

The Tower 53

Chapter 53

The black mana, which was considered the signature magic of Lee Shin's, moved. The spell containing the energy of death flew toward his opponent, the Clarte, and a curse was engraved on it.

"Keugh!" Dane gasped.

Surprised by the power of the curse that was stronger than he had expected, Dane, the Clarte groaned, standing his ground with much difficulty. At the same time, Lee Shin was also struck by the curse sent by the Clarte and was resisting it. Unlike the Clarte, whose face was noticeably distorted, Lee Shin stood there looking no different from the beginning.

There was a rumor about He Who Knows Death being in the Black Magic Tower. When the wizards saw Lee Shin's black mana and how he easily gained the upper hand over the Clarte, they began to wonder whether Lee Shin was the very same He Who Knows Death. Even Dane felt that way as he was fighting Lee Shin.

"Keughh!" Dane gasped again.

When Dane was cursed the second time, his legs began to shake. Not only that, his body became very heavy, and his face became more and more distorted. Dane looked up at his opponent—Lee Shin was still standing strong. Besides, other wizards around him were looking at Dane contemptuously as this competition went on.

Dane could hear the other wizards nearby saying that he had tarnished the Clarte's authority and that he was an incompetent wizard. Even as his composure faltered, Dane tried to keep his mind as focused as possible and cast the spell. Both of the two wizards had been hit by two spells of Leaden by then.

Dane wanted to believe that Lee Shin was only pretending to be fine, but Lee Shin seemed too fine for Dane to think that way.

'How on earth is that possible?'

Dane knew that at times like this, he had to be calmer. Therefore, Dane calmly analyzed the curse that Lee Shin had cast while putting his curse on Lee Shin. When Dane analyzed Lee Shin's casting speed, the power of his curse and its scope of attack, he realized that...

'I think he is about the same level as me.'

Dane and Lee Shin had been casting their curses almost at the same time and the curses struck each other at a similar level of power. For a moment, a strange thought came into Dane's mind, but it was time for him to cast the third curse. Besides, if he were to give up at this point, he would be mocked for the rest of his life in the Black Magic Tower.

When the third curse struck him, Dane gritted his teeth; but soon, he realized that something was off, his eyes wide open in surprise.

'Huh? What's going on?'

For a moment, Dane could not determine what was going on, and a wave of shame hit him. Dane could hardly feel the weight of the curse in his body this third time.

'You son of a bitch!'

As Dane looked at Lee Shin with a frown, Lee Shin stood there with a blank expression. However, Lee Shin did seem like he was struggling a little more compared to before.

When Dane saw that Lee Shin still looked calm, he was going to burst from anger and embarrassment, but he stopped right away after noticing the faces of the onlooking wizards. The contemptuous looks from a moment ago had disappeared, and the wizards were no longer looking down on Dane. Therefore, Dane continued casting his spells with a puzzled look.

As the curse spells went on the fourth, fifth, sixth, and seventh time, the facial expressions of the wizards who were watching changed from moment to moment. The contempt that Dane had observed earlier now turned into surprise and cheer.

By this point, the expectations the audience had for Lee Shin to emerge victorious were gradually shifting to the Clarte. Dane thought that maybe he was holding out well. He thought his attacks could have reduced the power of Lee Shin's curse unknowingly. These thoughts flashed past his mind quickly.

'Haha... there's no way that can be true.'

Holding back his laughter, Lee Shin knelt down. At the same time, the crowd applauded. Lee Shin's entire body had been trembling earlier. Seeing how he had been sweating all over, no one had thought that he was putting up any act in this test.

"Are you alright?" the deputy master approached Lee Shin and asked.

"Yes, I'm fine," Lee Shin replied.

"I never knew how great your persistence was," the Head Clarte said to the Clarte, as he helped him up.

"Ah, it's nothing," Dane the Clarte replied.

There was applause for both Lee Shin and Dane, and Dane looked at Lee Shin with mixed emotions.

"You look tired, so go take some rest before the summoning t—" said Ethan, the deputy master.

"No, I'll do it right away," Lee Shin replied.

"Would that be alright?" Ethan asked again.

"Yes," Lee Shin replied.

Even when Ethan asked again, Lee Shin was determined.

"Okay then, let's get moving," said Ethan.

