

The Tower 72

Chapter 72: The Eighteenth Floor

[You have entered the 18th floor.]

[Defeat the fallen Pope of the Church.]

Challengers like Lee Shin and Vuela were summoned to the southern part of the city. And despite the appearance of challengers, the city folk remained focused on their jobs as if they had no interest in the challengers.

"Do they really want us to defeat the fallen Pope...? The Pope, as in the one up there?" Vuela looked at the tallest building in the city center.

"Try not to spew nonsense there," Lee Shin warned Vuela.

"Hmm? What do you mean?" Vuela asked Lee Shin with widened eyes.

"If you speak ill of the people from the Church, you will be punished," Lee Shin explained to Vuela.

"Okay, I got it," Vuela replied, nodding.

"Argh!" screamed a man.

The abrupt scream made Lee Shin and Vuela turn their heads toward its origin. There, a few people were harassing a man. The man crouched in a corner and used his arms and legs to protect himself from the assailants' kicks.

"You punk! How dare you insult the priest?"

"You are alive because of the Church's grace!"

"But after the priest visited our house, my younger sister is...!"

The man had seemingly tried to explain, but the kicks interrupted him.

"Shut up! Stop being so loud!"

"You guys are the problem! The priest is innocent!"

Bam! Bam! Bam! Bam!

The man kept pleading his case, but none of the citizens around came to help him.

"You fucking bastards!" Vuela shouted, outraged.

"Wait a minute," Lee Shin said.

Lee Shin stopped Vuela, who was trying to rush out after watching the scene.

"Why are you stopping me!" Vuela shouted at Lee Shin.

"Look at that," said Lee Shin.

Apart from Lee Shin and Vuela, many other challengers were also there. They were also watching the scene unhappily. A group of three challengers pushed the assailants away and stepped up to rescue the man.

"What are you doing?"

"Are you okay?"

"Shouldn't you at least listen to this man before you start beating him up?"

Unexpectedly, the cold stares were now targeting the abused man and the challengers who had helped him. The challengers had naively thought the citizens hadn't helped the man because they were weak.

'W-w-what's going on?'

And that was a mistake. Those challengers had become the city's outcasts by rescuing just one man. The atmosphere around them had changed instantly, and the pressure they felt made it hard for them to breathe.

"What the hell..."

"Hey, hey! What's up with everyone? Why are you all acting like this? Did this person do something terribly wrong?"

At their outcry, one of the citizens glaring at them shouted.

"Skeptics! These naysaying bastards have disturbed the order of our city!"

"They're insulting God!"

"I'm scared! Please hurry up and take them away!"

The citizens' cries grew louder and spread like ink in the water.

"Die!"

"You worthless bastards!"

"Get out of our city! Get lost!"

The sudden outbreak of madness and blind hostility crushed the group's spirit; the mob had defeated them before they could even fight. A female challenger who had been trembling even lost the strength in her legs and collapsed.

Thud! Thud! Thud! Thud!

Heavy footsteps rang in the area as paladins in shining armor approached them.

"Are you the guys who dared to insult the Church?" one of the paladins asked.

"No way! We didn't do such a thing..." one of the challengers said.

The challengers expressed their innocence, but the paladins did not believe them.

"It's them! They insulted the priest!"

"That's right! Please hurry up and take them with you!"

"You blasphemers!"

Vuela tried hard to hide his disgust at the citizens' bizarre and disgusting behavior, as did the other challengers, because he knew he could be next.

"Take these unbelievers away right now!"

If they were challengers who had at least climbed up to the 18th floor, they could have tried to escape from them. Sadly, the challengers could do nothing as the paladins dragged them away.

After the paladins left, everything returned to routine, even the people. It was as if what had happened didn't happen. Seeing this, Vuela was stunned; soon, contempt filled his eyes.

"Hey, shouldn't you be better at hiding that?" said Lee Shin.

"How can you be so calm after what just happened?" Vuela replied.

Lee Shin was so calm because he had already seen similar events too many times. In his previous life, he had shown a similar reaction to Vuela's. And he had suffered a bit consequently.

The challengers who had been escorted away wouldn't be executed immediately, but their execution date had already been decided.

'They could have been acting like that on purpose.'

The woman who had been shaking before was no longer wagging her tail hidden under her clothes.

"Let's get going." Lee Shin suggested.

As Lee Shin and Vuela wandered around the city's southern section, they saw many fanatics here and there. During their journey, Lee Shin found it hard to control Vuela as the latter kept trying to fight the zealots.

