

Ark Vol 21 C 6

Chapter 6

ACT 6 Catch Alan!

‘That Alan, he dared appear out of nowhere? Okay. Then it is war!’

Hyun-woo exited the unit. Then he called Ho Myung-hwan for a meeting and explained the situation in detail. Ho Myung-hwan’s eyes widened.

“Alan?”

Are you talking about Holy Knight Alan?”

“Yes, that Alan.”

Hyun-woo nodded with a serious face.

“I confirmed it with my own eyes. The one controlling the creatures in the Sinus Principality is Alan. The fact that he is controlling the obelisk created monsters must mean that Alan is using a black code item to make trouble or he is closely related to it.”

“Alan.....!”

Ho Myung-hwan muttered the name with a groan. He took out a cigarette and considered something before talking again.

“It that is true then good job. In fact, other special management targets like Ark-nim who are investigating also mentioned that they saw a user controlling the monsters. But they couldn’t confirm the ID or appearance so it wasn’t helpful.”

It was that part that pained Global Exos. Like Ho Myung-hwan said, Global Exos had commissioned the candidates to investigate this incident. The candidates participated in the Schudenberg and Bristania expeditions and reported in from time to time. They saw the user controlling the monsters many times. But that was all they knew. A user seemed to be controlling the monsters.....Just like when Hyun-woo's Eyes of the Cat didn't work, Alan's information couldn't be confirmed.

'Other users could use a thief's skill like 'Penetration' or a scroll to check the opponent's information. Alan might be using a skill like Shambala's 'Camouflage' to hide his information window. The Red Man might also be hiding his information window. When I first met the Red Man, I couldn't confirm his information so I thought there was at least a 100 level difference between us.....'

Hyun-woo couldn't imagine that Alan or the Dark Elf was more than 100 levels higher than him. All three of them must be using a skill or an undisclosed item to conceal their information. Hyun-woo guessed that the undisclosed item might be a black code item.

'Alan and the Dark Elf are hiding their true identities for a reason.'

They knew they were doing something dangerous so they hid their identities. Despite that, Alan still intentionally lifted his helmet in front of Hyun-woo. Alan's skills and abilities were different so Hyun-woo wouldn't have known it was him if he hadn't revealed his face. It was all to get revenge on Hyun-woo.

'You fool. That is your mistake.'

It was unnecessary to say again but Global Exos was doing everything possible to solve this situation carefully. It had to be carefully handled to avoid a huge loss. He had a clue on how to handle Alan from that. Alan was still a Global Exos candidate. They could figure out Alan's details with just the press of one button.

"What will happen to Alan now?"

"I can't say. It is unclear where he is a key conspirator or is simply assisting others. But if he is a principle offender then he can't be let off easily. He will be punished."

“What kind of punishment.....?”

Hyun-woo asked in a sly voice. Ho Myung-hwan scratched his head and replied.

“Let’s see.... I don’t know the details either. As I said before, if the user obtained the item in a normal way in the game then it will be difficult to impose legal sanctions on them. But when considering the damages received this time, headquarters can’t just leave it alone. If he is at least a co-conspirator then it will be severe enough to seize his accounts.”

“I see.”

Hyun-woo replied calmly but inwardly he was singing with delight. It was the reason Hyun-woo had disconnected while in the underground base and contacted Global Exos. Hyun-woo had no interest in the legal consequences. The important thing was that Global Exos knew that Alan was complicit in this incident. Once again, Global Exos could settle it within 1 minute. But they couldn’t because they didn’t have the required information. Now they had the information about Alan. Naturally Global Exos could determine all the details about Alan. They could isolate him in solitary confinement and interrogate him or other methods.

‘No matter what they do Alan won’t be able to play the game.’

That was Hyun-woo’s aim. If Alan couldn’t play anymore then he would disappear from the game. And Alan was controlling the demonic monsters in Pabiun Canyon. They would go away and ordinary monsters would appear in the canyon again. Even if they only had 120 people, the elite troops could kill those monsters. In other words, it was a strategy to capture Alan in real life. And the operation was a great success! Global Exos would quickly carry out an operation to capture Alan. What happened to Alan after that was no concern to Hyun-woo. However, Hyun-woo made a regretful expression and said.

“Alan is a user that I am acquaintances with. I don’t know what kind of situation he is in but I feel slightly uncomfortable at the thought of having Alan’s account seized.”

“Don’t say that.”

Ho Myung-hwan said.

"You know this already but hundreds of thousands of users are suffering from this incident. Global Exos used the excuse of an event but there are still a few users accusing us. It isn't a simple problem anymore."

"I still don't feel entirely comfortable. Can you contact me after you decide what action you will take against Alan?"

