

## The Tower 52

### Chapter 52

The four headed to Gordon's private training ground.

"This is my personal training ground—meaning, you can fight as much as you want, because this place is so durable that it can even withstand my magic," Gordon said proudly.

Lee Shin and Verren faced each other on the training ground.

'It's been a while.'

During Lee Shin's previous life, he had many encounters with Verren. When he had reached the 15th floor in his previous life, Lee Shin had started out in the Gold Magic Tower, and he had become a student of the master of the Magic Tower, who recognized his capability. At that time, Verren was already a student of Gordon.

Since Verren had arrived at the Gold Magic Tower earlier than Lee Shin, Verren and Gordon kept Lee Shin in check when Lee Shin became the student of the Tower Master. The reason Lee Shin suffered the most on the 15th floor was because of these two. Thinking about the hardships they had caused him, Lee Shin smirked.

'You would have grown into a pretty decent wizard in five months, in time for the Deleague, but...'

As of now, Verren was just a greenhorn with high growth potential.

"Alright, you may begin," Gordon announced the start of the match.

Verren and Lee Shin activated their mana as soon as the match started. The next moment, a puddle of water appeared under Lee Shin's feet and the water clung to his feet, rendering him immobile.

"Why don't you try blocking this," said Verren.

With Verren's bold provocation, a mana circle appeared in the air, and lightning energy gathered over the mana circle.

"Blitz Gun!" Verren shouted.

Woong—

The thick bolt of energy gathered was fired at Lee Shin. Its power was more than enough to kill its target upon contact. However, to Lee Shin, it was a terribly familiar and obvious spell, to the extent that he even considered it boring.

'This is a spell that I've seen many times.'

Lee Shin smirked and gathered his mana. A tendril of mana grew from the tip of his wand all the way to the ceiling, connecting to the wall of the training hall.

[Lightning Rod]

The lightning bolt produced by Verren's Blitz Gun, which seemed about to pierce through Lee Shin, suddenly changed its course and flowed along the mana tendril and into the Lightning Rod that Lee Shin had created.

"What? What's going on?" Verren was shocked at the sight.

It was a spell that Verren had never experienced before. Panicking, Verren tried to move his mana, but it was useless. The lightning bolt that was supposed to disappear after hitting the ceiling had clung to it instead and was now flowing through the walls of the training hall.

"Take back your magic, just as you gave it away," Lee Shin muttered.

Lee Shin's mana moved once again, gathering the lightning energy which pulsed through the walls.

If Head Clarte Gordon had Blitz Gun as one of his best skills, then the Tower Master had Thunderbolt, which was also what Lee Shin had learned as his very first ultimate skill and his main spell.

[Thunderbolt]

Rumble— Crack!

Like dark clouds in the sky, the clouds of lightning energy gathered in one place on the ceiling, threatening to rain lightning upon the ground. At that moment, Gordon's expression stiffened as he watched Lee Shin's magic from behind. He quickly extended his mana to conjure a barrier of lightning over Verren.

Gordon's lightning energy spread all over the training ground, clashing with Lee Shin's own lightning energy in a match of sparks..

'If Verren gets hit by that directly, he will die!'

The Thunderbolt, one of the best spells of the Gold Magic Tower Master, was now being used by a wizard of the Black Magic Tower named Lee Shin. Gordon could not understand how that was possible. He wondered why Lee Shin could use that spell, and whether he was a secret student of the Tower Master.

Countless thoughts flashed through Gordon's mind at the moment; most importantly, the fact that Verren clearly did not have the ability to stop that spell with his skills.

If the Tower Master had been the one to use Thunderbolt instead, even Gordon himself would not have been able to respond in time to save Verren; luckily, there was a slight delay in Lee Shin's magic, which gave Gordon a chance to step in.

At his behest, a thin barrier made of lightning energy formed in the air, just in time for Lee Shin's Thunderbolt to blast it. The clash sent a wave of lightning energy along the barrier.

Crackle—

The lightning energy spread rapidly and Lee Shin's Thunderbolt flowed along the membrane and toward Gordon as if it had been aimed at him from the very start.

'No way! Was he going after me?'

It was a completely unexpected development, and when Gordon tried to stop the thunderbolt that was in front of him, Chains of Death came up from the blackened floor and bound his whole body.

'Wait...!'

