

The Tower 92

Chapter 92: The Captive

Kanoko mulled over the absurd situation and clenched her teeth. As soon as the Korean challengers set foot on the content of Isocia, their presence was picked up by her Mana Detection. They were almost two hundred meters away.

As Kanoko started to run away based on her instant judgment, the distance quickly increased to nearly five hundred meters. Even if Lee Shin had spread out his mana as soon as he arrived, he would have needed to cover a distance of nearly three hundred meters to find Kanoko and Kohei. Besides, for every moment that passed, Lee Shin had to activate his detection for a much wider range to find them.

‘Does this even make sense?’

Even though Lee Shin had not yet appeared, Kanoko was convinced that the lightning came from Lee Shin.

‘It's too early to give up right now.’

Kanoko thought that this incident could become a chance to turn the situation around. Kanoko had always wanted to meet Lee Shin at least once, no matter what.

Gulp—

In front of the burning tree that was struck by lightning, the two of them gulped. Even though they had not run very far, they were out of breath and very nervous at the same time.

‘Damn it... Why am I...’

Kohei clenched his fists, in disbelief that he was afraid of an enemy that he had not even faced yet. The rustling of leaves could be heard, accompanied by the sound of footsteps growing louder, which made their bodies tense up.

‘They are coming.’

A silhouette slowly emerged into their field of vision—someone with keen eyes and purple hair, exuding an inexplicable aura that made the two uneasy.

‘You sure he is... a challenger without any Pattern?’

‘Guess what, it was a baseless rumor, and a very wrong one.’

In that short amount of time, the two already knew that it was impossible to win against Lee Shin. It was easy for them to tell that their classes were vastly different from Lee Shin’s.

"I was wondering what you would be... because you were running away all of the sudden. But... I guess you were just agents who infiltrated the homeland," Lee Shin said in a cold voice.

Hearing Lee Shin’s cold voice, the two gulped once again. Kanoko, who had noticed the flow of mana in Lee Shin’s palm, was startled and quickly signaled with both hands that she had no intention of fighting.

"Wait a second! My name is Miura Kanoko!" Kanoko shouted.

“...” Lee Shin remained speechless.

"Huh? What are you doing?" Kohei could not understand what Kanoko was doing.

When Kanoko poked Kohei with her elbow, he too, hurriedly introduced herself.

"I'm Tadashi Kohei," Kohei introduced himself.

"So, you guys are from Japan?" Lee Shin muttered.

"No, wait! Could you please listen to me for a moment?" Kanako asked desperately.

Kanako had a strong feeling that she had to bring Lee Shin to her side, especially now that she had faced him directly.

"Are you... Lee Shin?" Kanako asked, looking at Lee Shin.

Judging by the ability that this person had just demonstrated, he could not be anyone other than Lee Shin.

'I heard that Lee Shin carries the Martyr and a silver wand.'

This person who was standing in front of Kanako did have a sword around his waist, but since it was in its sheath, she could not confirm that the sword was Martyr. Besides, there was no sign of a wand.

"Well, what if I am?" Lee Shin asked coldly, looking at Kanako.

"Japan wants to have a friendly relationship with you, Lee Shin, rather than an antagonistic one," Kanako explained.

"Says the ones who closed off Isocia and attacked Merteng?" Lee Shin asked.

"It's a misunderstanding! Japan did not participate in the attack on Merteng," said Kanako.

"...Then which country did it?" Lee Shin asked, looking at Kanako.

It was not supposed to be known to people outside that Merteng was being isolated by other countries.

However, there were always variables, and the situation became more complicated due to the betrayal of those who left Merteng, who had known the secret. Even so, Kanako thought that there would be no

change in the overall situation for now. It was still her priority to get through to the person in front of her.

"Well, if you join forces with our country th—" Kanako could not even finish her sentence.

"I think you are mistaken here," Lee Shin muttered.

Lee Shin's eyes, which had turned cold, looked at Kanako. Lee Shin twisted his lips and gave an incredulous expression. He reached out his hand, grabbing the air.

"Argh!" Kanako gasped in pain.

Kanako was caught at the neck by Lee Shin's psychokinesis. She gasped for breath as she hung in the air.

"You bastard!" Kohei exclaimed, drawing his sword in anger.

Kohei, who could not stand watching Kanako in pain, tried to attack Lee Shin. Kanako tried to stop Kohei, but since the psychokinesis held her body captive, Kanako was unable to move.

"N— Don't— Ugh!" Kanako gasped.

Kanako opened her eyes wide, realizing that Lee Shin had intentionally restrained her from provoking Kohei.

[Sword Drawing]

Kohei swung his sharp sword through the air, revealing the sword energy to Lee Shin. At the same time, Kanako activated her mana and broke free from Lee Shin's psychokinesis, pulling a blue capsule out of her pocket.

'It's do or die now.'

Based on Lee Shin's attitude, Kanako knew that it seemed impossible to leave this place without a fight. She decided to take a step back in order to advance later. Therefore, she threw an [Anti-Mana Bomb] at Lee Shin, hoping to freeze his mana and make a quick escape.

