

## **Blackfield 211**

### Chapter 211.1: My Kind of Country (1)

The entrance to the office was, as expected, secured with a system that required either a card or a fingerprint. There were two CCTV cameras at the entrance to the basement and the office as well, making it seem as if the Samseong-Dong office's security system had been directly transferred to the building.

*Click.*

The door opened when Woo Hee-Seung pressed the card against the reader. Kang Chan couldn't help but chuckle in disbelief at what greeted him. The middle of the grey-carpeted office was completely empty. Through the window on the left side were meeting rooms, reception areas, and a home bar with a coffee machine and various beverages. To the right were three lonely desks.

"Come this way," Seok Kang-Ho greeted Kang Chan and guided him to the right side. Compared to what was visible from the outside, its interior was much more spacious.

The two stopped in front of another door that had to be opened by a card. Beyond it was another completely isolated area with a personal office and exercise room. On the opposite side of it were bathrooms and resting lounges.

"This is your room, Captain. I'll be using the one right next to it, and Hee-Seung and the others will be using this room and the desks outside. I think we need a female employee, but I haven't hired one yet because I thought I should discuss it with you first," Seok Kang-Ho explained, describing the layout like a skilled real estate agent.

"There's also a way to get to your room from the entrance, so you don't have to go through the central area if you don't want to. If we have to, we can prepare partitions so we can divide it into separate spaces. Now, why don't we go have some coffee?"

They headed back to the open space.

"What would you like to drink?" Seok Kang-Ho asked.

"Do you have instant coffee?" Kang Chan asked.

"Phuhuhu," Seok Kang-Ho laughed as he brought out the coffee. Woo Hee-Seung and Lee Doo-Hee made themselves comfortable at the desks. With cups of coffee ready in his hands, he carefully pointed at the ceiling with his finger.

"Look over there."

It looked as if they had fitted this office with the device that sucked in air like a tornado in the Samseong-Dong office too.

"I'm just glad we don't have to worry about the people around us when we have things to talk about now," Seok Kang-Ho remarked.

Kang Chan stood next to the sofa and looked outside the window, finding buildings densely packed in the distance and the wide road filled with cars.

“What about the security?” he asked.

“That window’s made of bulletproof glass that also prevents anyone outside from seeing through it. Manager Kim provided us with it,” Seok Kang-Ho answered.

Kang Chan slowly looked around again. From what he could see, there weren’t any suitable locations within their vicinity for snipers to attack them from.

“Manager Kim said we need at least five guards if we want to be completely safe. If it’s all right, I was thinking of discussing this with Director Kim Tae-Jin. I would like to hire their employees and have their security system implemented in the building. I haven’t done it yet since I was hoping to discuss it with you first,” Seok Kang-Ho said.

Kang Chan glanced over at him.

“What is it?” Seok Kang-Ho asked.

“You suddenly got smarter,” Kang Chan replied out of curiosity.

“Phuhuhu

,” Seok Kang-Ho chuckled as he stood next to Kang Chan. He sounded proud of himself.

“I gave it a lot of thought while you were in France, Cap. I want to be helpful not just in operations. This is my way of fighting our opponents outside actual combat, so just accept it,” Seok Kang-Ho jokingly said as he looked outside the window. However, Kang Chan could tell that he was telling the truth.

“Daye,” Kang Chan began.

Seok Kang-Ho grew noticeably nervous as he looked at Kang Chan.

“Since we’re already doing this, we might as well do it properly. That’s why for every plan I make now...”

Kang Chan turned away from the window to look him directly in the eye.

“... You will be at the forefront,” Kang Chan firmly stated.

*Pft.*

They both grinned.

“The coffee is going to get cold,” Seok Kang-Ho said. The two smiled and sat down at the table that was near the window.

“Man! This room is going to make me anxious. Put a few plants here or something,” Kang Chan scolded.

As they drank coffee and talked about random topics, something suddenly occurred to Kang Chan. He called Woo Hee-Seung over.

Woo Hee-Seung sat at the table with them, curiosity evident on his face as he waited for Kang Chan to speak.

“Do you remember Lee Yoo-Seul from Jeungpyeong? When I brought her to their car so they could head back home, I noticed they had an old compact car. She lives in the military apartment, right? What’ll happen to her now?” Kang Chan asked.

Unable to understand what Kang Chan was trying to say, Woo Hee-Seung glanced at Seok Kang-Ho for a clue.

“The same goes for Choi Jong-Il when I saw him at the hospital. I’m not saying we should indulge in luxury and enjoy countless privileges, but the clothes Choi Jong-Il’s wife was wearing... Her shirt was all worn at the elbows. What exactly is the compensation and salary for the soldiers?” Kang Chan asked.

Woo Hee-Seung let out a quiet sigh. Perhaps the question wasn’t what he was expecting.

“Tell me everything you know. I know it’s not something that can be changed overnight, but at the very least, I don’t think it’s right for the families of soldiers who have sacrificed themselves for their countries to have a hard time getting by.”

“The salaries...” Woo Hee-Seung began. He sounded as if he was having a hard time explaining it. “The special forces’ salary is relatively high. Taking everything they’re provided with into the calculation, including hazard pay, then the total will be around a little less than thirty million won every year.”

Kang Chan felt as if he had been struck in the head.

“And for the fallen soldiers?” he asked.

“It depends on what the Ministry of Patriots and Veterans Affairs decides, but the families are given around one million two hundred thousand won every month,” Woo Hee-Seung answered.

“Haah,” Kang Chan sighed as he turned his head to the side. “Then that’s what’s going to happen to the soldiers who lay down their lives during the recent operation?”

“Yes. Thanks to Manager Kim and the section chief, we were able to give them the best for funeral expenses and condolence money.”

“What about Yoo-Seul? Since she lives in a military apartment, she’ll have to leave, won’t she?”

Woo Hee-Seung hesitated for a moment before speaking up again.

“My fellow soldiers and I actually pooled some money in together for that.”

It was absurd. It wasn't like they were living in a period where they had to fight for independence.

If one didn't have it in them to sacrifice themselves or an intense sense of duty, laying down their lives for their country would have been near impossible to do.

“What will happen to her family, then?”

“They decided to move to a place nearby that's up for rent,” Woo Hee-Seung replied.

Sighing, Kang Chan looked outside the window. He soothed her by telling her that her father was the bravest person in the world, but the reality was that she had to move to a rented apartment now. Even though he told her everyone was alive thanks to her father, she had to leave the military apartment anyway despite being able to barely afford another place with the money that the soldiers pooled together.

One million two hundred thousand won every month... Depending on one's perspective, that much money could either be a lot or too little. However, to a little girl who would have to live the rest of her life without her father, it was too cruel.

“Is it the same for the other soldiers as well?” Kang Chan asked.

“There are some soldiers who are better off,” Woo Hee-Seung responded.

“So you're saying the soldiers who aren't better off are in a similar situation, then? What about General Choi's bereaved?”

“His wife runs a restaurant. I heard she gives the compensation bonuses and the pensions she receives to the soldiers' families,” Woo Hee-Seung replied.

That wasn't right.

The people giving their lives for the country were struggling to get by while bastards like Huh Ha-Soo lived in luxury.

Kang Chan nodded, making up his mind.

“Daye,” Kang Chan said.

“Yes, Cap,” Seok Kang-Ho replied.

“I'll make arrangements for you to get money today. Use it to buy medium-sized apartments for the families of all the soldiers who fell during the recent operation. Give each of them two hundred million won as well,” Kang Chan said.

“Got it,” Seok Kang-Ho responded.

Woo Hee-Seung looked at Kang Chan with a dazed expression.

“I want you to talk about the profit we make from the rent here with Michelle as well. Give an excess to the bereaved family members every month,” Kang Chan ordered.

Seok Kang-Ho pressed his lips together and nodded with determination. Kang Chan then picked up his phone and called Cecile.

- Hello? Channy! What’s up?

“Hey, Cecile. I’ll be sending someone named Seok Kang-Ho to you right now. Can you prepare twenty billion in hundred million bills and give them to him?” Kang Chan asked. “I don’t have much time to talk, so I’m going to have to call you some other time to speak about other things.”

- That’s a bit of a tall order, Channy! No matter the transaction, the owner of the account has to sign for it.

“Then can you expedite getting me the documents?” Kang Chan requested.

- Is it urgent? If so, then I’ll get started on it right away. I’ll just take the money with me so you can get it as soon as you sign the documents for me. Otherwise, our branch is going to be deep in hot water.

“I’m in the newly acquired building. Call me when you get here.”

- Got it! I’ll be there in fifteen minutes—no, twenty, just to be safe.

Chapter 211.2: My Kind of Country (1)

After Kang Chan hung up after speaking to Cecile, he looked at Woo Hee-Seung.

“Woo Hee-Seung,” he said.

“Yes, sir,” Woo Hee-Seung responded.

“Give Choi Jong-Il and Cha Dong-Gyun three hundred million each, and one hundred million to each of the soldiers in Jeungpyeong and agents who guard my parents. Lastly...”

Woo Hee-Seung gasped in surprise.

“... Give two billion won to General Choi Seong-Geon’s family. That man was the general of South Korea’s special forces. Let’s make sure his descendants at the very least won’t have to be running a restaurant because they’re short on money,” Kang Chan firmly ordered.

“Yes, sir...” Woo Hee-Seung barely managed to reply.

Kang Chan sipped his lukewarm coffee and looked outside the window. Just then, Woo Hee-Seung asked, “I-I’m sorry, but what do you think about withholding the money that you want to give to the agents who are currently assigned to your parents?”

Under Kang Chan’s gaze, Woo Hee-Seung remained firm.

“The other agents don’t get paid that much, so if they learn that only the agents who work here are compensated, it may lead to misunderstandings. They could feel relatively deprived.”

Woo Hee-Seung paused for a moment, then steadfastly continued, “Unlike General Choi Seong-Gon, the injured Captain Choi, and the special forces, the agents of the National Intelligence Service are paid well. So please take my suggestion into consideration, sir,”

There was pride in Woo Hee-Seung’s eyes. Perhaps it was pride in the fact that someone recognized the work he was doing.

People working in the field understood this emotion the best.

“Got it. I guess I let my emotions take over,” Kang Chan replied.

“No, sir. I just...” Woo Hee-Seung trailed off. Seeing Kang Chan smirk, he smiled subtly in return.

“Can you stop by the home of General Choi’s family?” Kang Chan confirmed.

“I’ll make sure to do that, sir,” Woo Hee-Seung replied.

Kang Chan felt a bit relieved now.

Fifteen minutes later, the phone rang, and Kang Chan, Seok Kang-Ho, and Woo Hee-Seung headed to the first floor so Kang Chan could sign the papers. The money was handed over to him afterward.

“All right. You can head out now,” Kang Chan told Woo Hee-Seung. He understood why the man was hesitating, though.

“Don’t worry about things you don’t have to. You have Doo Hee with you too, don’t you? I’ll go around with you if it’s necessary, so hurry up and go already,” Kang Chan urged.

Only after Kang Chan said that did Woo Hee-Seung finally say goodbye and head down to the building’s underground parking lot.

“Channy! I heard you were overseas!” Cecile exclaimed now that Kang Chan was free, surprise evident in her expression. She looked happy to see him.

The branch manager, who was by her side, gave Kang Chan his business card and bowed politely.

“Thank you for coming all the way here, and I’m sorry I can’t offer you anything. I’m going through something at the moment,” Kang Chan apologetically said.

“Please don’t be! Feel free to contact me whenever you need me in the future,” the branch manager replied.

They parted ways not too long after exchanging farewells. After saying goodbye to Cecile, Kang Chan immediately went up to the office on the seventeenth floor.

He and Lee Doo-Hee were the only ones left in the office. Kang Chan made himself a cup of americano and sat down facing the window.

They had to establish an organization as soon as possible. Things like this shouldn't be taken care of with emotions. There had to be an organization with a structure that could systematically sort this out.

Looking out the window, Kang Chan thought of Lee Yoo-Seul. Despite having broken fingers, her father ran without end only to die after having a last meal of a C-ration. Amid all of that, he didn't even groan out loud once so the other soldiers wouldn't feel burdened. Kang Chan hoped the soldier could live proudly in his daughter's memory forever.

"Fuck!" he cursed.

*If only I was a little stronger! Maybe I could've saved him if my judgment was a little faster.*

The child he left behind needed her dad far more than the money that she would receive.

Buzz—Buzz—Buzz—. Buzz—Buzz—Buzz—. Buzz—Buzz—Buzz—.

Kang Chan hadn't even calmed down yet when his phone rang.

"Hello?" Kang Chan answered.

- Channy! Are you in the building?

It was Michelle. Considering the way she asked the question, she had clearly spoken to Cecile on the phone.

"Where are you?" Kang Chan asked.

- The seventh floor! We're all on the seventh floor. Are you really in the building?

"Yeah. I'll go down there now," Kang Chan responded.

He could hear her let out a loud sigh over the line. After hanging up, Kang Chan told Lee Doo-Hee that he was going down to where Michelle and the others were. He didn't have his own keycard yet, and even if he did, he still didn't know how to use it. There shouldn't be any problems going down, but he didn't want to run into any troubles on the way back up.

They stepped into the elevator and got off on the seventh floor. Only after using the keycard to open the door was the normal part of the building revealed.

Standing in front of a giant sign that read "DI," he pressed the bell at the entrance. The doors automatically opened.

The office was sophisticated and neat, just like Michelle's personality.

"Hello!" everyone greeted.

The moment Kang Chan stepped inside, the actors' eyes widened. They covered their mouths with their hands. Lim Soo-Sung and Kim Ji-Tae rushed over to greet him.

It was nice to see them, but it wasn't enough to alleviate his dampened spirits.

"Boss!"

Michelle dashed toward him and jumped into his arms like he was some long-lost family. Kang Chan embraced her and patted her back.

“When did you get here?” Michelle asked.

“Just now,” Kang Chan replied.

The two were in front of all the employees.

Michelle straightened up and led Kang Chan inside. On the walls were posters and pictures of the trainees posing elegantly, which Kang Chan had never seen before, and the drama title in large letters.

Michelle’s office was next to a window on the seventh floor, giving it a spectacular view.

The bookkeeper, Choi Yu-Jin, left after serving them coffee. Michelle sat down across from Kang Chan, her expression a mixture of happiness and concern.

“What happened, Channy?” she asked.

“Nothing in particular. I guess the training was just a little tough,” Kang Chan replied.

Michelle peered at him and tilted her head.

“What is it?” Kang Chan asked out of curiosity.

“You’ve changed. Something about your aura has changed, but I don’t know how to explain it. It’s like you’ve tucked in rough edges but at the cost of the bitter feelings inside you growing even bigger,” Michelle replied after giving it some thought.

Kang Chan took a sip of his tea, grinned, and then put his cup back down. Since she produced a drama, her ways of expressing herself improved.

“Michelle, there’s something I want to talk to you about,” Kang Chan opened. He then repeated what he told Seok Kang-Ho to Michelle.

“That’s actually even better than what I had in mind. We have already set up the corporation last time, so I can just redirect your dividends there,” Michelle replied. “I think that’s the best way to help you execute your plan as properly as possible. Oh, right! What should we do about the first floor?”

“I’ll discuss that with my father today, so let’s decide on that some other time.”

“All right, Channy,” Michelle replied. Carefully observing him, she asked, “Are you really okay?”

“Yes, I really am. It’s just that my emotions are a bit jumbled up right now because of my colleagues,” Kang Chan replied.



“Is there anyone who can comfort you during times like these?” Michelle sounded worried.

Kang Chan just gazed at Michelle in silence.

“Channy, nothing good will come out of bottling up your emotions like that for a long time. While I was designing the interior of this building, I could somewhat understand how difficult things must have been for you. If there’s someone who can offer you comfort, then you should meet up with them as soon as you can. It’s a bit unfortunate that that person isn’t me, though.”

Seeing Kang Chan grin, Michelle scrunched her nose and playfully laughed.

“It’s that girl named Mi-Young, isn’t it?” Michelle asked.

“Yeah,” Kang Chan replied. He didn’t want to deny something like this.

“Why don’t you go meet her, then?”

Kang Chan glanced outside the window. After a moment, he quietly replied, “Some of the soldiers I was working with died.”

Michelle looked at Kang Chan in surprise.

“They won’t leave my heart. For the first time, I had to meet the family members that the soldiers left behind. This may be hard for you to believe, but I’ve never had to see anyone’s family when something like this happened before. This is why I tried not to let my colleagues get into my heart. It’s not easy to shake this feeling off, and I don’t know how to handle this either.”

Kang Chan didn’t know why he was telling Michelle all of this. To be honest, he didn’t even know that this was what was on his mind. However, the moment he opened his mouth, everything that was weighing down on him just poured out.

“How was it before?” Michelle asked.

“In the past? Well, I guess my eyes started to glint whenever something like this happened. I ended anyone who touched me while I was feeling this way, too,” Kang Chan answered.

“Did meeting Mi-Young make you feel a bit better?”

Kang Chan nodded.

“Tsk! You really don’t know anything about love, Channy,” Michelle playfully replied.

Kang Chan just chuckled in response.

“Love is also just staying next to someone when they’re tired and hurt. If I were Mi-Young, I would be grateful and glad that you come to me during times like these,” Michelle continued.

That would probably be the case if they were the same age and lived similar lifestyles. But they didn't.

He missed Mi-Young when they were apart. But if they truly wanted to understand each other, he would have to tell her everything from the very beginning—being reincarnated.

The human heart was hard to understand. He was glad to see her whenever they were together, but when they were apart, those questions always lingered in his mind.

*This is a different matter from accepting Kang Dae-Kyung and Yoo Hye-Sook.*

Seeing Kang Chan's expression, Michelle made a sad, pitying smile.

"I can't even hug you since you haven't seen Mi-Young yet," she said.

Fortunately, opening up about what happened with the soldiers made his heart feel a little less heavy. It also made him realize that this had been weighing in the corner of his mind for a while now.

Kang Chan turned to look back outside the window.

A South Korea that the fallen soldiers wouldn't be ashamed of... A land that Lee Yoo-Seul could be proud to live in... Kang Chan wanted to make that kind of country.

Chapter 212: My Kind of Country (2)

Kang Chan and Michelle talked for about thirty minutes before he stood up and went up to the seventeenth floor. He then sat by the window, took out his phone, and looked for Kim Mi-Young's number. However, he suddenly had second thoughts about calling her.

*Why am I hesitating? I'm just going to ask to meet her.*

Kang Chan called Kim Mi-Young.

- Hello?

He heard Kim Mi-Young's clear voice over the call.

"Can you talk right now?"

- Of course. Did your training go well?

"Yeah."

Kang Chan grinned when he heard her voice, suddenly remembering her smile.

"What are you doing right now?"

- Me? I was just reading a book.

"You're just reading even though it's Christmas?"

- I see nothing wrong with it. I wrote down a lot of places that I want to visit and things to do with you when you return. Let's check them out when you get back to South Korea.

"Where would you want to go first?"

- Hmm...

Kang Chan then heard Kim Mi-Young rummaging through her notes.

- I heard there's an elegant coffee shop just a few minutes walk from Seongbuk-dong. I was hoping we could go there and have coffee, then stroll along the trail behind it.

Kang Chan glanced at his watch. It was three in the afternoon.

"Are you free right now?"

- Huh?

Kim Mi-Young grew silent after she unconsciously answered. It was as if she had become mute.

"You're not, then?"

- Where are you right now?

Kim Mi-Young sounded surprised.

"I'm probably just around thirty minutes away from your house."

- Really? Are you back in South Korea already? Will you really be in front of my house in thirty minutes?

"Yes," Kang Chan quickly answered. She sounded as if she was going to cry.

- Should I head out in thirty minutes, then?

"Yeah."

After hanging up, Kang Chan told Lee Doo-Hee to give him a ride to his apartment. After being dropped off, he immediately made his way to Kim Mi-Young's apartment.

He arrived ten minutes earlier than the time they agreed upon, yet he found Kim Mi-Young already sitting on a bench, wearing a thick coat.

"Mi-Young!" Kang Chan called and held up his hand. Kim Mi-Young quickly stood up and ran over to him. Her hair had grown quite a bit.

*Whoosh!*

Even though a lot of people were watching them and they were still in front of her apartment, Kim Mi-Young still jumped into Kang Chan's arms. The smell of the body wash and shampoo that she used made him emotional.

"Have you been well?" Kang Chan asked.

"Yeah!"

Kang Chan stroked Kim Mi-Young's head while she was in his arms.

"Let's go. You want to go to a cafe to have coffee with me, right?"

"Yes. There's a cafe I want to visit with you now that you're back," Kim Mi-Young still looked excited.

The two walked out of the apartment complex and got in a taxi. Kim Mi-Young then told the driver where they were going.

“When did you return?” Kim Mi-Young asked.

“Yesterday,” Kang Chan answered.

“Why did you only call me now?”

“I had a lot of things to take care of.”

“I see.”

Would Kim Mi-Young understand that he missed her while he was nervous because he felt as if he was going to die?

They didn’t talk when they were in the taxi. Kim Mi-Young just tightly held Kang Chan’s hand.

“Was it really difficult?” Kim Mi-Young asked Kang Chan.

“Huh?”

“Your training. I mean, you just got off a very long flight. If you’re too tired or going to the cafe is too hard for you right now, we can just visit it next time and just have tea in front of our house today.”

“Don’t worry, I’m fine. Let’s visit it.”

“Alright.”

After going past Jongno, the taxi headed to Seongbook-dong and stopped on an empty road. The two got out and walked to the cafe that Kim Mi-Young found.

Kang Chan felt awkward but happy at the same time. He could finally breathe easily again.

“It’s that place!” Kim Mi-Young exclaimed, pointing to a circular sign, after over fifteen minutes of walking. They were in an alleyway now.

*How does she find cafes in places like this?*

The two headed inside the cafe. It was quieter than Kang Chan expected.