The Chains of Death were unbreakable as long as Lee Shin lived. As he stood there incapable of doing anything, Gordon's heart was pierced by Lee Shin's thunderbolt.

"Kaaaahhh!" Gordon screamed.

His body convulsed in spite of his will, and Gordon felt the burns caused by the lightning energy. He tried to defend himself by summoning mana. However, even though he succeeded to an extent, the amount of lightning energy was simply too much for him to handle.

"Keuahhh! Ha... ha... haa..."?Gordon screamed.

Every single one of his muscles was spasming uncontrollably. Collapsing onto the floor, he stared at Lee Shin with bloodshot eyes. Then, Verren and the other wizard of the Gold Magic Tower, who were watching them, ran to Gordon in shock.

"Don't...touch... me...!" Gordon barely managed to speak and tried to push them away from him.

"Ugh..."

Gordon groaned in pain but still clenched his fists and tried to move slowly.

Lee Shin was surprised to see how great his willpower was. It was impossible for ordinary wizards to try to protect themselves from the Thunderbolt's energy by circulating their mana once they were struck by the spell.

"Master! Are you alright? Hey! What are you doing? My master got hurt because of you!" Verren started yelling at Lee Shin.

Verren was furious to see how injured Gordon was, so he grabbed Lee Shin by the collar. Whether he was just stupid or pretending to be stupid even in this situation, Verren behaved as if Lee Shin had not done this on purpose.

"Let go of me," Lee Shin demanded.

"Ugh!" Verren gasped.

When Lee Shin grabbed Verren's wrist, Verren easily let go of Lee Shin's collar. Compared to Lee Shin's Strength stat, which was well over 100, Verren's Strength was ridiculously low.

Crunch!

Lee Shin twisted Verren's wrist, and Verren started screaming, collapsing onto the floor. The wizard of the Gold Magic Tower who had been watching the situation fell on his knees and started to tremble.

"P-p-please don't. F-f-forgive me..." the wizard pleaded.

Lee Shin was speechless. He certainly had a bad relationship with Gordon and Verren, but this guy had nothing to do with it.

Lee Shin was aware that this guy was nothing more than a creature of the tower, and he was still hesitant to kill such a passive opponent.

'Sigh...'

Lee Shin knew that he could not allow his resolve to waver like this. There were times when it was inevitable to kill others in order to climb the tower. However, when Lee Shin placed his hand on the left side of his chest, his face stiffened.

'My heart is...'

Lee Shin's heart was beating peacefully, as if the thought of having to kill the wizard in front of him did nothing to disturb its calm rhythm. When Lee Shin realized that his expression was betraying his inner struggle, he closed his eyes and apologized.

"I'm sorry."

The wizard could not be kept alive because no one was allowed to know that Lee Shin was the last person to meet Gordon and Verren.

Lee Shin turned and headed to the door to exit the training ground. At the same time, thin yet powerful thunderbolts came crashing down from the ceiling, striking the three wizards of the Gold Magic Tower. Then, above them, the Grim Reaper appeared.

- Wake up...

\* \* \*

As the Magic Towers were being attacked one after the other—first, the Blue and Red towers, then Yellow and Gold—the wizards fervently looked for clues to find the culprit of this series of incidents.

Among the Blue, Red, and Green Magic Towers, which were considered the middle lines of Seia, the Blue and Red Towers had been almost destroyed, while the Green Magic Tower was the only one that remained intact. Despite the collapse of his competitors, the Master of the Green Magic Tower was not pleased; rather, he felt his anxiety growing.

"The Blue and Red Magic Towers had a fight with each other which led to self-destruction. Shane died and Helen will have to lie down for years... In addition to that, Terian was assassinated, and Gordon from the Gold Magic Tower is missing..." Baron, the Master of the Green Magic Tower, seemed worried as he paced up and down his room, biting his thumb.

"What if the whole thing started with one group...or rather, one person? And if that's the case, who the hell is that person?" Baron tried to think of a suspect.

However, no matter how hard he thought about it, Baron had no idea who the culprit could be. He could not think of anyone who could manipulate flames with enough power to kill the Masters of the Magic Towers. In fact, Helen was the only person who came to his mind, because she had the skills to do something like that.

'Well, if this continues...'

