

World Mall 136

Chapter 136 Going Inside

"So, this is the building." Kanaria raised her head, looking at a rather small building. Since it was a special laboratory, she originally thought that the building would be a skyscraper, but this one only had three floors.

Melody, on the other hand, said, "I'm afraid that this building is not that simple."

"What do you mean?"

"I notice some radiation coming from the underground. If there is no protective suit, we might have to go out as quickly as possible. I'm running the calculation right now." Melody's expression turned grim.

"Radiation?" Kanaria suddenly fell silent. If that was the case, then this building was definitely dangerous. "But aren't those materials banned? The radiation can mutate the beasts. There are a few places with high radiation, which causes a Tier 6 beast to be as strong as a Tier 8 beast."

"We don't know anything about it, but we might have to investigate it properly. You said your mother is the one sending you here, she must want you to acquire it as her movement would be monitored and under some suspicion. Either way, we don't have a lot of time. Clovis and Jay still need our help."

"Indeed." Kanaria nodded in agreement. They could think about the reasons later. Retrieving the information was more important.

"Let's go inside." Melody took a deep breath. "According to my calculation, we only have thirty minutes inside unless we have a protective suit."

The building itself was mostly covered with concrete. There weren't many windows as if to contain the radiation from spreading outside.

When Kanaria and Melody entered the building, they were greeted by a messy hall. Everything seemed to have been toppled down. There were a lot of trails on the floor.

"This is..." Kanaria's expression turned serious.

Melody, on the other hand, took out the ground radar and placed it on the floor. In that instant, she got a reading. "Kanaria."

Kanaria instantly frowned when seeing the radar. "So many?"

"Do you think that we're actually the ones getting the short straw?" Melody smiled wryly.

"I guess the beasts are attracted to the radiation. In fact, all those beasts might be mutated beasts... It's going to be a hard battle."

"You're still planning to go?" Melody looked surprised that Kanaria didn't have any fear of these many beasts.

"As long as there are no Tier 3 beasts, then sure." Kanaria put the rifle on her back and took out her pistol. "Those two have become much stronger. I'm not planning to become an accessory of this group... So, I'm going to keep up with them no matter what."

Melody scratched the back of her head. "We both have Brain Affinity, so our senses should be able to locate those beasts even in the dark. In addition, I will assist you through the skyglasses... I have to earn my place here for the sake of my brother after all."

Kanaria nodded. "I will take the front."

The two walked around for two minutes, trying to find a protective suit. Unfortunately, they couldn't find a single protective suit.

The only thing they found was the hidden entrance to the basement. Even though it was a hidden entrance, it had been opened by the beasts, so it wasn't that hard to find it.

Kanaria and Melody climbed down the stairs carefully, trying not to make any sound during their descent.

The air flow in the basement was different, making them notice that the space had expanded.

From the sound alone, Kanaria noticed at least four beasts located not far from her. They were pretty scattered, but as expected, she couldn't see anything in the basement.

She didn't know whether these beasts were able to see in the dark, but either way, they still planned to kill them.

Meanwhile, Melody had much sharper senses than her. She hurriedly inputted the information into the skyglasses.

"!!!" Kanaria suddenly found a blue light that gradually formed the shape of the beast. It seemed like she was wrong. There were actually five beasts on this floor alone. And if they took into account the number that the ground radar produced earlier, there were still at least ten more.

Fortunately, the beasts seemed to be sleeping as if they didn't care about anything.

Melody showed Kanaria the targets she should focus on, while Melody took care of the rest.

They were on the same team, so Kanaria agreed without hesitation.

There was a countdown in their skyglasses. Once it reached zero, both of them pulled the trigger.

Bang!

The beasts seemed to die before they were able to let out any sound, but the gunshot was loud, waking up the other beasts.

Still, Kanaria and Melody didn't panic. They simply aimed at the second target and shot them when they were still waking up.

Bang!

With the second shot from both of them, there was only one beast left on this floor. Kanaria immediately aimed her pistol at this last one while Melody listened to the surrounding noises.

Shriek!

Qieek!

There were a lot of sounds coming from the lower floor. And all of them seemed to be climbing up.

Bang!