"Hoo..." Vuela breathed in and out repeatedly to calm himself down.

Lee Shin and Vuela could see people being dragged away in shackles. Their faces were covered, so Lee Shin and Vuela could not see them properly, but the duo could deduce from their physiques that most were women.

"Hurry up, you guys!" a man, one of the zealots, shouted at them.

The passersby and the bystanders completely ignored the zealots, who treated their fellow citizens like slaves.

"This city is a damn mess. Do we really have to leave them alone like that?" Vuela asked Lee Shin.

"For now, let's secretly follow them." Lee Shin suggested to Vuela.

Lee Shin and Vuela secretly followed them. After a while, they came across a large carriage and a human, both seemingly waiting for the prisoners.

"I guess he is handing them over," said Vuela.

"Where on earth are they going?" Lee Shin muttered.

Then, a man in familiar clothing exited the carriage: The Church priest.

"Did you bring the slaves well?" The priest asked the man leading the prisoners.

"Oh, dear priest! Of course, I did!" the man replied.

The man hurriedly bowed his head and greeted the priest.

"Remove that cloth. I need to check their looks," said the priest arrogantly.

The priest's face was full of greed even before the man lifted the cloth.

"All right, Sir!" the man replied.

The faces of the slaves were revealed; as soon as Vuela saw their faces, his mana got abruptly triggered.

"Wow, these are great! They look very pretty," said the priest.

The slaves had pointed ears and inherent beauty. The slave trader had brought female Elves who hadn't even reached adulthood according to Elven standards. The priest's lecherous gaze made Vuela's sanity fly out of the window.

"You fucking bitch!" Vuela shouted with anger.

Before Lee Shin could even stop him, Vuela had rushed toward the carriage. Vuela pulled a sword from his waist and swung it vigorously, but a paladin appeared from the back of the carriage and blocked it.

Clang—!

Their swords clashed, creating a loud noise. Such events happened occasionally, but the culprit was always weak, so the paladin had assumed his current opponent would be the same. However, the opponent's attack was much stronger than he had expected.

"I'll help you!" the priest said.

The priest unleashed his divine power and empowered the paladin's sword with it. Still, the battle's outcome did not seem to tilt in anyone's favor.

Clang! Clang! Clang!

As Vuela swung his sword wildly, the precision of his strikes faded.

'Vuela is just too emotional.'

Lee Shin watched Vuela fight the paladin while hiding. It was difficult for Vuela to fight. After all, his combat power was now less than half what he normally had because he had the Herman cowl on. Besides, Vuela could not fight rationally because he was boiling with anger. And the cowl would become meaningless if he used his berserker powers.

"Damn it! What the hell is up with this hobo elf!" the priest shouted.

"Keugh! I don't think we can look down on him just because he looks like a beggar!" the paladin shouted as he struggled to fight back.

The priest and the paladin began to sweat more and more. They were panicking because Vuela's ability didn't match his appearance. He was swinging his sword frantically, but the swordsmanship even in that was far beyond the paladin's comprehension.

"You're holding up pretty well!" said Vuela.

Vuela swung his mana-imbued sword like a berserker. And in response to the ominous flow of mana, the paladin also boosted his divine power accordingly.

"Watch out!" the paladin shouted.

"Where did that crazy guy come from suddenly?" the priest muttered.

Vuela's wildly fluctuating mana gathered in his sword.

"Wave Cutting Sword," Vuela called out.

A sword strike, seemingly capable of tearing through anything, flew toward the paladin. The paladin, who had gathered all of his divine power, manifested it simultaneously. The golden shield and Vuela's skill clashed, producing a violent cracking sound.

"Hahaha! Die!" Vuela shouted.

Vuela sounded like a villain as he gathered mana again.

"Keugh!" Vuela gasped abruptly.

There was mana reflux; consequently, his flow of mana disappeared instantly.

"Keuuahhh!" Vuela groaned in pain.

The priest and the paladin were puzzled as they watched Vuela suddenly scream in agony. After looking at Vuela, the two nodded, looking at each other.

"We need to call for backup," said the paladin.

"You will pay for this, you son of a bitch!" the priest shouted.

The priest and the paladin quickly jumped into the carriage and disappeared from the scene. However, Vuela could not afford to chase after them because he was already struggling to control the mana reflux.

"Ha... ha..." Vuela was out of breath.

Drenched in sweat, Vuela cursed as he saw the system messages appearing in the space above him. Thanks to the Herman cowl, he became stronger in real-time. But the suit was also why he couldn't chase after them. Vuela did not know whether he should be glad or angry about this.