A man with gray hair greeted them. He was wearing an apron.

Kang Chan and Kim Mi-Young ordered an americano, caffe latte, and two slices of cake. Kim Mi-Young then smiled at him, her eyes still full of excitement.

When their orders were served, Kang Chan had a sip of the americano.

“Is it good?” Kim Mi-Young asked.

“It’s delicious.”

Before they met up, Kang Chan wanted to tell her what happened in the Intelligence Bureau and, if he could, about his reincarnation. However, seeing her big and clear eyes completely erased those thoughts.

*Chatter chatter.*

While listening to Kim Mi-Young talk about their exams and the festival, he thought that she would be too flustered if he talked about those things.

“I was actually about to get a part-time job because I wanted to go to France,” Kim Mi-Young said.

“What were you thinking of doing?”

“Tutoring.”

Kang Chan nodded in response. He didn't know much about it, but if Kim Mi-Young became a tutor, a truckful of parents would want to entrust their children to her.

Fascinatingly enough, while listening to Kim Mi-Young, he felt the emotions weighing down on him dissipating.

*Is it because she held my hand inside the taxi on our way here?*

Now that she had lost her baby fats, Kim Mi-Young was so pretty that he wondered if she had always been this beautiful. He would have trouble breathing whenever he saw her smile or she looked at him.

*Is it because I'm taking a breather?*

“I think I perfected the exam,” Kim Mi-Young said.

Kang Chan was surprised. He was more confident that he could hit the bullseye of three hundred targets than get perfect marks on an exam.

“I double-checked my answers when I got back home. It looks like I got all of them right,” Kim Mi-Young continued. She seemed happy to see Kang Chan so amazed.

While they were talking, two more groups of customers entered the cafe. Its food and drinks were a little expensive, but it did seem like a good place to talk since it was quiet.

“Where did you hear about this place?” Kang Chan asked.

“It was featured in a magazine that was published about a year ago. I wrote down the address when I saw pictures of it. I did good, didn't I?”

This kind of small talk was natural as well.

Their conversation lasted for about an hour. They never went into deep topics like about their love or desperate ones like missing each other.

In the middle of their conversation, Kim Mi-Young looked straight at Kang Chan.

“Why are you looking at me like that?” Kang Chan asked.

“Do you want to go for a walk?”

“Sure.”

They stood up, left the cafe, and walked along the alley again.

Kim Mi-Young slightly swung Kang Chan’s hand while holding it. The way she acted made it clear that seeing him made her happy.

*How can I pull her into the pit that I’m living in?*

It was cowardly, but Kang Chan couldn’t stop thinking of the wife and young daughter that his fallen comrade had left behind. Introducing Kim Mi-Young to a life of guns, knives, and death felt like a crime.

*She might change her mind once she’s in college anyway, so I should just watch how things turn out for now. I should occasionally meet with her, though, especially when I’m having trouble enduring the weight or when I want someone to console me.*

Slowly walking, Kang Chan remembered what he thought when he saw Kim Mi-Young for the first time.

While walking along the alley for quite some time, they came across a large restaurant and a nicely decorated trail.

“Do you want to have dinner?” Kang Chan asked.

“That restaurant looks expensive.”

*Unless she asks me to buy a restaurant, it’s really not going to be a problem.*

“Can we walk a bit more before we eat?” Kim Mi-Young asked.

“Of course.”

While strolling, Kim Mi-Young talked about how happy she was to go to school with him and about getting to travel all around the world with Kang Chan if she became a diplomat.

At the end of the trail were a few pieces of workout equipment and a good view of Seoul. Kim Mi-Young sat on the bench near the hill and leaned her head against Kang Chan.

Since it was winter, the sun was quick to set. It seemed farther away from them than any other time of the year, too.

“Did you want to do this as well?” Kang Chan asked.

“Yeah!” Kim Mi-Young sounded delighted.

“You know...” she started, suddenly sitting up and looking straight at him. “... I really missed you.”

Her big and clear eyes made Kang Chan stop breathing for a moment.

“I missed you too,” he replied.

“Really?”

“Yeah.”

“Thanks. Huhuhu.”

Kang Chan remembered wanting to hear her laugh when he was deep in the mountains of France and when he was in a valley in North Korea.

Kang Chan raised his hand and tousled Kim Mi-Young’s hair.

Buzz—Buzz—Buzz—. Buzz—Buzz—Buzz—. Buzz—Buzz—Buzz—.

As he did, the phone in his pocket rang. Nothing was better than this at ruining the mood.

Kim Mi-Young looked at him with curiosity as he took out his phone.

Anne was calling him.

“Ello?”

- Mr. Assistant Director, sixteen South Korean citizens have been kidnapped near Sangar, Afghanistan.

Kang Chan cocked his head.

*Shouldn’t she inform South Korea’s National Intelligence Service first about things like this?*

- We inform you and the Ambassador first when it comes to international disputes in that area.

Anne seemed to have guessed what was on Kang Chan’s mind.

“Does South Korea’s National Intelligence Service know about this already?”

*Ah, shoot! What if Kim Mi-Young understood what I just said?*

Fortunately, Kim Mi-Young looked like she didn’t really understand what he said since he spoke very quickly and used a special word.

- The Shiite militia were the kidnapers, so I doubt it. They will probably release a video within the next twelve hours about their demands. As far as we know, only the Algerian media has this information right now.

Kang Chan frowned. He saw that organization very often in Africa. If it was the Shiites...

- On another note, we should be able to find Wui Min-Gook’s location in two days. We have also made preparations to have Gerard be appointed to South Korea. Your orders, sir?

“I’ll contact you after I see how things go here. Have you reported this to the Ambassador?”

- Since he has a different hotline, I’m sure he has already received the report.

Kang Chan wasn’t aware that France’s DGSE conducted such a wide range of activities.

After hanging up, he looked at Kim Mi-Young while pretending to be calm.

“We should go. Aren’t you busy?” Kim Mi-Young asked. She was the first to stand up.

*What should I do? I should have enough time to have dinner with her, at least.*

“In return, treat me to delicious food next time,” she added.

“I will. I’m sorry.”

Kang Chan followed Kim Mi-Young and walked back down the trail.

“My dad said that you’re one of the few people who can decide South Korea’s future,” Kim Mi-Young said.

“Am I?”

“Yeah! So he kept telling me not to bother you when you’re busy or having a difficult time.”

“I haven’t even met since I saw him at the hospital, though.”

“My dad just nodded when he heard that you’re going to France to receive training.”

*Does her father know what I do?*

They walked a bit past where they had coffee before they found a taxi. On the way home, Kim Mi-Young held Kang Chan’s hand, their fingers intertwined with each other.

They reached the apartment complex at around six in the evening.

“Can I start calling you again?” Kim Mi-Young asked.

“Of course.”

“I’ll get going. Take care of yourself.”

Kang Chan cocked his head at what she said, but before he could say anything, Kim Mi-Young waved and was already running toward her house.

*Does she know something about what I do too?*

Kang Chan found it possible, but he didn’t have time to think about it right now. He immediately called Lee Doo-Hee and headed to Samseong-dong.

- Mr. Kang Chan, it’s Kim Hyung-Jung.

Kim Hyung-Jung answered as soon as Kang Chan called him.

“Manager Kim, I heard that sixteen South Korean citizens have been taken hostage in Afghanistan. They’re going to make their demands in twelve hours.”

Lee Doo-Hee’s head snapped toward Kang Chan.

- Mr. Kang Chan! Where did you get that information?

“Where are you right now?”

- I’ll go to you. Where are you?



After exchanging questions and deciding to meet up at Samseong-dong, Kang Chan dropped the call and dialed Seok Kang-Ho.

- It's me.

“Is Cha Dong-Gyun or Kwak Cheol-Ho with you?”

- I'm going around with Cheol-Ho. What's wrong?

“Tell him to have the entire special forces team on emergency standby and that this isn't an official command.”

- Phuhuhu. Alright.

*How can this fucker laugh after hearing what I just said?*

After hanging up, Kang Chan called Anne.

- Please go ahead.

“How long will it take to have a plane be ready in Osan?”

- If it departs from the Subic army base in the Philippines, it'll arrive in... approximately six hours.”

“Mobilize it.”

- I'll have it done. Do you have any other orders?

“Can we have the plane on standby all day?”

- You're the assistant director. You don't have to worry about running out of time.

“Thanks.”

After finishing all the necessary phone calls, Kang Chan glared ahead.

The Shiite having sixteen hostages was bad. That organization would decapitate a few of them to make an example out of them.

*Damn it! Life just won't give me a break.*

Kang Chan planned to check out what he should do for the Eurasian Rail after knocking down Wui Min-Gook, too.

When they arrived at Samseong-dong, Kim Hyung-Jung welcomed Kang Chan in. He looked like he just arrived as well.

“Mr. Kang Chan! We have secured the list of people who entered Afghanistan. Unlike what you said, there are seventeen names on it.” Kim Hyung-Jung handed over the list to Kang Chan.

“They're young,” Kang Chan commented.

“They seem to be volunteers.”

*Damn it! There are too many women.*

“I have directly reported this matter to the Director and the President. We’re thinking of discussing the countermeasures. Can you attend that discussion with me?” Kim Hyung-Jung asked. When Kang Chan just looked at him, he immediately continued, “We still haven’t confirmed that they’ve been kidnapped, but we doubt you would be misinformed about something this grave. Either way, your cooperation right now is essential to whatever decision we’ll reach.”

Kim Hyung-Jung didn’t ask how Kang Chan got that information. It seemed he had already assumed that it came from the DGSE.

“Let’s go,” Kang Chan said.

“Thank you, Mr. Kang Chan.”

Kang Chan and Kim Hyung-Jung immediately went down to the basement, got in the car, and headed to Naegok-dong. When they arrived, they went around the building and entered through the back entrance of the parking lot.

“Mr. Kang Chan, please wear this.” Kim Hyung-Jung clipped an ID on Kang Chan’s chest.

They got out of the car in front of two elevators facing each other. However, Kim Hyung-Jung just walked past them and entered the hallway on the right.

Going through the iron door, they came across an agent guarding another elevator.

Seeing them approach, the agent briefly bowed and pressed the button for the elevator.

“Let’s head in,” Kim Hyung-Jung said. The interior of the elevator didn’t really have anything to indicate what floor it was heading to.

*Ding.*

When the elevator door opened, they walked down the dark hallway. There were doors on both the right and left, and also at the innermost part of the hallway. Agents who were wearing helmets and bulletproof vests were watching Kim Hyung-Jung and Kang Chan in front of the doors and in front of the elevator.

*Click.*

An agent opened the door for them.

Kang Chan sighed softly as he went inside.

Moon Jae-Hyun, Hwang Ki-Hyun, Jeon Dae-Geuk, and three other people whom Kang Chan hadn’t seen before were sitting on a round table. A large screen was on one of the walls of the room.

Kim Hyung-Jung and Kang Chan bowed and greeted them.

Following Moon Jae-Hyun’s lead, everyone stood up.

“Welcome,” Moon Jae-Hyun greeted Kang Chan. Kim Hyung-Jung then introduced the three people Kang Chan didn’t know as the first, second, and third deputy directors.

“Let’s sit down.” Moon Jae-Hyun sat down as the screen changed.

“On the screen is Sangar, Afghanistan. We confirmed that seventeen South Korean citizens have entered Afghanistan through a South Korean volunteer group on the twenty-first. However, we haven’t confirmed the kidnapping that Mr. Kang Chan told us about yet. We haven’t been able to talk to them either due to bad connections,” the first deputy director coldly reported. “To start off, we have to determine whether they’ve been really kidnapped.”

Everyone sitting at the table simultaneously looked at Kang Chan.

The fact that Moon Jae-Hyun came here himself and even called the NIS director, even though Kang Chan only told them one thing, showed how much they trusted him.

Now that they had done all of this for him, Kang Chan thought it would only be proper for him to show them what he was capable of in return. For the sake of Jeon Dae-Geuk and Kim Hyung-Jung, who tirelessly looked after him, and Moon Jae-Hyun, who trusted him, it was the least he could do. “I recently went to France to receive training from their Intelligence Bureau,” Kang Chan explained.

The three deputy directors looking at the documents turned their attention to him.

“After the training, I was appointed as the DGSE’s assistant director,” Kang Chan said.

Hwang Ki-Hyun, the three deputy directors, and Kim Hyung-Jung simultaneously stiffened as if they rehearsed to do so.

Chapter 213.1: Something I’ve Always Dreamed About (1)

Even a ten-year-old child would recognize that their reactions didn’t mean anything good.

When Kang Chan turned his head, he found Moon Jae-Hyun looking at him head-on with an expression that was hard to read.

*What’s making everyone react like this?*

Kang Chan looked at Kim Hyung-Jung with curiosity.

“Mr. Kang Chan, there is a provision in each country’s intelligence bureau that prohibits double agents. According to the regulations, you should not have even been allowed to enter this room,” Kim Hyung-Jung explained.

*A double agent?*

“Essentially, a spy,” Kim Hyung-Jung added.

What if someone overseeing a country’s intelligence actually belonged to a different country’s bureau? When Kang Chan put himself in their shoes, he could see why that would be problematic.

Kang Chan completely understood their situation, but he couldn’t help himself from smiling bitterly. He had been skillfully outplayed by France.

*And there’s no way that snake didn’t know how things would turn out if he told me about this.*

In that brief moment, many thoughts passed through Kang Chan's mind.

"Did you obtain your information in this incident in Afghanistan from the French intelligence bureau?" Hwang Ki-Hyun asked.

"Yes, sir," Kang Chan immediately responded.

"And it didn't occur to you at all that you could be a double agent?" Hwang Ki-Hyun prodded on.

"I thought I would be of assistance to South Korea."

"How so?" Moon Jae-Hyun chimed in. He didn't seem to be rebuking Kang Chan. Rather, he looked as if he was genuinely curious.

"I'm sorry for being so direct, but I heard the level of our country's intelligence bureau is ranked around 40th in the entire world. I believe information warfare will be critical to our goal to be a part of the Eurasian Rail. To that end, I think receiving the help of the DGSE would serve us well for now," Kang Chan told him.

The ends of Moon Jae-Hyun's eyes curved up in delight.

"Mr. Kang Chan, have you already come up with countermeasures to resolve this situation?" he asked.

Considering Kang Chan had already decided to give this a try anyway, he thought he might as well go for it. After taking a deep breath, he began, "I contacted France's DGSE to send a plane from the Subic Base in the Philippines to Osan. Since the demand video is expected to be released within the next 12 hours, I plan to rescue our citizens before then."

"For planes to fly directly from Osan to Afghanistan, they have to go through China first. We can't expect China to give permission for a military plane to fly through their airspace. However, if you go around their territory, you won't make it in time," the first deputy director of the National Intelligence Service said in disbelief. He sounded quite flabbergasted.

Moon Jae-Hyun turned back to look at Kang Chan again.

'What's the solution?'

The president's eyes seemed to be asking him that question.

"I will ask for help from Yang Bum, the Chinese intelligence bureau," Kang Chan stated.

"This is a matter of life and death for our citizens, Mr. Kang Chan. Can you call China's intelligence bureau now?" Moon Jae-Hyun asked.

"I will try, sir," Kang Chan responded.

When he pulled out his phone, Moon Jae-Hyun added, "May we all listen to your conversation?"

It sounded as if the president had ulterior motives for his request. However, Kang Chan couldn't get a grasp on it.

Seeing him about to make the call, Kim Hyung-Jung quickly gave him a small, thumb-sized compressor that had a cable connected to it.

“Stick this device to the back of your phone,” he explained.

All these theatrics were cumbersome, but Kang Chan decided to do his best—at least for the sakes of Jeon Dae-Geuk, who looked very anxious, and Kim Hyung-Jung, who was doing everything in his power to help him.

When he pressed the call button, the dial tone began to ring.

*Ring. Ring. Ring.*

- Mr. Kang Chan.

Yang Bum answering the call in Korean sounded as if it was coming from the desk because his voice resonated throughout the room.

*Now that it's come to this, I might as well do it!*

“Mr. Yang Bum, this is Kang Chan speaking. Do you have time to talk for a bit right now?” Kang Chan politely asked.

- Nothing could be more important than your calls, Mr. Kang Chan.

At Yang Bum's humorous response, the second and third deputy directors exchanged gazes of surprise.

“I'll get straight to the point because of the urgency of the situation. In the next twelve hours, a military aircraft that I will be on has to pass through China. Do you think you can give us permission to fly through your airspace?” Kang Chan asked.

Yang Bum briefly paused before answering.

- If you are the only passenger on the plane, we can provide a flight for you.

“A fully armed special forces team will be on board with me,” Kang Chan added.

Awkward emotions of doubt and concern flickered across Hwang Ki-Hyun and Kim Hyung-Jung's faces.

*Should I not have mentioned that much to Yang Bum?*

This was Kang Chan's way of doing things, though.

There was an even longer moment of silence than before until Yang Bum spoke again.

- Mr. Kang Chan, may I know where you will be headed?

When Kang Chan lifted his gaze in question, Hwang Ki-Hyun swiftly nodded at him.

“I will be going to Afghanistan,” Kang Chan replied.

- Well... hmm...

Yang Bum sighed, clearly deep in thought.

- The aircraft will be cutting straight through China. During that time, we will have to temporarily lift our air defense system. That’s not something we can easily do.

The first deputy director made an “I told you” expression upon hearing Yang Bum’s response. However, Yang Bum soon continued.

- Is there any other assistance you require from me?

“That should be enough, sir. Oh! Of course, I’ll also need your cooperation when we’re returning to South Korea,” Kang Chan added.

Yang Bum’s astounded laughter echoed from the other end of the phone.

- Mr. Kang Chan, in return for doing this favor for you, I would like to request your mediation for our negotiations with Russia’s Vasili. Would you be able to do that?

This was the condition that Yang Bum was offering. The three deputy directors looked beyond stunned at how things were turning out.

- Vasili has always had a close friendship with Suo Ke. You and Ambassador Lanok are the only people who can connect me to him. I thought I should ask since we have a matter to discuss that involves the borders of Mongolia, Russia, and China.

When Kang Chan lifted his gaze again, Hwang Ki-Hyun didn’t seem to have an answer for him.

“Mr. Yang Bum, I don’t know exactly what you require from me, but I promise you that I will do my best with whatever you need my help with,” Kang Chan firmly replied.

- Thank you. I know your promises can be trusted. If you let me know when you will be going through China, I will make the arrangements. I wish you the best of luck with your business.

“Thank you, sir.”

Once the phone conversation ended, a heavy silence fell upon the conference room.

“Mr. Kang Chan,” Moon Jae-Hyun spoke up, breaking the ice.

“Yes, sir,” Kang Chan replied.

“Do you love South Korea?”

Song Chang-Wook, a lawyer and descendant of an independence activist, had asked him the same cringeworthy, embarrassing question just a few days ago,

“I actually don’t quite know the answer to that question, Mr. President,” Kang Chan truthfully answered.

Jeon Dae-Geuk dropped his gaze to the table. However, Kang Chan wasn't finished.

“But when I saw the men who were killed in the recent operation and the bereaved daughter of one of them, I became determined to accomplish something.”

Moon Jae-Hyun gazed intently at Kang Chan while he waited for him to continue.

“I want to create a South Korea that our fallen and the families they left behind can be proud of. I want to make their sacrifice worth it, to show them that they lay down their lives not in vain but for the development of this country, sir.”

“Is that why you sent money to the families of the fallen?” Moon Jae-Hyun asked.

*He knows about this too?*

Kang Chan looked at him with curiosity.

“Director Hwang, what is the current position that Mr. Kang Chan has?” Moon Jae-Hyun asked before Kang Chan could answer his first question.

“He is a special-grade agent of the special forces, and he holds no official position,” Hwang Ki-Hyun answered.

“Then what of the position of assistant director in France's DGSE? What kind of rank is that?”

“It would be right below the Deputy Director-General position. They have the authority to issue assassination orders for up to second-grade personnel as classified by the DGSE.”

“What rank would you fall under the France DGSE's classification, Director?”

“Second grade, sir,” Hwang Ki-Hyun responded, causing the atmosphere in the conference room to tense up.

“It would seem France has preemptively called dibs on Mr. Kang Chan by giving him extremely high authority and rank. If we are sharing a double agent with them, which country would be at a greater disadvantage?”

“Mr. President, this kind of situation cannot be assessed simply in terms of each side's advantages and disadvantages,” Hwang Ki-Hyun cautiously replied.

“Is that so? Well, I think France has done something that is disadvantageous to them. Am I wrong?” Moon Jae-Hyun asked, but he sounded as if he didn't really want an answer, so everyone just remained quiet and waited for him to continue.

“France, who recognized Mr. Kang Chan's talents and gave him a position of authority, versus South Korea, who is contemplating whether he is a double

agent or not. Which side is at the disadvantage here? What do you think, Director Hwang?”

“As the Director of the National Intelligence Service, I have no choice but to follow the protocol, sir. Making decisions is a unique power of the highest-ranking individual in charge.”

Moon Jae-Hyun turned to Kang Chan and looked directly into his eyes. “Mr. Kang Chan, there are currently two years left in my term. Until then, I will do my best to protect you. I have just one request,”

This man didn’t have a sharp gaze, but his eyes were definitely filled with enough conviction to make up for that.

Even Jeon Dae-Geuk and Hwang Ki-Hyun were looking at Kang Chan with nervous expressions.

Chapter 213.2: Something I’ve Always Dreamed About (1)

“Can you make a promise to the sitting president that you will do your best to strengthen South Korea so the Eurasian Rail will be connected before I die and so the citizens of our country will never be in danger like this again? I want South Korea to become a nation that no one will ever dare to touch, one that the citizens of other countries across the world will be envious of. Would you promise me that you will do your best to make South Korea powerful?” Moon Jae-Hyun solemnly requested. People with convictions were truly scary. Even Kang Chan found his eyes intimidating.