Kanaria killed the last beast on the floor as Melody said, "They are coming toward us."

Kanaria nodded her head and grabbed the rifle back. Since they were going to defend this position, it was better to have a bigger gun.

Melody, on the other hand, calculated the movement of the beasts and predicted the door leading to the second floor.

"There it is!" Melody marked the door on the skyglasses.

"!!!" Kanaria immediately adjusted her aim toward this door. Even she could hear the screeching sound from the beasts. From Melody's marker, it looked like the beasts were mostly rats that had mutated to be as big as a human's child.

And those rats started climbing up together.

'Here they come.' Kanaria squinted her eyes. The moment the mark Melody put on them reached the same level, Kanaria pulled the trigger.

Bang!

The rat died instantly, but the other beasts stepped over its dead body and started coming out in rapid succession.

Scree!

Chapter 137 Mutated Beast

Scree!

Both Kanaria and Melody furrowed their eyebrows as the pace of these rats coming out was much faster than their original expectations.

When Kanaria shot it, one beast might die, but three or even four would have passed that door.

As a result, she only managed to kill three rats before the remaining seven came out. She was lucky that she managed to hit the last rat.

However, the situation didn't look that bright. There were seven rats, moving at lightning speed toward them.

More importantly, the rats were moving at high speed toward them. And without the light, they couldn't see their tier or gather more information like their body or strength.

Kanaria hurriedly changed into her pistol again and shot the incoming rats multiple times. To her surprise, these rats were actually more agile than the rats that stayed on this floor.

None of her bullets actually hit. Melody also did the same, but the result was similar to Kanaria. She managed only one hit, which wasn't fatal.

Her left hand reached for the grenade in her bag, but she soon stopped, realizing that this place was important. If the grenade ended up destroying the basement, their purpose of coming here would be gone.

Noticing their situation, Kanaria shouted, "We are going up."

"Yeah." Melody nodded in agreement as they climbed back to the ground floor. She remained facing the bottom of the stairs and kept shooting even if there were no rats. They should be aware that charging into her line of sight would kill them, so the two managed to reach the ground floor without any injuries.

However, the rats began to emerge one after another.

Their shape looked like that of a rodent, but their skin was white. There were a few green spots on their fur and their heads seemed to be bloated. It seemed that the radiation had mutated them to a certain degree.

The fact that they managed to avoid their shots earlier meant that the radiation also boosted their reaction speed.

"This is Gobiconodontidae. Similar to the modern rodent..." Melody recognized it through the AI.

"If I'm not wrong, they were supposed to live alongside dinosaurs." Kanaria's expression turned grim.

However, the one that caught their attention the most would be the slightly bigger rodent. Its eyes were bloodshot and the claws were long as though they were blades.

Scree!

These seven rodents charged ahead, splitting into three to surround Kanaria and Melody.

To their surprise, Kanaria charged ahead.

"I'll take care of the big one. You take care of the rest." Kanaria believed that this rodent would be either Tier 1 or Tier 2 based on its strength. So, she chose to fight this one while letting Melody take care of the Tier 0 creatures.

She widened her vision to check her surroundings. The rodents from the front took this opportunity to stop her. Two more rodents also turned around, trying to eliminate her first.

But Kanaria got a good grasp of her surroundings. She hurriedly turned diagonally to the left and stepped onto the chair before jumping over it.

During her spin in mid air, Kanaria pointed her gun toward these four rodents, shooting them.

The rodents avoided it the moment they saw Kanaria pointing her gun. It seemed that they understood how it worked and made their move accordingly.

The high tier rodent also went toward Kanaria. Since she was still in mid air, she wouldn't be able to block him.

But to his surprise, there was actually light attached to the ceiling on the third floor. She grabbed the cable with her legs and swung around, avoiding the beast.

The rodents thought she was just lucky that the cable was there. But for Kanaria, she knew that she wasn't lucky. It was a well-calculated move. Only someone with wide vision could do it.

Kanaria landed on the ground with a confident smile. When she was about to pick up the gun, another gunshot echoed inside the building.

"!!!" The rodents were startled, realizing that one of them who focused on Kanaria got hit by Melody's bullets.

Scree! The leader informed the others to focus on Melody while he took care of Kanaria personally.

