

The Tower 30

Chapter 30: The Fifth Floor

[You have entered the fifth floor.]

[The Goblins drove out the natives who used to live here and built a hextech citadel there. Goblins were so obsessed with hextech that they hated people who were ignorant of it. Take down the citadel of the Goblins, the Gerpain citadel.]

Lee Shin could see a large citadel in the distance. The citadel contained the essence of hextech, the pride of the Goblins. Since the sun had long set and it was now deep in the night, Lee Shin could not see clearly what was ahead. However, there were lights surrounding the Gerpain citadel that illuminated the area and made the place look more splendid.

To doo— To doo— To doo—

Lee Shin, who was hiding among the trees, raised his head up at the sound of a machine coming from the sky. The reconnaissance aircraft of the Goblin seemed to have a problem, because it was passing at a low altitude with the sounds of a poor engine.

"Tsk." Lee Shin thought it was not a great start.

He clicked his tongue when he saw the reconnaissance aircraft falling toward him. Then he used his mana to prevent it from crashing on the ground.

[Feather Fall]

Kugook— Kugook— Kugook—

The intrusive sound of the gear wheels inside the reconnaissance aircraft grew louder and sounded as if they were caught in something. Lee Shin slowed its fall down with his skill, and the reconnaissance aircraft was able to land safely in an open space, instead of crashing into the ground.

"Kieeek!?I don't know who you are, but thank you so mu— Wait, are you human?" A Goblin who came out of the reconnaissance aircraft frowned when he saw Lee Shin.

‘Do the Goblins here hate humans?’Lee Shin thought it was strange.

There was no reason for Goblins to be hostile to humans if they enjoyed hextech. Lee Shin had thought that they would prefer to interact with humans. Lee Shin was curious, but he did not make it obvious.

"Tsk,?why did it have to be him... Well, no. Wouldn't he be a decent human being, considering that he had helped me?" The Goblin mumbled as if he was lost in thought.

Lee Shin slowly approached the Goblin.

"I just helped you because you were about to crash in front of me," Lee Shin explained.

"Oh, is that why? Thanks anyways! Kieeek,?but are you the one who knows death? The person who had rescued the Troll tribe?" the Goblin asked.

"He Who Knows Death?" Lee Shin tried to remember.

Those unexpected words from the Goblin reminded Lee Shin of the title he had acquired from the fourth floor.

[Pioneer of the World]

Words about you pioneering a new world will spread everywhere.

‘I didn't expect the words to be spread even to the Goblins who live in these mountain ranges,’ Lee Shin thought.

After hearing the title He Who Knows Death from the Goblin, it was clear to Lee Shin that the title he already possessed had an impact.

"Are you not?" the Goblin asked.

"You're right. I did not expect that word would spread all the way here," Lee Shin explained.

"Wow, I guess I encountered a famous person, kieeeek!?Where were you going?" the Goblin asked.

"I was on my way to Gerpain," Lee Shin replied.

"Oh, I see. I feel like humans are starting to come here all of a sudden! Kieeeek! There hasn't been any human around for a while," the Goblin explained.

"Human? Was there another person here?" Lee Shin asked.

Lee Shin was intrigued by the word human. If someone like him had come to this place where no one usually would come, there could be a hint about this stage at this place.

"Well yeah... There was a weird person. Kieeeek, you don't need to know. It's not good to be interested in him," the Goblin muttered.

For some reason, Lee Shin felt like the Goblin had a hostile attitude toward that person. The Goblin's attitude toward Lee Shin seemed a little more relaxed, compared to the initial moment they met. Lee Shin realized that the Goblin first acted that way because of the person who had come to Gerpain before Lee Shin.

"If you're planning on going to Gerpain, can you please tell someone that 'Durgin' has asked you to send the transportation equipment for the reconnaissance aircraft to the forest? Kieeeek! If you give my name when you enter the Gerpain, people will treat you more friendly," Durgin asked.

