

World Mall 181

Chapter 181 Test

"This is how I fight." Hana raised the bag that contained multiple drones. The moment she activated it, all these drones started soaring into the air and moving in all kinds of formation.

The smaller drones had a few holes in them, while the bigger drones were much easier to spot but also had a bigger gun.

"So, by combining the drones and using them in a certain formation, you're able to surround them." Clovis frowned. This was the first time he had seen such a fighting style.

It was definitely deadly. Even he didn't know how to defeat this formation. With the number of drones, it was clear that he had to move as quickly as possible, avoiding all the bullets. But the moment his movement was interrupted, the drones would get into the position and surround him.

The other way would be to destroy the drones with his short sword or pistol. But the drones had an advanced AI that could read attack patterns.

Without enough speed, he would have a hard time destroying them.

"So, we can do this..." Melody tried typing a few things, testing the drones herself. The drones began to move in an unpredictable way.

"Do you want to try it on someone? Of course, no shoot." Hana smirked. Considering Melody was an operator, she should be exceptional in this field. She wanted to see whether she was good or not with the drones she used for the first time.

"Ehm..." Melody looked hesitant because she didn't have the money to replace the drones if they crashed into each other.

"It's fine. The information alone makes me not mind even if you destroy all these drones." Hana chuckled.

"Why don't you try it?" Clovis nodded. Since the owner had said so, it would be a waste if they didn't take the opportunity.

"Clovis. Do you mind?" Melody nodded. Clovis had the best reaction speed, so he would be the hardest to trick.

"Sure." Clovis waved his fingers. "I will stand here and see if I can destroy all the drones or not."

After watching how Hana operated the drones, Melody began to move the drones.

Clovis lowered his hands as though he were gripping his long sword and pistol.

Once Melody started to get used to the drones' movements, she raised three of her fingers. "I will try it. Three... two... one..."

The drones sped up and moved toward Clovis. The latter looked like he was clenching his fists, ready to slash the drones.

But right before it reached Clovis's attack range, the drones spread out.

In an instant, Clovis imagined himself raising his left hand and shooting one of the drones.

To his surprise, Melody changed the patterns of the drones, avoiding Clovis before he shot. After that, several of them moved closer, entering his range.

Clovis had to choose which one he would strike first, but that was when the rest of the drones released the laser as though they were ready to kill him.

Clovis leaped to the side and slashed one of the drones, but that was actually a trap. Melody actually aimed the laser toward his eyes, which caused his vision to be blurry for a split second.

After Clovis cut down one of the drones, he suddenly stopped when he noticed he had been surrounded. There were at least four drones who had been waiting for him in this spot as though they knew Clovis would be here.

"!!!" Clovis raised his eyebrows before asking, "Did you intentionally lower the speed of the drones?"

Kanaria and Jay were confused because they didn't know what Clovis was talking about.

However, Melody and Hana were actually able to imagine the clash between Clovis and the drones. It was magnificent.

Melody placed a trap for Clovis and checkmated him the moment he took the bait.

Melody nodded her head. "Yes. The biggest advantage of these drones is their number. By manipulating each drone's speed, you can create the illusion that you are one step ahead of the drones, while in reality, you've been trapped."

Hana rubbed her cheek multiple times as her gaze lost its focus as though she had fallen into deep thought.

As soon as she finished her thought, she couldn't help but say, "That's an interesting way to play with the drones."

"Well, it's only possible because the AI is very advanced. If I can create several models, it can create different combinations of attack patterns."

"My engineers said the same thing." Hana nodded in agreement. "It seems that I've underestimated you."

"Well, I can only do this because of my good senses."

Clovis clicked his tongue. After hearing those words, Clovis couldn't help but look down. The ground was uneven, so he subconsciously lowered his speed as well. This made the drones look much faster.

"Well, my affinity is not the Brain, so I don't have those good senses." Hana shook her head helplessly. "But your control over the drones is interesting, especially with the fact that this is your first time operating them. If he disbands the group, you can work under me."