Unfortunately, the one who got hit ended up succumbing to his wound before it was able to attack.

Kanaria couldn't help but smile, finally getting the chance to fight against this mutated beast.

The mutated leader charged toward her while sweeping its right claws.

Kanaria ran to the side, avoiding it. When she turned around, she saw the claws actually slice a wooden chair cleanly.

It was also fast since the leader closed the gap between them in just a second, not letting Kanaria shoot him.

Kanaria was forced to grab her rifle and use it like a shield.

Clink!

Kanaria frowned. The impact of that attack was quite powerful. Fortunately, this rifle was made of high quality materials, so she didn't have to worry about it being destroyed.

'This attack power surpasses that of a normal Tier 2 beast,' Kanaria muttered. However, she didn't think that this rat would be comparable to the Tier 3 beasts that Jay and Clovis fought.

'I guess I should call this mutated beast... a Tier 2.5 or something.' Kanaria chuckled inwardly as she received another attack from the claw.

When the rodent wiped its tail, Kanaria took a big step to the back and rotated her rifle, aiming it toward the beast. With this range, there was no need for her to look at the scope anymore.

Bang!

The rodent tried to avoid it, but Kanaria pointed it at the center of its body. So, even if it managed to twist its body, the bullet still hit the edge.

Scree!

The rodent looked like he was in pain. But he had learned enough from Kanaria.

Suddenly, he reached out for the chair he had slashed earlier and threw it toward Kanaria.

"!!!" Kanaria was startled, thinking that the rodent was supposed to attack her more straightforwardly.

When she got distracted by the chair, the rodent closed the gap between them.

Kanaria had to jump to avoid the chair, so by the time the rodent reached her, she was still in mid-air. She hurriedly put the rifle in front of her like a shield, but the rodent ended up slapping her to the ground, causing her to roll a few times.

"Mhmm..." Kanaria bit her lips.

Chapter 138 Kanaria's Progress

"Mhmm..." Kanaria bit her lips.

'Tsk. Clovis and Jay have been fighting monsters like this the whole time?' Kanaria couldn't help but think. Her body was already hurting when it hit the ground. But she still had to maintain the position of her gun so that it wouldn't bend or hurt her.

Clovis and Jay were often getting blown away, so their situation was much more dangerous than hers.

The rodent wouldn't allow Kanaria to recover, but before he could reach her, Kanaria shot with her pistol to force the rodent to dodge it, giving her precious time to stand back up.

The beast approached her from her left, so Kanaria ran in the opposite direction. Her brain was processing all the information about all the mess around her, but there was nothing she could use to help her.

When fighting inside a building, they could throw things at the beasts to distract them. But there wasn't anything big enough or hard enough for this beast. So, Kanaria had no choice but to fight it fully with her gun.

Kanaria raised her pistol again, but the rodent had pounced on her.

"Hiii!" Kanaria hurriedly ducked down as the claws passed over her and left a huge mark on the concrete pillar. Kanaria wanted to attack the rodent once again, but she saw the tail coming at her face.

Because of her position, it was impossible to block it with her rifle, so she raised her arm.

"Kh." Kanaria gritted her teeth, enduring the pain. Kanaria rarely got hurt because of her position, but even if she was only a sniper, it didn't mean she wouldn't get hurt for the rest of her life.

There would be a time when she had to fight in close range for one reason or another.

This pain alone reminded her of how much Clovis endured this whole time.

When she thought about Clovis, it also reminded her of a certain conversation.

It was ten days ago. Back then, she was watching him train with his sword.

"Clovis. We have just gotten back from the tiring expedition and the first thing you do is train." Kanaria shook her head helplessly.

"I don't have a lot of time left to train. Once the group grows bigger, the more responsibility I will have... which means that I won't have a lot of time to practice like this. In addition, what if I get married in the future? I'm going to spend as much time as possible with my family. That's why right now is the best time for me to train," Clovis explained while swinging his blade.

"..." That answer somehow took her by surprise. She wanted to say that Clovis would be single if he kept that up. But it seemed that he had thought about it properly.

And this also made her realize that Clovis was simply doing his best at the moment while he still had time.