"Okay, I will," Lee Shin replied.

Lee Shin left Durgin there and headed for Gerpain. Lee Shin expanded the scope of detection, just in case, by spreading his mana power. He had a feeling that he would not fit in with others. Why did he have to land in such a forest?

The Hell level was not easy. Lee Shin moved cautiously, so he did not miss a single clue.

'There's something here.'?Lee Shin had a feeling that something had been caught by his mana.

Someone had been watching, but Lee Shin did not know whether they were looking at himself or Durgin. It seemed like they were not interested in having a conversation, so Lee Shin decided to go to Gerpain regardless.

"Kieeek!?Stop, right there! Are you human?" A gatekeeper guarding the entrance to the Gerpain citadel blocked Lee Shin. "Why are you here?"

The gatekeeper seemed very cautious, just like Durgin when he first encountered Lee Shin. Although exercising caution was the duty of a gatekeeper, the emotion contained in his words was clearly a little more than that.

"I came here because I heard that I can learn about hextech here," Lee Shin replied.

"Hextech? Are you also interested in hextech? Hmmm... but wait for a second, do you happen to be... He Who Knows—" The gatekeeper was interrupted.

"That's right, He Who Knows Death," Lee Shin replied.

"Kieeek! Kikk!?I knew it! My eyes were not wrong. It is exciting that such a great wizard is interested in hextech!" the gatekeeper replied.

"Yes, and I also met Durgin on my way here, and he seemed to need help because the reconnaissance aircraft broke," Lee Shin explained.

"You know Durgin, too? Huh, all right, you may enter." The gatekeeper let Lee Shin in.

When the gatekeeper granted permission, a small door opened under a large door. The interior of their citadel was not much different from other citadels in general, other than the fact that it belonged to the Goblins. The most outstanding difference was just that there were numerous small buildings because the Goblins were about 1m tall.

Lee Shin slowly walked through the citadel to gather information. Most of the residential areas had their lights turned off. And the only bright place, even at this time, was the area where blacksmiths were gathered.

Lee Shin took his time, checking out other places as well. He went around the entire citadel. Time flew by quickly and it was almost dawn. Lee Shin moved toward a building that was still lit.

"Is there anyone here?" Lee Shin asked.

There was no response, but Lee Shin opened the slightly opened door and entered. Lee Shin could see designs scattered all over the place. He picked up a design that was on the floor and took a closer look at it.

The design looked quite complex. It was not a simple design drawn to make some kind of device. Lee Shin could see math formulas on it, explaining some kind of mana. These formulas were written all over, and there were scribbles that were crossed out as if the writer was angry while calculating these formulas.

'Whoa... The level of hextech is quite high.'?What Lee Shin was seeing was beyond his expectation.

People thought that Goblins were stupid, but they had a solid understanding of the mana theory. Of course, that also depended on the tribe in question.

Chang! Chang! Chang! Chang!

Lee Shin put down the design and moved where the faint hammering sound was coming from. There was a staircase to the basement, where the sound was coming from. As Lee Shin took careful steps down, he saw a Goblin pounding iron.

"Who is it?" a Goblin shouted, sensing Lee Shin's presence.

"Oh, I came in because this was the only place where the lights were turned on." Lee Shin decided to act shamelessly.

"Tsk, humans have no manners," the Goblin muttered.

"Then why didn't you lock the door?" Lee Shin asked.

"Aeeing! Can't I decide what I want to do with my door? Kieeek!" The Goblin seemed more calm than Lee Shin had expected.

Lee Shin thought the Goblin would burst into anger, but the Goblin did not seem particularly wary of humans. He just seemed a little annoyed that someone had entered their home, but he did not seem angry.

"Are you not going to kick me out?" Lee Shin asked.

"Will you go out if I tell you to?" the Goblin asked.

"Well..." Lee Shin muttered.

"Tsk, stop pretending. Why are you here anyways? It seems like it's your first time here," the Goblin said, looking as if he was about to throw his hammer at Lee Shin if he bothered him.