*Damn it!*

Since he was reborn, too many people had been making a space for themselves in his heart.

There was no way Kang Chan could refuse a request as genuine as this.

“I will do my best, sir,” he responded equally gravely.

Moon Jae-Hyun smiled from ear to ear.

“Director Hwang, I have a favor to ask,”

“Of course, sir,” Hwang Ki-Hyun replied.

“We can’t fall behind France. I want Kang Chan to be the head of the National Intelligence Service’s counter-terrorism special forces. I also want him to be appointed as the assistant deputy director. His status as a special-grade agent of the special forces will be maintained as it is.”

“I will process the paperwork right away.”

Jeon Dae-Geuk’s cheek twitched due to the force he was clenching his teeth with.

“I will also grant him the ability to mobilize the special forces in Jeungpyeong,” Moon Jae-Hyun added.



“But Mr. President—!”

“I grant Mr. Kang Chan the ability to proceed with operations without needing approval. He will give a report to the Director of the National Intelligence Service within twenty-four hours of his return.”

“For that, the Jeungpyeong special forces have to be put under the National Intelligence Service. As its assistant deputy director and the head of its counter-terrorism special forces team, he will naturally have the authority to mobilize our agents. It is also advisory for him to only proceed with operations after receiving approval,” Hwang Ki-Hyun worriedly commented.

Moon Jae-Hyun turned to look at Hwang Ki-Hyun.

“The Jeungpyeong special forces is the core of our military, so there will be strong opposition from them. If we have to explain each of these situations to them, Mr. Kang Chan’s identity will inevitably be revealed to the public,” Hwang Ki-Hyun continued.

Moon Jae-Hyun sighed quietly and glanced at Kang Chan with a small smile. “Being the president doesn’t mean I can do everything I want.”

Why were there so many of these kinds of men in South Korea?

“All right, then! I would like the head of the counter-terrorism team to command the hostage rescue operation in Afghanistan. I pray for the safe return of our citizens,” Moon Jae-Hyun said.

“I will do my best,” Kang Chan assured him.

Moon Jae-Hyun stood up and held out his hand toward Kang Chan.

*Things are getting complicated.*

Jeon Dae-Geuk proudly watched on like an uncle watching his nephew being promoted.

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Ring. Ring. Ring.

“Allo?” Lanok answered the phone on his desk.

- Monsieur Kang has procured his path through China.

Lanol had a smile in his eyes. He looked quite amused.

- As you expected, South Korea’s National Intelligence Service has given Monsieur Kang the position of assistant deputy director as well as leader of the counter-terrorism team.

“It was expected, but at the same time, it’s a bit unexpected. I see South Korea is steadily becoming stronger. A country that recognizes talent and knows how to use it will become proportionally as powerful as that talent.”

- You knew the National Intelligence Service would react sharply because of the double agent protocol, no?

“Yes, I was expecting it. But for the great France to prosper, Monsieur Kang needs to have some power.”

- I know this is all according to plan, but I can't help but be worried.

“Anne,” Lanok said her name softer than usual. “Maintain your composure at all times. If you show any weakness, people will inevitably want to exploit them. Focus on helping Monsieur Kang so he can grow as quickly as possible. That is our best course of action.”

- Yes, Father.

“What about the approval from the Afghan government?”

- South Korea's National Intelligence Service has contacted them, but if the DGSE hadn't pressured them, it would've fallen through.

“I see they still lack experience in that aspect. And the forces surrounding the hostages?”

- There are approximately two hundred fifty armed Shia forces waiting within a ten-kilometer radius.

“Knowing Monsieur Kang, he won't ever resort to bombing, so this will be quite a challenge. This incident will be a good opportunity for you to learn as well. I believe you can handle it,” Lanok said with conviction.

- Papa?

Lanok just silently listened.

- Everything really will be okay, right?

“Become stronger, Anne. Now is the time for resolute action, not weak sentiments,” Lanok firmly warned her. He then hung up the phone.

“Moon Jae-Hyun and Hwang Ki-hyun. They're definitely not easy,” Lanok muttered to himself before taking a deep breath. “Monsieur Kang, this is where everything starts.”

Lanok glared sharply at the clock.

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Kang Chan only went to the meeting to create a plan for the emergency situation, but he ended up coming out of it as the assistant deputy director of the National Intelligence Service and head of its counter-terrorism team. Returning to Samseong-Dong, he felt as if he had just been hit by a truck.

It was already ridiculous enough that Kim Hyung-Jung had a map of Afghanistan spread out in front of him with an expression that seemed to say that he was awaiting Kang Chan's instructions. However, Jeon Dae-Geuk also looked like he was so proud of Kang Chan that he wanted to give him a kiss.

"What are you doing, sir?" Kang Chan asked Kim Hyung-Jung.

"We need a plan on how to rescue the hostages. If you want to rescue them before the hostage video is made, please issue an order to mobilize the special forces team first, Mr. Kang Chan," Kim Hyung-Jung said.

Kang Chan felt genuine irritation bubbling up inside of him.

"Please don't misunderstand. Right now, we need instructions from you, Mr. Kang Chan—I mean, Commander Kang. We have to request assistance from France and China for this affair, and your rank is necessary for that," Kim Hyung-Jung explained.

"Then for the time being, let's go on like we've been doing until now. We've already got our hands full, and we do not have the time to be concerned about other matters at the moment," Kang Chan stated.

"Chan is right," Jeon Dae-Geuk agreed.

"Shall we begin by requesting the mobilization of the special forces team?" Kim Hyung-Jung asked.

"That sounds good," Kang Chan responded.

*Finally! Things are finally moving along.*

"How many personnel would you like to deploy?" Kim Hyung-Jung asked.

"Let's go with twenty-four. Have gas masks prepared as well. I also want Woo Hee-Seung and Lee Doo-Hee to join the team, so you only have to select twenty from the Jeungpyeong special forces."

Kim Hyung-Jung picked up the phone on the desk to proceed with Kang Chan's commands.

"Are you planning on commanding them yourself?" Jeon Dae-Geuk asked.

"Yes, sir," Kang Chan replied.

"Don't you think you should leave the special forces team to handle this one?"

"I don't think they're ready for me to leave them to their own devices just yet, especially since Cha Dong-Gyun and Choi Jong-Il won't be there either."

Jeon Dae-Geuk's face was back to how it normally was.

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Seok Kang-Ho, Cha Dong-Gyun, and Kwak Cheol-Ho looked on with nervous expressions as the deputy hung up the phone.

“We’ve received orders to send twenty armed soldiers to Osan,” the deputy said.

Cha Dong-Gyun stood up from the chair next to the bed.

“Kwak Cheol-Ho, compose a list and arm the team,” he ordered.

“Yes, sir,” Kwak Cheol-Ho replied before rushing out.

“Please do my part for me, sir,” Cha Dong-Gyun said as he looked at Seok Kang-Ho. He still appeared to be quite pale.

“Do you know what someone with subpar combat skills has to do to become the boss of the class?” Seok Kang-Ho asked.

Cha Dong-Gyun didn’t seem to understand what he meant.

“He has to fight like his life is on the line. There will be an endless number of these kinds of operations in the future. The captain I know doesn’t start things without properly seeing them to the end,” Seok Kang-Ho continued.

He dug through his pocket and pulled out a cigarette and a lighter, offering them to Cha Dong-Gyun.

*Click.*

“Right now, the best you can do is recover quickly. Come with us on the next operation.”

“Yes, sir,” Cha Dong-Gyun replied. He puffed on the cigarette once before immediately putting it out.

“What’s wrong?” Seok Kang-Ho asked, puzzled.

“I was told to keep away from alcohol and cigarettes if I want to recover quickly,” Cha Dong-Gyun explained, looking quite determined.

Seok Kang-Ho couldn’t help but smirk.

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The preparations proceeded swiftly.

With a single phone call, they obtained approval for the operation, and through a satellite operated by France’s DGSE, they received detailed photos of the hostages’ approximate location.

That wasn’t all the DGSE was capable of. They sent over detailed information on the enemy’s armed personnel, their types of weapons, the mastermind behind the kidnapping, individuals involved in it, and even nearby armed forces likely to support the kidnappers. All of this was provided in so much detail that Kim Hyung-Jung shook his head in admiration.

“I’m honestly envious,” Kim Hyung-Jung remarked.

“Hopefully we’ll reach this level soon,” Kang Chan agreed.

“These kinds of abilities provide better safety for the agents going on the operations,” Jeon Dae-Geuk said approvingly, a bit of jealousy in his eyes.

“Since they left Jeungpyeong, they should arrive in about two hours and thirty minutes,” Kim Hyung-Jung informed them.

“Fatigue is likely going to be a problem. If the enemies have nuclear weapons like Mystras or Iglas, taking a helicopter is going to be dangerous. Whatever the case, I will receive as much help as I can from the French DGSE. Please prepare satellite phones and codes in case we decide to travel by land,” Kang Chan requested.

“Understood,” Kim Hyung-Jung said as he noted each of Kang Chan’s requests.

*Is this everything?*

A map, team, weapons, satellite phones, and paths with escape routes. Kang Chan slowly reviewed the map from the beginning.

Sometimes, one could feel a gaze on them without seeing it. Kang Chan turned his head to see Jeon Dae-Geuk looking at him with a heavy expression.

“I must be getting old,” Jeon Dae-Geuk said.

“How so?” Kang Chan asked.

“I’m anxious about you going on this operation.”

When Kang Chan smirked, Jeon Dae-Geuk nodded. “This is something I’ve always dreamed about. But now that it’s actually happening, I finally understand a bit of how Choi Seong-Geon felt.”

“I’ll return home with everyone rescued safely,” Kang Chan assured him with a smile.

“Of course you will. Good luck,” Jeon Dae-Geuk said.

Kang Chan couldn’t help but grin. It was strange, but South Korea had many incredible people like Jeon Dae-Geuk.

Chapter 214: Something I’ve Always Dreamed About (2)

It didn’t take long for the military aircraft that departed from Osan to enter Chinese airspace.

In the plane, Kang Chan put on the military uniform, military boots, bandana, and helmet that Yoon Sang-Ki handed him. The military uniform was in a faded light gray color, and for the first time since he began joining South Korean operations, the national flag was sewn near the top of his left upper arm.

After wearing the appropriate gear, the soldiers split roles and started arming themselves to the teeth. As usual, Kang Chan and Seok Kang-Ho each took an MP5SD submachine gun, a rifle, a

combat knife, and extra magazines. This time, they also put two grenades in the pockets of their vests.

*Click. Click.*

As Kang Chan and Seok Kang-Ho checked the breechblock on their rifles, the plane filled up with a new kind of tension.

“Gather ‘round,” Kang Chan ordered. In response, the soldiers rallied up at the center of the plane.

Kang Chan subtly smiled. Judging from the soldiers’ behavior and the look in their eyes, they seemed to be calm and relaxed. It was a stark difference from when they participated in their first operation, which was in France.

“This is a full picture of the town of Sangar, our target location, and this photo shows where we think the hostages are being held,” Kang Chan began. The soldiers concentrated on the map and photos that he was showing them.

Kang Chan then took out another map and pointed to one area on it with his index finger. “The plane will be dropping us off here at Kabul[1] Airport. From there, we’ll be taking a helicopter to Ghazni[2], where a local guide will help us get a truck to Sangar. This place will be our Point Alpha, and this will be Point Beta.”

The soldiers nodded. Kang Chan no longer had to explain things in detail for them to understand what he meant.

“I’ll be leading Team One. Woo Hee-Seung, you will be my second,” Kang Chan continued. Making eye contact with him, Woo Hee-Seung nodded.

“Seok Kang-Ho, you’re in charge of Team Two. Kwak Cheol-Ho, you will be his second,” Kang Chan added.

“Alright,” Seok Kang-Ho answered.

Kang Chan slowly looked at each of the soldiers. “The Palestinian Islamic Jihad is the Shiite militia’s biggest characteristic. Since they believe that they’re fighting a holy war, they will be stopping at nothing. We have to be especially cautious of suicide bombing and hostages rigged with booby traps.”

Seok Kang-Ho softly exhaled.

“Even if you find the hostages, make sure you don’t just recklessly approach them. Daye!” Kang Chan called.

“Yes, sir.”

“If you find the hostages, make sure you guide the men through the procedure properly.”

“Roger that.”

Kang Chan's gaze on the soldiers sharpened. They now worked well enough with each other that they started becoming more or less nervous depending on how he moved and behaved.

"You guys aren't little chicks anymore. Honestly, you all look older than half-grown chicks to me now," Kang Chan commented.

Tightly gritting their teeth, Kwak Cheol-Ho and the others put all their focus on Kang Chan.

"If I had to form a team to fight fifty of who you used to be when we had our live ammo training, I would only need to take five of you who are on this plane right now."

As the soldiers' eyes filled with pride, Kang Chan added, "However, let this serve as a warning to all of you. Do not recklessly run into battle. If any of you loses control of your emotions, overdo it, and run out, know that you're going to get your fellow men shot in the forehead."

Seok Kang-Ho watched Kang Chan and the soldiers with a grin. It was his first time seeing Kang Chan rambling like this, and he found it fascinating how the eyes and expressions of the soldiers changed every minute in response to what Kang Chan was saying.

"Our goal for this operation is to rescue all of the hostages. Any questions?" Kang Chan asked. Starting with Kwak Cheol-Ho, he slowly made eye contact with all of the soldiers. No one raised any concerns.

"Then get comfortable and some rest until we arrive," Kang Chan said. The soldiers sat against the wall of the plane again.

"Want to have a cup of coffee?" Seok Kang-Ho asked Kang Chan.

"Sure."

As Seok Kang-Ho stood up, a soldier quickly stood up as well and said, "Please stay seated. I'll make the coffee."

"Alright," Seok Kang-Ho replied and sat beside Kang Chan again. It was as if he had been waiting for someone to say that.

"Judging from the look in their eyes, the men seem to be in great condition," Seok Kang-Ho commented afterward, his own eyes glinting from excitement. When Kang Chan glanced at the soldiers, he continued, "It seems they have really become half-grown chicks."

Before Seok Kang-Ho was done with what he was saying, the soldier from earlier brought over and handed them two paper cups of instant coffee.

Kang Chan took out a cigarette and put it in between his lips. He then held out a cigarette to Seok Kang-Ho.

"Here," Seok Kang-Ho said, offering his lighter.

*Click.*

When Kang Chan and Seok Kang-Ho started smoking, the soldiers who were drinking coffee all began smoking as well.

“Phuhuhu,” Seok Kang-Ho laughed.

“Why are you laughing?” Kang Chan asked.

“The look in your eyes changed again.”

Kang Chan smirked, and Seok Kang-Ho grinned. They had done things like this countless times already.

\*\*\*

After flying for seven hours straight, they finally landed at Kabul Airport, which looked deserted.

After the military aircraft stopped at one side of the airport, Kang Chan and his men immediately boarded the helicopter that was waiting for them.

*Du-du-du-du-du-du-*

As they felt the winter air dig into their skin, they noticed clouds of dust and damaged buildings all over the area, which were things that informed them about where they were.

After getting about three hours of sleep and eating cup ramen and C-rations back in the plane, they were now going to spend another hour in the air on a helicopter to get to Ghaznir. Upon reaching their destination, they would secretly meet their guide and finally head to where the hostages were.

Kang Chan raised his left leg and sat back against the helicopter.

He was painfully aware of the difference between the soldiers, who now looked like mid-sized chickens, in front of him and the soldiers of France’s Foreign Legion, which was that he genuinely cared for all of these mid-sized chickens. The bizarre fact that they were willing to risk their lives for their country only made his heart swell even more.

After some time, even Kang Chan began to feel the spite in his eyes, which was his body’s way of informing him that they were getting closer to the operation site and that he was about to enter a new battle.

All operations were awful no matter the type.

They were hell—just pure living hell. Be it in the picturesque forest in France, an airport with the most modern facilities, or a deserted rocky mountain in North Korea, if they made even just one mistake, they could find themselves dying with a bullet in their foreheads, necks, or chests.

*If we want to survive, we have to be relentless in neutralizing our enemies.*

They had to see blood spray from their enemy’s forehead. Failure to accomplish that could lead to their colleagues near them dying. Even he wasn’t an exemption to death.

Like Lee Yoo-Seul, the soldiers in front of Kang Chan also had families that wouldn’t be able accept it if they died. Now, he also had Kang Dae-Kyung and Yoo Hye-Sook, who would be in more pain than having their flesh ripped apart if he died.



“I bought sushi...” Kang Dae-Kyung had said on Christmas when Kang Chan, who left early in the morning, called and told him that he wouldn’t be able to go home for a couple of days.

He knew that Kang Dae-Kyung was trying his best to smile and joke around, but he could still feel the worry and uneasiness in his words.

Still, he couldn’t stop.

*What if I only sent these men in front of me to this operation? What if I only sent Seok Kang-Ho?*

Kang Chan smirked as he shook his head. He was going to save all of the hostages. He would stop at nothing to rescue them and return with them.

When Kang Chan glanced at the soldiers, he noticed they now looked as if they already had a lot of experience.

About three hours before midnight local time, as the helicopter flew over a rough hill and a deserted field, Kang Chan began to feel on edge.

He fought the Shiite militia and the Sunni Muslims so many times back in Africa that he grew bored of them. However, he and his men were now in a place where they had no idea when or where a mistral or an igla would come flying toward them.

Among everyone here, only Kang Chan and Seok Kang-Ho were aware of how cruel they were.

That wasn’t all. In the past, he had even seen a nine-year-old child with big eyes firing an igla and a six-year-old girl with several dynamites wrapped around her chest.

*Will the soldiers still be able to pull the trigger if they see the look in those children’s eyes?*

That was how hell often unfolded.

After some time...

*Badum. Badum. Badum. Badum.*

Kang Chan’s heart suddenly began beating loudly.

*Damn it!*

He gritted his teeth.

*Why do I always suddenly feel uneasy whenever we’re getting close to our target location on a helicopter?*

As Kang Chan’s senses grew on edge, Seok Kang-Ho quickly looked at him.

‘Are we in danger?’

Kang Chan briefly shook his head.

‘I’m not sure yet.’

One igla was all it would take to end this entire operation.

*What’s going on? What on earth is happening?*

Kang Chan quickly scanned the area around the helicopter.

Ten minutes? No—they just had to fly for five more minutes.

In places like this, getting to where the hostages were was almost impossible if they failed to meet their guide.

*Badum. Badum. Badum. Badum.*

Kang Chan gritted his teeth as he continued to scan their surroundings.

*Let's go! We're going to stay in the skies for five more minutes!*

\*\*\*

When Vasili entered the concrete barrack with cold, snake-like eyes, Ethan stood up and held out his hand.

“I've always known you were sly, but I didn't expect that you would visit me like this,” Vasili said.

“Vasili, there's a misunderstanding. At that time...”

“Ethan, stop talking shit and just tell me what you're here to say.”

“You're not even giving me tea?”

After side-eyeing Ethan, Vasili slowly turned around and filled a small glass with vodka. He then offered it to Ethan.

“Are you aware that Monsieur Kang is on his way to Afghanistan right now?” Ethan asked.

“I don't know what you're trying to do this time, but you shouldn't forget that the three Spetsnaz teams that we lost to him a while back were our best units.”

Moving the vodka glass with his finger, Ethan looked up. “Do you know that France's DGSE is very unhappy about Monsieur Kang and Lanok? If you give me your support on this, I'll have the subterranean shock device installed in Russia.”

Ethan remained firm even as Vasili looked at him suspiciously.

“If you help us, then France's DGSE will also remove Anne,” Ethan added, making Vasili smirk. “After her, their next target will be Lanok. With his removal, you'll become the chairperson of the European Union's Intelligence Committee.”

“Continue.”

“The Foreign Legion's special forces in Africa will leave for South Korea. Their target will obviously be Lanok. As soon as they arrive, they will head to the embassy and remove Lanok, which will only take more or less five minutes.”

When Vasili narrowed his eyes, Ethan immediately continued, “It's impossible for Lanok to not know about an assassin from the DGSE taking action. That's why as an alternative, we thought of using the Foreign Legion's special forces instead.”

“How are you planning to get rid of Monsieur Kang?” Vasili asked.

“The United States will deploy three MQ-1 predators[3] and three satellites to live broadcast Monsieur Kang’s activities. Not only will CNN be putting it in the air, but the Taliban is bound to see it as well.”

“You’re going to put Monsieur Kang right before the whole world?”

“Monsieur Kang’s location will be shown on TV in real time. That will prevent him from ever leaving Afghanistan.”

Vasili pursed his lips and smiled, then frowned at Ethan. “You know what I think? I think you’ll find yourself in a very difficult situation if I tell Lanok what I just heard.”

Vasili’s blue eyes became as sharp as a snake’s, rendering Ethan speechless.

“A word of advice: if I were you, I would never mess with Monsieur Kang that way. Ethan, you lack experience in working with special forces teams, and that exposes your weakness too often,” Vasili said. He downed the vodka, then frowned again. “Even if you broadcast their location for all the world to see, three Spetsnaz units will still be able to get out of Afghanistan alive. Yet you expect Monsieur Kang, who basically wiped out those soldiers by himself, to die in the hands of mere irregulars? Haha.”

“Vasili...”

“You’re too late, Ethan. Lanok already called me before you arrived. You want to use the Foreign Legion’s special forces? Hahaha. Are you not aware that the person that they respect the most is the God of Blackfield?”

“They’ve only worked with him in one operation,” Ethan argued.

“You idiot!” Vasili exclaimed, which seemed to stun Ethan.

“The Foreign Legion only cares about two things—money and honor! And their idea of honor is different from the Spetsnaz or the SBS. It’s based on their endless respect for their remarkable commander. Do you really think they’ll betray the commander who gave them the best outcome since the establishment of the Foreign Legion?” Vasili asked, then sighed. “Do you know who the current chief commander of the Foreign Legion’s 13th special forcest regiment is?”

