

World Mall 176

Chapter 176 Invitation

All of them were just staring at her as though there was nothing they could believe coming from her mouth.

"Okay, Okay. Don't give me that look." Hana scratched the back of her head.

Even though her character was rather questionable, it seemed that her talent was a real deal. She managed to do both business and exploration simultaneously.

Even Clovis didn't expect that she was a Tier 4 human when she was only two years older than them.

Hana knew Clovis was curious about the reasons, so she decided to reveal them before he got annoyed.

"The reason I changed my decision was because of your performance. From what I could see, you are much stronger than what your tier represents. With your performance, you shouldn't have any problem defeating Tier 2, and you can probably fight against Tier 3 toe-to-toe. It's just that I'm not sure whether you're able to defeat them or not."

Melody frowned since Clovis and Jay had defeated Tier 3 beasts. However, Clovis hurriedly waved his hand as if knowing what she wanted to say. Clovis actually agreed with her words.

If this was a normal Tier 3 beast, he would say that he had the ability to defeat it. However, if their levels were the same as the beasts in this place, it would be impossible to kill the Tier 3 beasts.

Since she had only seen their performance here, her opinion was valid.

"I'm complimenting you right now. Even I don't have the ability to kill a beast one tier above me." Hana shook her head. "Of course, we're talking about the real beasts, not those weaklings."

"Those weaklings?" Clovis frowned.

"You should have sensed the difference in strength between the beasts near your base and the ones in this place, right?"

Clovis didn't say anything, but the answer was pretty obvious.

"Do you know the difference between the beasts in this place and the ones near the base?" Hana smirked.

They didn't think they had heard this kind of information before, so they were curious about the answer.

"Well, the exact reason is still unknown."

"..." Clovis's eyebrows twitched while the others looked annoyed.

Hana hurriedly added, "We still don't know the exact reason, but there is some speculation. Why do you think those areas collapsed and became a tunnel that connected the surface and the subterranean world?"

"Is that the reason?" Clovis looked down, falling into deep thought.

"Yes. Some scientists speculate that the phenomenon creates a field that weakens the beasts' abilities. So, the further they are from the city, the stronger the beasts are. Of course, there are some exceptions. This former volcano might affect that field, which would result in the beasts not being suppressed by that field anymore.

You could say that this place is a place with the closest level of the beasts' real strength."

Clovis pinched the bridge of his nose. He suddenly remembered the ruin and thought about the possibilities for it to be created. What if that person created the ruins because the beasts here were much stronger?

Hana raised a finger. "By the way, isn't it unfair for me to be the only one talking? Can't you answer my question as well?"

"Are you demanding it as a Tier 4 human or as a suspicious person who stalks us?"

"Stalking? What an accusation..." Hana looked like she was wronged. "Then, how about you answer my question after I answer two of your questions?"

Clovis thought for a moment before nodding his head. "Alright."

He might be able to learn more about this world from her. She only asked him a few things. While he had a few things he wanted to keep secret, he could simply lie to her.

"Then, should I ask a question now?"

"Wait. You haven't finished the previous topic."

"I think I have. Basically, the countryside is only focused on the beasts near their base, so it doesn't really matter. But if you go to major cities... at least Tier 7 and Tier 8 cities, you will realize that they calculate your strength based on the beast's true strength.

This city might be considered a Tier 6 city, but it is nowhere near the real Tier 6 city because of the lack of education and facilities. If we're talking about the real Tier 6 city... it should be Starlight City."

"!!!" Clovis raised his eyebrows. The Starlight City was the city he resided in, but that city had been destroyed by the beasts and he had to escape to the current city.

However, he could see the difference in quality between the two cities but simply pushed the matter aside since he was in no position to care about it.

"If you want to go to a major city, I don't mind bringing you there." Hana smirked.

"What is your purpose in approaching me? No. Before that, how did you find me?" Clovis asked.