Lee Shin smiled and picked up a design from the ones scattered all over the place. The mana formulas were scratched out and the design crumpled, as if this one was also ruined.

"I think you're having trouble keeping the mana storage device from overheating as the running time increases. I see that the device is quite large... Are you making some kind of siege weapon?" Lee Shin asked.

"Kieeek! How do you know that? Are you a hextech engineer?" the Goblin asked.

"No, I'm a wizard," Lee Shin replied.

The Goblin's facial expression changed immediately at Lee Shin's words. The annoyance on his face vanished, and was replaced by curiosity and anticipation. It was absurd how drastic the change was.

"Well, do you know anything? What did I do wrong? If I run the engine for more than 10 hours, I cannot prevent other parts from getting out of order! Plus, I can't lower the output—" The Goblin was disrupted.

"There is something wrong with the heat dissipation method. We will have to find a way to cool it down or fix the way we dissipate it," Lee Shin explained.

"Kieeek! What? Then what do I do now?" The Goblin was already too excited even though they did not have much conversation.

The Goblin came up to Lee Shin and was holding his clothes.

"You can turn this heat into a different power. For example, you can replace the intense heat with mana power and use it as mana..." Lee Shin explained.

"What? Kieeek! Kieek! Is that even possible?" The Goblin was surprised.

"Well... it's possible," Lee Shin muttered.

Lee Shin grinned at Goblin, who was about to lose his mind in excitement.

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In less than a day, Lee Shin became close with the Goblin, Borgin the blacksmith. And Lee Shin heard a lot of stories from him.

"Before you came, a person came and made a fuss. That person could also handle a little bit of mana. That was why many Goblins in Gerpain were interested in him," Borgin explained.

"Was he also a wizard?" Lee Shin asked.

"No, I don't know all the details, but he said he uses a sword," Borgin replied.

That person had some understanding of mana, and usually used a sword. Was he a swordmage? Or was he a swordsman who knew a little bit of mana theory?

"I heard that he attacked the Lord of our citadel and is now locked in an underground prison. What a stupid man. Kieeek," Borgin explained.

"Is the Lord that strong?" Lee Shin asked.

"That's right. He's an amazing person," Borgin replied.

Lee Shin knew intuitively that this stage would be tough.

"Oh right, I will have to visit the Lord in a few days, and I'm going to talk about the hextech design I made with you. I'm sure that the Lord will like you," said Borgin.

"I did not do much though. I just gave you a few words of advice," Lee Shin muttered.

"It was a tremendous help. Anyway, let's keep it that way. The Lord may invite you sooner or later." Borgin smiled.

Lee Shin had spent several days in Borgin's workshop. During this time, he helped Borgin and gave him some advice on making hextech machines. At the same time, Lee Shin was able to learn quite a lot from Borgin.

[You have acquired the 『Skill - Hextech Level 1』.]

Perhaps because of his excellent knowledge on mana, it was not difficult for Lee Shin to understand the field of hextech. There were quite a few things that Lee Shin had already known, but Borgin, who had a good knowledge of this field, taught Lee Shin a lot.

After Borgin returned from meeting the Lord, Lee Shin received the Lord's invitation. He had heard that the previous human was also invited by the Lord to enter the castle thanks to his knowledge of mana. And then he was imprisoned in the underground jail for attacking the Lord. Lee Shin thought he should go to the underground prison and look at the man if he had a chance.

A day after receiving the invitation, a Convertible arrived in front of Borgin's workshop. It was a car made with hextech. It was an open-type hextech machine that did not have a ceiling. A driver from the castle had come to pick Lee Shin up to head to the castle.

The outstanding technical skills of hextech could be seen all over the place. And the Lord's castle was the most prominent of them all, especially with the huge robots that stood around the castle. The four-to five-meter-tall Titans guarding the castle were a tremendous sight to behold, a picture of majesty to boast of.