With only about four months left until the Deleague, the most likely tower to win was the White Magic Tower. The Master of the Gold Magic Tower, Astor, remained safe, but the White Magic Tower was in the best position in terms of combat power. It was obvious that the victory would belong to the White Magic Tower anyway, unless there was a miracle.

'What if the White Magic Tower secretly raised a flame wizard... Well, everything would make sense if it's that insidious Abel.'

Baron, who was processing his thoughts alone, nodded and sat down.

'It must be the White Magic Tower.'

The Black Magic Tower also had their combat power intact, but with their skills, no one believed they had any chance of winning. Besides, Baron thought that the Black Magic Tower could not afford the extra effort to raise such a great flame wizard. If the White Magic Tower was the real culprit, it made sense that the Black Magic Tower was safe.

There were only a few people who thought like this now, but there was a rivalry between the two Magic Towers that had lasted for a long time. It was clear that Abel would rather leave the Black Magic Tower intact and become a Deleaguer to trample them thoroughly later.

Beep.

When Baron pressed the button on the desk, the deputy master opened the door and entered.

"Did you call me, sir?" the deputy master asked.

"Send a secret messenger to all the towers except for the White Magic Tower," Baron ordered.

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There was a huge test room in the Black Magic Tower lined with audience seats along its interior. On the field, there was only a Clarte and Lee Shin, and in the surrounding audience seats, numerous wizards from the Black Magic Tower had gathered. At the front, there was a Head Clarte and the deputy master, who both visited to watch how Lee Shin would perform.

The Head Clarte sat down and started explaining.

"We've decided to test both curses and summoning skills. Your first test will be about curses."

Usually, it was common to choose one of the two fields because the test for the first class required the wizards to select one and conduct research on it. However, Lee Shin had announced that he would do both, which was a very unusual case.

Considering Lee Shin's achievements and the skills that he had shown during the lectures done in the Magic Tower, the fact that he was taking the test for both fields at the same time and he had declared that he would challenge the Clarte class immediately after the first-class test had convinced the deputy master and the Head Clarte to be part of the audience for his test.

Lee Shin was the first person in history to attempt the leap from a learner to a Clarte in such a short period of time. Within the Black Magic People, people were already referring to Lee Shin as the most talented prospect of all time.

"The first cursing test is a competition with a Clarte. You can put a curse on each other and knock down your opponent," the Head Clarte explained.

Since it was already quite obvious that Lee Shin would most certainly be promoted to the first-class, whether or not he could become a Clarte became the biggest question on the wizards' minds. Therefore, they decided to increase the difficulty of the first-class test to assess whether he was qualified to be a Clarte.

"What kind of curse are you going to choose?" Ethan, the deputy master, asked the Head Clarte.

"Hmm... Do you have a curse you're confident in?" The Head Clarte looked at Lee Shin and asked.

"Anything is fine for me," Lee Shin replied.

"Oh, you have a lot of confidence. What about you?" the Head Clarte asked the Clarte.

The Head Clarte's eyes shifted from Lee Shin to the Clarte, and the Clarte also replied firmly, that anything was fine.

"Then why don't we go with Leaden? That will allow for an accurate check of their pure skill level," Reina suggested.

"Hmm... Leaden sounds fine."

Ethan agreed to Reina's suggestion, and the two people on the field also nodded.

"Alright, so you will put a curse on each other and whoever kneels first loses," the Head Clarte explained.

Leaden was a curse that made the target heavier. On the field, Lee Shin and the Clarte faced each other and slowly activated their mana, and their energy filled the test room.

"I'll make you regret saying that anything is fine," the Clarte muttered.

The Clarte sounded like he was warning Lee Shin. He was offended that Lee Shin seemed so carefree when a Clarte like him was the opponent. It had barely been a few months since Lee Shin had entered the Black Magic Tower, while the Clarte had begun his career here more than a decade earlier.

Although some differences in talent were expected, the differences in basic skills were critical in this test, because there was no point in using tricks for Leaden. The Clarte, Dane, was determined not to let Lee Shin get away with it. He wanted to show the newbie the difference in skills and experience.

"You may begin." The Head Clarte announced the start of the competition.

At the words of the Head Clarte, the heat in the test room began to increase. For the first time in the history of the Black Magic Tower, there was a competition between a Clarte and a second-class wizard, and it made the wizards of the tower watch the competition intensely, palms all clammy with sweat.