At that moment, the young Elves approached Vuela and thanked him.

"Thank you so much."

"Sob!? I thought I was going to die like this..."

"Thank you so much!"

Vuela had acted impulsively because seeing these young Elves had reminded him of the children of his tribe. However, he felt proud when he received the young Elves' gratitude. Although he had let the priest and the paladin slip away, he had at least rescued these young Elves, so he thought that was enough.

"Tsk, what are you so proud of? You couldn't even catch any of those guys," Lee Shin said to Vuela.

"If not for this cowl, I could have easily defeated them even with my eyes closed!" Vuela shouted at Lee Shin.

"What do you mean! You should have won even if you wore this cowl," Lee Shin said.

"That's because I made a mistake..." Vuela muttered.

"Making mistakes is also part of your skill. Anyway, what are you going to do with these guys?"

"What do you mean? Well, if we hide them somewhere—" Vuela could not finish his sentence because Lee Shin cut him off.

"Think before you speak. Where will you hide them so that they aren't caught again?" Lee Shin had a good point.

As if he had not thought of that, Vuela became lost, trying to devise a good plan. While Vuela was busy thinking, someone approached them from the back. A woman with an ordinary appearance looked at the Elves with a stiff face.

"It seems like these Elves have not been touched yet," the woman said.

"Who are you?" Vuela said coldly.

In the very next second, a sword—wielded by Vuela—appeared next to the woman's neck.

"Let's just say the Church and I aren't on the best of terms. I can hide these Elves for you," the woman said.

"Umm, how can I trust you?" Lee Shin also spoke coldly to the woman.

The woman looked at Lee Shin after hearing his cold voice.

"Isn't your nickname 'He Who Knows Death' and 'Death Ruler?' Isn't that you?" the woman looked at Lee Shin and asked.

"..." Lee Shin remained quiet.

"I've heard rumors about you. Your name is Lee Shin, a wizard and necromancer who carries a silver wand and a pure white sword." The woman told Lee Shin what she knew about him.

"Yes, that's right. You seem to know it well. But you failed to learn that I don't like people looking into my life," Lee Shin explained.

Lee Shin's black mana slowly moved toward the woman, pressuring her. Lee Shin used his murderous intent to show the woman that he could easily kill her. It seemed like the woman did not have great combat ability because she did not fight back. She turned pale right away and glared at Lee Shin.

"My master wants to talk to you!" the woman shouted.

When Lee Shin heard that, he dispersed his mana. He never intended to kill this woman in the first place. Lee Shin had acted so because he did not want to be seen as easy.

"Ha... ha..." The woman seemed to be out of her breath.

"All right, where's your master?" Lee Shin asked.

"You can just follow me," the woman said to Lee Shin.

"All right, but I have something to do before doing that," Lee Shin said.

Lee Shin's widely spread mana wave had detected a big group of people. He quickly got ready for a fight after sensing them.

"Well, we must first deal with the consequences of our actions. Don't you think so, Vuela?" Lee Shin asked Vuela.

"Yeah, that's right," Vuela replied.

"No way... Are you two going to fight with the Church's paladins? You can't do that! It won't be just one or two paladins! They have a lot of knights."

The woman desperately tried to stop Lee Shin because she thought it foolish to go against the paladins. Even if Lee Shin and Vuela could defeat the approaching paladins, more paladins would just show up in the next wave. And then there would be more and more waves of enemies. In that sense, they would eventually have to confront the entire Church.

"Don't worry. You just need to hide these Elves in a safe place," Lee Shin said.

"Yeah, that's right. Besides, I kind of went easy on them earlier. If I can show my true abilities, I can even beat ten of those paladins!" Vuela shouted with confidence.

Lee Shin and Vuela were truly thinking of confronting the paladins and the priests. The woman wanted to stop them from doing that, but the woman failed to reason with those two stubborn creatures.

"Wait. You let the paladin and the priest go on purpose, didn't you? You wanted to make them return to find you guys, no?" the woman asked Lee Shin and Vuela.

The woman felt conflicted. It seemed like she had finally understood Lee Shin's true character. Lee Shin was exposing himself to danger to prevent others from getting harmed.

She had mixed feelings, wondering if she had really understood the true nature of the wizard named Lee Shin.

'I should have made contact earlier.'?the woman thought.

Since her misjudgment caused such a repercussion, the woman could say nothing even if her master decided to reprimand her.

"It might also be a good idea to show you my abilities before we meet your master. Watch closely and see how weak the Church's paladins are," Lee Shin said, preparing to fight.