Kanako thought that she would be able to escape faster from Lee Shin if she could freeze his mana.

Woong—

The Anti-Mana Bomb began to fly slowly toward Lee Shin. Lee Shin formed a shield with one hand to block Kohei's Sword Drawing, while extending his other hand with mana to the Anti-Mana Bomb to neutralize it.

There were only one or two seconds left, until the bomb exploded. However, for Lee Shin, who had moved a step closer to the class of transcendence, it was enough time.

Mana particles expanded in an instant, freezing the mana in the air and stopping the flow of mana within the body. The complexity of how the mana moved within this skill was beyond description. However, Lee Shin was able to detect an even greater flow of mana.

Compared to the first heart of Abaim Monstre, this was a level that was easy for Lee Shin. Mana energy was moving at a rapid pace along the circuitry that was intricately intertwined inside.

[Hextech Lv. 1]

The Hextech skill that Lee Shin had obtained on the 5th floor had helped him get through these processes. For the Anti-Mana Bomb, Lee Shin had to sever dozens of strands of mana at once for the energy to lose its strength and dissipate. The control of high-density particles was Lee Shin's expertise, so he dug in persistently and severed those strands.

Woong— Chop!

Hissing like the sound of a gust of wind, the Anti-Mana Bomb lost its light and dropped to the ground.

[You have acquired 『Skill - Hextech Lv. 2』 .]

“Wait a second... Something is not right,” muttered Kohei.

Kohei, who was about to put away his sword thinking about the mana that was soon to be frozen, stopped. As he looked at Kanoko with a puzzled look, he noticed that her eyes were wavering.

"Tsk." Lee Shin clicked his tongue. Lee Shin pressed down on the two with his psychokinesis.

"Ugh!" Kanako and Kohei gasped in pain.

Thump—

As if the failure of the Anti-Mana Bomb had lowered their morale, the two immediately fell to their knees in front of Lee Shin.

"Is it possible for the Anti-Mana Bomb to fail...?" Despite knowing the apparent answer, Kanako had to ask.

As Kanako spoke, she quickly realized the reality of the situation and shook her head.

"Ah, nevermind... You won't let us go free, right?" Kanako asked.

Kanako had given up on escaping from Lee Shin and relaxed her tense body before she asked. Having given up, Kanako could more easily ask Lee Shin some questions.

"You're giving up already?" Lee Shin asked with a smirk.

"What else can I do? Didn't you just neutralize the Anti-Mana Bomb? I mean, how can you neutralize that in one or two seconds while it was flying? Does that even make sense? I've never heard of any instances..." Kanako said.

"Stop it," Kohei said.

Kohei, who was sighing beside her, stopped Kanako. Kanako was usually cold-hearted, but she sometimes spoke recklessly when she got emotional. Kohei knew that it would not be good to provoke Lee Shin, so he could not understand why Kanako was acting that way.

Kohei thought that he needed to step in to clear up the situation.

"We'll give you everything we have. Please, please spare our lives," said Kohei, looking at Lee Shin.

"But, I could still get everything of yours if I were to kill you, no?" Lee Shin asked.

"We'll also tell you everything we know," said Kohei.

"How can I believe you?" Lee Shin asked.

"I can prove it. I know several of WOFB's current plans," said Kohei.

"Kohei!" Kanako shouted urgently.

The desperate Kanako shouted, not expecting him to reveal all the cards like this.

"Okay then... For now, we'll go together," said Lee Shin.

With a snap of his finger, Lee Shin's shadow extended, and Warrie and May appeared beside him.

"Take all their belongings and tie them up." Lee Shin ordered.

"Yes sir," May replied.

"Got it," said Warrie.

Warrie swaggered toward Kohei like a gangster and crouched down, extending his hand out toward him.

"If you don't want to get hurt, hand over everything you have," said Warrie.

"What?" Kohei said.

Feeling irritated at the idea of being taunted by someone as insignificant as a Skeleton, Kohei glared at Warrie without handing him anything.

"Ha... this little punk," Warrie muttered.

Warrie glared at Kohei with his squinty eyes and pushed his skull against Kohei's head.

Clank!

However, instead of giving in, Kohei pushed back even harder, exerting more force with his head. Suddenly, it was a fight between the two to protect their pride.

Their heads were pushing against each other until they groaned in pain, but they finally stepped back after getting hit by May's wand.

"You bastards with only shit in your heads... Aren't you going to hurry?" May demanded.

As Warrie gritted his teeth, glancing at Lee Shin, he snatched Kohei's bag and pulled out handcuffs to tie them up.

"Hehehe! Stay still!" Warrie yelled at Kohei.

"Grr!" Kohei tried to resist against Warrie, who enjoyed restraining him.

May and Kanako watched them and shook their heads.

The challengers waiting for Lee Shin, who suddenly disappeared, looked puzzled seeing Lee Shin come back with Kohei and Kanako.

"Mr. Lee Shin, who are those people?" Merteng's knight, who was waiting with the challengers, asked Lee Shin.

"These are Lantan's spies," Lee Shin replied.

"We're not spies—" Kohei tried to explain, but he could not.

