

The Tower 61

Chapter 61

"Didn't you say earlier that people who didn't do anything don't deserve to eat?" Lee Shin asked Alice coldly.

When Alice heard Lee Shin's cold voice, her facial expression turned stiff and she turned away from them. Alice had kind of expected that kind of a response, but she clenched her teeth and went back to grill the meat that she was working on. Alice tried to ignore them.

"But you know, I have different values from you. It's good to share it with your comrades, right? So, let's eat this together," Lee Shin offered.

When Alice heard Lee Shin's offer, her hand that held the meat up stopped moving, because she did not expect to hear that from him. Alice did not expect Lee Shin to reach out to her first because they had been hostile to each other the whole time.

"Hmm... I'm fine. How could I get something to eat if I didn't do anything?" Alice replied.

"Well, alright then. I'm not going to offer it another time," Lee Shin said.

There was disappointment in Alice's slightly flushed face when she heard Lee Shin's harsh words.

'Are you serious... Shouldn't you ask me at least once more?'

Mariel asked Alice one more time, as if she had read her thoughts.

"Ms. Alice, why don't you eat with us? This is so delicious!" Mariel offered.

"Huh? Uh... I mean, if you say so..." Alice pretended to give in and then glanced at Lee Shin.

At the same time, Mariel looked at Lee Shin as if she was asking for permission from Lee Shin.

"Come eat with us," said Lee Shin.

After hearing Lee Shin's words, Alice turned around and brought the meat that she had been grilling and sat next to Fletta.

"Why did you bring that?" Lee Shin asked.

Flinching at Lee Shin's words, she stopped putting the meat on the fire and looked at Lee Shin. She had brought it with her without realizing it because she did not want to come with empty hands. However, when she thought about it again, it was useless.

"Huh? Oh, right. Why did I bring this?" Alice replied.

Fletta flinched when Alice threw the meat that she had brought with her away, without even a second thought.

'I worked hard for it though...'

Fletta suddenly looked sullen and tried to just focus on eating the meat. When Alice ate the meat that Lee Shin had prepared and grilled, she was instantly surprised by the taste. It was more delicious than what she had expected. She tried to stifle the exclamation coming out of her mouth.

"Hmm... This is okay." Alice cleared her throat.

When Lee Shin saw Alice clearing her throat in embarrassment, he smirked at her and quickly glanced at Mariel. Mariel was smiling at Alice, who was really enjoying the meat.

"Mariel, go ahead and eat," said Lee Shin.

"I think you have a kind heart, Mr. Lee Shin," Mariel replied.

"Well, we survive by helping each other out," said Lee Shin.

Lee Shin said something that he did not want to say and looked at Mariel who was smiling innocently. He thought that if she were an angel made by the system of the tower, there would have been a message saying that Mariel's favorability had increased. Since her emotions were pretty obvious, there was no need to put in more effort to read Mariel's feelings.

'Good.'

In order to acquire the Divinity stat, Lee Shin had to win the favorability of Mariel. With that in mind, giving some meat to Alice was nothing and Lee Shin could do it a hundred or even a thousand more times. When Lee Shin turned around, he saw Fletta picking up the remaining meat.

"Fletta, there's no need to pack them, because we won't be able to preserve them anyways," said Lee Shin.

"Oh, is that so?" Fletta asked.

The pungent smell of blood and the dampness that made their skin wet added to their annoyance. Since all sides were surrounded by walls, the air was hot and stuffy. If they were to try taking the Devagar Cow's meat right now, it would definitely go bad in less than 30 minutes.

"We'll have to go now," Alice said.

At Alice's words, Fletta and Mariel looked at Lee Shin. And when Lee Shin noticed that, he nodded slightly. Only then did they get up and get ready to leave. The atmosphere in the group was subtly changed by a simple dish. So far, Alice had led the group, but the power balance had shifted a little to Lee Shin. However, that was not what mattered to Lee Shin right now.

'We're really going to get to the exit soon.'

If Lee Shin's intuition was correct, the exit would be open by the time they arrived at their destination. However, they could not leave the labyrinth like this, because that was not the way Lee Shin wanted to escape this place.