"Of course, I'll contact you right away."

"Then I'll go now."

Hyun-woo finished and returned home. He brought his telephone in front of the unit and waited for someone to contact him. He wanted to receive the notification that Alan was caught and then connect to the game immediately.

'Judging by Ho Myung-hwan's words, he should be taking action against Alan quite carefully.....'

Global Exos was suffering an enormous loss from this event. Even if they were legally faultless, a big business like Global Exos wouldn't receive that kind of damage easily. As a big business, Global Exos would definitely do something to punish Alan. Global Exos was unaware of any other users except Alan thanks to Hyun-woo's information. His actions in New World was like terrorism. If Alan was the primary offender who brought suffering to millions of people in New World then he would be punished in reality.

.....The probability was really high when looking at the present situation.

'Although it is a little intense..... If he is the principal offender then he will be caught. And there is no way for him to appear in front of me anymore. Huhuhu, Alan. I'm sorry but the fight between us can't be concluded. Because I'll never see you in New World anymore.'

Hyun-woo laughed inside the dark room as he imagined it. However, after 1 hour, 2 hours.....he felt something was strange when 5 hours passed.

'What the? Didn't Global Exos lose hundreds of millions of won from this situation? They should move immediately after receiving a clue. But why haven't they contacted me yet?'

He started to feel more and more anxious.

Diririri, diririri.

Hyun-woo finally heard the phone ringing and he picked up the receiver.

"It is Ho Myung-hwan."

"I've been waiting for your call. What happened?"

"Ah, well....."

He could easily hear Ho Myung-hwan's sigh over the phone. His misgivings was starting to turn into a reality.

"What's wrong?"

"Actually, I handed over the information to the Security Department the moment Ark-nim left. The Security Department immediately found Alan's registered address and visited him. However Alan wasn't home."

"He's not playing the game at home?"

"I heard that Alan had already departed overseas one month ago."

"O-overseas? Then Alan in the game.....?"

“It seems that he is accessing it from overseas.”

Hyun-woo made a stupid expression at Ho Myung-hwan's answer. It had been 10 days since Alan attacked and the White Tiger clan took refuge in the underground base. Alan had been playing the game from 10 days ago. In other words, Alan didn't go overseas for sightseeing. Moreover, this event started a fortnight ago. Yet he already left for overseas a month ago. Didn't that mean he had expected this?

“It is clear that Alan isn't a simple participant.”

Ho Myung-hwan had the same thought as Hyun-woo. If Alan left that early then he had clearly been a part of the planning stage!

‘But why?’

Hyun-woo couldn't understand Alan's intentions. Hyun-woo was certain that Alan was one of the primary offenders in this incident. It was a state he couldn't recover from. Yet.....

‘Alan is a smart guy. He should know how serious this incident is. No, he must know which is why he escaped overseas to play the game. It means he would have no troubles playing the game. But what will happen after that?’

Hyun-woo couldn't understand. This situation wasn't a simple joke. Global Exos had already received tens of billions of won worth of losses. It was possible they could sue Alan and there would be a huge scandal. Alan had planned this a month ago so it was impossible for him not to predict the reactions. Yet he still escaped abroad to play the game. Therefore he could continue playing even if his identity was recovered.

‘Isn't it a problem if his identity was noticed in the game? Wouldn't it make the issue larger? What on earth? What is he thinking? Is he trying to strike against Global Exos?’

Hyun-woo thought Alan was involved because he wanted to get revenge on Hyun-woo. But he couldn't think the situation was that simple anymore. Of course, he might've started with that intention. But did he really have to cause such a large incident to get revenge on Hyun-woo?

‘Even a bullet in the head is more likely.’

If his purpose was mere revenge than Alan would’ve approached Hyun-woo earlier. But Alan didn’t move. He only coincidentally encountered Hyun-woo when he was going to capture Shangri-La.

‘Alan has a purpose other than revenge. He is involved in a big problem that has something to do with New World. This incident might not be as simple as I thought. What’s the? What is Alan trying to do that is worth the cost?’

The more Hyun-woo contemplated it, the more complicated his thoughts became. In the end Hyun-woo shook his head and asked.

“What now?”

“Anyway, Alan escaping overseas means that he is one of the ringleaders of this incident. He is clearly trying to endanger and cause confusion in New World. We have no jurisdiction overseas but we will continue chasing Alan.”

“Then there is no way to stop Alan at the moment.”

Hyun-woo muttered in a disappointed voice.

“That’s right.....”

Ho Myung-hwan thought for a moment before speaking again.

“We are utilizing all possible methods to catch him.”