Hana grabbed her drone and projected a video in the air so that all of them could watch it together. It was news about the sudden appearance of a sinkhole.

Hana pointed at the screen and said, "Your grandfather did that. The reason I know it is because that place is a branch of the Red Dagger Assassination Guild. You should be stalked by some people, right? They are related to them.

"Since your grandfather had hidden himself the whole time, this action caused a lot of uproar. I investigated it and tried to find the reason which led me to your accident. That is how I got here."

"You should know that your actions will also lead others to me, right?" Clovis's expression turned cold.

"Definitely. That's why my grandfather forbade me to come here. However, you may call it a reckless decision or whatever, but I believe meeting you is more important." Hana explained.

Clovis fell silent. If she was known to be that talented, she should have at least some common sense. It seemed that it was also a hard decision on her part. Whatever her purpose here, it should be something important.

It was Hana's turn to ask a question. "You've heard what I wanted to ask earlier. I want you. Will you please be mine?"

"..."

"..."

"No."

Chapter 177 Reasons

"Will you please be mine?"

Clovis looked at her for a few seconds before raising his head as though he considered it seriously before saying, "No."

"Wait, wait! While I appreciate the fact that you consider it seriously, please hear me out a bit." Hana raised three fingers. "There are three reasons. You should know the first one, since yes, I want your family's power."

"While my family is wealthy and has two Tier 8 powerhouses, it still can't be compared to a single Tier 9 human. In this current era, strength reigns supreme. Even if you have all the wealth in the world, if you don't have a Tier 9 human, you're basically not big enough.

"After all, if a Tier 9 human ambushes you and your family, you won't be able to fight back. Even if the people scrutinize the Tier 9 humans, the latter can just ignore them. That's the kind of strength they possess.

"The second reason is because the Hacfield is the smallest yet strongest family. There won't be a lot of headaches doing so.

"The last reason is your grandfather's personality." Hana waved her hand while correcting Clovis.
"Besides, it doesn't necessarily mean that way. You can become my subordinate or something. As long as you become my person, I can publicize that fact without angering your grandfather."

Clovis closed his eyes before asking, "Suppose I were to refuse?"

"Couldn't I kill all the people here except you?" Hana smirked, which made Clovis and the others frown. She hurriedly added, "I'm just kidding. Once you have an influence as big as mine, you can easily find out that your parents are still alive. Even if your grandfather is not going to do anything to me, your parents are definitely gonna pay me a visit.

I'm not crazy enough to make the Hacfield family my enemy."

Clovis thought for a moment and said, "You can simply join my group, you know?"

"Unfortunately, I don't think I can do that." Hana shook her head. "There are two reasons. I don't have the time to go on the adventures. If I go to a raid, it will be a big one so that I can gain enough battle experience and just buy all the essence. The second reason is that being someone subordinate doesn't suit me."

"And that's also the exact reason why I rejected your offer earlier."

Hana and Clovis looked at each other for a moment before Hana eventually gave up. "Alright. I shall respect that choice."

Clovis turned around. "Anyone want to ask a question?"

"Nah, I don't want to bother. I will just keep listening." Jay shrugged while Melody shook her head as if this wasn't her place to interject.

"This is a matter of the Hacfield family. I believe it's not our place to meddle." Kanaria rejected it. Even if she became Clovis's girlfriend, she still wasn't in the place where she could get involved in his family's matter. This was the least she could do to respect his identity.

Clovis nodded his head. "Alright. My question is this... What is your purpose in coming here?"

"Didn't I tell you I want you?"

"Do you think I'm supposed to believe it just like that? You should have known that you would be rejected."

Hana paused as though she had known that fact. She raised a finger. "I wanted to confirm whether the Hacfield family was as strong as the rumor."

"I guess you're not satisfied." Clovis shook his head helplessly. The retreat alone was a big mistake.

"Of course not. You have shown me how you and your group manage to defeat all those beasts that I think you're not capable of defeating. In addition, I can see that each of you possesses good qualities as an explorer.