Melody smiled. Even though she was happy that Hana valued her that highly, she had made her decision to remain in the Libation Fiesta. "As an operator, I'm thankful for your assessment, but I'll have to reject it."

Hana shrugged. "Do you want to buy the drones? I'm sure that you can put it to good use."

"As much as I would like to have them, I don't think I have the money to buy one. In addition, I don't think this city has the ability to restock the parts the drones use." Melody shook her head.

"The first problem is easy. I can just use the money from future sales to buy the drones. Then again, they are indeed expensive. The smaller ones cost about two million dollars. As for the second one... yeah, you can probably visit my city after this. You're going to leave the city in a few months, right?" Hana turned to Clovis.

"Come to my city, okay?"

"We'll see." Clovis shrugged. Now that they had reached an agreement, Hana began to use all opportunities to invite them.

Chapter 182 Leaving

Hana did everything she had to do with Clovis. She first read the research to make sure the potential was indeed limitless.

After that, she negotiated the terms with Kanaria. While Kanaria wasn't at her level, she was the best one to take care of the negotiations in the team.

At the same time, Hana had to be extra careful when dealing with Clovis, especially with the Hacfield family behind him. If she ended up angering the Hacfield family, she would be in trouble. Her family would punish her instead.

This was what Hana meant by saying that everything was useless unless they had a Tier 9 human.

Hence, during the negotiation, Hana offered an extremely generous contract for Clovis's group.

She couldn't help but imagine that if her family had the backing of a Tier 9, they wouldn't have to worry about Michael Hacfield. Even during the negotiation, they could be more proactive and get as much as possible.

The negotiation lasted for the whole night. Clovis was there only to observe and didn't say anything during the negotiation. But his presence alone was enough to pressure Hana.

After reaching an agreement, Hana promised to draft the contract as quickly as possible and sign the contract before she returned to her country.

Meanwhile, Clovis was satisfied since, one year from now, they would definitely get a lot of money.

Then again, he believed that the group would be able to reach Tier 2 or even close to Tier 3. At that time, they should be able to get a few millions for every expedition that lasts for two or three days. The money that Hana promised might not be that much to them anymore.

Still, for Clovis, money was money. And it would definitely help his Another World Mall.

In the morning, Hana was ready to leave. Her backpack only contained some basic necessities as most of them were her drones.

She waved her hand and said, "Alright. I'll be going."

"Yeah." Clovis nodded.

"By the way, I want to warn you about one thing. I don't know if you have noticed it or not, but the informant who gave you the information about this mountain... he might not be the one you thought he was."

Clovis's expression turned serious. He was already aware of it, but he still asked, "What do you mean?"

"He hid his strength. I'm not sure how he did it, but he was definitely much stronger. Tier 3 if not Tier 4."

"How did you even know that?" Clovis squinted his eyes, asking not the informant but the fact that she knew about this informant.

Hana only gave him a wry smile. "I don't think I need to answer that question. But I just want you to be careful... Tier 4 is already rare enough in this city, so I'm afraid that he might be plotting something."

"..." Clovis fell silent, remembering the huts inside the ruin.

"Anyway, I'm done here. I'll see you during the raid. Are you sure you're not going to go back with me?"

"No. We'll look around and get used to this level of beasts first."

"Alright!" Hana waved her hand and walked toward the edge of the mountain. After taking a look at the terrain below, she jumped off.

Clovis and the others were quite surprised by her boldness, but Hana managed to land on top of a big boulder skillfully before hopping to another rock below. She repeated the same thing over and over again until she reached the bottom.

"How did she do that? It only took six jumps to reach the bottom. And this mountain is close to three hundred meters." Jay muttered. "Did her ankles or knees not feel anything?"

"It's probably because of her affinity. She is most likely to have a Heart or Bones affinity. Heart boosts her regenerative power, while the Bones increase the toughness of her body. Either of them will be perfect for those jumps. In addition, she is already a Tier 4 human, so I think we'll be able to do that as well once we reach Tier 4." Clovis shrugged.