When Ethan didn’t answer, Vasili shook his head and frowned. “My god, you poor man! This is why they say you need lots of experience in the special forces to properly work as the Director of an intelligence bureau. Just so you’re aware, Gérard de Mermier is their chief commander. Do you understand now?”

Ethan looked as if he couldn’t understand what Vasili meant.

“Haha. This is appalling. That person is of French aristocratic lineage. Nevertheless, he applied to be transferred because the God of Blackfield is the French Foreign Legion’s most remarkable and respected special forces commander right now. That means the DGSE has been reporting your stupid plan to Lanok all along! Do you get it now?”

*Click.*

Vasili looked at the glass of vodka that Ethan dropped. Forcing a smile, he added, “If I were you, I would be running over right now to try to stop the United States from deploying their reconnaissance planes and satellites.”

“It’s too late. The United States has made and is already executing their own plan for this.”

“Tsk tsk tsk. In that case, you should be writing a proper will by now. If by any chance you’re lucky enough to survive, then you better start keeping one thing in mind.”

Ethan looked completely astounded.

“You should never mess with Lanok for as long as Monsieur Kang is behind him. Do you understand? Monsieur Kang is the assistant director of France’s DGSE and the assistant deputy director of South Korea’s National Intelligence Service. Do you know what makes him even scarier?” Vasili asked as he looked at Ethan as if he felt pity for him. All Ethan could do was shake his head like an idiot.

“One word from the God of Blackfield is all it would take for South Korea’s terrifying special forces and France’s 13th special forces regiment to put their lives on the line and pounce on anyone. What will Monsieur Kang do if a soldier dies because of your stupid plan?”

“No matter how strong he is, he won’t be able to come into the UK!” Ethan exclaimed.

“I remember North Korea’s Jang Kwang-Taek saying something like that not long ago. He was shot right here.” Vasili pointed to Ethan’s forehead with his index finger.

“And here, and here.” He then pointed to his neck and heart in order. “Then he was shot here again.”

Vasili turned around and filled up his glass with vodka. “In Asia, I heard that they call people like Monsieur Kang the drakon. They advise people to never mess with a drakon’s Achilles heel[4]. Unfortunately, you really grabbed onto Monsieur Kang’s Achilles heel.”

Vasili leaned his head back and downed the vodka, his contempt-filled eyes remaining on Ethan.

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“Anne! Call the Foreign Legion’s special forces immediately!” Lanok exclaimed.

- Yes, sir.

Lanok’s voice was unusually sharp. “Have you figured out the commander of this operation yet?”

- The DIA is the most likely to command it. According to our analysis, this could be their way of getting revenge for killing their spy Xavier. I’ve also received reports that state we can’t rule out the CIA either.

“Have you been able to contact Monsieur Kang?”

- He secretly met with our spy and left. I was told that the DGSE requires twenty hours to get into the DIA’s confidential information.

Lanok cocked his head. “Where’s Ethan?”

Anne didn’t answer. While looking at his watch, Lanok smiled, making it seem as if he just put on a mask.

“I didn’t expect another spy to dare two-time me. Anne.”

- Yes?

“Go to Niafles with Louis right now and stay with Pierre.”

- Alright.

“I love you,” Lanok said with a genuine smile under his ‘mask.’ He then hung up and pressed the button on his desk.

- Yes, Mr. Ambassador?

“Strengthen the embassy’s security to level 1.”

- Understood.

As soon as he got an answer, he removed his hand from the button and sat up.

“It’s going to be quite a long night,” Lanok told himself. He then held up the remote control on the desk and turned on the TV.

The wall in front of him went up, revealing a TV behind it. It was showing news from CNN.

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*Clank. Clunk.*

The soldiers swayed along with the truck. Fortunately, even without headlights, the driver was still driving quite well.

Kang Chan had his upper body out of the car window and his rifle resting on the roof of the driver’s seat. He put Kwak Cheol-Ho in charge of monitoring their left and assigned Seok Kang-Ho to their right.

The soldiers had also split into two groups and were pointing their guns in both directions, but they couldn’t really see anything since it was so dark outside.

They had to drive like this for two hours.

Even though it was already late in the evening, Kang Chan at least saw the dust that rose up behind the truck.

*Badum. Badum. Badum. Badum.*

His heart continued to warn him of danger.

Chapter 215: I Was With Him (1)

The guide parked the car behind a precarious hill with tumbling rocks. Fluent in Arabic, not French, he understood Dayeru's Arabic chatter perfectly. Before the soldiers' surprised expressions, Dayeru pointed to two locations on the map, spoke in fluent Arabic, and then turned to Kang Chan.

"He says we'll reach the target location once we cross over the hill out front, so we should stay hidden from here on out."

Kang Chan nodded, recalling the details from the map and the photos he had memorized.

France's DGSE introduced this guide to them. Anne also made sure that this guide could be trusted, given the intelligence agency's mistake in China.

"As-salamu alaykum," the guide said.

"That means, 'I wish you peace under Allah's protection,'" Seok Kang-Ho interpreted in a hushed voice as the guide hastily climbed back into the truck.

*Vroom.*

As the truck left the area, moving along the path up the hill, a storm of dust, silence, and cold rushed toward Kang Chan.

Kang Chan took the map that Seok Kang-Ho handed him and spread it out in the middle of the circle that the soldiers had formed.

"We are approximately a kilometer away from our target point. Woo Hee-Seung, split Team One into two groups. As soon as we reach our destination, secure this area," Kang Chan ordered, pointing to the ruins of a building shown in a photo. "Kwak Cheol-Ho, take care of this side."

"Yes, sir," Kwak Cheol-Ho replied with a nod, seeing that he would be taking the area opposite of Woo Hee-Seung's.

"Once all the snipers are in position, Seok Kang-Ho and I will go in. Any questions?" Kang Chan asked.

There were times in the past when soldiers still messed up their assignments even though Kang Chan had repeated his orders multiple times, leading to their entire team standing in one area with one side uncovered.

Starting with Kang Chan, the men all lowered their masks to cover their faces. Kang Chan naturally stood at the forefront. Kwak Cheol-Ho was to his left and Seok Kang-Ho to his right.

*Tat, tat, tat, tat.*

The small pebbles seemed to shout, “People are passing by!” as they loudly crunched under the men’s feet.

Kang Chan exchanged a glance with Seok Kang-Ho, then lifted his index and middle fingers to point at the hill on the right.

*Tat, tat, tat, tat, tat, tat, tat, tat.*

It was human nature for people to move faster once their destination was in sight.

A full ten hours had already passed since the Korean citizens were kidnapped.

This desolate land’s lack of civilization and the pitch-black evening seemed to amplify the men’s footsteps and other small movements.

Seok Kang-Ho raised his index finger and rotated it three times. Kang Chan pointed Kwak Cheol-Ho to the hill on Seok Kang-Ho’s upper left.

*Tat, tat, tat, tat, tat, tat, tat, tat.*

Kwak Cheol-Ho and the remaining members of Team Two moved in sync with him.

*Haah, haah.*

Kang Chan felt the air enter his lungs as he quickly scanned their surroundings.

*Thump, thump, thump, thump.*

His heart was beating heavily, but no sense of danger was pricking his skin yet.

After securing his position, Kwak Cheol-Ho lifted his index finger and rotated it three times.

One rotation meant that the team couldn’t get a view of the surroundings, an X sign indicated that they found unexpected enemies or potential shelter for them, and three rotations meant that everything proceeded as planned.

Seeing Kwak Cheol-Ho’s signal, Kang Chan began to head out with his own team.

Kang Chan traveled past the point that Seok Kang-Ho had secured and reached where Kwak Cheol-Ho was. There, he swiftly examined the view the position offered.

The landscape had a flat horizon and long hills on the left side. In the worst case scenario, there would be trenches between the hills, each one manned by someone aiming a gun at them.

*Thump, thump, thump, thump.*

Kang Chan moved forward, and Kwak Cheol-Ho and Seok Kang-Ho immediately followed him, the members of their respective teams moving after they did.

*Tat, tat. Rustle. Rattle.*

Kang Chan felt as if the pulsations of his heart were circulating through his blood, sending his heartbeats to the rest of his body. Each nerve connected to his eyes, ears, and brain was drawn taut as he trodded onward.

*Haah, haah.*

Every oddly shaped rock and meteor streaking across the sky caused every fiber of his hair to stand on end. With every step he took, he had to decide whether to pull the trigger or not.

*Crunch.*

When someone stepped on a pebble, several glances would shoot toward them, and the whistles of the wind led to sharp gazes searching for the source.

*Haah, haah.*

Kang Chan examined their surroundings more carefully than usual as they made their way to their destination. After about an hour on foot, they finally found the target location they saw in the photos. Amid the rubble and remaining walls of ruined structures, they occasionally saw completely intact buildings.

Climbing up and around the hills visible through the ruins would reveal a large cave, where the hostages were most likely kept.

Kang Chan pointed to the locations he assigned to Woo Hee-Seung and Kwak Cheol-Ho earlier.

The enemy's base was a single-story building. There was a wall that was made by pressing earth together, which had to be where the guards were staying. They were no doubt sleeping behind it.

At Kang Chan's signal, Lee Doo-Hee and another sniper went to their positions.

Not too long after, Kang Chan's radio started to crackle.

*Chk, chk, chk. Chk, ch, chk.*

He just received a message in Morse code by using the buttons on the radio.

'Got it!'

A few moments later, the same Morse code was transmitted by the other team. The two locations where the guards were asleep had now been secured.

Kang Chan gestured to Seok Kang-Ho, pointed to his eyes with his index and middle fingers, then to Yoon Sang-Ki and one other soldier.

Any enemy emerging from the secured buildings would be eliminated without hesitation. Kang Chan cautiously made his way to the cave, where the only remaining threats should be.

*Haah, haah.*

It was currently a little past five in the morning, which was when the enemies would be most exhausted and in their deepest sleep.

After going around the hills, Kang Chan hurriedly raised his left hand. Two guards wearing turbans were standing at the entrance of the cave. One of them was behind an M240 machine gun that had its bipod spread apart, and the other guard was holding an L85A2 against his chest.

The motherfuckers were standing on either side of the wooden door that led into the cave. They would likely shoot the hostages if they heard any noise.

Kang Chan crouched down lower and pulled out the Bowie knife that he had holstered to his ankle.



*Haah, haah.*

Catching onto what Kang Chan was trying to do, Seok Kang-Ho pulled out his own knife. Yoon Sang-Ki, who was following him, covered them from the back.

If they continued to creep along the wall, they could easily and smoothly take out the guard in front of the M240 machine gun. The issue was the one on the other side of the entrance.

Pressing themselves against the wall, Kang Chan and Seok Kang-Ho cautiously approached their enemies as closely as possible.

Kang Chan held his Bowie knife in a reverse grip as he turned back to Seok Kang-Ho.

*One, two...!*

*Swish! Whoosh! Dash!*

The moment Kang Chan threw his knife, Seok Kang-Ho dashed toward the enemy at lightning speed.

*Slash!*

Seok Kang-Ho deeply slit the enemy's neck. Kang Chan then grabbed the enemy's neck and covered his mouth as he struggled.

*Crack!*

Kang Chan forcibly twisted the enemy's neck, causing the man to slump over in his arms. The enemy's blood squelched, but it wasn't loud enough to be heard from inside the cave.

Kang Chan carefully set the enemy down on the ground and then withdrew his knife, wiping it on the corpse's clothes.

The wooden door was the only thing keeping him from entering the cave now.

Carefully peeking inside, he saw the hostages sitting in a corner with devastated, jaded expressions.

Kang Chan gestured at Yoon Sang-Ki, then pointed at the entrance of the cave with his index and middle fingers.

He only had one shot. The best he could hope for was to kill all the enemies in one go as soon as he charged in.

The cave was illuminated by lights that seemed to be fueled by burning petroleum, not electricity.

As long as Seok Kang-Ho was with him, the plan would turn out fine. They could eliminate the enemies directly in front of where they would run in from. Kang Chan put his rifle in front of him and got into position with Seok Kang-Ho. He then pressed the buttons on his helmet's radio a couple of times.

*Ch, ch, ch, chk, chk. Ch, ch, chk, chk, chk.*

'Two, three...'

As Kang Chan and Seok Kang-Ho's gazes met, Seok Kang-Ho slammed his right foot on the door and kicked it open.

*Bam! Swoosh!*

The enemy in a wooden chair sprang up.

*Pew! Pew! Pew!*

They took out three enemies in total.

“Aaahh!”

The women covered their eyes and screamed upon seeing the enemies grotesquely writhing and falling.

“Pull yourselves together! Does anyone have a bomb attached to them?” Kang Chan hastily asked.

Several hostages suddenly raised their heads.

“Korean! Are you Korean?” one of them asked.

Continuous gunshots could be heard outside.

“We’re South Korean special forces soldiers. Does anyone have a bomb on their body or anything like that?”

“No, we don’t!” a hostage quickly replied.

Kang Chan quickly scanned the hostages’ surroundings.

“These people didn’t treat us too badly!” one of the four male hostages said as he looked at the dead enemies with a pitiful look.

*Should I just shoot him too?*

Kang Chan felt an unknown anger surging inside him. However, now was not the time to dwell on it.

The gunshots outside suddenly ceased.

*Chk.*

“This is Team One. We have secured the first target point!”

*Chk.*

“This is Team Two. The area is currently clear!”

“We have to get moving,” Kang Chan frantically shouted, and the hostages stood up with confused faces. “Let’s go! Daye, cover our six!”

“Roger, Cap,” Seok Kang-Ho replied.

When they got out, they found the rest of the men standing guard in a circle in front of the cave.

“Follow us! Quickly!” Kang Chan urged.

“Aren’t there any vehicles?” the same hostage asked.

*This motherfucker has so many questions!*

“We have to walk for at least one kilometer!” Kang Chan replied.

Kang Chan stood at the forefront, Kwak Cheol-Ho took the left, and Seok Kang-Ho took the right.

*Tat, tat. Tat, tat. Tat, tat. Tat, tat.*

“Oh my gosh!”

“Careful! Take my hand!”

Kang Chan felt as if he was going to die from frustration. It was a good thing they were young women.

“Which organization are you associated with?” the male hostage asked.

*This son of a bitch!*

Kang Chan didn't bother to respond. The women were running as fast as they could, but from his point of view, they only seemed to be speed walking at best.

*Tat, tat. Tat, tat. Tat, tat. Tat, tat.*

“Huff! Huff!”

“Ow!”

On top of that, their rough breathing and yelps of “Be careful!” and “Hold onto my hand!” every time they took a misstep were basically like an advertisement telling the enemies where they were. This was undoubtedly the worst escape they could do.

“Ouch!”

*Plop!*

While running, one of the women fell over and clutched her ankle.

“Oww!”

Kang Chan ran over to help her up. “Get on my back!”

At his command, two of his men rushed over and lifted the woman onto his back.

“You said it was one kilometer. How much further do we have to go?” the male hostage asked.

The motherfucker was no doubt the guide. Despite the urgency of the situation, he wanted to show off that he still was in charge. It was disgusting.

Kang Chan continued to run without any response.

Just then, they saw car headlights violently shaking on the horizon, closing in on them. They still had about five hundred meters left to go.

“Hurry!” Kang Chan shouted.

To their credit, the hostages did begin to run faster when they saw the lights.

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Sunday, the day after Christmas.

All the regular programs were suspended due to a broadcast of a surprising and shocking scene, causing almost everyone in South Korea to be glued to their TVs.

[Let me repeat myself. The scene you are currently watching is being broadcast with a one-minute delay because you are watching it through CNN, which is receiving the transmission from Al Jazeera,] The anchor said in a quick, high-pitched voice, unable to contain his excitement.

[Even so, we are still broadcasting to you a live situation. It has also been confirmed that the team isolated on the hill with the hostages is indeed the South Korean special forces. Now, allow me to provide an overview of the incident.]

Just like every other morning, Kang Dae-Kyung was watching the morning news with Yoo Hye-Sook when this broadcast came on. Seeing Yoo Hye-Sook's trembling hand, he cautiously and nervously exhaled.

'No way. It can't be. I'm sure it isn't.'

It was the South Korean special forces team, after all.

No matter how exceptionally talented Kang Chan was, there was no way the government would send him all the way to a place like that. Still, Kang Dae-Kyung couldn't help but grit his teeth and remember Kang Chan running alongside the van during the underground parking lot shootout.

His heart quivered anxiously.

[First, at ten in the morning in our timezone, a video presumed to be of hostages abducted by armed Taliban militants in Afghanistan was released.]

On the TV screen, a tense young woman, unable to calm her nerves, delivered a clearly enunciated message in English saying, "Please save us," and "Please listen to their demands." Next, a man in a similar state pleaded for cooperation and begged to be rescued.

[And now, the video you are watching has begun to be broadcast around the world. We still do not have answers about how the South Korean special forces managed to enter Afghanistan to rescue the hostages, who are filming this live scene from the sky, and why this video is being broadcast.]

Before the anchor finished speaking, Yoo Hye-Sook covered her mouth with two hands as she gasped. The broadcast had just shown the South Korean soldiers crouching down to avoid the enemy's bullets, which shot up dust as they hit the ground. The broadcast's lack of sounds intensified the fear and tension of the situation. Soon after...

"Woohoo!"

A deafening cheer erupted as South Korea scored a goal in the World Cup.

In between the barrage of bullets, one soldier stood up and dropped the enemies in every direction his gun aimed at like dominoes. Those who dared close in on him plunged to the ground while a few others scurried quickly back to where their truck was. Another loud cheer resounded through the entire apartment complex.

Yoo Hye-Sook's hand continued to tremble.

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The screen now showed the soldier who eliminated some of the enemies giving orders to the other soldiers. Lee Yoo-Seul's mom, who was standing in front of the TV, covered her mouth.

That was probably how her husband fought.

'I was with him.'

'I'm sorry I couldn't save him. None of us here could've survived in that dire situation if it wasn't for Yoo-Seul's father.'

'He was braver than anyone. He never even showed anyone that he was struggling. I'm sorry.'

It was probably that person.

He had a deep gaze that didn't suit his age, and the other soldiers followed him without any hesitation. It was the man who told her about her husband's last moments with Lee Yoo Seul in his arms.

"Please come back alive! You have to come back safely!"

Tears streaked down the face of Lee Yoo Seul's mother.

\*\*\*

Gerard, who was on emergency standby, clenched his jaws while watching the TV.

The man had to be the God of Blackfield. The distinctive gestures that the God of Blackfield displayed when issuing orders to his team were exactly the same as the commander giving instructions on the screen.

The barracks were so silent that not even the sound of anyone breathing could be heard. Every time the deeply embedded scar on Gerard's cheek twitched, the youngest of their team anxiously observed his mood before returning his gaze back to the screen.

He considered asking if that man was truly the God of Blackfield, but Gerard's glinting eyes and wriggling scar were enough of an answer.

At that moment, the men's expressions filled with surprise, then nodded in understanding.

The South Korean special forces commander burst up amid the rain of bullets and took down the enemies in quick succession, and another soldier followed and covered him with incredible precision and timing.

Some people would probably think that the other soldier was just firing at random, but if it wasn't for his cover fire, the commander couldn't have eliminated the enemies with ease.

"Daye..." Gerard said under his breath, making the soldiers clench their teeth.

This was essentially the same as insulting the special forces across the globe. They were turning a hero into a mere spectacle.

Combat and death was inevitable for the special forces. Even so, their fate should never be portrayed as a circus.

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“These motherfuckers. Why are there so many?” Seok Kang-Ho gruffly grumbled with his head hidden behind a small boulder.

They were standing on an extremely low hill.

The team surrounded the rescued hostages to protect them. Right now, this was all they could do.

Kang Chan heavily panted as he peeked outside. For some reason, he felt as if the enemies could keenly observe their movements.

“Daye,” he called.

Seok Kang-Ho quickly glanced back at him.

*Du du du! Du du du du!*

The sound of the machine gun fire thunderously echoed from ahead of them.

“Let’s take the truck!” Kang Chan shouted over the noise.

Seok Kang-Ho briefly looked downward and then glanced back at the hostages. He was silently asking if the hostages could reach the truck quickly enough even if they did manage to hijack it.

“Put the hostages on your backs. Have the men run on their own,” Kang Chan directed.

“You don’t even have a proper plan?” the male hostage loudly complained.

“Shut up, you fucking asshole!” Seok Kang-Ho swore, causing the man to quickly lower his head.

Chapter 216: I Was With Him (2)

“Daye, take charge here for a bit,” Kang Chan said.

“Copy.”

Kang Chan quickly went to the other side of the hill.

*Bam-bam-bam. Bam-bam-bam-bam. Pew! Pew!*

The volley of bullets made the boulder he had his head against explode.

“Kwak Cheol-Ho!” Kang Chan called.

While prone, Kwak Cheol-Ho turned his head to Kang Chan, who was behind him.

“Let’s hijack the truck up front,” he continued.

Kwak Cheol-Ho briefly nodded.

“Have the men carry the thirteen women on their backs. Seok Kang-Ho and I will run out first. You and Woo Hee-Seung will cover our six and take the truck! At my signal, the rest of the team will then head down with the hostages!”

“Understood!”

*Bam-bam-bam! Bam-bam-bam! Pow-pow-pow! Pow!*

“Prepare the grenade launcher! Our enemies might have something similar as well, so as soon as you get on the truck, have our snipers positioned at the front and back of it!”

After issuing orders, Kang Chan crawled over to the hostages in the middle of their formation.

“Please listen carefully!” he exclaimed.

*Pow-pow-pow! Pew! Pew!*

Gunshots and the sounds of rocks breaking apart continued to echo around them.

“We’re going to steal the truck up front! My men will be carrying the women on their backs because they’re slow, and the men have to run with us. Any questions?”

“Isn’t that too dangerous?!” the same man as before yelled. He had a point, but Kang Chan still couldn’t help but hate him.