"Still, if I have to say, there are also many geniuses that are able to fight a beast one tier above them in major cities. However, I have noticed something. Your movement is refined, but it has the trace of hard work instead of talent. I'm not saying that hard work is not important, but there is a distinct difference between the talented and the hard working.

"I'm assuming that your evolution rate is low, which is what actually impresses me. You manage to reach this level in just a couple of months."

Clovis took a deep breath, never expecting her to be able to observe that much from the fight alone. It seemed that he had underestimated her.

"Why me? Or should I say... why the Hacfield family? It's true that we're the smallest family, but we're also the most eccentric. In fact, if you want to gain the help of Tier 9 humans, you can use your money to ask for their help or even search for their successors like me."

"That's where you're wrong." Hana waved her hand. "Built, not bought. Earned, not given. No matter how hard I do it, I won't escape the stigma that I've got all this because my family is freaking wealthy. I can't deny and won't deny that fact. It's true that I'm able to achieve all this and build my empire this early because of my family's influence."

"The business partners think of me positively because of my family's reputation. They give me investments because I have wealthy parents, and so on. The same applies to those people... except for you."

"When people think about you, they don't think you've got the strength, the money, or anything. The only stigma you have is the craziness of your family, which is not related to all this. And I want that."

"But if you want strength, can't you just pour all those resources to boost you to Tier 9? Isn't it easy?"

Hana shook her head. "Everyone around me told me that I would never become Tier 9. My parents couldn't, my grandparents couldn't. They didn't give me the reason. Even if I investigated it, there weren't any results."

"Huh?" This answer actually raised a big question in everyone's mind.

Chapter 178 Evaluation

"Huh? Unable to become a Tier 9?"

Hana shrugged. "I don't know the reason. I don't believe it either, but when you think about it, there are a lot of people that have the potential to become Tier 9. Yet, why are there only ten Tier 9 humans in this world?"

They couldn't say anything, thinking about the possibility.

"Fifty years ago, people knew this world was just a simulation. So, it might be related to that... which sucks. But I will continue striving forward."

Hana waved her hand and turned back to Clovis. "It's my turn now. Do you have any desire to move to a different city? At the very least, do you want to come with me? You can even bring your group."

"I'm going to remain in this city for a few more months." Clovis shook his head. This had been decided before.

"I won't force you, but I hope that you can join the raid that I'm organizing in this city. Well, the raid was supposed to be an event to measure your ability, but I had seen it here. I don't really care anymore."

"What kind of raid do you have in mind?" Clovis looked a bit interested in this raid. In fact, he had been looking for one this whole time to motivate them.

"I'm not sure, but we'll go to a harder place that is far from any cities since they each have their own 'field' that weakens the beasts. Of course, my group will protect the people here, so I believe this is a good opportunity for you."

Clovis's vision turned to his teammates.

"I don't mind about the raid." Jay shrugged. "As long as I can fight, I'm satisfied. Even if they are not strong, I will just find the strongest one."

"You are the captain, you make the decision, and we'll follow." Melody nodded her head.

Kanaria looked at Hana for a moment before closing her eyes. "This will serve as motivation."

Clovis shrugged. "There you have it. We might participate in that raid."

"That's good. The raid will be held the day after tomorrow."

"That's quite troubling." Clovis looked down, contemplating. They could probably use tomorrow to get used to the level of the beasts here and head back during the night. But they wouldn't have a lot of time to prepare for the raid.

"I can put your name in there anyway, so as long as you're not late, you don't have to mind anything else. All the supplies will be provided by me."

Clovis still hesitated, but eventually agreed. "Alright. That should be alright, yes?"

Kanaria didn't agree immediately. Instead, she added, "It depends on how long the raid will take."

"Two days at maximum. I have to go back soon."

"That should be fine," Kanaria finally confirmed.

"Alright. We'll participate in the raid." Clovis nodded. "Now that we're getting used to the level of the beasts in this area, your evaluation might change, you know."