There were three ways to escape this labyrinth. First, it was to find the exit, get there, and then wait for the exit to open. The second option was to keep walking around until they find an open exit. Lastly, the third option was to defeat the monster and find the hearthstone.

There were boss-level monsters in the hidden area of the labyrinth, and if they found them and killed them, you could acquire the hearthstone. Lee Shin did not want a quick escape. He had to make a decent achievement even if that could take him a few more days.

"Huh? There's another forked road in front of us. Where should we... go...? Fletta said that and turned back.

At first, he looked at Alice, but his gaze quickly shifted to Lee Shin.

"Go to the left," said Alice.

She had to be aware of the atmosphere, but she still expressed her opinion as if she knew nothing. Fletta and Mariel, who would have normally followed Alice's instruction right away, waited for Lee Shin to confirm even after hearing her words. When Lee Shin nodded, confirming her instruction, Fletta took a step to the left with a sigh of relief. Alice was annoyed by the atmosphere of the group that had changed, but since she had to get food from Lee Shin for the next day or two, she clenched her teeth and held it in.

Still, since Lee Shin went the way she wanted, there was no need to overthrow the authority in this group yet. As Alice was moving with that thought in mind, Lee Shin had already made all the plans to use her.

'Well, first, I'll go as you wish.'

There was no point in turning around now, so Lee Shin just decided to use her properly.

"Huh? Hey guys?" Fletta tried to get people's attention.

While wandering around the labyrinth for a long time, they encountered a stone statue that blocked their way. It was a statue of a knight who was wearing thick armor and a helmet.

"Wow, it's a knight!" Fletta seemed interested.

"Don't touch it!" Alice shouted.

Surprised by Alice's sudden shout, Fletta turned back just before he was about to touch it. When people looked at her as if they were asking why, Alice told Fletta that he should not touch anything in the labyrinth.

"All right," Fletta replied with disappointment.

"Aren't you overthinking it? Until now, we did not set any trigger off as a result of touching something," Lee Shin said and suddenly reached out and tried to touch the stone statue.

Then, noticing that his hand could not move any further in front of the stone statue, Lee Shin smiled slightly. He knew that it was because of the intangible mana that held his hand immobile.

'Aha.'

Lee Shin's eyes were fixed on the stone statue, so he could not see Alice's facial expression, but he was sure that her face would have stiffened. Maybe she was clenching her teeth because she could not hide her facial expressions well. And Lee Shin was right.

'You son of a bitch!'

Alice cursed inwardly. She did not want to reveal her hand for no reason when she had not yet found out the identity of Lee Shin. However, she had used her psychokinesis power instinctively because of Lee Shin's sudden unexpected behavior. Alice did not see Lee Shin's expression, but she did not think that

Lee Shin, a wizard, would miss seeing this ability. She felt like she was being played by Lee Shin somehow. As this thought struck her, her face went stiff, making it difficult for her to keep a poker face.

"Oh well, I guess it's better to be careful in the labyrinth. Let's just go the other way," said Lee Shin.

However, Lee Shin, who turned around, had the same look as before.

'Did he not notice that?'

It was only for a moment that Alice activated her psychokinesis power. She started thinking that Lee Shin might not have noticed it because she undid it right away.

'Oh well, that kind of a guy might not be able to notice it.'

Alice decided to think that way. However, after turning back from the stone statue, an undead sprang out of the black passage that extended from the shadow of Lee Shin without anyone knowing.

"Ugh... you're so full of yourself! I can see that you're thinking about something else inside," Warrie grumbled and showed discomfort.

Warrie lifted his sword, his red eyes shining.

"I'll feel better if I do something that she said not to," Warrie muttered.

Red lines were carved over the large stone statue, and Warrie's sword swung along those lines in a beautiful arch.

Swoosh! Thud!

The statue's body was cut in half and fell to the floor, creating a loud sound of stones scraping against one another.

"It's always fun to make a mess," Warrie muttered.

* * *

After passing the statue of the knight, and many turns later, the four finally reached the exit—although only Lee Shin and Alice knew about the truth of this route they had taken. Alice had been showing Lee Shin some respect because of her issues with food; but as she reached the end of the labyrinth, she began to reveal her true colors.