"That's true. Then again, that suits her fighting style very well. With her controlling the drones, it's much easier to target her instead of the drones. However, she should be able to withstand her enemies' attacks with those skills while her drones shoot them." Kanaria assessed her ability.

"That's true. Still, what should we do with the ruins?" Melody glanced at Clovis, believing they should prioritize this problem.

"For now, we should lay low and act as if we have never gone to this place. I don't know if the informant is related to whoever created those huts or not. Either way, we'll just have to prepare for trouble." Clovis sighed.

"Can't you just tell her to deal with it? Or at least, investigate it? They won't dare touch her, right?" Jay asked nonchalantly.

"..." Clovis raised his eyebrows as if he didn't think of that possibility or more like he was so focused on the deal that he forgot about the ruin for a moment. "I don't want us to owe her that much. We'll be taken advantage of if we owe people too much."

"Like how you're showing the Star Method and all these items?"

"I'm trying to make an excuse." Clovis clicked his tongue, knowing that he would never take advantage of them and that Jay was just teasing him. "Anyway, let's go. We don't have a lot of time."

The group chuckled before continuing their trip. They searched for all the beasts near the mountain during the morning and headed back after lunch.

The return trip only took three hours, so they still had plenty of time to prepare for tomorrow's expedition.

As usual, Jay returned straight away while Melody visited her brother and told him about the hot spring. Clovis and Kanaria restocked their supplies before reviewing the next raid.

Obviously, they found out that Ivan also participated in this raid, but considering Hana was the one who made it, he doubted the Drake Group would do something. Even those assassins would probably refrain from getting involved in this expedition.

Or... that was what Clovis and Kanaria hoped when reviewing the mission.

Chapter 183 Angry

Drake Group.

"Sir!" A man entered the office, finding the president of the Drake Group, who was talking to Ivan and his team.

"What?"

"We have just received the news from the expedition team. His name has appeared."

"!!!" The president stood up in shock. "Are you sure?"

"Yes. We have just received the updated information."

"But the expedition team should have been filled, right?"

"That's..." The man rubbed his cheek, not knowing what to say. There was only one way to add another party to the expedition team.

And President Thomas obviously knew it. He slammed his fist onto the table. "Shit! How did they get the favor of Hana Skylark?"

He was originally happy that Clovis's group didn't participate in this expedition. He had done everything he could to fill up the quota as quickly as possible by using the favor.

But to think that Hana Skylark would add them into the expedition team all of a sudden.

"Wait. Isn't she supposed to be staying in the hotel..." Thomas raised his head, noticing something was off. "Don't tell me, her actual aim is him?"

"!!!" The people were stunned. If that was the case, they could finally understand why Clovis's team could join the raid at the last second. Even if the mayor asked her about it, she could simply dismiss it, considering she was the one organizing the raid.

Ivan clenched his fists. Every single time, Clovis humiliated him. Even when it was his time to shine, Clovis would appear once again.

His hatred for Clovis gradually became bigger than even his obsession toward Kanaria.

On the other hand, Thomas kicked the trash can next to him while screaming, "Motherfucker!"

If her aim was really Clovis, Ivan wouldn't be able to do anything. He could show off his strength, but unless the difference between them was so high, it would be impossible to impress her.

And there was no way Ivan or his Drake Group could get a favor from a big company like OpenSky.

That was why Thomas was so angry that he wanted to kill Clovis right away. However, the moment he tried to do it, those assassins would come for him.

Even Ivan had gotten his lesson after his previous attempt. If not for the fact that the main culprit had been killed, Ivan would have lost his life.

Still, he was unwilling. He had done everything right, yet Clovis appeared again.

If he actually harmed Clovis in this expedition, the ones he had to fight might not be the assassins. It would be the OpenSky Company. It wouldn't be hard for Hana to crush his Drake Group financially.

President Thomas gritted his teeth before glaring at Ivan. "You better not do anything to them on this expedition. If you dare to do something, I will be the one to kill you!"