It was different from hers. While she didn't consider herself lazy, she didn't try to do much more. She believed in her ability to shoot and manage the logistics, but that was all about her.

People looked at her as a promising rookie who kept growing at high speed, but compared to these two, she looked as if she didn't put in any effort.

When Kanaria thought about it, she stood up, asking, "If this is just a bother for you, please reject this... But I wonder if you can teach me some self defense."

Clovis raised his eyebrows. "To be fair, you have an elastic body and a much smaller frame, which will allow you to have some dexterous movements for close quarter combat. It can also provide me with some experience in that area. But... if you're only doing this because you don't want to look like you're lazy or something. Then, don't bother."

"No. In a fight, it's better to eliminate the sniper first because they are troublesome. In the future, I might have someone trying to eliminate you first while the others are stalling you and Jay. That's why I want to be able to protect myself," Kanaria explained with a determined expression.

"If you have a clear goal, then I don't mind helping you. But I'm not going to hold back."

"Fine by me."

...

When facing this beast, that memory resurfaced in her mind, making her take a deep breath.

The rodent charged toward her, which she stopped by pointing the gun at him.

Bang!

Bang!

Bang!

A series of shots were released, but the rodent managed to avoid all of them by looping around Kanaria.

Kanaria kept chasing after the rodent without thinking about the bullet.

After twelve shots, there was a clicking sound that marked the start of the rodent's counterattack.

Without hesitation, the rodent turned around and went straight at her. That big gun of hers might be powerful but hard to use, so the rodent was convinced that it could avoid it later.

That was why he closed the gap in an instant. Instead of changing her weapon, Kanaria actually tossed the pistol at the rodent's head.

"!!!" The rodent was surprised and stopped for a moment while covering its head.

As soon as it opened its eyes, the rodent saw Kanaria trying to kick its head. That was why the rodent jumped over her.

Surprisingly, Kanaria's kick actually reached a 180 degree angle from her other leg, showing incredible elasticity. This was her advantage. With her body's stability, she tilted her upper body to the back.

Now that her body was parallel to the floor, Kanaria could clearly see the rodent's body. She used this slight gap to aim at the rodent's head.

"!!!" The rodent lowered its head, only to find the gun muzzle facing right back at him.

"Checkmate," said Kanaria with a tired expression as she pulled the trigger, shooting the rodent on the head. Kanaria couldn't help but say, "I don't want to get carried by those two the whole time..."

However, because of her position, the recoil caused her head to hit the ground.

"Ou... It hurts."

Chapter 139 Password

"Are you alright?"

Kanaria saw Melody standing next to her, as if she had been waiting for her to kill that beast.

Considering her opponents were only Tier 0 beasts, it was understandable. Even if they were mutated, they were still not Melody's opponents.

Kanaria smiled wryly, taking the hand Melody extended to stand up. "Yeah. Anyway, let's hurry. We have to find the research as soon as possible."

"Yeah. Clovis and Jay are still fighting out there, so if we're not in a hurry, there might be some beasts coming toward them." Melody nodded in agreement.

Both of them hurried inside. As soon as they didn't sense any beasts around, they immediately proceeded to the floor below.

"Is this the place?" Melody asked while taking out the flashlight. She couldn't help but feel surprised about this room. If the first floor was filled mostly with desks and papers, these floors contained several shelves and giant tubes.

"Mhmm?" Kanaria frowned, feeling something was weird. "This tube hasn't been crushed yet... There is a liquid inside."

Melody immediately turned around. "Is there anything inside other than the liquid?"

"No." Kanaria shook her head while furrowing her eyebrows. The other tubes had been destroyed, so the liquid had flowed out and probably evaporated.

On the other hand, this tube had a liquid without anything in it, looking very suspicious.

"Maybe they don't manufacture anything here?"

"I'm not sure." Kanaria fell into deep thought. "Maybe there is another place that we haven't found? My mother has given me an access card, so there should be something else here that requires the access card."

Melody immediately illuminated the area around them, finding a door on the corner. "Is that..."

Kanaria nodded with a serious face. "Yes. That might be it."

Both of them immediately came to the door. There were a lot of scratches on the door, but it didn't seem to break.

"Is there any other beast in this place?" Kanaria asked.