The place where the summoning test was to be conducted was unlike the cursing test venue. There was a prison with a cage in this test room

"These people will be in charge of this test." The Head Clarte pointed to the three Clartes, whose studies focused on the summon field.

The summon field was not the mainstream field of study within the Black Magic Tower, having only a few people studying it. Among them, these three wizards were the ones who had the highest rank. The master, deputy master and Head Clarte were all from the curse field, and the summon field had not produced wizards of such classes for a long time.

"For this test, all you have to do is to defeat the Hobgoblin in that cage with the undead you've summoned," one of the Clarte of the summon field stepped up and explained the test.

After listening to the explanation, Lee Shin looked at the Hobgoblin in the cage. The Hobgoblin was a monster that was in charge of leading the whole Goblin village. Not only did the Hobgoblin have superior physical abilities compared to other Goblins, but the reason people feared him the most was because of its high intelligence and excellent communication skills, unlike the regular Goblins.

The Hobgoblin was a tricky monster to deal with because of its ability to bring unruly Goblins together. However, the test here was to deal only with one Hobgoblin.

"Is the Hobgoblin the only thing I have to deal with on the test?" Lee Shin asked.

"Yes, that's right, but don't worry too much. Even if you can't beat the Hobgoblin, you've already shown a lot by beating the Clarte in the cursing test, so that will be taken into consideration," the same Clarte explained, because he and the other Clartes thought Lee Shin asked because he felt burdened to deal with the Hobgoblin.

When Lee Shin heard the Clarte's explanation, he found it ridiculous and tried to hold back from laughing.

'Well, I knew it would be easy, but I didn't expect it to be this easy...'

Lee Shin could not believe that his opponent was only that one Hobgoblin with no other subordinates, meaning there was no need for his main magic to be used. The black mana that swirled around Lee Shin disappeared as if it vanished into the ground, and his shadow expanded to create a huge portal.

[Shadow Space]

Lee Shin's strongest undead were asleep in his Shadow Space.

"Come out, Bark," Lee Shin ordered.

Among them, a Skeleton that would most likely leave the strongest impression came out from the portal. Bark had thick bones, a hideous-looking skull, and teeth that were sticking out. His huge body was dripping with black mana. As soon as the Skeleton Ogre Bark, who was emitting black mana from his huge body, emerged from the portal, he let out a roar.

Keuarraak!

"Argh!"

"A m-m-monster! A monster has appeared!"

"What did he do?"

"No way..."

The wizards were startled and started screaming, but Lee Shin simply stood there casting spells as if he could not hear them.

"Kill him," Lee Shin ordered.

Bark raised his club aggressively, but the Hobgoblin just trembled and could not even think of avoiding it. There was nothing the Hobgoblin could do, because it was already frozen on the spot due to the fear emitted by Bark.

Woong—

Crack!

Just like that, the Hobgoblin's skull broke, its big body was crushed at once, and he fell to the floor. The wizards had been stunned by Lee Shin's cursing ability since a while ago; but now, the wizards of the Black Magic Tower could not take their eyes off the scene, amazed.

In the midst of a crowd who had been frozen to the spot as if time had stopped, there was a sudden sound of footsteps. When the three Clartes heard the sound, they flinched, and soon realized that it was coming from Lee Shin, who had finished the test.

"Did I pass?" Lee Shin asked.

The three Clartes, whose mouths were open in amazement, nodded vigorously as if they had a motor installed on their necks.

* * *

Reina walked up to Lee Shin who had become a Clarte as well as 'The Eye of a Typhoon' within the Black Magic Tower.

"I guess we're both Clartes now," said Reina.

"I guess so." Lee Shin smiled.

"Make yourself comfortable. Ah, no wait, you will be progressing further up soon, so should I show my respect in advance?" Reina asked.

Unlike what she had said, Reina clearly seemed nervous, because she was worried about how Lee Shin might ask her to behave. When Lee Shin noticed that, he smiled and stopped her.

"I don't really care about that, so just do what you've been doing," Lee Shin said.

"Well... shall we? Haha! Okay, but you were amazing. I was really surprised by the last test," Reina said.

"Do you have any interest in the summon field?" Lee Shin asked.

"Huh? Uh... What do you mean?! I'm busy studying just the curse. I'm not a monster like you," Reina explained.

Thinking that Lee Shin would probably be glad to teach her about the summon field, she considered showing her interest; but she decided to say no, because she thought it would be too much for her. Reina had been called a genius a lot, but if she tried to follow real geniuses who were really monsters, she would be destroyed eventually.