"I'm looking forward to it." Hana smiled.

"By the way, this is my turn now." Clovis raised his hand, shifting back to the topic.

"Ah!" Hana scratched the back of her head. She only had two questions, so she didn't know what she was going to ask next.

However, Clovis seized the opportunity and asked first before she could say anything. "What do you think about me?"

"Eh?" Hana looked startled, never expecting that Clovis would ask about this. She thought he was uninterested in it.

But Clovis hurriedly solved the misunderstanding by adding, "I mean as a person not related to the Hacfield family. Or all these guys? If you can choose whether to hire us or not, will you hire us as an individual? And what kind of investment are you planning to give us?"

Hana didn't answer immediately. On the one hand, she felt it would be rude to answer truthfully. Even her business side was screaming at her since if they wanted to cooperate with each other, there was no way they could talk badly about them. On the other hand, Clovis's serious expression told her that he wanted to know the truth.

After considering her options, Hana said, "If I can be honest, I will not hire you, Clovis."

"The reason?"

"You don't have a high evolution rate. I can see the hard work you put in, but it will definitely bring a bad image and there's a chance that you will not grow much in the future. Even if I have to invest in you, it won't be that much. The only interesting thing about you right now is that you can fight a beast one rank above you, which is a big plus right now.

But as you grow stronger and stronger, the gap between each rank will become wider and wider. So, it feels like a gamble.

"But this gentleman here is different. I can see the confidence in his eyes and the refined strength in his talent. He will definitely go high, at least Tier 6 or Tier 7. I have to observe him a bit more to make an accurate assessment, so I'll probably make a contract that only lasts for a few years and will be extended if his performance is satisfactory.

"As for the operator lady, she is probably the highest. It's hard to find a good operator, let alone a mobile operator that can act together. Her fighting skills can be refined later, but there will be a lot of people wanting her on their teams.

"Last but not least, the sniper lady does have a very interesting talent. However, that is not enough... In fact, I will put her below this gentleman unless she has other special skills that I don't know of. So, it's hard to make an accurate judgment."

The one who reacted to this assessment wasn't Clovis who got the harshest assessment. It was Melody who had the best evaluation.

Melody couldn't help but widen her eyes, realizing why Clovis actually asked this question.

She thought, 'Did he want to try whether it's possible for me to be valued that highly to the point where they would go all the way to invite a good doctor to treat my brother?'

Chapter 179 Business Partner

"I hope you're not offended by my honest assessment."

Clovis shook his head. "Of course not. In fact, I'm glad that I can hear your honest thoughts."

When Melody looked at him, instead of happiness, she felt empty. It was true that her goal was to treat her brother. However, she couldn't help but remember all the time they had spent together.

After hiding herself for so long and enduring the hardship, she regained the warmth, excitement, fun, and bond that she had lost over the years.

At the same time, she wanted her brother to recover. That was why Melody faced a dilemma.

Would she sacrifice this bond just for her brother? It was Clovis and the others who pulled her from that darkness.

When her brother woke up and knew that she abandoned them even though they helped her so much, would he still thank her?

Melody clenched her hands into fists as she heard Clovis ask, "By the way. If you have that kind of opinion about my teammates..."

"Clovis!" Melody shouted, stopping him.

"??" Hana tilted her head in confusion, while Clovis looked at her face and saw her answer.

Clovis scratched the back of his head and said, "Never mind. Actually, let's move on to the next question. Suppose I say, instead of a boss-employee relationship or any other kind, what do you think about business partners instead? One that is equal."

"!!!" Hana raised her eyebrows as if she couldn't believe what Clovis said. She had told him earlier that Clovis wasn't that interesting as an individual. The only thing she could see in him was his family.

So, she couldn't help but ask, "Are you sure you're asking that question?"

"As an individual." Clovis answered before she could even finish.