Ivan wanted to get angry, but he had to swallow his pride. There were already people looking at him with disdain because of his disfigured face and continuous embarrassment. If he lost the favor of the Drake Group, everything would be over even if he had a 99% evolution rate. People would simply eliminate him instead of taking him to avoid future threats.

Ivan clenched his fists so tight that his nails almost cut his palms. The only thing he could do was to lower his head.

"You guys go!" Thomas waved his hand, gesturing them to exit the room first as he thought about this matter.

While walking, Ivan looked like he wanted to murder someone. After the previous defeat, everything began to fall apart. The two girls that joined his group previously? One of them had left his side as though they didn't want to participate in the fight between him and Clovis. The other one still remained, but there was a significant distance between them.

Elina was the only one who remained close to him, but it was clear that she only did it because the order of the president.

The problem would be Vina. He began to grow suspicious of Vina. In the previous raid, Vina used some excuses to remain on Clovis's side and even supported him during the argument.

He had heard from Lovelia that Vina had been pretty distant since the first competition. There was a chance that Vina was actually siding with Clovis.

On the other hand, Elina wondered what she should do at this point. While it had become easy to manipulate Ivan through that intense hatred, Ivan had also turned into a double-edged sword. If they made a mistake, the entire Drake Group could be dragged down together.

Unfortunately, the president only ordered her to observe him for the time being.

No one uttered a single word as they exited the building.

It was far different from President Thomas.

He was calling someone and even shouting at them. "Why are you letting the Libation Fiesta enter the expedition team?"

"We are sorry, Mr. Thomas. We don't have much authority to refuse when the host is putting their name in it."

"This is unfair to the other groups who did their best to enter the raid team, don't you think?"

"I'm sorry, Mr. Thomas. While I favor your opinion, the risk is too high."

"You bastard. Are you chickening now?" He gritted his teeth. When the other party hung up the call, he threw his device to the floor before stomping it. "Coward bastard."

Thomas knew that the relationship between the Drake Group and Clovis was already doomed. So, he had to eliminate Clovis at all costs.

"If you're not going to do it, then I'll do it myself." Thomas went back to his computer, steering everything so that Clovis couldn't join this expedition. As long as he remained hidden, Hana wouldn't be able to find him.

In addition, she also had to make sure to avoid having her reputation ruined. If there were enough pressure, she would have no choice but to comply.

Thomas used all his connections to find all the information about Clovis. Little did he know, he would find something that even he never expected. "This is... I might be able to use this."

Chapter 184 'Visitors'

Clovis's group had finally arrived at the meeting place. It seemed that they were planning to use the battleship instead of normal cars.

It was a good plan, considering the battleship could pass on any terrain and was much more efficient. They even had defensive systems.

"So, this is the rumored battleship," Clovis muttered.

"Yeah. I'm quite surprised that such a thing can exist. I mean, the airplane should suffice, but they are prone to attacks from flying beasts. It's said that this battleship is used for the new generation of airplanes."

Clovis pointed at the airship. "Can't they just put those big guns from the walls into this battleship?"

"I think they've done that." Kanaria shrugged. "I don't know much about the battleship though."

Melody was simply staring at the battleship as if she were mesmerized by it. "Why a battleship... I want a robot. It will be cool to fight inside a robot."

"Do you think our technology has reached that point? Even this battleship is known to be using the most cutting edge technology." Kanaria shook her head helplessly.

"Maybe we should have one in the future. Not the big one... Just a small one for our group." Clovis looked at the battleship, imagining himself traveling with his friends on that ship.

"That sounds nice. But it's not nice for our wallet. I'm sure that it will cost at least tens of billions of dollars."

"Yeah. I'm talking about the future, not now." Clovis shrugged. When he got even stronger, he might have started selling the items from Another World Mall, which would have given him an unimaginable amount of money.

So, it might not be impossible.

"Still, there are a lot of people here." Clovis looked around, not finding a single person he knew.

Most of them were Tier 1 humans and the rest were just Tier 0. Since they had never publicized themselves, Clovis's group wasn't known by a lot of people, which was actually convenient since he didn't have to deal with their stares.

"Sadly, Melody can't go with us since it's only under 20." Kanaria sighed.