"Ugh! I told you not to touch that!" Alice shouted.

"Mariel! The dead bodies of the monsters are flying over here! I told you to be careful!" Alice shouted.

"Why do you keep following me? I've decided on the path; plus, you don't even fight. Is it only about cooking well?" Alice shouted again.

The hostility that had originally been directed only to Lee Shin was extended to Fletta and Mariel. Nevertheless, the foolish Fletta and Mariel were just smitten by her.

"You're making it sound as if you knew the way," Lee Shin said.

Alice did not say anything in response.

She had difficulty answering that, so she ignored his words and just moved forward.

'Why does she have to hide her ability to that extent?'

Whether she was lucky to find one of the escape routes that she memorized, or knew the way because she had a special ability, she did not have to hide her ability as a guide to this extent.

'She has a lot of things to hide.'

Lee Shin did not have to care about that any more, because this companionship would soon be over. As the four turned the corner, at the end of a wide and long straight corridor, they could see an exit to escape this tedious labyrinth. With the thought that they could escape soon, the three people, except Lee Shin, heaved a sigh of relief. And they were about to go forward to escape.

Coo-goo-goo-goong!

Suddenly, the walls of the labyrinth cracked, and knights that looked somewhat familiar walked out from the walls.

"What? What's going on? Why are they here...?" Alice started to panic and glared at the knights with eyes open wide.

It was the statue of a knight that they encountered a while ago. Dozens of knights who looked just like the knight from before were blocking the way out. Unlike Alice, who was nervously biting her nails, Fletta and Mariel were ready to fight.

"Well, that's alright. As long as we get their leader, the rest of them will be a piece of cake to deal with," Alice explained.

"But, who's the boss? They all look the same to me."

"Look at the pattern engraved on the back of their hands. The one with the gold pattern engraved on it is the leader," Alice explained.

Alice revealed the information she had.

'You even know this?'

A map did not tell the challenger all the traps, because the traps were not always the same. It might also have been luck that Alice knew about this, but Lee Shin was convinced that that was not the case.

"Whoa... I see. Alright, I, Fletta, will lead you guys to freedom from this dreadful labyrinth!" Fletta shouted with confidence.

The desire to escape this place was contained in his voice.

'I guess that guy suffered a lot, too.'

Fletta and Mariel had confronted the knights first, and Alice also revealed her skills this time because no matter how good they were, it was not easy to face dozens of knights on their own.

"You fight, too!" Alice ordered.

"I will," Lee Shin replied.

In front was Fletta, who had swift swordsmanship skills, and Mariel, the Elyos. At the back, there was Alice with her psychokinesis and Lee Shin with his flame spell. Although it was the first time they properly cooperated to fight, their synergy was quite good.

"I found him!" Fletta shouted.

Once he had found the knight with the gold pattern, Fletta forced his way past the knights and relentlessly aimed his attacks at that single one. He was able to handle the leader knight because Alice was supporting him at the back with her psychokinesis power.

"Ha..."

"Great job everyone! That was truly amazing! Alice, you're a good fighter too, aren't you?" Mariel asked.

"Ha... this is it. I've gotta get out of this annoying place quickly." Alice ignored Mariel's comment and tried to get past the knights.

Suddenly, another black portal sprang up in front of the exit.

Thud! Thud! Thud!

An undead emerged from a huge portal and revealed its big body. Beltiar walked out, leaking black mana with a greatsword on his shoulder. Following Beltiar, there was May wearing his robe, Warrie whose red eyes were shining, and lastly, Shun who was emitting cold air. There were only four undead, but the aura they exuded was much more powerful than that of the dozen of knights they had encountered previously.

"W-w-what's going on... What the hell is happening?" Alice stuttered and faltered because she was stunned.

Besides, Fletta, who was always confident in encountering the monsters of labyrinth, closed his mouth and clenched his teeth for the first time. On the other hand, Mariel boosted her fighting spirit and mustered her strength.

"You can't go through here." Beltiar stopped the knights.

Thud!

Beltiar showed his resolve by striking the ground with his greatsword. As Alice clenched her teeth with a serious look on her face, Lee Shin smirked behind her.

'You'll panic a little.'