Lee Shin entered the castle, sat in the drawing room, and waited for the Lord. After a while, the Lord appeared in his thin armor.

"Kieeek! Kieek! Nice to meet you, I'm Gorgin, the Lord of Gerpain," Gorgin introduced himself.

"Hello, this is Lee Shin," he replied.

Lee Shin used his mana and read the mana wave of what Gorgin was wearing. Just a rough estimate was enough to tell that each of his items, including his clothes and accessories, was an excellent mana tool. Lee Shin could understand why that person had difficulty attacking the Lord.

"I heard that you are He Who Knows Death," said Gorgin.

"...That's right." Hearing that title over and over again, Lee Shin felt as if he had become an apostle of the God of Death, which did not feel good.

"Kieeek, it's an honor to have a conversation with such a wizard. Will you tell me about your knowledge on mana?" Gorgin asked.

"Sure, as much as you like," Lee Shin replied.

* * *

At Gorgin's request, Lee Shin decided to stay here for the time being and talk with him about his knowledge on hextech. Gorgin kept urging Lee Shin to stay in the castle, as if he was not worried about the fact that he had once been attacked by humans. Lee Shin could clearly see how obsessed the Goblins were with hextech. Maybe Gorgin was confident that he would not be defeated no matter who came at him.

First of all, Lee Shin had to gather the information as much as he could.

'The place where Titans are stored, the location of the underground prison...'?thought Lee Shin.

And most importantly, Lee Shin had to find where the Titans of Gorgin was located.

He still had not figured that out yet.

- My Titan is truly outstanding! Even if all the Titans in this place attack him, they won't be able to defeat my Titan.

Gorgin bragged about his Titan every day.

‘There is no way that it will be a Titan of the transcendental class... Will it be from a castle lead class?’ Lee Shin thought.

No matter how difficult the Hell level was, it did not make sense to have a fight against a transcendental level. The Titan of the transcendental class had enough power to crush a nation on its own. To be honest, it was too much for a Titan of the castle lead class to appear on the fifth floor. It practically had the same level of strength as an entire castle. It was a ridiculously harsh opponent for challengers who had just begun climbing.

‘Well... there is a possibility that it will not be at the castle lead class, but it would be better for me to overestimate,’ Lee Shin thought.

There was nothing wrong with being careful. The tower, especially a tower of this level of difficulty, was a place where a person did not know when they would die even if they tried to be careful.

"I'll be out for a while," Lee Shin said.

"Where are you going?" Gorgin asked.

"I have to discuss something with Borgin, and it's time for me to take a look at what we've been working on," Lee Shin explained.

"Oh, I see. Alright," Gorgin replied.

Lee Shin's relationship with Gorgin had grown so close that Gorgin gave Lee Shin much freedom. However, since there was a precedent for things going awry with humans, it was too early to drop all the vigilance. Lee Shin not only went out of Gorgin's castle but also out of the citadel.

"I'm going to get the ingredients that Borgin had asked for," Lee Shin said.

"Okay," the gatekeeper replied.

If Lee Shin reported to the gatekeeper, it would go into the ears of the Lord, but it did not matter. He could easily get around it. It was time for Lee Shin to go outside for once.

Lee Shin left the citadel and went deep into a forest. It had been a while since Lee Shin felt this piercing sensation of a thirst for blood.

"How long are you going to be hiding? Let's talk it out. There's no Goblin here," Lee Shin said.

Nothing moved at Lee Shin's words. Lee Shin had a bitter smile on his face, and stared into a spot.

"Not only are you hiding from the Goblins, but are you also going to run away from me now? How far are you going to run away?" Lee Shin provoked him.

The air around Lee Shin began to vibrate at Lee Shin's provocation.

The raw emotions of bloodthirst, hatred, enmity, and anger approached Lee Shin. Only then, Lee Shin smiled.

"Yeah, this is what Ogre is like," Lee Shin said.

A huge silhouette slowly emerged in front of Lee Shin.