“It’s the only way!” Kang Chan responded.

*Bam-bam-bam-bam! Pew! Pew!*

“Look at this!” the man yelled and quickly stopped Kang Chan from turning around. “What’s your religion?”

*What insanity s this fucker saying?*

“A god is protecting us! The fact that we escaped from our kidnappers proves that, doesn’t it?” the man continued. Kang Chan’s silence seemed to give him confidence. “If we’re really going to get the truck, then let’s all pray together first! He will definitely answer our prayers!”

Kang Chan was relieved that he was wearing a mask and a helmet. Instead of responding, he immediately went back to Seok Kang-Ho. At the same time, Kwak Cheol-Ho explained the plan to the soldiers through the radio and assigned them the people they would be carrying on their backs.

“We’re heading down the hill once they’ve provided us cover with the grenade launchers,” Kang Chan told Seok Kang-Ho.

“Roger that.”

*Chk.*

“We are all in position,” Kwak Cheol-Ho reported at the same time as Seok Kang-Ho’s response.

*Chk.*

“Prepare the grenade launchers,” Kang Chan ordered.

*Chk.*

“Yes, sir.”

A moment later, Kwak Cheol-Ho, Woo Hee-Seung, Lee Doo-Hee, and two soldiers carrying M203s approached Kang Chan.

“See that rock in front of the truck?” Kang Chan asked.

*Bam-bam-bam! Bam-bam-bam-bam! Pow-pow-pow! Pow-pow-pow-pow!*

When Kwak Cheol-Ho raised his upper body a little, the enemy immediately tried to shoot him down.

“We have to secure that area so the others will have a safe location to come down to!” Kang Chan yelled.

“What about the rest of our team?” Kwak Cheol-Ho asked.

“Staying here is too dangerous, so have them target the first one among the three trucks! Make sure they take down any tango carrying an Igla or RPG!”

Their opponents were in what essentially was a flatland that didn't provide any cover that would allow them to use shoulder-launched missiles in hiding. However, if they managed to fire even just one rocket toward the truck, then everything would be over.

Kang Chan immediately told the soldiers what to target with the grenade launchers. If they could just eliminate the enemies hiding behind the rocks, then they would gain approximately three to five minutes of time.

\*\*\*

Lanok stayed up all night.

In his room were three agents standing with their feet apart and hands clasped together in front. Raphael was also waiting next to his desk.

Glaring at the TV hanging on the wall, Lanok took a sip of his tea. Not long after, the phone on his desk rang.

“Ello?”

- High Commissioner, this is the Director-General.

“What's going on?”

- I called to clear up a misunderstanding

Lanok had a similar smile to Kang Chan's.

“I believe you're working with France in mind, Director-General, but you'll only cause problems if you go cross the line of the role you're given. Nothing is more important than France's glory for me as well, but even I have trouble forgiving anyone who would dare point a gun behind my back and Anne's.”

- I have never thought of doing that, High Commissioner.



Lanok firmly pressed on the inner corners of his eyes with his left thumb and index finger.

“Romain de Begeade,” Lanok called.

- Please go ahead, High Commissioner.

“Be thankful that Monsieur Kang is on close terms with France. If he worked with the UK, France would have already disappeared from the map.”

- I’m aware of that.

Lanok glanced at the TV. “Fine. I’ll give you a chance to make an excuse about this ‘misunderstanding.’”

- We have removed Deputy Director-General Theo from his position. On the aristocrats’ honor, I, DGSE Director-General Romain de Begeade, swear my allegiance to you, High Commissioner Lanok Belmonde Perdieu.

“Who ordered that stupid broadcast to be aired?”

- According to our investigation, the DIA and Ethan have made a secret agreement.

“Where’s Ethan right now?”

- He immediately went from Russia to the United States.

“Protect him.”

- You must be concerned about Josh.

“UK’s intelligence bureau will keep making trouble with that kind of idiot as their leader. However, if Ethan is removed, then Josh will become their head. And if that happens, then France will be faced with a really tough battle.”

- Understood.

“Promote Monsieur Kang to the empty Deputy Director-General position.”

Raphael gulped while quickly looking at Lanok.

After a brief moment of silence...

- High Commissioner, I have a personal question to ask you.

Still watching the TV, Lanok began to look as if he had put on a mask.

- Do you believe that Monsieur Kang will genuinely work for France?

The Director-General seemed to have taken Lanok’s silence as permission.

“Romain.”

- Yes, sir?

“No one can predict the future, so wouldn't looking back at the past at times like this be the best answer to that? Have I ever made a decision that harmed France's glory?”

Raphael quietly put cigars and an ashtray on Lanok's desk.

- Understood. I'll appoint Monsieur Kang as Deputy Director-General. What measures should I take afterward?

“Mobilize the Foreign Legion's special forces. Save France's Deputy Director-General.”

- I'll have all those done immediately.

Lanok ended the call and held up a cigar, which Raphael then lit up for him.

“Contact Vasili and Ludwig. Tell them to cancel their command to assassinate Romain and that I'll contact them once Monsieur Kang has returned to stop them from saying anything else,” Lanok said.

“Yes, sir,” Raphael answered, looking full of pride.

“Will you tell Anne and Louis to return to the DGSE as well?”

“Will do.” Raphael quickly left the room.

Lanok looked back at the TV.

“Monsieur Kang improves one step at a time whenever he's in a difficult situation. Should I call the DIA and thank them for turning Monsieur Kang into the hero of all the special forces around the world through this broadcast?” Lanok asked himself, then deeply exhaled the smoke from the cigar.

\*\*\*

*Thunk! Thunk!*

Kang Chan glared at their target. He imagined firing the grenade launchers would make cool and heavy sounds, but in reality, they just sounded as if someone fiercely struck a can.

*Bang. Bang!*

*Whoosh!*

Kang Chan and Seok Kang-Ho stood up at the same time.

*Pew! Pew! Pew! Bam-bam-bam! Bam-bam-bam-bam! Pew!*

“Daye!” Kang Chan called, then quickly went down the hill.

*Pew! Pew! Pew! Pew!*

Kang Chan shot back at their opponents as he ran.

Seok Kang-Ho immediately ran over from behind Kang Chan. Kwak Cheol-Ho, Woo Hee-Seung, and the two soldiers armed with grenade launchers provided cover fire.

\*\*\*

[Two soldiers are quickly going down the hill. As a citizen of South Korea, while I'm proud of the soldiers for overcoming that kind of desperate fight...] The news anchor trailed off, unable to hold back her emotions.

The broadcast from CNN lacked sounds and sometimes shook as well, which perhaps made the scene seem all the more desperate.

~

[Ah...!] The news anchor sighed. The screen now showed the soldiers quickly running out with the women on their backs.

~

[Please... I and all of our fellow South Koreans hope that the soldiers and the hostages can escape safely—ah!] the news anchor, who could barely deliver her lines, screamed, and all of South Korea fell silent. The screen showed the soldier running at the very back of their formation falling to the ground.

Dirt splattered as the enemy riddled the truck with holes.

While the soldiers helped the rescued hostages onto the truck, two more collapsed.

The female news anchor at the bottom right corner of the screen turned her head to the side, unable to hold back her tears anymore. Yoo Hye-Sook began to cry as well, feeling the same way.

The soldiers' situation seemed to be becoming direr every second.

\*\*\*

“Cover me! Daye!” Kang Chan yelled.

*Bam-bam-bam-bam! Bam-bam! Pew! Pew! Pew!*

Kang Chan ran to the back as he called Seok Kang-Ho.

“Please go!” a soldier yelled. A bullet wound was on his thigh.

“You son of a bitch!” Kang Chan swore as he and Seok Kang-Ho tightly grabbed the soldier's shoulders at the same time.

*Pew! Pew! Pow-pow! Bam-bam-bam!*

The others provided cover fire for Kang Chan and Seok Kang-Ho, who were dragging the wounded soldier with them, so relentlessly that it was as if they had gone crazy.

*Pow!*

“Fuck!” Seok Kang-Ho swore as he staggered. A bullet had found its way into his left shoulder.

*Swoosh! Pew! Pew! Pew! Bam-bam-bam! Bam-bam-bam-bam! Bam-bam!*

“Grab onto him!” Kang Chan yelled. As soon as they reached the truck, he managed to lift the soldier onto it.

He and his men formed a circle around the hostages.

“Daye! Get in the truck!” Kang Chan yelled.

“Ugh!” Seok Kang-Ho—whose eyes were glinting full of spite—grabbed the hand a soldier offered and climbed onto the back of the truck.

“Go!” Kang Chan yelled as he struck the door of the driver's seat. He ran as quickly as he could next to it.

*Vroom!*

*Pew! Pew! Pew! Pew!*

As the truck began to move, Kang Chan returned fire.

“Kwak Cheol-Ho! Get in!” he yelled.

Kwak Cheol-Ho and Woo Hee-Seung—who were protecting the hood of the truck—climbed onto its back.

*Pew! Pew! Pew! Bam-bam-bam! Bam-bam!*

This had turned into a battle to the death.

Dirt splattered around Kang Chan with each gunshot from their enemies.

*Pow!*

Kang Chan staggered back.

\*\*\*

Yoo Hye-Sook covered her mouth with her hand.

Even though she didn't know anything about warfare, she still noticed the special forces commander falter. He continued running next to the truck not long after, but he was limping now. He seemed to have been shot in the leg.

Imagining the family and the parents of that soldier watching the broadcast made Yoo Hye-Sook cry even harder. Remembering Kang Chan doing the same thing some time ago didn't help at all either.

Wiping her tears, she unintentionally glanced at Kang Dae-Kyung, who was glaring at the TV and tightly gritting his teeth.

“Honey...” Yoo Hye-Sook muttered, then held his hand. Kang Dae-Kyung—who never failed to console and comfort her during moments like this—was crying.

\*\*\*

Inside a plane, Gérard loaded the magazine into his gun and looked at all the soldiers before him.

“I don't know what you all think about him, but to me, the God of Blackfield is a hero I'd be willing to put my life on the line for.”

Right now, Gérard's eyes were glinting as much as Seok Kang-Ho's. The scar on his cheek seemed to express his emotions. "Our target location might change on our way there, but our goal will remain the same. Secure the route the God of Blackfield will be taking. We don't have enough time to land, so we're going to have to drop down."

Smirking, Gérard continued, "As your commander, I have to admit that this operation is dangerous. I'm sure you're also all well aware of how high-risk parachuting down into the middle of enemy territory is. As mandated by the rules of the Foreign Legion's 13th regiment, I will ask you all once more. Does anyone want to back out of this operation?"

No one raised their hands. On the contrary, one of the soldiers even looked as if his pride was hurt.

Gérard nodded. "Then let's go save our hero."

*Clank!*

The youngest soldier roughly pulled a breechblock and released it. He was wearing the bandana that Kang Chan gave him.

\*\*\*

"Woah!" A thunderous roar came from an apartment when the TV showed the limping commander getting on the truck.

The men watching the scene got goosebumps, and the women clapped while wiping their tears.

As soon as he got in, the commander put his right foot at the edge of the truck and continued returning fire.

\*\*\*

Brandon—the Director of DIA—spoke to Ethan with cold eyes.

"Discontinue the broadcast for me," Ethan said.

"I feel like I'm watching the future of the British Empire. I can't believe the leader of an intelligence bureau can't keep the promises he so confidently made. I even feel like I got teased because I can't believe it," Brandon responded.

"I didn't expect the Director-General to turn his back on me. They're cunning."

Brandon sneered at Ethan. "You took Lanok too lightly, didn't you?"

"If the DGSE kept their word, then Lanok would have already been killed last night—"

"Ethan," Brandon called lowly, breaking off what Ethan was about to say.

"Now that we're in this situation, the DIA has to make the childish and nauseating excuse that we prepared this broadcast for South Korea's special forces team. We also have to join this operation now. SOCOM [1] has already mobilized the Green Berets[2]," Brandon looked at Ethan emotionlessly. "You've done something truly ridiculous this time, but at least it made me realize that Lanok has a power that we aren't aware of."

Just as Ethan was about to respond in delight, he added, “However, something horrible happened as well. Watching the broadcast has made the US military’s special forces think of South Korea’s special forces and the God of Blackfield as a hero.”

Brandon’s cold comment shut Ethan up.

“Go back. France’s DGSE pressured us into letting you live in exchange for quietly letting us go off the hook for that damn broadcast, so I suggest you head to South Korea and beg Lanok for your life,” Brandon continued.

“Brandon—”

“Ah! If I were you, I’d be on a plane already. If the God of Blackfield manages to get to South Korea before you do, you’d probably end up with a bullet in your head like that North Korean.”

Ethan gulped as he nodded.

\*\*\*

Kang Chan quickly scanned their surroundings. A soldier had bandaged his right foot, which was on the edge of the truck.

*Damn it!*

*My leg keeps getting shot every time I pick up a gun. I should put a fulu[3] or something on my right foot.*

When they left the standoff, their enemies stopped shooting at them.

Fortunately, their surroundings didn’t offer anything the enemies could use to hide.

*Clunk! Clunk! Click!*

With the truck rocking, Kang Chan held up his rifle and aimed at a small boulder. Everything would end if someone popped out from behind it and launched a missile at them.

The two snipers continued to monitor their surroundings on top of the truck, while the soldiers sharply glared ahead of the truck.

Two of his men were shot in the thigh, one in the waist, and Seok Kang-ho in the left shoulder.

One of them forced a smile as he looked at Kang Chan, blood seeping out of his military uniform. He was wearing a mask, but Kang Chan could immediately tell who it was just by looking at his eyes.

Kang Chan brightly smirked back, then examined their surroundings again.

*That’s it! Don’t die! Let’s get back home alive!*

*Click! Pew! Pew!*

Chapter 217: You Guys Fought Well (1)

*Bam! Bam!*

Pulling the trigger inside the rattling truck, Kang Chan blew the heads of the two enemies armed with guided missile launchers. He wasn't aware of it, but at that moment, thunderous cheers erupted from all of South Korea, causing the entire country to rumble.

A few of the other countries' special forces soldiers who were watching the broadcast sprang up from their seats, unable to contain their emotions.

*Clunk! Clunk!*

Every time the bumpy road rocked the truck up and down, the soldiers and hostages sitting inside wildly swayed back and forth. In that suffocating tension, they kept driving for seven more minutes.

*Thump, thump, thump, thump.*

Soon, Kang Chan's heart sent him even stronger warnings. He looked sharply ahead of them.

*Wham. Wham. Wham. Wham.*

His heart beat more powerfully than ever, making him feel like nothing he had ever felt before. It was as if his heart was shouting at him to immediately get out of the truck.

They hadn't even been able to get too far. The shallow hills on the right were just beginning to come into view. To their left were just a few houses with their roofs completely blown off.

Kang Chan quickly turned around to check on the people in the truck. One of the women had sprained her leg, preventing her from running, and three of his men were injured.

*Thump, thump, thump, thump.*

His heart beat so furiously that it was as if it had reached its limit.

No gunfire had come from the abandoned houses yet.

Kang Chan quickly scanned the hills ahead of them and raised his hand to his helmet.

*Chk.*

"Lee Doo-Hee! Head to the abandoned houses up front!" Kang Chan ordered.

*Chk.*

"Yes, sir," Lee Doo-Hee replied a moment later. The others heard the exchange through their own radios as well.

Feeling their gazes on him, Kang Chan pressed the button for the radio on his helmet again.

*Chk.*

"Kwak Cheol-Ho! Woo Hee-Seung! Lee Doo-Hee! Take over those ruined buildings as soon as we reach them! The rest of you are in charge of the injured!" Kang Chan commanded.

The truck went off the road and beelined toward the abandoned houses. As soon as it screeched to a stop, Kang Chan shouted, "Go, go, go! Hurry up!"

Already familiar with his personality, they realized his shout was far sharper than before. Hence, they began moving faster.

“What is the meaning of this?” the man who appeared to be the hostages’ leader complained through gritted teeth.

However, no one paid him attention.

“I said make it quick!” Kang Chan rushed the men even more.

As if there was no tomorrow, the soldiers rapidly lugged the injured people onto their backs while Kwak Cheol-Ho, Woo Hee-Seung, and Lee Doo-Hee bolted to the abandoned houses.

“Get off!” Kang Chan shouted, getting rid of the formal speech he had been using all this time. With widened eyes, the hostages hurried out of the truck.

“Why are you making us get off of the truck? It’s not like there are any enemies here either!” the man sitting in the innermost seat of the truck—the same man who had done nothing but complain—gruffly protested. “Our god is looking after and protecting us! For as long as we have faith in him, we will definitely be rewarded for our trust!”

“Shut up, you fucking son of a bitch!” Kang Chan finally roared. “Don’t you see the soldiers who took bullets just to save a fucking whiny little bitch like you? Don’t you think they have families back home desperately waiting for them to return safely? If you want to die here, then be my motherfucking guest!”

The male hostage noticeably gulped, his throat bobbing up and down. He had just seen the glint in Kang Chan’s eyes between his helmet and mask.

“We will give up on the hostages who refuse to follow orders,” Kang Chan warned before turning away to get off the truck.

The soldiers carried the injured and the weaker women on their backs while they stood on standby behind the truck.

*Chk.*

“We have secured the abandoned houses, sir,” Kwak Cheol-Ho informed him through the radio.

At the same time, the male hostage inside the truck quietly crept out and stood between the soldiers.

“Get going! Daye, lead them to the target point!” Kang Chan shouted.

*Whoosh!*

As commanded, the soldiers dashed forward. If it turned out that nothing was wrong with their situation, this would just be an act of insanity. They had abandoned their perfectly fine means of transportation just to be trapped in an old building.

However, Kang Chan couldn’t just ignore his gut feeling.

An enemy had to be nearby somewhere.

*Chk.*



“Lee Doo-Hee! Prepare to shoot!” Kang Chan ordered. His heart was beating so fast that it made him dizzy.

*Swish!*

With the sound of fireworks popping, white smoke soared from the hill to their right to their truck. Limping, Kang Chan hurriedly followed behind the soldiers.

“Run! Run!” Kang Chan rushed them along.

Drawing a line in the air, the white smoke reached the truck. Amid a heavy moment of silence, the truck exploded with a deafening boom.

*Thud!*

In this terrain, one grenade would be enough to make the ground within a hundred-meter radius violently quake. Hence, the moment the truck exploded, almost all of the special forces team members staggered. A few of them even fell to the ground.

*Du du du du du! Du du du du du! Du! Du!*

An incredible rain of bullets followed after the explosion. The only silver lining they could find in this situation was the fact that the hill and the truck had quite a huge distance in between, lowering the accuracy of the gunshots.

However, getting hit by a stray bullet could still mean certain death.

Someone had to stay behind and cover their rear at least until the soldiers and the hostages had reached the abandoned houses.

“Daye!” Kang Chan shouted.

Seok Kang-Ho, whose left shoulder was a bloody mess, stayed behind Kang Chan, eyes determinedly glinting.

They were currently down on the ground while the enemies were running over to a dark blob that was quite far away from the hill.

*Pew! Pew! Pew! Pew!*

Kang Chan opened fire, and Seok Kang-Ho followed suit. Kang Chan saw the enemies flinch before lurching down to the ground.

Chk.

“Everyone has been brought to safety!” Kwak Cheol-Ho announced over the radio sometime later, accompanied by gunshots coming from the abandoned buildings. Kang Chan felt relieved until he saw a truck approaching from the hill.

“Get inside! Hurry!” Kang Chan commanded.

Seok Kang-Ho stayed silent.

“You can’t shoot while running with that shoulder! Get in, find a position, and provide cover for me from there!”

Delaying any longer in a place like this would just put them both in danger.

Seok Kang-Ho looked at Kang Chan with red, bloodshot eyes one last time before quickly turning around and running toward the buildings.

*Swish! Swish! Pew! Du du du du! Du du! Du du du!*

The enemies relentlessly targeted Seok Kang-Ho. Even without being ordered to, the team immediately provided cover for him.

The dirt below Kang Chan rose up and violently whipped around him.

\*\*\*

The female anchor remained speechless, still choking back her tears, and the male anchor covered his mouth with a clenched fist, barely managing to keep his expression under control.

[There is no way of knowing... Ahem! There is no way of knowing... how the commander detected the ambush of the enemies...] The anchor's voice trembled as he spoke. [One thing is for certain, however. That desperate battle... clearly demonstrates the determination and spirit of South Korea's special forces.]

The female anchor's sniffles could be heard through the TV.

[We eagerly anticipate the safe return of the special forces soldiers and the hostages. Thank you... on behalf of our country, thank you so much.]

The male anchor barely managed to finish his lines before he turned to the side and closed his eyes. Unable to suppress his overwhelming emotions, his silent cries vividly represented the sentiments of the South Korean people watching from home.

[Please... may the commander be safe... we hope he can enter the building. Whatever... whatever is making him fight so fiercely like that... Thank you.]

After endless expressions of gratitude, the male anchor could no longer speak either. Seeing the spray of dirt around the commander, who was now left alone, the male anchor eventually burst into loud sobs.

\*\*\*

*Du du du du! Du du du!*

Kang Chan couldn't even stand up.

The enemies took cover and started shooting at him from behind the truck. Kang Chan had to find a way to avoid their gunfire.

*Chk.*

"Snipers! Keep an eye out for any missile launchers!" Kang Chan ordered.

*Chk.*

"Understood, sir!" Lee Doo-Hee said, his firm resolve made clear through the radio.

*Du du du! Pew! Pew! Du du du du! Pew pew pew!*

A glance was enough for Kang Chan to determine that they were up against roughly over a hundred people.

*Chk.*

“Captain! Come inside as soon as I hit them with the grenade launcher!” Seok Kang-Ho shouted.

*Chk.*

“Got it,” Kang Chan replied.

He knew he could count on Seok Kang-Ho. In seconds, the guy had assessed the situation and come up with a plan.

*Chk.*

“Get ready!” Seok Kang-Ho shouted. Right after he sent an order through the radio, two dull thuds echoed in succession.