Hana was flabbergasted. This was the first time someone actually dared to think of her as an equal without their backing. Even the geniuses in her city were trash without their backing, including her. But even with her backing, Clovis believed that he could cooperate with her as an equal.

"If you can even meet my expectations, even half, I will consider it in a positive way," Hana answered carefully.

Clovis smiled and tilted his head. "Kanaria. We have that, don't we?"

"Ah!" Kanaria was dumbstruck. "Are you insane?"

That question might undermine the scale of that information. After all, Clovis actually wanted to entrust the information from Professor Waod to her.

On the one hand, it was clear that Hana had the ability to complete it. She could easily make other people believe that she was the one who found it. On the other hand, if they just handed her this information, she could discredit them completely and act as if she had never seen them.

However, Clovis thought differently. There were a few reasons why he wanted to test it.

First of all, Clovis had the Hacfield family. His parents or even his grandfather could get involved in this matter, especially since Professor Waod was his mother's student.

The next reason was Another World Mall. Yes, Clovis planned to sell the items from Another World Mall in the future. He never did it this whole time because it would be easy to track him and force him to fork out all these things. It might not just become a local problem but an international one.

Hence, he abandoned that idea right away. It would be different if he could trust Hana and her company.

If she cooperated with him honestly with only the information about the beast soul, he might trust her with Another World Mall's items.

In addition, she couldn't kill him for this information, considering his grandfather would destroy her entire family in rage.

In other words, this proposal carried far lower risk than it looked on the surface. While the beast soul was important, he still had a copy of this information and could simply spread it so that Hana couldn't monopolize it.

On the other hand, he was the sole master of Another World Mall. If he sold those clothes as 'artifacts,' people would definitely go to him. This kind of business would definitely surpass that of beast souls. And he would definitely hold a grudge and crush her company in the future.

These were the reasons why Clovis decided to do it. He just never expected there to be someone who would go all the way here to become that person for him.

Of course, this was also a gamble for him. While he could do all that, it would be extremely troublesome. In fact, he could be considered foolish.

Even though he said it was as an individual, the other party still had to consider his family.

As Hana said, in the end, they couldn't escape the stigma of family.

Some would think of him as foolish, but he definitely considered this decision carefully. That was why he extended his hand as if asking for her device.

Kanaria looked reluctant, but she didn't forget that this professor was his mother's student. In addition, she had gotten all the benefits from the Star Method.

So, Kanaria opened her device and showed the information before handing it to Clovis.

"Please take a look at this." Clovis passed it to Hana.

Hana looked confused, wondering what kind of thing could shock her. It was actually a research paper.

The best thing would be to scan all the documents and understand their potential. However, since the other party was still here, she could only look at the abstract to understand what kind of research this was.

It took her only two minutes before she dropped her jaws to the ground. "Are you serious?"

"How is it? This thing will be extremely beneficial for you, right?"

"It's easy to set up a new company for this. And the potential of this research is actually beyond imagination... I believe that it can even surpass my current company. Are you sure you want to collaborate with me? Do you understand its value?"

"Yes. I do have several conditions though."

"As long as it's not harsh to the point where I can't even make a living, I don't mind."

Chapter 180 Agreement

Clovis smiled. "Don't worry. It's not that harsh. There are three conditions. First, the research should have been finished, so you can immediately test and even produce it. However, I wish that you would wait for me first.

"I'm planning to leave this city one year after my awakening, so there are still about nine to ten months. I want you to wait until that time before announcing it. Of course, I would like my members to get it first."

"It's easy. We still need to test it, which will take a few months. Because the price of beast souls will skyrocket, it's better if we stock as many beast souls as possible before launching it. Let alone a year, I can even wait for three years."

Clovis shook his head. "A year is enough. The second condition is that you have to hide our name. We don't want to get into trouble with this information. You can claim that it's yours, but respect the name of the author. Give him the credit he deserves."

"Are you sure about this? If you are known because of this, there will be a lot of fame and money opportunity."