"Don't worry. This will be like my day off. I'll be watching you guys fly into the sky." Melody waved her hand.

That was right. Hana could put them inside the expedition team, but she couldn't change the rule she had set. So, Melody couldn't participate in this expedition.

"Get some fun out there, will you? Make sure that the Libation Fiesta won't be looked down on by others. Of course, since I'm an operator, I can still support you from my home... It's just the connection and the ping will be a problem. But I'll do what I can."

"Thank you." Clovis nodded.

Melody smiled, gesturing that she would be fine.

While they were chatting, Jay tugged them in the shoulder while pointing at the side.

"Mhmm?" Clovis and Kanaria turned around and found Ivan's group coming to the meeting point.

Ivan had changed drastically. Most of his face had been covered with a mask. He had lost one person from his previous team and Vina, as usual, remained on the back.

When they made their entrance, the people began to look at him and whisper to each other.

"Is that Ivan?"

"Yeah. I heard that he did something bad and got his face disfigured."

"What? Wasn't that too cruel?"

"I heard it was only a rumor."

"Rumor? But if that was only a rumor, why would he put on a mask?"

"Ssshhh. Don't say anything. It would be bad if he unleashed his anger at us."

"But if I'm not wrong, he had been beaten multiple times by another group. What was their name again? Libation Fiesta?"

"Yeah. I saw them not long ago. There might be another clash between them. We should just stand on the sidelines and watch the show."

"Agreed. No, wait. We don't have popcorn."

"I prepared hot dogs for us by the way."

"This is going to be interesting."

The people were talking about Ivan and Clovis as if they were eager to see what kind of conflict would arise in this expedition. While it was true that it would create danger, they simply wanted Ivan to get knocked down.

It might be out of pettiness, but Ivan had it all. He had multiple women by his side, unparalleled talent, and even a handsome face.

However, ever since meeting Clovis, his face was ruined, his talent didn't look that much, and the women that flocked him previously began to disappear.

On the other hand, they had heard rumors about Clovis. From one source, it was said that Clovis had done a much better job than Ivan's group. They were humble and put the credit where it's due.

There was simply not much information about them. If there was one, it was most likely to be positive.

It might be because of the lack of information that Clovis became even more mysterious. People wanted to cheer for the underdog.

Some people even went all the way to say that Ivan looked good because the Drake Group portrayed him that way in the media. It was just a facade because they needed to hide his bad behavior.

Ivan was annoyed when he listened to their nonsense. But they heard that the president had prepared something to mess with Clovis, so they should just stay out and not do anything to make it worse.

It only took a minute after Ivan appeared before the mood changed once again as new visitors arrived.

"Hey. Isn't that the police?"

"Why are the police here?"

"What is going on?"

The people began to whisper as they saw multiple policemen coming into the scene. All of them had a stern face and walked straight to their target.

Clovis turned his head around because he felt a lot of people were staring at him, wondering what was going on.

At that time, the police were already in front of him while projecting a screen of his identity that showed his evolution rate.

"Mr. Clovis. You're under arrest for bribing the Exploration Association to get your explorer identification. Please follow us to the station."

Chapter 185 Trouble?

"Mr. Clovis. You're under arrest for bribing the Exploration Association to get your explorer identification. Please follow us to the station."

"Huh?"

The people were dumbfounded when they heard what the police said. They simply couldn't believe it.

Even Melody and Kanaria didn't expect this. They knew that Clovis had a low evolution rate, but once he got the identification, people wouldn't usually bother him anymore.

In addition, he was already Tier 1, showing his talent. There were some examples of people with low evolution rates who became successful because they were desperate enough to get it.

When it was found, the people actually helped them, demanding the police release them. After all, this also showed the potential of humanity.

The same should apply to Clovis. Both of them believed that once he became Tier 1 within a year of his awakening, even the police couldn't arrest them. It wasn't that they couldn't, it was that they wouldn't. Arresting him would bring a bad reputation to the police after all.

That was why it was too shocking that the police would make a move now.