*Clunk! Clunk!*

A moment later, one of the enemy’s trucks exploded.

*Swoosh!*

*Pew pew! Pew! Pew! Du du du du! Du du du!*

Kang Chan ran toward the abandoned buildings as fast as he could. Despite the pain making him feel as if his right leg would be torn apart, he forced himself to take awkward steps.

*Pew! Pow! Peeew! Thud! Pew! Pow!*

Amid the sounds of bullets hitting the ground, Kang Chan leaped toward the ruined building.

*Thud! Whoosh!*

Seok Kang-Ho and Kwak Cheol-Ho ran forward to grab him.

\*\*\*

South Korea was experiencing a rollercoaster of cheers and grief.

The broadcast had just shown the commander leaping toward the building and the two soldiers quickly dragging him to safety.

“Ah!” the anchor exclaimed, his sigh seemingly drowned out by the simultaneous moans of people all across the nation.

The live was being recorded from the sky. While there were times when the enemy’s presence could be seen in the distance, it focused mainly on the situation inside the abandoned building.

The two soldiers propped their commander against a broken wall. Everyone held their breath, watching him, until he commander tapped one of the soldier’s helmets and stood up.

“Woohoo!”

Another wild cheer erupted throughout the country.

\*\*\*

Kang Dae-Kyung burst into sorrowful tears.

“Honey!”

He was sobbing so heartbreakingly that Yoo Hye-Sook embraced him around his shoulders to comfort him. She soothingly rubbed Kang Dae-Kyung’s neck and shoulders, which were as stiff as a tree.

“Don’t cry, Honey. What’s wrong?” Yoo Hye-Sook asked through sobs.

Hearing her tearful question, Kang Dae-Kyung took in a deep breath and wiped his tears.

“It’s fine, Honey. They will be coming back home safely. Don’t worry, okay?” Yoo Hye-Sook said, attempting to calm him down.

“Yeah. They’re going to come back home safely. I know it... They’re coming back,” Kang Dae-Kyung repeated what Yoo Hye-Sook said as he choked back his tears.

\*\*\*

“We’re quite far from them, so they should have trouble firing a missile at us!” Kang Chan declared.

There were a total of four old buildings.

The hostages and the injured soldiers were gathered inside one building, and the snipers were positioned at their forefront. The others entered the adjacent building to split it up effectively.

*Shhk!*

Yoon Sang-Ki brought over some bandages and tore some off to tightly bind Kang Chan’s leg.

Kang Chan, Seok Kang-Ho, and the rest of the team members knew it now—the South Korean special forces now had the skills and experience to compete with any team around the world.

They could easily read the situation based on Kang Chan’s gazes, and no crisis flustered them now.

The look in Yoon Sang-Ki’s gaze, while he tied Kang Chan’s leg, was clear proof of that. Anyone who acted tough and picked a fight with Yoon Sang-Ki because they thought South Korea was weak would only get beaten up to a pulp.

Kang Chan lifted his hand to his helmet.

*Chk.*

“The truck is the boundary. Unless they go anywhere near it, don’t shoot,” he directed.

The enemies weren’t shooting right now either.

*Chk.*

“Snipers. Our lives are in your hands. A single Igla would decimate us right now. Protect us.”

*Chk.*

“Leave it to us, sir!” Lee Doo-Hee replied so firmly that it felt as if pebbles were digging into his ears through the radio.

*Chk.*

“The enemies will begin to form ranks. We can rest until then,” Kang Chan told all the soldiers. He then headed to where the injured soldiers were. The three all turned to Kang Chan with such perfect synchronization that it seemed as if they rehearsed it beforehand.

“I’m sorry, but this is the best we can do. I’ll look for a way to get us back. Until then, stay tough,” Kang Chan said. He then looked into the eyes of each soldier before hunching over and extending a hand.

*Thud. Thud.*

He patted the soldiers’ helmets. In response, the injured soldiers took turns raising their hands to tap his helmet.

*Meeting people like these is a first for me.*

They had all found a place in his heart.

Kang Chan grinned at them and began to move forward again.

\*\*\*

A tiny portion of the tubing connected to the IV needle inserted into Choi Jong-Il’s arm turned red, having clenched his fist so tightly with every scene that blood flowed back into the needle.

“Dear,” his wife suddenly said.

The broadcast just showed Kang Chan taking care of the injured soldiers before walking forward again. Choi Jong-Il’s wife quietly called to him so the other people in the four-person ward wouldn’t hear them.

“That’s the person from back then, isn’t it?” she asked.

Choi Jong-Il simply nodded with dark, bloodshot eyes.

“When you go back to work and happen to sacrifice your life for him, I’ll consider you a hero for the rest of my life,” she said.

“I know,” Choi Jong-Il agreed.

“I’m jealous that you get to fight side by side with someone like him. Once you get better, forget about your duties in the household. Just give your life to the

Republic of Korea. We once lived as the last bastion of this land. In the first place, I chose you because I fell in love with the way you protect our country," she added.

Choi Jong-Il nodded again, choking back the emotions that threatened to spill out.

"It's frustrating! I can't believe that I'm not in that kind of battle!" his wife furiously exclaimed. She wiped her tears with the back of her hand and then glared at Choi Jong-Il.

"Stop acting like a dramatic baby and get back up! Fight for that man already!"

"I will," Choi Jong-Il firmly replied.

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About an hour had passed since then.

Kang Chan headed from the front building to the one on the left.

"Yoon Sang-Ki," Kang Chan called.

"Yes, sir!" Yoon Sang-Ki attentively replied.

"Who has the satellite phone?" Kang Chan asked.

Kang Chan had been wondering for a while why they hadn't used the phone yet.

"I have it," the soldier next to Yoon Sang-Ki immediately replied and lifted the phone that was hanging from his waist.

"Get me on a call," Kang Chan ordered.

"Yes, sir."

They had turned the satellite phone off in case it made any noise during the operation. The soldier pressed the switches 9 times in order to unlock it, then pressed the phone to his ear before handing it to Kang Chan.

Beep. Beep. Beep.

The distinctive signal of the satellite phone echoed. Not long after, they got a response.

- This is Terminal.

"This is Delivery. We are currently isolated," Kang Chan informed them.

-We are aware, Delivery. The whole situation is presently being broadcast on TV.

Kang Chan quickly looked up at the sky. He had no idea what was going on. All he could see was that the damn sky was blindingly blue and tall.

- Delivery, we can also see the enemy's current situation. They have gathered a large number. This isn't an accurate count, but there seems to be at least two hundred.

*Damn it!*

They would have to deal with that many with just seventeen men.

Kang Chan gritted his teeth and glowered at the hill on the horizon.

- France and the United States have sent their special forces teams over. The United States' Apache helicopter is flying toward you as fast as it can, so you should only have to hold on for a little longer.

Kim Hyung-Jung sounded as if he was trying to maintain his composure, but his voice was filled with pity. He and the other men were probably all listening to this conversation in the strange conference room Kang Chan was invited into earlier.

“Anything else I should know?”

- That is it.

Not stating one's name, nationality, and purpose was the most fundamental principle of communication. The people in the know were probably already aware of everything, but even so, it wasn't as if they could say “Manager Kim” or “Mr. Kang Chan” over a satellite phone.

“I will contact you when we've made the delivery,” Kang Chan said.

- Understood.

The call ended with lingering regret from the other side.

Kang Chan handed the satellite phone to the soldier and immediately informed everyone about the information he got from the conversation.

*Chk.*

“It appears the enemies are planning a large-scale assault. No matter what they do, though, we're going to return with all the hostages at the end of all this. Since this is being broadcast on TV, Lee Yoo-Seul must be watching as well. Let's show how bravely her father fought.”

Kang Chan paused for a moment before raising his hand to his helmet again.

*Chk.*

“It feels strange that I'm saying this, but...”

The sound of Kang Chan chuckling could be heard over the radio.

“... You guys fought well.”

Chuckles and snorts could be heard throughout the room.

*Chk.*

“What are you laughing about?” Kang Chan asked mock-sternly.

*Chk.*

“It's cringey, Cap,” Seok Kang-Ho grumbled. Through Seok Kang-Ho's line, Kang Chan could hear the hostages singing hymns in the background.

Soon after...

*Chk.*

“Cap, the bastards seem to be getting back to it,” Seok Kang-Ho radioed in, urgency in his voice.

Chapter 218.1: You Guys Fought Well (2)

Kang Chan ran to the front and looked past the broken truck, which was still letting out dark smoke.

*This is weird.*

He suddenly grew suspicious as he watched how their enemies were behaving.

*Something's not right.*

He couldn't put it into words, but his gut feeling seemed to be trying to tell him something.

Seok Kang-Ho quickly looked at Kang Chan and cocked his head.

‘Something's weird!’

‘So you can feel it too, huh?’

Behind their position was nothing but a flatland. That was why only one of his men was protecting it.

*Kim Hyung-Jung said that everyone is watching all of this unfold from the sky and that we have two hundred enemies coming from our twelve. He didn't say anything else.*

Kang Chan glared at their enemies as he gritted his teeth. He could see the truck that had left from the hill making a wide turn to the left side of the abandoned houses.

Kang Chan quickly raised his hand to his helmet.

*Chk.*

“The enemies are trying to surround us! I'll take charge of our six! Snipers, don't ever take your eyes off that ridge!” Kang Chan commanded. “Seok Kang-Ho, take command of the men assigned to our front, and Woo Hee-Seung, take three of our men with you and support our rear!”

*Du-du-du-du! Du-du-du-du! Du-du! Pow pow pow! Pow pow! Pow pow pow pow!*

Their enemies started to shoot at them nearly at the same time as Kang Chan finished radioing in his orders.

*Swoosh!*

Kang Chan headed to his position, and Woo Hee-Seung and three other soldiers followed him.

“Take the wounded and hostages inside!” Kang Chan yelled.

*Clank!*

Kang Chan put his rifle on top of a ruined wall and began firing at a truck.



*Du-du-du-du! Pew! Pew! Pew!*

*Damn it!*

More than twenty trucks spread out and rushed toward them, leaving clouds of dust in their trail.

Kang Chan didn't expect that many.

*Pew! Pew!*

With a pull of his trigger, he killed one of the drivers, causing a truck to swerve to the side. One missile from any of those trucks would end everything they were fighting so hard for, so he kept them all under close observation as he shot them.

*Pew! Pew! Pew! Pew! Pew!*

After moving the wounded inside, Woo Hee-Seung and the other soldiers headed to the back, making the pressure a little lighter.

*Du-du-du! Pew! Pew! Du-du-du-du! Pow pow pow! Pow pow!*

Their rear wasn't their only problem, however.

They kept hearing gunshots and walls exploding from the left—which Kwak Cheol-Ho was in charge of—and the front, which Seok Kang-Ho was protecting.

*Ta-dang! Ta-dang! Du-du-du! Du-du-! Du-du-du-du! Pew!*

While the bullets caused sparks to splatter from the trucks' hoods, their enemies ferociously fired back at them.

*Chk.*

“Another truck is coming toward us from the right side of our front!” someone radioed in.

*Those fuckers!*

Their enemies could attack them this coordinatedly probably because they were watching the broadcast, which put Kang Chan and his team's situation in full display.

*Pew! Pew! Du-du-du! Pow! Ta-dang! Pew! Pew!*

Kang Chan fired two bullets, causing another truck to swerve away.

The trucks were only fifty meters away now.

Kang Chan quickly headed to where the new truck was coming from.

*Chk.*

“Daye! Support our right!” Kang Chan yelled and aimed his rifle above the wall that was near the building that the wounded and the rescued hostages were in.

*Damn it! There are so many of them! Are they planning to bring all the trucks in this country?!*

*Du-du-du-du! Pew! Pew! Pow pow pow! Pow pow! Pow pow pow!*

So many bullets were whizzed toward them that it became difficult to even just raise their heads. Still, Kang Chan found gaps to shoot back in turns with Seok Kang-Ho, who had run over.

*We're going to prevent any missile from hitting us no matter what!*

*Pew! Pow pow pow pow! Pow pow! Pow pow pow pow!*

For each bullet they fired, ten more hit the walls they used as cover.

*Pew! Pew!*

Kang Chan shot and stopped a truck again. The rest were only thirty meters away now.

At this rate, they would soon be engaged in the most awful close-quarters combat.

The wounded soldiers took out their pistols and bayonets.

*Pew! Pew! Du-du-du! Du-du-du-du! Pow pow pow! Pow pow pow pow!*

Right after Kang Chan stopped another truck...

*Pow pow pow pow! Pow pow pow pow pow! Pow pow pow pow!*

From the left side—which Kwak Cheol-Ho was in charge of—they heard the rapid fire of an M60 machine gun.

“Daye!” Kang Chan shouted, and Seok Kang-Ho quickly nodded in response. Seok Kang-Ho would have to protect this area by himself.

To make matters worse, their snipers couldn't do anything to help because they had to keep an eye out for any missile launchers.

*Swoosh!*

Kang Chan ran past the rescued hostages, who had their heads down to the ground, and ran to the left, which was where Kwak Cheol-Ho was.

*Pow pow pow pow! Pow pow pow pow!*

Behind the wall, which scattered cement dust with each hit it sustained, the soldiers had their heads down to the ground. Two of them seemed to have fallen.

*Pow pow pow pow! Pow pow pow pow pow!*

Kang Chan made his way along the wall and quickly pounced on their enemies.

*Pew! Pew!*

As he killed the person manning the M60, their enemies took advantage of that time and covered more than twenty meters. They then got out of the truck and ran toward the abandoned building.

Kang Chan didn't even have time to press the button on his radio. “Kwak Cheol-Ho! Have all the soldiers gather where the civilians are!”

*Pew! Pew! Pew!*

With Kang Chan providing cover fire, two of his men supported the wounded by putting their arms below the wounded's armpits, then carried them to safety. Those at the front covered them as well, then immediately stepped away.

*Pew! Thud! Pew! Thud! Pew! Pow pow! Thud! Pew!*

“Surround the civilians! Do whatever it takes to protect them!” Kang Chan yelled.

Following his orders, the soldiers stepped back and formed an encirclement around the hostages.

*Swoosh! Pew! Thud! Swoosh! Pew! Thud!*

The enemies that were coming up the walls were wearing Islam clothes and carrying large knives that were used to slit necks.

*I can't believe I'm in the same situation as the battles I fought back in Africa again!*

*Click! Ta-ang! Du-du! Ta-ang! Tang! Du-du-du!*

With their rifles out of ammo, the soldiers took out their pistols and quickly rejoined the fight.

*Du-du! Thud! Du-du-du! Thud!*

However, due to their inferior numbers, more of their brothers collapsed to the ground, falling one after another.

Kang Chan was definitely their enemies' target. Hence, he chose not to withdraw yet. His men needed more time to move the wounded soldiers to the back. After all, if they just left their wounded behind, the enemies would carve through them until nobody could recognize their faces.

*Tang! Pow! Tang! Pow! Tang! Pow! Tang! Pow!*

Kang Chan took out a pistol and shot another enemy in the forehead.

The enemies climbing up and stepping over the curved wall fell backward, leaving behind a spray of blood. However, more opponents just rushed over and swiftly took their place.

*Tang! Thud! Tang! Thud! Tang! Thud!*

By the time Kang Chan took out a second pistol and began killing people with it, the enemies were already starting to come up the walls from four different directions.

Their enemies were probably acting like this because this was being broadcast on TV. With so many people watching their battle, they were likely refusing to let their pride be tarnished. Blatantly carrying kukris, the Shiite militia continued climbing up.

*Tang! Pow! Du-du-du-du-du!*

With a pistol in hand, Seok Kang Ho shot one of their opponents in the forehead. Their corpse fell back behind the wall before they could even fire back.

“Inshallah[1]!” one of their enemies yelled.

Not long after, the first of their enemies finally jumped down on the other side of the wall, closely followed by even more of his peers.

Kang Chan and his men would be shot to death if they hesitated at a time like this.

*Swish!*

Hence, he immediately took out his bayonet and ran to the front.

*Slice!*

Kang Chan swung his knife in a wide arc, then squeezed into the space it cleared, allowing him to grasp onto his target's neck and quickly slit their Adam's apple.

*Slice! Slice! Slice! Ta-ng!*

The hostages huddled against the wall like pheasants huddled in tall grass to hide as a mere group of ten fought with guns and knives, stopping hostiles from reaching them.

In this situation, nobody could carelessly fire a bullet.

*Bam! Slice! Slice! Slice!*

Kang Chan seized another enemy by the collar and stabbed their side and their neck in one quick motion. He then slit the nape of the hostile beside him.

“Glurp!”

*Swish!*

Blood spurted out from the enemy's neck like a hose that was releasing a large build-up of water.

*Bam!*

*You son of a bitch! No rule is stopping me from using other weapons aside from my knife just because I'm holding it!*

*Slice! Slice!*

Kang Chan quickly struck someone's forehead, then slit their neck twice.

Right now, neither he nor their opponents had the time to remember why they were even fighting in the first place. All they knew was that they had to kill every enemy in sight to survive.

*Stab stab! Slice! Slice!*

Kang Chan stabbed another opponent in the neck and stomach with his bayonet, then immediately sliced into the armpit and neck of the enemy next to him. At the same time, he grabbed a grenade with his left hand.

Kang Chan took out the pin with his thumb, then slightly relaxed his hand.

*Ting! Slice! Slice! Slice! Swish!*

While swinging his knife nonstop, he threw the grenade into the room next door.

*Whoosh! Slice!*

At the same time, someone thrust a knife toward him, slicing his side. However, he couldn't care about it right now.

*BANG!*

*Dayeru knows what has to be done next!*

Despite the vibrations from the ear-piercing explosion shaking the ground, Kang Chan pounced on their enemies without delay.

*Slice! Slice! Slice! Slice! Slice!*

As he mercilessly slit the necks of the remaining enemies, he heard metal hitting the ground twice. Seok Kang-Ho had thrown two grenades.

Chapter 218.2: You Guys Fought Well (2)

“Surround the hostages!” Kang Chan yelled.

Just like how the first shot and second shot were different, the first and second times they threw the grenades were different as well!

*Bang! Grumble!*

Parts of the wall broke off as if it was going to crumble down, and the enemies' feet, which were blown off, fell in between the civilians with a thud.

Kang Chan and Seok Kang-Ho picked up their enemies' guns.

*Du-du-du-du! Du-du-du-du! Du-du-du-du!*

Would people believe Kang Chan if he said that there was a rhythm in combat?

Unexpectedly, people were easily broken by the cancellation of operations they looked forward to or the leader of their team dying.

Kang Chan and Seok Kang-Ho pounced on and fired at the enemies with the M85A2 machine guns that they had picked up. In response, the enemies started to retreat.

*Du-du-du-du! BANG! Du-du-du-du! BANG!*

Soon, Kang Chan also noticed the enemies hiding behind the trucks, their heads planted on the ground.

*You motherfuckers! I'm not called the 'god that brings death' for no reason!*

“Huff Huff. Huff Huff.”

His helmet, top, and hands were covered in blood. Even his mask was drenched in it, making him constantly smell the strange scent of blood.

“Aaack!”

After some time, they heard an ear-piercing scream from behind them. It sounded as if it could rip the world apart.

“Ah! Argh!”

Kang Chan and Seok Kang-Ho ran over, finding the guide of the civilians on the floor, screaming and struggling to move away.

It did not take long for Kang Chan to identify the reason the guide was screaming—he had just seen the enemy's feet that landed near them after the grenades blew them off.

The ground that the hostages were sitting on was completely soaked by now.

Still, he was at least proud of them for not puking—

“Hurgh! Blurgh!” the hostages started to vomit.

*Damn it!*

The screaming stopped only after a soldier bent down, picked up the feet, and quickly threw them to the side.

“Lee Doo-Hee!” Kang Chan called.

“Yes sir?”

“Stop any incoming missile at all costs!”

“Yes sir.”

All of them had been wounded in some way. Lee Doo-Hee was covered in blood, and even Kang Chan had an open cut on his side.

“Kwak Cheol-Ho! Assign two of our men to help Lee Doo-Hee!” Kang Chan continued.

With a glance from Kwak Cheol-Ho, two soldiers ran to provide aid. Their masks were completely drenched in blood.

Right now, they at least had some time to breathe and recollect themselves before their enemies reengaged them in combat.

“Those four are in very dangerous conditions,” Kwak Cheol-Ho quietly told Kang Chan.

Behind the hostages were four soldiers, all of whom had lost consciousness. One of the soldiers who had been shot in the thigh earlier seemed to have been shot again during the battle. That was made evident by Yoon Sang-Ki, who was wrapping the soldier’s chest with bandages as fast and tightly as he could.

“Hurgh!”

The hostages still hadn’t stopped vomiting. Unfortunately, the soldiers could not really do anything for them. After all, they were reacting this way because this was their first time witnessing so much blood.

“Hurgh! Blurgh!”

Like an infectious disease circulating among the hostages, when one person vomited, the others started puking well. Watching the Shiite member with a slit throat twitching in front of them only made the situation worse.

*Gérard, since you’re already on your way here, hurry up!*

Kang Chan looked at the distant sky.

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It would be an understatement to describe the South Korean special forces team's situation as just desperate.

The female news anchor cried and gasped while the soldiers were fighting. Now pale with fright, she had begun to tremble as well. Meanwhile, the male news anchor continued to hold back his tears. Nobody could have ever expected that they would witness such a battle today.

[Please, everyone! Please pray for our soldiers' safe return and for the wounded to arrive back home alive!] one of the news anchors said, still on the verge of tears even though the battle had died down for now.

However, that was all they could really say. Whenever the screen showed the wounded soldiers next to the hostages and the ten to twenty remaining soldiers who were using all of their strength to protect them, they failed to stop their tears from falling.