"Yeah. The trouble that will follow is simply not worth all that." Clovis sighed. He certainly had a headache just thinking about the mess he had to clean up, especially since he had a group.

"Alright. I can fulfill the second condition. What is the last condition?"

"We want a priority for it. I mean, do you think we won't use it?"

"If that's your condition, it's easy. In fact, you deserve shares or a portion of revenue just by providing the information alone."

Clovis pointed at Kanaria. "As for the details of the contract and shares, she will handle it."

"Okay." Hana agreed without hesitation. She never thought that the conditions were easy to fulfill.

This made Clovis look generous or even foolish. But she felt things weren't so simple. With how easily he revealed this information, he might have something even more terrifying on his sleeve.

The Hacfield were known for their craziness, not their foolishness after all.

"I will need your contact information later so that you know the progress." Hana smiled, feeling excited. It was no wonder why Clovis sounded confident earlier.

"That's all. Since I have asked two questions, it's your turn right now. I don't think I have any other questions, so we can end it after this."

"No. I don't have any more questions either. Or if you feel it's unfair, then how about answering this... Do you mind if I stay with your group for the night? I will go back tomorrow morning."

Clovis glanced at the others. Since they didn't raise any objections, Clovis nodded his head. "Sure. You can discuss the agreement with Kanaria and our group can learn a lot from your experiences as an explorer."

"Thank you."

"Alright. I'm done here." Clovis stood up, grabbed his clothes, and walked away with only a towel covering his lower body. Jay did the same since they had bathed for more than thirty minutes.

"I think I will go in next. Gotta grab some towels first. Hahaha..." Melody let out a hollow laugh and escaped, leaving Kanaria and Hana alone to discuss the business.

However, both of them looked at each other with different intentions. It felt like they exchanged a lot of words without even opening their mouths.

"Are you his girlfriend?" Hana asked. After seeing all their reactions, only Kanaria looked extremely hostile when she invited Clovis with words easy to misunderstand.

Kanaria didn't answer, or more like, she couldn't. She wasn't his girlfriend yet, even though their relationship was already pretty close. There was still a thin barrier that isolated him. Considering what he had gone through and his family, she decided to respect his boundaries for the time being and wait until he was ready.

But that changed when Hana invited him. It was no wonder why her mother was so proactive toward Clovis's grandfather.

However, Hana simply waved her hand, gesturing that she had misunderstood her. "Don't worry. I'm not going to steal him from you. First of all, I'm too greedy. I don't think I will do something that makes me potentially lose money... for example, divorce.

"And even if I marry someone, I'm going to be a horrible wife and mother. I won't have time to do much for my significant other since I'm going to bury myself either in business or exploration. The same applies to the child. Instead of being irresponsible, I will just not do it.

I'd rather use that money to make a foundation for homeless children and train them so that they can change their future... if I can be so kind.

"So, don't worry, Miss." Hana winked her right eye.

"..." Kanaria remained silent for a minute, making the atmosphere awkward.

"Mhmm... If you're not going to say anything, I will leave... I have soaked for too long."

Kanaria finally opened her mouth. "My goal is city reconstruction, taking the world back from the beasts. It definitely requires a lot of money."

Hana raised her eyebrows, starting to understand the meaning of that agreement. It seemed that Clovis cared for her dearly.

"While I'm good at logistics, I'm not someone who can generate a stable cash flow. That's why he answered it that way and even brought up this collaboration.

"He has sacrificed a lot of things and planned to do more in the future. I feel like I'm unable to repay him no matter how hard I try.

"Hence, the least I can do is to sacrifice a part of myself... Though, I'm not even sure why I even tell you about this." Kanaria let out a long sigh as she walked to the edge of the hot spring while extending her hand. "Let's discuss the agreement later."

Hana looked astonished for a moment before taking her hand. "I might have underestimated you a little bit. The reason why I came here was purely business, so you don't have to worry for now. I've told you earlier, right? Money will always be my priority."