He didn’t show it but Ho Myung-hwan was also deeply concerned. The current situation was many more times complicated than Ho Myung-hwan had told Hyun-woo. Ho Myung-hwan used the term ‘visit’ but it was more like a ‘raid’ on Alan’s home by the Security Department. Global Exos thought that this event

was because someone was trying to get their hands on the master code. And the master code had the destructive power to take down New World and Global Exos. The company was at stake so how could they knock and visit politely? But Alan had already escaped overseas. Therefore Global Exos was at a complete loss.

“It is certain that Alan is aiming for the master code. He probably thinks that if he gets the master code then he can negotiate his way out of this situation!”

It was natural to think like that. They had to stop Alan no matter what, even if they had to hire assassins. They concentrated all their power on finding Alan’s location but it wasn’t that easy. Therefore Global Exos became increasingly restless.

“If only we could connect to the main system.....”

If it was a normal online game then it would be simple to determine where the users are connecting from. Of course it was illegal to check the personal information but the company was willing to break the law in such a situation. However, currently Global Exos couldn’t use such an easy method. The game designer Park Woo-seong had put locks all over the main system. The only way to crack it was with the master code! And the master code was guarded by high walls.

“Is there a way to find Alan’s location?”

The Security Department thought frantically.

“Do you know where Alan went?”

Someone in the Planning Department asked.

“I just know that he left for Hong Kong.”

“Hong Kong..... Is there a more accurate position?”

“Not at the moment.....”

“Hmm, then it won’t be easy.”

“What do you mean?”

“Please wait a moment. Ah, here it is.”

Kim Gwon-tae typed on the keyboard for a while before pointing to the monitor.

“There have been 30,000 New World units sold in Hong Kong. When considering Alan’s personality and removing the game arcades, that is 20,000 units.”

“You want us to go around and check every house where we sold the 20,000 units?”

“No.”

Kim Gwon-tae smiled and shook his head.

“Currently we can’t access the main system because of Park Woo-seong’s locks. However, the middle circuit connecting to the system is unaffected.”

“Middle circuit?”

“Yes, think of it simply as a telephone and a telephone wire.”

Kim Gwon-tae indicated the telephone in the corner of the Planning Department and explained.

“Let’s pretend that New World’s main system is a telephone. That telephone is placed inside an iron case and we have no way to access it. But if we hack the phone wire then we can get the information.”

“T-that is possible?”

“It’s hard to explain the technical parts but it is possible. Of course, New World isn’t a telephone so it won’t be easy hacking the connected circuits. It would be impossible to find Alan if he was playing in Korea. But Hong Kong only has 20,000 personal units. Including the game rooms it is 30,000. If I search the connections related to Hong Kong then it might be possible to find Alan.”

Kim Gwon-tae looked at the monitor and smiled.

“When playing an online game like New World, all the information moves through the circuits connecting to the main system. It means that once I find the Alan’s connection, I can use the circuit to keep track of what Alan is doing and anyone he makes contact with in the game. In other words, we can grasp everything related to this incident.”

“Tell me what you need.”

Ha Myung-woo said. Kim Gwon-tae tapped the monitor and said.

“100 competent hackers and a 100 terabytes computer.”

“Begin immediately.”

From then on, the Planning Department started to attack Hong Kong’s connection server. Ho Myung-hwan had been so busy considering these preparations that he had contacted Hyun-woo late. But there were two reasons why Ho Myung-hwan couldn’t explain this to Hyun-woo. The first reason was that Hong Kong’s servers belonged to Global Exos but hacking was still illegal. The second reason was he would have to explain that they lost control of New World’s main system to explain the hacking.

“We are doing our best so Ark-nim should also continue watching carefully.”

“I understand. Please contact me if you make any progress.”

Hyun-woo sighed and hung up. Anyway, Global Exos was busy with their own preparations after hearing Hyun-woo's information. But that didn't solve Hyun-woo's problem. Whether this problem was resolved or not didn't matter to Hyun-woo. Hyun-woo had only told Global Exos about Alan because he wanted to stop Alan from playing the game for a few days. But wasn't it all in vain?

'What now.....?'

Hyun-woo couldn't take one step out of the underground base. And the remaining time left was only one day.

'I can complete the and quests at any time but.....'

The only had one day left. If he didn't succeed in one day then the Bristania expedition would reach Silrinad first. Haverstein would be replaced and Hyun-woo would lose the exclusive trade contract.

'It is difficult to exit the canyon thanks to Alan. The group will be completely wiped out by Alan and the monsters. Damn! It is more like I'm trapped in the underground base than hiding there.'

Hyun-woo grabbed his head and sighed.

'Wait? Trapped? I'm stuck there? Then..... That's right, there is a way!'

He suddenly came up with an idea.

"There is no time left. I have no choice but to try it!"