[Right now, we have no choice but to rely on the capabilities of the South Korean special forces commander. As a citizen of South Korea, I cannot help but be ashamed that I have been completely oblivious to the fact that our soldiers have been fighting desperate and noble battles all this time to protect our country and its citizens! Thank you, our beloved special forces!]

Every time a soldier fell or an enemy came over the walls, the news anchors' hearts ached, thinking it was all over for the soldiers now. Fortunately, the commander tirelessly pounced on the hostiles climbing over the wall, defeating each and every one of them.

When the battle stopped, the commander began to check their defenses in four different areas. At the same time, the soldiers started dragging their enemies' corpses out of the building.

What would it have been like if they could hear the battle?

At that moment, one of the news anchors quickly turned their heads, seemingly coming to their senses.

[It has been an hour now since our soldiers occupied the abandoned house, and a little over thirty minutes since that desperate battle for survival started. Unfortunately, our soldiers don't seem to have any food or water. Just thinking about how parched they probably are in that cold and tense situation makes me feel guilty to even just have a sip of water.]

The news anchors looked as if they had calmed down to some extent.

[The citizens are raising our flag.]

However, when the broadcast began to show national flags hanging at every house, the news anchor burst into tears again.

\*\*\*

The soldiers had survived another crisis.

Pressing his lips tightly together, Kang Dae-Kyung cried like a child. He unknowingly clenched his fist so tight that Yoo Hye-Sook, who had been holding his hand, frowned.

"Honey, what's wrong?" Yoo Hye-Sook asked. She had also begun to cry after seeing his husband crying helplessly. Even as tears fell down her face, she

couldn't help but grow suspicious, thinking, 'Is he crying because of Kang Chan?'

"Nothing!" Kang Dae-Kyung wiped his tears with the back of his hand. "I just can't help but remember my time back in the military! Ugh!"

Kang Dae-Kyung's tears continued to drop.

"Don't cry! Seeing you like this breaks my heart."

"I'll stop—urgh! Argh!" Like a child who could not get what he wanted, Kang Dae-Kyung couldn't stop himself from crying..

\*\*\*

After disposing of their enemies' corpses, the soldiers guided the South Korean civilians and moved their wounded comrades somewhere a bit cleaner. Kang Chan then took his weapons and checked how much ammo he had left. Suddenly feeling hungry, he couldn't help but smile when he remembered the sushi that Kang Dae-Kyung bought some time ago.

Kang Chan looked up at the sky.

*Are Kang Dae-Kyung and Yoo Hye-Sook watching us fight through the broadcast as well?*

"What are you doing?" Seok Kang-Ho asked Kang Chan as he walked over to him.

"Nothing. I'm just staring at the sky out of hunger."

"Phuhuhu." Seok Kang-Ho was the only person who could still bring themselves to laugh during difficult times like this. Despite his laughter, however, his eyes never once stopped glinting. He never forgot about the dire situation they were in either.

"If those bastards attack us again, we are going to have a lot of trouble just keeping everyone alive," Seok Kang-Ho commented.

"Those fuckers are also going to need some time to regroup before they can execute another offensive."

"What do you think? Those bastards are going to result in that tactic now, aren't they?" Seok Kang-Ho asked Kang Chan.

"You already know the answer to that, so why even bother asking me about it?"

Seok Kang-Ho only nodded in response. Now that their large-scale attack had fallen through, the Shiite militia was bound to resort to suicidal strategies. The next wave of enemies that would charging toward them would likely have bombs strapped to their chests. If even just one of them managed to get inside the building, then all of their efforts and sacrifices would be rendered meaningless.



If they were up against even more cruel bastards, then they would be seeing women and kids at the frontlines soon.

In such a situation, Kang Chan and his men would be forced to shoot people down even if they hadn't checked who was carrying bombs yet. Unfortunately, among those that their enemies would send at them, only a few would actually be strapped with explosives.

However, determining if a woman or a child was equipped with bombs was actually quite easy. If they were crying, then they would most likely have bombs strapped to their chests. If they were just breaking out in cold sweat, then they were most likely unarmed and just sent out to confuse their targets.

That was the case with almost all women and children, at least.

“Ah, fuck! I'm hungry!” Seok Kang-Ho yelled.

*Why does this fucker curse when he's hungry?”*

Seok Kang-Ho let out a groan as he turned around.

The bandages wrapped around Seok Kang-Ho's shoulder, forearm, and waist were red with blood. Meanwhile, those around Kang Chan's side and right leg were also drenched in dark blood.

Kang Chan walked toward the wounded soldiers—which was every member of their team right now. The ten who could no longer move properly were lying down right next to the hostages. Among them, four were in such bad conditions that with each passing second, the situation they faced grew even direr.

Soldiers prepared and brought different supplies to different operations. In missions like this, bringing C-rations would be found quite funny. Much to their relief, they did bring morphine and several other essential medical supplies.

*These bastards have really become a team worthy of global recognition.*

Although they made it seem as if it was easy to pull out their pistols and unsheathe their bayonets while wounded, that could not be any farther from the truth. However, seeing them do that provided a huge morale boost to the other soldiers who relentlessly fought alongside them.

Kang Chan had to find a way to save these men and the hostages who were now looking at him with frightened eyes. Fortunately, they had at least stopped vomiting all over the floor.

“The enemies are coming!” Kang Cheol-Ho yelled after a bit more time passed, informing the rest of their team.

As the terrified hostages watched him closely, Kang Chan quickly headed to the frontline. Gritting his teeth, he glared at the hostiles making their way to their position.

They're wearing shaylas[1]!

Women wearing maghnaehs[2] were moving alongside them.

Their enemies were definitely going to be walking right behind these civilians.

Curious about what was happening, Kwak Cheol-Ho examined their situation.

*Chk.*

At the same time, they heard their radio crackle, followed by someone saying, “God of Blackfield, this is Gérard.”

Chapter 219.1: Let’s Send Them Off First (1)

All of the members of the special forces team also heard Gérard’s message over the radio. Kang Chan quickly raised his hand to his helmet and pressed his comms switch on.

*Chk.*

“Well, Gérard! Welcome to hell!” Kang Chan jokingly announced in French.

*Chk.*

“Dang, you must have been in quite the crunch to be welcoming me so eagerly, Cap,” Gérard joked back.

“Ha, shut up, you son of a bitch!” Kang Chan retorted in Korean.

When Kang Chan suddenly swore in Korean in the middle of his French conversation, his team members incredulously chuckled at him. Their lack of surprise was evidence that they had become perfectly used to Kang Chan and his quirks by now.

*Chk.*

“The DGSE has informed me about the situation. We will be jumping in T minus three minutes. Our team is composed of twenty-four members and led by Gérard de Mermier,” Gérard officially declared the team’s details to the South Korean special forces.

Kang Chan looked up at the sky.

*Chk.*

“The enemies are preparing for a suicide attack out there. It’s dangerous if you come down right in the middle of it!” Kang Chan exclaimed.

*Chk.*

“We will try to land as far back as possible,” Gérard replied with determination, refusing to take no for an answer.

Around the time Gérard finished his sentence, Kang Chan started to hear the whirrings of an airplane. He looked over the wall of the house to see.

Since he couldn’t stop Gérard from jumping off the plane, the least he could do was prevent him and his team from hanging from a parachute like sitting ducks waiting to get shot.

“France’s Foreign Legion has sent over twenty-four men as reinforcements, but since they will be parachuting down to us, half of them will probably die before they even reach the ground if we don’t do something,” Kang Chan informed his men.

Reading Kang Chan’s expression, Seok Kang-Ho chuckled out loud with anticipation, eyes glinting.

“I need three soldiers who are willing to come outside with me,” Kang Chan declared grimly. Almost immediately, with the exception of Lee Doo-Hee and the other sniper, every single one of his men took a step forward.

*These damn motherfuckers!*

It was a touching moment. Seok Kang-Ho must have been rubbing off on him because he couldn't help but internally swear.

“You already have me, though, so you only have to choose two more,” Seok Kang-Ho quickly said, staking a claim before anyone else could.

“Well, all right. Then first off, Yoon Sang-Ki, you're coming with us,” Kang Chan said.

“Yes, sir! Thank you!” Yoon Sang-Ki thunderously boomed.

*Have all these punks lost a few marbles? How can they be so grateful when I'm pretty much taking them on a suicide mission?*

Kang Chan looked at each of the soldiers in turn until he made eye contact with Woo Hee-Seung.

“Woo Hee-Seung, let's go,” Kang Chan announced

“Heh heh heh heh,” Woo Hee-Seung laughed like a maniac.

*There isn't a single sane person here.*

Meanwhile, a woman with bombs attached to her chest and the children walking with her had already reached the totaled truck.

“Kwak Cheol-Ho, protect the hostages no matter what happens!” Kang Chan loudly ordered.

“Yes, sir! You can leave them to me!” Kwak Cheol-Ho replied, reassuring Kang Chan and the rest of the team.

The airplane's noises had become louder.

“We'll take the M60 on the left and run straight into enemy lines. We have to prevent them from shooting down the paratroopers. Daye! You let the M60 rip. Yoon Sang-Ki, you're going to be our driver. Hee-Seung and I will cover you,” Kang Chan directed.

The soldiers who would be staying behind walked over to the four while Kang Chan was speaking. They held out their hands to pat Kang Chan, Seok Kang-Ho, Woo Hee-Seung, and Yoon Sang-Ki on their helmets.

“Now, let's go!” Kang Chan firmly roared.

The three men slung their rifles over their backs and followed Kang Chan over the fence.

\*\*\*

[The commander has just climbed over the fence and headed outside. It appears he is severely injured... but since this commander has overcome situations in ways that we couldn't have imagined, we can be sure that he will prevail this time as well.]

The anchor sounded coarse. The fatigue on his face was so evident that it seemed as if all of his strength had been drained away.

On the screen, the commander and three of his men ceaselessly rained bullets on their opponents as they ran for the truck.

[It seems they are attempting to escape!]

The enemy fired back, causing the dirt around them to toss up into the air. Soon, one of the soldiers lurched forward and fell over on the ground.

The male and female anchors both covered their mouths at the same time before breaking into tears once again.

\*\*\*

“Hold on to me!” Kang Chan shouted over the commotion.

Kang Chan and Seok Kang-Ho grabbed Yoon Sang-Ki's shoulders to pull him out of danger as Woo Hee-Seung hurriedly climbed into the driver's seat.

*Du du du du du! Pow pow pow pow! Pew! Peew!*

Unfortunately, the cover that the soldiers from the abandoned buildings provided wasn't too helpful. They were too far away, and the woman and the children with her were standing between them and their opponents.

Kang Chan got in the truck, held Yoon Sang-Ki by his shoulder, and forcibly pulled him in.

“Aargh!” Yoon Sang-Ki moaned.

Blood was oozing through his hand as he tightly clenched his stomach.

“Go!” Kang Chan ordered as soon as Seok Kang-Ho got in. In response to his booming command, the car started with a vroom.

*Clunk!*

Seok Kang-Ho grabbed onto the M60 and opened the chamber to load more rounds into it. Meanwhile, Kang Chan raised his hand to his helmet.

*Chk.*

“Woo Hee-Seung, don't mind the direction too much. Just avoid hitting the kids and keep yourself as close to the floor as possible!” Kang Chan shouted.

*Vrooom!*

The engine roared loudly in response. However, their speed didn't change much from before.

*Tu ta ta ta ta ta ta! Tu ta ta ta ta ta ta! Tu ta ta ta ta ta!*

The M60 began to fire rough, powerful bullets in rapid succession.

The smell of gunpowder instantly filled the air. Kang Chan's ears were ringing so much that it made him dizzy, but he pushed through it and aimed his rifle in front of the truck. He had to protect Woo Hee-Seung at any cost.

*Tu du du du! Bam bam bam bam! Tu ta ta ta ta! Pew! Pew!*

The combat had turned into a cacophony of gunfire and bullets bouncing off the truck's hood.

*Chk.*

“Jump.”

Kang Chan hadn't even heard the airplane yet when Gérard's voice came through the radio.

*Come down, punk! I'm going to protect you no matter what it takes!*

Sparks flew relentlessly from the steel plate in front of Kang Chan.

*Tu ta ta ta ta ta! Tu ta ta ta ta ta! Tu ta ta ta ta ta!*

The M60 certainly packed formidable power.

Unfortunately, the woman and children started to run toward the truck.

*We still have to buy at least one more minute!*

Kang Chan changed his position.

*Pew! Pew! Pew!*

The woman and children naturally weren't familiar with combat. They halted and hesitated when the dirt in front of them splattered at their feet from the bullets. The woman holding the hands of the children was standing at the very front, her extremely tear-streaked face coming into clear view.

*Tu ta ta ta ta! Tu ta ta ta ta ta! Tu ta ta ta ta!*

*Tu du du du! Pew! Pew! Pow! Crash!*

“Send the children over!” Kang Chan shouted.

*Pew! Pew! Pew!*

Kang Chan gritted his teeth and pulled the trigger. Dirt splattered again in front of the woman's feet.

“Send the children!” Seok Kang-Ho shouted at the top of his lungs in Arabic, momentarily pausing the trigger to speak.

*Tu ta ta ta ta! Tu ta ta ta ta! Tu ta ta ta ta!*

*Tu du du du du! Tu du du! Tu du du du!*

*Vrooom!*

The truck swerved in a different direction once again. At that moment, the woman shouted something through clenched teeth and pushed the children forward.

“Hurry!” Kang Chan shouted through gritted teeth as he pulled the trigger of his rifle.

The children hesitantly stopped as they scurried over.

“For god’s sake, please hurry up!” Kang Chan shouted again.

*Tu du du du du! Tu du du du du! Pow, pow, pow, pow! Pow!*

*Tu ta ta ta ta ta! Tu ta ta ta ta ta! Tu ta ta ta ta!*

The children started to move closer toward the truck.

*Craaaash!*

However, before they could reach it, an explosion erupted. It was so destructive and loud that Kang Chan felt as if it made his eardrums bleed.

*Creak.*

Woo Hee-Seung frantically swerved the truck away. When Kang Chan turned around to look, they found two young girls sprawled on the ground.

“Daye!” Kang Chan shouted urgently.

*Tu ta ta ta ta ta! Tu ta ta ta ta ta!*

Kang Chan quickly ran toward the children.

*Vrooom!*

Realizing the situation, Woo Hee-Seung blocked Kang Chan from the enemy’s line of sight with the truck, and Seok Kang-Ho continued to unleash hell with the M60, providing cover.

Kang Chan carried the bloodied girls in his arms. If they left these abandoned girls out here, they would inevitably suffer the cruelest death imaginable.

*Tu du du du! Crash, crash, crash, crash! Tu du du! Pow pow!*

Kang Chan pushed the girls into the truck, and Yoon Sang-Ki, who was still gripping his own stomach, pulled the girls toward him with all his might.

*Vrooom!*

*Tu ta ta ta ta! Tu ta ta ta ta! Tu ta ta ta!*

Seok Kang-Ho began to open fire again. As he did, they heard a different type of gunfire.

*Bang, bang, bang, bang! Bang, bang, bang! Bang, bang, bang, bang!*

It was all too familiar and too pleasant to hear.

*Vrooom!*

The truck screeched as it turned and started for the abandoned buildings with Kang Chan tightly hanging off of it.

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“Woohoo!”

Loud cheers erupted, shaking the apartment complex by its foundation. Yoo Hye-Sook clapped with tears streaming down her face.

Her tears were partly because of the news of the arrival of the French special forces and partly because she was moved by the commander rescuing the two fallen girls even in the middle of all the chaos.

Kang Dae-Kyung was breathing heavily, still in tears.

Concerned, Yoo Hye-Sook brought him some water, but Kang Dae-Kyung refused it. Yoo Hye-Sook set down the glass in the middle of the living room floor.

On the screen, the entire French special forces team was seen saluting the Korean commander.

[It appears the French special forces are expressing their respect to the commander.]

The anchor, who didn't know any better, uttered some irrelevant commentary.

Chapter 219.2: Let's Send Them Off First (1)

“You definitely are the best in the world at raising a storm,” Gérard joked in greeting.

“You son of a bitch!” Kang Chan swore with a grin.

“Stop cursing in Korean, sir,” Gérard shot back.

“What's the punk going on about?” Seok Kang-Ho asked.

By the time Gérard arrived, the scene was beyond chaotic. What made Kang Chan the most glad was that their wounded now received the treatment that they needed. Moreover, they finally had food and water.

*Click! Click!*

The sniper of the French special forces team set down an M200 Cheytac next to Lee Doo-Hee, making Kang Chan's heart feel a lot lighter.

One of the soldiers distributed water and C-rations to the hostages. At the same time, another gently laid the two girls next to them.

“Oh my goodness! Lila!” a female hostage shrieked in surprise upon seeing one of the children.

A member of the French special forces team examined the girl, then shook his head at Kang Chan with a grim expression. He then began to work on the other child.

The back of the girl's head was a bloodied mess, and her back had visibly caved in. It was hard to imagine her surviving given her poor state. Even the female hostage who screamed her name earlier seemed too shocked by her gruesome condition to approach her.

“Did you give these children food or something to wear?” Kang Chan asked.

The female hostage nodded with a bewildered expression, not knowing why he was asking. However, it now made sense to Kang Chan why the bomb-strapped woman had walked over with the children earlier.

In the midst of the situation, a few hostages dry-heaved upon seeing the young girl. The smell of blood would probably be staying with them for a while.

“Something went wrong, didn’t it?” the tearful female hostage asked Kang Chan after seemingly mustering the courage to speak up.

How could he explain everything behind what had happened? He and the hostages had different ways and outlooks of living life—would it even make sense to them?

Kang Chan lifted the dead child and set her down away from where the enemy’s bodies were. He thought this poor little girl wouldn’t be able to rest in peace given how bad her wounds were.

Not long after, a soldier walked out carrying the other girl. In the end, both of the girls he put his life on the line for to rescue died.

The girl’s face under her long eyelashes was already pale, and she had blood splattered all over her. However, her limp arms hanging lifelessly what was wrenched Kang Chan’s heart the most. When she should’ve been holding snacks and dolls at her age, her tiny hands were a mess instead, covered in blood and dirt.

An innocent child succumbed to hunger and was forced to walk alongside her bomb-strapped mom all because she accepted a stranger’s food.

Kang Chan approached the little girl that the soldier had set down and took her hand, brushing off the dirt. Although it didn’t fully come off, he also wiped off the blood with his sleeve.

From inside, he could hear the hostages saying grace for the food they were given.

*Pft.*

He supposed they were also prepared to risk their lives when they came here as well. It was just a difference of what they risked their lives for.

When Kang Chan stood up and walked back inside, a masked member of the French special forces team approached him.

“Do you remember this mask, sir?” the soldier asked.

Kang Chan grinned and tapped the soldier’s helmet. However, they were interrupted before they could continue their conversation.

“Captain, the injured are in critical condition. They require blood transfusions stat. For now, we will all contribute a little bit of our own blood.”

The soldiers all knew each other’s blood types. It was like common knowledge to them. It did not matter if they didn’t record anything else for as long as they recorded their blood types.

“Gérard,” Kang Chan said, gesturing to Gérard to go to the side so they could speak in private. He felt a bit lighter knowing that the French special forces team was guarding the perimeter.



“Take some of my blood and distribute it to the severely injured team members,” Kang Chan said.

“There’s no need to go that far,” Gérard refused.

“Just to be safe, do it discreetly so that the others don’t notice,” Kang Chan ordered.

Gérard met Kang Chan’s eyes and tilted his head. There was a brief moment of silence before he replied.

“There’s really no stopping you,” Gérard said so low that it was almost like a growl. He then headed back inside.

As instructed, Gérard took some of Kang Chan’s blood first.

“Excuse me!” the same female hostage talking to Kang Chan earlier exclaimed. “Please allow us to help the injured soldiers.”

She was quite observant.

Meanwhile, the soldier who had drawn a pack of blood glanced at Kang Chan and then approached the wounded.

“Here. Let’s get some food in us first before handling the rest,” Seok Kang-Ho said, noticing the soldier’s hesitation. He brought over a C-ration and tore it open.

Kang Chan gulped some water down, making him feel as if he could finally breathe again. The two then plopped down on the floor and ate.

“We want to give our blood too!” the woman said in a raised voice. Perhaps she thought she was being ignored, or maybe she had lost all sense of fear given the situation.

*Crunch. Crunch.*

Instead of responding, Kang Chan just took a bite of his biscuit.

*I really do need to do something about my stubborn personality. I can’t hate people just based on my first impression of them...*

While they ate, the French special forces team took turns drawing blood to give to the soldiers in critical condition. After giving them orders, Gérard came over to Kang Chan.

“It’s too dangerous to stay here any longer than this. We should take three of the trucks over there.”

Kang Chan stood up and looked at the trucks that Gérard was pointing at. There were five of them in total, each one driven around the back and abandoned by their enemies earlier.

“Those bastards seem to have have Iglas,” Kang Chan mused.

“How about loading the hostages and injured soldiers into one truck and making the other two trucks provide cover? If we use the M60 again, this plan will most likely work,” Gérard suggested.

“We’re running low on ammo.”

“Well, considering the ignorant Daye was the one who had his finger on the trigger, that does make sense.”

When Kang Chan grinned, Gérard shrugged.

“This punk just said my name, didn’t he?” Seok Kang-Ho asked.

*Sheesh!*

It wasn’t like Kang Chan could beat these two up either. He shook his head and scanned their surroundings again.

“Gérard. I was informed earlier that the United States is supposedly sending Apache helicopters. Have you heard anything about that?” Kang Chan asked.

“I don’t think you should look forward to it. If those bastards were going to come, they would have already been here long ago. And that over there?” Gérard pointed up at the sky with his index finger. “I don’t think they had good intentions when they started broadcasting your battle.”

“Probably not. Let me talk this over with Daye a bit,” Kang Chan said.

“Got it,” Gérard replied. He then moved further inside the room, the rifle in his hand rattling.