"Shut up," said Lee Shin.

The knight looked at them with a sharp gaze.

"Are you saying you captured these two alone? These people have blue Patterns though," said the knight, looking puzzled.

Lee Shin laughed awkwardly as the knight looked at Lee Shin incredulously.

"So, these are the challengers from Japan," said Hwang Il-Han.

Hwang Il-Han shot a curious look at the two of them. It was a hopeful gaze, that they might know more about the current situation in Isocia.

"Are you going to do some sort of torture now? Because that's what we do to prisoners and..." Hwang Il-Han started to speak, but as he felt the cold glares from the two, he paused and shut his mouth.

'I was just asking...'

"Well, we'll have to see," Lee Shin replied.

"What do you mean by you'll see! We said we would tell you everything!" Kanako shouted.

Kanako shouted in defiance at the word "torture," but it was no use.

"It's human nature to reveal one's true self when faced with death," said Lee Shin.

"You can reveal your true self even if it's not just before you die," said Kanako.

"That's for me to judge," said Lee Shin.

As they exchanged useless remarks, everyone headed toward Merteng.

A black mist had blocked their path, and only a certain area was covered, making the Demon Realm seem unreal. The challengers gulped at the creepiness that emanated from the Demon Realm, which they were facing for the first time.

"This is a False Demon Realm."

The Demon Realm that was in front of them was a fake one. The term False Demon Realm referred to a Demon Realm that disappeared when its nucleus was destroyed.

"Well, you guys are lucky that the False Demon Realm appeared at this time," Kanako muttered as if she was annoyed.

"Why are you making that face? Isn't it a bad sign if the Demon Realm appears?" May asked, as he heard her muttering.

"Well, if you penetrate the False Demon Realm, you can acquire the Pattern right away. Your master is already strong, but how much stronger would he become if he could acquire the Pattern right away?" said Kanako.

"Our master is already strong enough without that Pattern," said May.

"Tsk. I know that much!" Kanako said.

As someone who had faced Lee Shin directly, Kanako sensed that if Lee Shin were to receive the Pattern, there would be no way for her to defeat him.

Thump thump thump thump—

They had no time to stop, but kept walking. The path inside the Demon Realm was difficult to navigate because it was covered in black fog. The challengers had to move cautiously because they could not tell when a demon might jump out and attack them.

Bang! Crack! Thud!

However, the demons lurking in the Demon Realm died on the spot, unable to even approach Lee Shin.

"This is... insane..." Kanako muttered.

Was this really the power of a challenger who had just set foot on this continent? Kanoko and Kohei watched the scene in astonishment, their jaws hanging open. The other challengers simply followed Lee Shin, not doing anything else.

At best, the other challengers could only deal with the ambush of the demonic beasts that occurred after Lee Shin had passed by. The knights who accompanied the challengers to safely escort them to Merteng were no different.

‘These people seem to be quite good too...’

One could tell the level of skill just by watching the challengers fight against the demonic beast. Feeling the increase in the average power of Korean challengers, Kanoko’s face had hardened.

"Krooo!" Keros roared.

Keros appeared, howling. He was a demonic beast with two heads and guarded the Nucleus of the Demon Realm. For ordinary challengers, he was different from other demonic beasts; but for Lee Shin, he was as easy to handle as all the others.

Swoosh—!

Thump!

Warrie, who had cut off Keros's head in an instant, sharpened his sword and returned to Kohei’s side.

‘Did he just do that in one strike?’

Kohei started to laugh as he watched the scene. He could also have cut off Keros's head with one strike. However, that Skeleton had no Pattern, and he was just one of Lee Shin’s summoned creatures. Of course, Warrie could have been the stronger subordinate among the rest, but Kohei could not help feeling helpless.

‘Am I only at the same level as one of Lee Shin’s summoned creatures?’

While Kohei fell into sudden distress, Lee Shin destroyed the Nucleus of the Demon Realm that was in front of his eyes.

[The Nucleus of the Demon Realm has been destroyed.]

[The Demon Realm in some areas has disappeared.]

[Your merit points are being calculated.]

[The top two challengers will obtain the 『Red Pattern』.]

First. Lee Shin - 5,400 points.

Second. Park Tae-Yoon - 380 points.

[You have acquired the 『Red Pattern』.]

[Red Pattern]

You have received a qualification to go to the next stage.

The Health Point and Mana increases by 3%.

The overall stats increase by 5%.

The Red Pattern was engraved on the back of Lee Shin's hand. This Pattern, which increased the stats, gave Lee Shin a higher efficiency than any of the abilities he had gained before.

‘Nice.’

As Lee Shin let out a short exclamation while looking at the Pattern on the back of his hand, a cry of joy was heard from behind him.

"Wow! It's a Pattern! I got a Pattern!" Park Tae-Yoon shouted in joy.

Park Tae-Yoon had only killed a few demonic beasts that were approaching, but he had gotten second place and acquired the Pattern.

The challengers looked at him enviously, and Lee Shin chuckled and started moving again. The challengers, including Lee Shin, walked toward the giant Citadel City that could be seen in the distance.