"No. The radar doesn't pick up anything." Melody shook her head. "This should be the place. The security is much tougher..."

Kanaria looked at the handle, surprisingly finding no lock. "Can't the beast open this?"

"There is no lock..." Melody muttered and pushed down the handle, opening this door. To their surprise, the alarm on Melody's device alerted her.

[High Radiation.]

Out of reflex, she closed the door once more and said, "Wait a minute. I have to calculate the amount of time we will have with the new level of radiation."

Melody panicked as she waited for the calculation. "Ten minutes... We will only have ten minutes if we enter this place because we don't have any protective suits. And we have to abandon our clothes after this."

"Wait. If that's the case, let me take off my shorts first."

"Huh? Why do you want to take off the last bit of protection you have? Wait. Those shorts..."

"Yes. It's a special item that Clovis gave me." Kanaria hurried back to take off the shorts. Then, she just covered the rest by wrapping it with her jacket. "Alright. Let's go."

Melody didn't know what to say, but she knew how precious items from Clovis were. There was no way they should waste it or even throw it away.

After they were ready, Melody opened the door as they rushed inside, climbing down to the third level. Before they were able to reach the third level, they met another door with a lock on it.

"This must be it." Kanaria muttered, finding the scanner on that lock. She placed the access card on the screen and soon heard a beeping sound. "Oh? It still works? There must be some electricity left inside."

"Yeah." Melody immediately opened the door for her, revealing the third floor.

"What is this..." Kanaria didn't enter immediately. Instead, she was stunned by the sight of this place.

There was still a dim green light illuminating the room. Although barely visible, she could see the giant tube located in the center of the room. This time, there seemed to be a huge skeleton inside that tube.

At the same time, she could see the walls on the left, right, and in front. The left side had been covered with smaller tubes similar to the one in the middle. The right one seemed to be a glass wall as if there was an even deeper place inside. But she couldn't imagine the use of the big screen on the wall opposite her.

"Mhmm? We don't have much time, Kanaria. It's shocking, but we have to move." Melody gulped down while entering the room.

"Y-yeah!"

When they entered, they were greeted by the computer that handled the giant tube. To their surprise, it was still active, asking for a six-digit password.

Kanaria looked at the screen as if she were thinking about something. On the other hand, Melody went around the room.

"This glass wall is connected to the room on the other side. It seems that they are testing something inside that room. There seems to be a human's remains inside... I don't want to say this, but are they conducting human experiments?"

Melody muttered. It was hard to see with this dim light, so she couldn't come to a conclusion.

She then walked to the screen and found nothing. "Why did they put a big screen inside? Maybe those people were bored and wanted to watch movies together here?"

In confusion, Melody came to the left side, which probably contained the most information. "There are tubes with the same liquid. And it seems that each tube contains a beast's remains. They aren't recognizable anymore, so I can't really say anything."

Melody thought for a moment. "Kanaria. What are we supposed to find here? We don't have enough time to hack the system, you know. We have to—"

Beep!

Melody stopped the moment she heard that sound. Following that sound, the light inside the room turned on, brightening the room.

"What the hell did you do? Did you get the password as well? Or was the password 123456 or 111111 or your birthday?" Melody asked in shock as she returned to Kanaria, confused by the shocked face on Kanaria's face.

Kanaria blinked a few times as if she couldn't believe it actually worked. She said with a disbelief tone, "No. It's the combination of two passwords that Clovis's parents gave him."

Chapter 140 Research

"The combination of the passwords that Clovis's parents gave him?" Melody wasn't present back then, so she was oblivious to the number.

The passwords Kanaria mentioned earlier were none other than the passwords leading to the secret basement at Clovis's house.

Both passwords had three-digit numbers, so she thought it would work if she combined both of them.

And it actually worked.

"Clovis is related to this place? No, wait. Maybe it's the Hacfield family?" Melody furrowed her eyebrows. Considering the mysterious identity of the Hacfield family, she thought it was possible that they conducted experiments like this.

However, her thought was cut short because the moment the lamps were turned on, the screen followed suit, showing a video of an old man.

The old man had a thin frame and a tired face as though he hadn't slept for a few days. He was staring at the screen with a face devoid of any expressions.