“Gérard says he doesn’t think the United States will be sending help. He suggested putting the hostages and our wounded in one truck and using two other trucks to provide cover,” Kang Chan told Seok Kang-Ho.

“If our enemies pull out an Igla, at least one of those trucks will explode if the enemies use an Igla,” Seok Kang-Ho warned.

Kang Chan nodded.

The blood on his mask had dried, making the cloth feel quite rigid.

“Wait! Doesn’t that mean the enemies can see us talking while looking at the trucks?” Seok Kang-Ho asked.

That sounded about right.

*Is this punk really getting smarter?*

“The problem is the Iгла. Maybe the plan would work if a sniper stays behind to cover us since it’s hard to shoot accurately in a moving car. If we travel by truck, we’ll also get closer to the enemies,” Kang Chan thought out loud.

“Why don’t we drive on that open field instead? I don’t see any reason why we should stick to the roads. It looks like those bastards are thinking the same thing, considering they have been staying near that ridge for an opportunity to attack.”

“Right!” Kang Chan exclaimed.

“Hey! What’s with that shocked look?” Seok Kang-Ho grumbled.

The two chortled together over Seok Kang-Ho’s complaint.

*This was the same in Africa too.*

However, when Kang Chan pulled out a map and looked at the area, he shook his head.

“The road will eventually loop around the ridge. If we go that way, we’ll end up getting blocked and forced to turn back.”

“So if we want to get out, we really do have to be prepared for one of the trucks to explode,” Seok Kang-Ho said disappointedly.

“Daye.”

“Yes, Cap.”

The change in Kang Chan’s tone made Seok Kang-Ho respond with a sharp gaze.

“Let’s send them off first.”

“So the two of us will be staying behind, huh?”

“I doubt a certain someone is going to listen to me, though.”

“Phuhuhu,” Seok Kang-Ho laughed.

“We only need to stop the Iгла. Since the other group will have Kwak Cheol-Ho, he can take charge and issue the orders. We need to find their location with a satellite phone and send the injured soldiers back quickly,” Kang Chan said.

Seok Kang-Ho nodded in agreement.

“It took us about ten minutes to get here, so if we drive for about an hour, we should get somewhere close to Sanggar. As long as we get out of this area, I think the rest should be manageable.”

“Got it, Cap.”

“Alright. Let’s plan it out and bring the trucks here, then,” Kang Chan said.

“What would we have done if those bastards hadn’t abandoned their trucks?” Seok Kang-Ho asked with a grin.

“You and I would’ve gone to steal them, obviously.”

“Phuhuhu,” Seok Kang-Ho chuckled.

The hostages exchanged wary glances when Seok Kang-Ho turned around with a smile.

“Urrm! Urrrrm!”

One of the female hostages vomited what she had eaten just moments ago.

Chapter 220.1: Let’s Send Them Off First (2)

“Gérard,” Kang Chan called.

“Oui!” Gérard swiftly replied and walked over to him.

Gérard was behaving as if he were just another subordinate of Kang Chan. Moreover, instead of finding it odd, the French special forces team seemed rather proud of it.

Kang Chan spread out the map in front of Gérard.

“If we take this road, we will have no choice but to follow the edge of that ridge. We can’t stop an Iгла from a moving truck, after all,” Kang Chan explained.

Gérard lifted his gaze from the map to Kang Chan and waited for him to continue.

“We will be taking three trucks. Three people will stay here to keep them safe from the Iгла. They will be making a break for it only after making sure the people in the truck are safe.”

“Perfect. Daye and I can stay behind with you,” Gérard stated matter-of-factly, which was exactly what Kang Chan and Seok Kang-Ho predicted earlier.

“Monsieur Crack can take command of the trucks, no?” Gérard confirmed.

“Monsieur Crack?” Kang Chan repeated.

He followed Gérard’s gaze to see who he was talking about, finding Kwak Cheol-Ho looking back at them, wondering what they were discussing in French.

“Captain,” Gérard suddenly called.

“What?”

“Why don’t we take two of our snipers and five other soldiers as well? Once the others leave, we can have the snipers hold this area off, which would give us the chance to ambush the enemies,” Gérard suggested.

*Why is this punk suddenly acting so cocky?*

“If we’re going to protect the hostages, we might as well make sure we eliminate all the risks and get the job done properly. Escaping later with just the three of us will be difficult if we leave the enemies in good condition anyway,” Gérard politely explained his idea.

Kang Chan's eyes glinted sharply.

"You little son of a bitch," Kang Chan abruptly cursed.

In the face of the sudden Korean expletive, Gérard remained steadfast. Amid the tension, Seok Kang-Ho, who didn't even know what the two were talking about, carefully looked between Kang Chan and Gérard, concern evident in his gaze.

"Gérard," Kang Chan said.

"Oui," Gérard politely replied when he noticed the change in Kang Chan's tone.

"Don't try to act smart in front of me," Kang Chan warned.

"Captain, you've done more than enough. You can leave this place to us and get out first."

Kang Chan smirked, but Gérard didn't step down.

Kang Chan had his suspicions about why Gérard was suggesting an increase in the number of men who would be staying behind. As it turned out, he was right. Gérard was trying to send him away while the French special forces kept the enemies from attacking them.

"As mandated by the rules of the 13th Regiment, I have already checked if anyone wanted to opt out of the operation. Not a single one of the men here will be able to run away with peace of mind if they have to leave you behind, Captain. The group that will be escaping must have a commander to lead them anyway, so..." Gérard trailed off, having noticed the look that Kang Chan was giving him.

"What the hell is he saying?" Seok Kang-Ho asked, unable to contain his curiosity any longer.

Since the French soldiers all heard and understood what Gérard suggested, Kang Chan decided to relay it all to Seok Kang-Ho and the South Korean team.

"Looks like becoming a pullet has taught the chick how to use his brain," Seok Kang-Ho joked.

*What does this punk think he's doing? Why is he agreeing with Gérard?*

"Well, he's right, you know. If you leave the group that's escaping to Kwak Cheol-Ho, who's going to be interpreting for the French soldiers?" Seok Kang-Ho reasoned.

Kang Chan found the situation so absurd that he couldn't help but laugh in disbelief.

"Fine, all right then!" Kang Chan eventually agreed.

Gérard, Seok Kang-Ho, and nearly all the other soldiers looked at Kang Chan at the same time.

Kang Chan began to speak in French first.

“We’ll divide the French team into two. Seok Kang-Ho, you, me, and half of the French team will go into enemy territory while the rest escape,” Kang Chan ordered.

“I’ll go make the preparations,” Gérard replied with satisfaction before turning around with his team members.

“Kwak Cheol-Ho!” Kang Chan called, having him walk over to the map. “Half of the French team will take one truck, and the civilians and the injured soldiers will take another. Keep going down this path for about an hour and you should reach Sanggar, which is where the helicopter dropped us off earlier. I’ll be staying behind, so I’ll call the base using the satellite phone from here. All you have to do is get there.”

“Permission to stay behind with you as well, sir,” Kwak Cheol-Ho replied with great resolve.

“Denied,” Kang Chan refused.

Kwak Cheol-Ho didn’t seem to want to back down, however.

“Kwak Cheol-Ho, this isn’t the time to act based on emotions. Those soldiers, our men, need a leader. Who else can act as their commander if not you?” Kang Chan continued, attempting to convince him.

“I can’t even speak French,” Kwak Cheol-Ho said in regret.

“They’ll understand you if you speak simple English.”

Kwak Cheol-Ho met Kang Chan’s gaze and never looked away.

He knew how Kwak Cheol-Ho was feeling right now better than anyone. This was why all of these punks had found a way to his heart in the first place.

“This is a direct order from your commander. Take the hostages and our wounded men to Sanggar,” Kang Chan.

Kwak Cheol-Ho made puppy eyes at him. He looked as if he was extremely wronged.

“Kwak Cheol-Ho,” Kang Chan urged.

“Understood, sir,” Kwak Cheol-Ho finally answered. He stood up, his rifle clunking.

Seok Kang-Ho grinned while he looked at the map.

“We can use the two trucks in the back and the truck with the M60 on it,” Kang Chan mused.

“I’ll have the men bring over the truck to the front. The M60 doesn’t have much ammo left, though.”

Kang Chan nodded and folded the map back up. "Who has the satellite phone?"

One of the soldiers quickly came over, pressed the call button, then handed it to Kang Chan.

The dial tone rang just once before the phone was answered.

- Base speaking.

Kim Hyung-Jung's voice came through the line.

"Base, Delivery and the cargo will be moving together. Prepare the helicopter for evac," Kang Chan ordered.

- Understood.

"Is the broadcast being televised in real time?" Kang Chan asked.

- According to our estimations, it has a one-minute delay.

Kang Chan let out a low sigh.

If they could get onto the truck in a minute, they could probably make a move before the enemies could catch onto their plan, but just getting the hostages and the injured in the trucks would already take too much time. Even if it didn't, the enemies would see them as soon as they left the abandoned building anyway.

"Four of the injured are in critical condition. Requesting medical personnel. Over."

- We will make the arrangements.

Now that Kim Hyung-Jung had given his word that they could provide Kang Chan with everything he requested, Kang Chan did not have anything else to say. He hung up the call and handed the phone back to the soldier just as two trucks came toward him from behind.

"Get the injured inside the trucks first!" Kang Chan ordered.

The palpable tension filled the abandoned houses.

The South Korean soldiers left their surroundings to the French team and focused on getting their injured comrades into the truck.

Kang Chan walked over to the hostages.

"Once all the soldiers have been carried over, you can get into that truck," Kang Chan instructed, using formal speech again.

They did not respond, but they didn't argue against his orders either. The battle had left them extremely pale, especially after the knife fight.

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[Ah! A few soldiers who appear to be injured and the hostages are boarding a truck. It seems they are planning to escape with the assistance of the French special forces team. I sincerely hope they can escape safely.]

This was the most hopeful scene they had witnessed so far, allowing strength to return to the anchor's voice. Loud applause echoed from all over the apartment complex.

Kang Dae-Kyung had stopped crying.

He cried like a young child during the last horrific fight, but he had gone numb now. However, he still forced himself to keep watching the broadcast.

If he could save his son by sacrificing his own life, he would have already jumped off the apartment railing without even thinking twice about it. That was just how much he loved his son. As a father, he could not help but feel ashamed that he was crying like a baby while his son was enduring such a terrifying battle so valiantly.

They would endure it together.

Amid the gruesome situation he could only watch, his son continued to hold on, even going as far as using his knife and throwing grenades.

*I have to watch everything. I have to watch him until the very end.*

Once everything was said and done, he believed he would watch his beloved son coming out of that hell.

Hence, Kang Dae-Kyung stopped himself from crying.

“Are you okay?” Yoo Hye-Sook asked with concern.

Her question made him feel a lump in his chest, but he gritted his teeth and pushed back the tears.

“Have some water. You'll get a headache later,” Yoo Hye-Sook suggested.

“All right,” Kang Dae-Kyung replied, taking the water that Yoo Hye-Sook handed him. He carefully took two sips.

*Son, I'll endure watching you go through hell, so you better persevere and get out of there.*

“There's something I'm not aware of, isn't there?” Yoo Hye-Sook asked suspiciously.

Seeing Yoo Hye-Sook's swollen red eyes, Kang Dae-Kyung shook his head.

“As I said earlier, the broadcast just made me remember my time in the military,” Kang Dae-Kyung replied.

However, Yoo Hye-Sook continued to express her doubt. “You said all you did during your enlistment was sweep snow.”

“I only told you that so I wouldn't worry you. We went through that kind of training too.”

“Does everyone really go through that kind of training when they join the military? Will our Channy have to go through that when he enlists in the future too?” Yoo Hye-Sook asked.

Kang Dae-Kyung smiled.



Their son wouldn't go through that training. At most, he would likely be the drill sergeant—never the one being trained.

[The commander and about ten of his men have not gotten in any of the trucks yet.]

When the anchor's commentary reached Kang Dae-Kyung's ears, he quickly turned his head to the screen.

Chapter 220.2: Let's Send Them Off First (2)

DIA Director Brandon, looked at the screen in front of him as he pressed the button for the intercom.

“What is the current success rate of the operation displayed on the screen?” he asked a subordinate.

- Taking the leadership of the God of Blackfield and the combat capabilities of the French special forces team into consideration, they have a 75% chance of bringing the hostages back to their country. The God of Blackfield has a 55% chance of escaping, sir.

“Goddamnit! Shit!” Brandon swore, his finger still on the button for the intercom. Breathing out roughly, he wiped his lips with his free hand.

“What's the Apache's estimated time of arrival?”

- Within ten minutes after the order is given, sir.

Glaring sharply at the screen in front of him, he asked, “What's Ethan doing?”

-He is on his way to South Korea.

“That idiot!” Brandon exclaimed in disgust.

- Pardon?

With a dark scowl, he lifted his finger from the intercom.

“If the bastard was just South Korea's assistant director, we could have used this opportunity to kill him with the Apache. I suppose I shouldn't have expected any less from Lanok.”

Brandon tapped the desk slowly with his index finger as his habit of speaking to himself when in a dilemma surfaced.

“This is ridiculous. He's France's deputy director-general and Korea's National Intelligence Service assistant director. The man who dealt with the Blackhead's energy just had to be Korean. Fucking God of Blackfield!”

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As Kang Chan ordered, the soldiers got into the two trucks as fast as they could. Kang Chan then headed over to the truck that the French special forces team had taken.

“Any questions?” he asked them.

“No, sir!” the soldiers replied.

Kang Chan's proficient French always drew attention wherever he went. The hostages peeked at him nervously from inside their vehicle as he made his way over to the South Korean special forces team's truck.

"Kwak Cheol-Ho! Any questions?" he asked.

"No, sir," Kwak Cheol-Ho replied.

Kang Chan nodded, then then looked inside the back of the truck.

"The enemies know that we have commandeered their vehicles. Be prepared for what's coming, and start as soon as you hear the gunfire from the M60!" he reiterated.

Kang Chan grinned and tapped Kwak Cheol-Ho's helmet.

"I will respond when you get back, sir," Kwak Cheol-Ho said. His firm voice and sharp, glinting eyes had returned.

*This is incredible. I didn't expect the world to have special forces bustling with people like him.*

Kang Chan turned around and went back to the abandoned building.

"Snipers! Focus on the Igla!" he instructed.

"Understood, sir," Lee Doo-Hee replied.

Now, all the preparations were complete.

Kang Chan looked back at the French special forces team and let out a low sigh. He had just seen a chick wearing the reddish-brown bandana that he gave standing with a confident look and waiting for the battle to start.

"This is the last time you're going to get asked this. Does any of you want to back out of this operation?"

*Click!*

As if asking what nonsense Kang Chan was talking about, the chick roughly pulled and then let go of his breechblock.

"Get ready!" Kang Chan shouted.

*Click! Click! Click! Click!*

The sounds the soldiers made as they checked their weapons echoed loudly. They were all equipped with rifles, knives, pistols, and grenades.

With Kang Chan in the lead, his group pressed against the left wall of the building.

"Let's go!" Kang Chan shouted.

*Whoosh!*

Kang Chan jumped over the half-collapsed wall, and Seok Kang-Ho and Gérard followed suit.

*Du du du du! Du du du! Pew! Du du du du! Pew! Pew!*

*Bang, bang, bang, bang! Bang, bang, bang! Bang, bang, bang, bang!*

They fired at their enemies as they ran.

Those who had not experienced the fear that came from bullets splattering the dirt right in front of their feet would never know how it felt. Few people would know what it felt like to run between a barrage of bullets.

*Thud!*

With a loud crash, one of the French soldiers collapsed to the ground.

*Clank, clank! Clang! Pew! Bang, bang, bang, bang!*

The enemies' bullets loudly clanked against the hood of the truck that Kang Chan finally reached.

*Vrooom!*

One of the soldiers started the engine and hurriedly got in through the back.

*Clank! Click! Click! Pew! Pew! Bang, bang, bang, bang!*

Seok Kang-Ho loaded the M60, and Kang Chan and Gérard stuck out their guns in front of them. The rest of the soldiers opened fire with their rifles without any hesitation.

*Vrooom!*

Not long after, the truck began to move forward.

*Tu ta ta ta ta ta! Tu ta ta ta ta! Tu ta ta ta ta!*

The M60 that Seok Kang-Ho was manning roared awake, unleashing hell over their opponents. There was no turning back now.

The truck kept moving forward as Kang Chan, Gérard, and the other soldiers fired at the hill.

*Bam! Bam!*

Along with two ominous noises, the truck swerved.

Kang Chan gritted his teeth and looked at Gérard. He then hung by the door of the truck to move into the driver's seat.

*Tu ta ta ta ta! Tu ta ta ta! Tu ta ta ta ta!*

Nearly at the same time, Seok Kang-Ho ran out of M60 ammo.

Kang Chan held onto the door of the driver's seat as he climbed inside. As he expected, the soldier was already leaning against the wheel, unconscious.

*Fuck!*

*Clank! Clank! Clank!*

As the front windshield shattered helplessly, Kang Chan pushed the wounded soldier into the passenger's seat and forcibly stepped on the accelerator with his head as close to the floor as possible.

*Vrooom!*

Changing gears and all that crap wasn't what was important right now.

*Clank! Clang! Bam! Bam!*

Sparks flew from the hood of the truck. Some of the bullets pierced through the glass and into the track.

*Vroom!*

*Bang, bang, bang, bang! Bam! Du du du du! Du du! Bang, bang, bang, bang!*

The gunfight became somewhat more manageable when the French soldiers who were with the hostages began to cover fire for them as well. However, they were still about a hundred meters away from their target location.

*Vrooom!*

The engine screamed for mercy, but it wasn't like they could or even planned to use this truck again anyway.

*Whoosh! Bang, bang, bang, bang, bang! Du du du! Du du! Pew! Pew!*

The sound of the engine, gunshots, and the smell of diesel and gunpowder overwhelmed Kang Chan's senses. He leaned over to the passenger's seat, giving him a good view of the blue and vast sky above them.

*Bam! Pow! Pow!*

As he stared at it, a bullet pierced into the driver's seat as if telling him to wake up and return to reality.

*Haah. Haah.*

Kang Chan started to hear his own breathing.

*Vrooom!*

The vibrations of the engine dug into his senses, as did the noise from the guns. He could even feel where the bullets landed on the truck.

Kang Chan peeked for a brief moment to see where they were, realizing that they were only thirty meters away from the hill now.

*Vrooom!*

*Du du du! Boom! Clank, clank, clank, clank! Pow! Pow! Pow!*

Their opponents put up quite a tough resistance. They were proving to be quite a force to be reckoned with.

If they didn't have any snipers, the enemy's Igla would've ended them all in one go already.

*Creaaak!*

Kang Chan stepped on the brakes and immediately rolled out of the driver's seat.

*Pew! Pew! Bang, bang, bang! Bang, bang, bang, bang! Bang, bang, bang, bang! Pew!*

There wasn't anywhere to hide in front of the hill. Even if they wanted to fire an Igla, they would have to climb it first.

He could see the truck with the hostages going down the path that went around to the other side of the hill.

*It worked!*

*Pew! Thud! Pew! Thud! Pew! Thud! Pew! Thud!*

Kang Chan could see it—the foreheads of the enemies that he was shooting at.

He quickly got up and ran to the top of the hill. His rib and right foot hurt so much it was as if they were being ripped apart.

*Haah. Haah.*

*If I stop here, my people will die.*

*Pew! Bang, bang, bang, bang! Pew! Bang, bang, bang, bang! Bang, bang!*

Seok Kang-Ho and Gérard provided cover for him from his flanks.

There was a critical difference between regular soldiers and special forces soldiers.

*Pew! Thud! Pew! Thud!*

It was a matter of learning how to kill your enemies efficiently versus learning how to kill them gruesomely.

*Pew! Thud! Pew! Thud! Pew! Thud!*

*Du du du! Bang, bang, bang, bang! Pew! Du du! Bang, bang, bang, bang!*

*You motherfuckers!*

*You sent her just because she took something to eat with those tiny, fragile hands? She accepted it without knowing who was giving it to her!*

*What does it matter what kind of bastard lives in the sky and which punk made this Earth?*

*Pew! Thud! Pew! Thud! Pew! Thud!*

*I'll put holes through your foreheads...*

*Pew! Thud! Pew! Thud! Pew! Thud!*

*So go and tell him that I am the one who killed you!*

Kang Chan immediately climbed from the top of the hill and broke into a dash.

*Haah. Haah.*

*You stupid idiots! You call this a base? You don't even have a lot of fuckers left!*

*Pew! Pew! Thud! Thud!*

*Bang bang bang bang! Bang bang bang bang bang! Bang bang! Bang bang bang bang!*

With their morale now shattered, the hostels powerlessly plunged to the ground in the face of Kang Chan and his men's bullets. Perhaps because they had rushed in to try and kill them earlier, they really didn't have too many men left waiting for the special forces units.

Kang Chan quickly moved behind a toppling shack.

*Click!*

However, he couldn't pull the trigger. Right in front of him was a young girl.

Kang Chan quickly scanned his surroundings.

*Tat, tat, tat! Tat, tat, tat, tat!*

Seok Kang-Ho, Gérard, and the remaining soldiers stood around Kang Chan, their guns aimed outward.

*Haah. Haah.*

*Why are you crying?*

*Haah. Haah.*

*Why are you crying right now?*

*Haah. Haah.*

"Gérard! Scan the perimeter! Take two of our men with you!" Kang Chan ordered.

*Tat, tat, tat!*

"Daye, tell the kid to never press the button!" Kang Chan shouted.

Kang Chan looked sharply at the girl's thin hands. A single press of her thumb would cause the bomb to explode.

*Haah. Haah.*

Things like this were nothing. He had done them sickeningly in Africa.

*So don't cry.*

*Haah. Haah.*

Dayeru rapidly fired out a sentence in Arabic. Nevertheless, as if to defy him, large tears continued to flow from the girl's large eyes.