"Is there something wrong? Do you even have the warrant to arrest him?" Kanaria tried to stop them.

However, the police stopped her and even took out the scanner.

"In that case, we'd like for Mr. Clovis to show his evolution rate. According to the database, Mr. Clovis only has a 15% evolution rate and has bribed an official to get his license. We'd like to bring you to the station for some questioning."

"What do you mean, 15%?" Kanaria acted as if she didn't know any of this. She even added, "He has become a Tier 1 within a month of his awakening. How could he have 15% evolution rate?"

When the people saw this exchange, they began to whisper to each other once again. As expected, the happiest one was Ivan as he could see Clovis suffer.

Clovis maintained his poker face, making people think that he was silently admitting his deed.

"Is that true? Did he bribe the staff in the exploration association?"

"But when you think about it, isn't it fine? I mean, he has become Tier 1, which is enough to show his talent. There are a lot of people out there who can do something like that."

"No, no. If you look closely, he is more amazing than those people. 15% evolution rate. Can you imagine how hard it is to reach Tier 1 with that evolution rate? Yet he achieves it within a month, according to that girl."

"If you put it that way, then yes, he is amazing. But it doesn't change the fact that he broke the law, right?"

"Still, I don't think the police will arrest him. From all the examples in the Skynet, talented people like him will only be brought to the station and released after that. In fact, the police should give some official statement or letter so that this won't happen again."

"If that's the case, doesn't it mean it will be good for him to follow the police?"

"Do you forget where we are right now?"

"Ah!"

The bystanders soon noticed what was going on.

Clovis, who was silent this whole time, was actually trying to figure out their true aim. The police came here not to arrest him. Instead, they were planning to bring him away so that he couldn't participate in this raid.

Without him, his party would become even more vulnerable. In other words, if Kanaria and Jay were to be killed in this mission, even his grandfather couldn't do anything. Melody also didn't go because of her age.

Hana was most likely unable to help him out of this situation because it would put her company's image in danger. In addition, it would simply give away his identity as Clovis Hacfield.

'Do I have another choice?' Clovis tried to think of a solution. Just like them, he never expected the enemy would exploit this at such a time.

When he thought everything was over, a new problem came.

"What's going on?!" Hana's voice echoed in everyone's ears. They all turned around, trying to see who dared to stop the arrest.

However, they were all stunned when they realized the big boss was the one stopping it.

The police looked panicked, especially when they saw Hana's angry face. Even a normal citizen would have heard the news about her since everyone was talking about.

"What is going on here?" Hana was startled to find Clovis was in trouble, especially since they were about to set off. She glared at them, demanding an explanation.

"Mr. Clovis is suspected to have bribed the official from the Explorer Association for forging his explorer identification because his evolution rate is below the minimum stated in the law. We'd like to bring him back to the station so that we can ask a couple of questions."

The police explained it carefully and politely, trying to calm Hana down.

Hana, on the other hand, looked dumbfounded. She didn't expect that Clovis's evolution rate was that low. Then again, his achievement was so outstanding that she believed Clovis's evolution rate should be similar to that of his parents or grandfather.

This made Clovis even more amazing in her eyes.

At the same time, Hana pinched the bridge of her nose. She could see the aim of the police and someone was definitely instigating this.

Instead of feeling troubled, Hana was actually annoyed. She muttered in her own language, "(These fools...)"

"Pardon?" The police didn't understand what Hana was saying.

Seeing the gadget on their hand, Hana glanced at Clovis and nonchalantly said, "How about showing me your evolution rate? I won't allow them to bring you away if they're lying. I might have to sue them as well."

Clovis thought this was just an attempt to buy time as it was useless. Still, he was willing to do it and placed his finger on the gadget so that they could scan his fingerprints and show his information.

At that time, Clovis wasn't aware of the full extent of what a Tier 9 human could do in this world and he was about to learn it.

...

Ririiing!

Ririiing!

There was a call in the other part of the world. The man looked at his screen and saw the caller.

International Explorer Association.

The man picked up the call, saying, "This is Michael speaking."