"Why don't we talk about cursing next time," Reina suggested.

"Sure," Lee Shin replied.

After Reina left, while Lee Shin was on his way to his newly assigned room on the seventh floor, he encountered the three Clartes, who were in charge of the last summoning test.

"Oh, hi, Clarte Lee Shin. Can we talk to you for a second?" one of the Clartes asked.

"Sure," Lee Shin replied.

The three Clartes followed Lee Shin to his room and timidly entered.

"Wow..." The Clarte was amazed.

"This room is much better than ours," said another Clarte.

"Well, Lee Shin deserves it," said the third Clarte.

The three people sat down as they admired the interior, which seemed to be much better than theirs, although they had been Clartes for much longer.

"So what brings you here?" Lee Shin asked.

"Clarte Lee Shin, don't you want to focus on the summon field?" a Clarte asked.

"That's right, with your level of skills, you can easily be the best wizard in the summon field! You can be the best necroman—" another Clarte started to explain.

Clang—

When Lee Shin put down the cup from which he was drinking tea, the three Clartes heard the clattering sound loud and clear.

"I will study and handle all the black magic," Lee Shin replied in a determined voice.

"But that will be too har—" the Clarte tried to explain.

"Stop, please don't make me say it again," Lee Shin said.

When the three Clartes saw Lee Shin's determined attitude, they shut up, as if they were honeyed mutes.

"To be honest, the wizards in our summon field are in a very difficult situation. The summon field is no longer taught in school, and now we have to teach ourselves," the Clarte explained.

"We need a genius like you, someone who can break through our blocked path," another Clarte explained.

Looking at the trembling hands of the Clartes, Lee Shin could tell how desperate they were. Lee Shin could tell how hard it must have been for them.

"Just because I will deal with everything doesn't mean I will be neglecting the summon field. I will help you guys for sure," Lee Shin explained.

"Really?" The Clarte seemed excited.

"Thank you! Thank you so much!" another Clarte shouted.

The Clartes seemed elated and excited to hear Lee Shin's positive answer. They looked like kids who just received some extra pocket money.

"How did you make that Ogre into a Skeleton?" the Clarte asked.

"I had a hard time making that Hobgoblin into an undead too. Besides, it wasn't easy to handle it even after I succeeded," another Clarte explained.

"How many of those undead can you control at your best?" the third Clarte asked.

"I'll let you know later." At the sudden barrage of questions, Lee Shin waved his hand and stopped them.

Lee Shin barely managed to calm them down, and sent them off. However, as soon as he sat on the sofa, someone else knocked on the door.

"Come on in," said Lee Shin.

It was the Clarte Dane whom Lee Shin had faced in the last cursing test.

"Why did you do that?" Dane asked.

When Dane asked him out of the blue, Lee Shin pretended like he did not understand what Dane was talking about.

"What are you talking about?" Lee Shin asked.

"I already know that you went easy on me," said Dane.

"Do you think that I went easy on you? Don't you think that it was because I couldn't cast my cursing spell properly as your curse was so strong?" Lee Shin asked.

"That's not even poss—" Dane could not finish his sentence.

"Don't underestimate yourself. It's entirely your achievement and the result you deserved," Lee Shin explained.

Dane wanted to ask more, but seeing Lee Shin's determined attitude, Dane kept his mouth shut.

"...I see, Clarte Lee Shin," Dane muttered.

Dane got up from his seat, and just before he exited the room, he said one more word.

"... thank you."

When Lee Shin tried to sit leaning against the sofa after Dane left, someone knocked on the door again. Lee Shin frowned. Recently, people visited him so often that he could not do anything properly. Besides, the frequent visits were to the point that his head started throbbing. Lee Shin even thought of calling either May or Warrie to block the door, but he held it in.

"Come on in," said Lee Shin.

Lee Shin wondered who it was this time, so he looked at the door that opened and saw that it was Ethan, the deputy master.

'Why is Ethan here?'

Lee Shin looked at him with a puzzled look.

"Would you like some tea?" Lee Shin offered.

"Yes, thank you," Ethan replied.

When Lee Shin put the tea on the table, Ethan had a sip and put the cup down. Then he looked at Lee Shin.

"You know... Are you interested in becoming a deputy master?"