"If you happen to find this recording, you should be related to that family. In that case, I only have three things to say to you."

The old man took a step back and raised his left hand as a screen was projected next to him. It was the image of a human's anatomy.

"Our experiment is successful. We have proved that humanity has two basic paths for them. The first path is something everyone is aware of, which is the combination between a human and a beast. I'm talking about the beast soul, not the fusion of genes.

"However, by taking the beast soul into your body, you will still mutate in a rather subtle way. For example, your body might become stronger or faster. Your senses become sharper or something along the lines. And this change will be passed on to your descendants.

"While this looks quite good, this change will also have a negative impact... not on the current generations but on a few generations afterward. The beasts might have stronger skin, faster speed, or stronger strength, but the humans have high adaptability.

"In other words, the two paths that I'm talking about are the path of raw physical ability without flexibility or a path of lower ability but high versatility.

"Yes, the second path is a path of pure human, or you can say, not taking a single beast soul."

Kanaria and Melody couldn't help but widen their eyes in shock. This was the first time they heard that the beast soul would actually alter humans.

"This..." Melody sucked a cold breath. "Is taking the beast soul bad then? But it's actually giving you the raw power of the beast, allowing you to become stronger than pure humans. And what is this versatility that the old man is talking about? Is he Professor Waod?"

Kanaria, on the other hand, remembered when Clovis told them that his grandfather told him not to take beast souls.

Unfortunately, she didn't have a lot of time to think as the professor continued, "Onto the second matter, I have found out a way to utilize every single beast soul whether it's compatible with you or not.

"The beast soul is extremely rare and no one can deny its strength. At the same time, a compatible beast soul is very hard to find.

"This research can very well become an earth shattering phenomenon. Please take a look at this..."

Professor Waod changed the video on the projection. This time, it showed a man standing in front of a metal puppet. The guy moved forward while waving his right hand as if he were about to slap the puppet. But the moment his finger reached the metal puppet, the head was sliced into pieces.

This was the normal utilization of a beast soul. It should turn his hands into claws, so they didn't find it different.

However, the professor played the second video. It was a different man, but instead of using his hand like claws, the guy actually produced the claws from his hand.

"Huh? That's..." Memory gasped as she saw the guy slash the metal puppet with these claws.

"This is the same beast soul, but one is taken orally as usual while the other one is injected. By swallowing the beast soul, it will allow you to have the same ability as the beast. But if it's injected, you can manipulate the gene to form the organ that produces it. In other words, you don't have to be a close-range fighter to find this beast soul useful.

"And there is one more way to utilize it... or you can say, a different way to manipulate the gene." The professor showed the next video.

The third man produced the claw as well, but this time, there was only one claw and its length was similar to a short sword.

"Because we're manipulating the gene, we are able to change how it is being utilized. And the area is not limited to your hand... You can inject it on your back to make you look like a shark or use it underneath your feet to use it as a surprise attack.

"This is a very versatile way to use the beast soul. Since humans will lose their versatility over time, it's better to invent new ways to utilize it.

"Anyway, it's better to copy my research and the way to utilize it. Just plug in your device into the slot on the right and it will automatically copy my research."

Melody dropped to her knees as she couldn't help but say, "This research... It might actually change the world."

Kanaria remained silent, but it was clear that she was shocked by her fingers which were currently shivering. Still, she had to copy this research to her device and give it to Clovis later. Although she failed to insert it multiple times, she managed to do it ultimately.

The moment it was plugged in, Professor Waod continued, "Last but not least, I just want to warn you that evolution is unavoidable. If little Clovis doesn't take any beast souls, there will soon be a lot of women flocking around him. After all, versatility is not the only one that humanity will lose during evolution... they'll also lose their fertility. The birth rate should have decreased by now.

"To get to the peak without using a beast soul... It's a hard path, but a more desirable one for various reasons.

"That's all I want to say. Well, maybe one more thing. I just want to thank Teacher Aisha for helping me with this research. I have finally fulfilled my long cherished dream and have no regrets anymore. Goodbye."

Professor Waod smiled for the first time, showing a very gentle face. At the same time, the moment the video ended, the data transfer had also finished.