

## World Mall 261

### Chapter 261 Shifting the Blame

"Now that we're done with the registration, I think we need to come up with a concrete plan for the competition. Like... should we utilize all our strength at once, or should we hide Ragna, who is known to be weak, as our trump card?"

"Considering we have three Tier 2 explorers and two Tier 3 explorers in our group, it can be said that people will look down on us. Then again, if I'm not wrong, there is a bid for the winner of this tournament. Should we bet on ourselves?"

"At the very least, we know that there are going to be a few difficult opponents. I'm expecting us to reach the semifinals at the very least."

Kanaria explained their problems, wanting to know about the people's decision, specifically Clovis's.

Jay and the others also knew that it would be Clovis who would be giving his opinion on the plan. Their gazes immediately shifted to him after Kanaria was done with her explanation.

To their surprise, Clovis was tapping the table continuously while staring at the table with an empty gaze as if something had troubled him.

"Clovis?" Kanaria frowned.

"Yeah?" Clovis raised his head.

"Did you listen to my explanation earlier?"

"Yes. I mean, you all can start discussing it." Clovis extended his hand, gesturing to them to start giving out plans.

Kanaria looked concerned. It wasn't like Clovis to act this way. Even if he didn't have a concrete plan, he would usually lead the discussion by asking people's opinions.

However, it seemed that Clovis was distracted with something. Kanaria couldn't help but ask, "It's not like you to act like this. Is there something wrong?"

"No, no. It's fine. How about we hear Jay's opinion first?" Clovis asked while looking away. His expression showed how distracted he was.

"Clovis... Is it something that you can't share with us?" Kanaria decided to confirm it first. If it was supposed to be a secret, they would just move on.

However, Clovis scratched the back of his head, seriously contemplating about this matter.

After a minute, Clovis took out his Skyphone and opened his recent contact. And there was one contact that grabbed their attention. It was Hana.

"Hana? A month ago?" Kanaria frowned. She shouldn't have any reasons to call him, considering it would lead to the risk of being tapped.

Clovis let out a long sigh and said, "You should know that my grandfather is still out there, right? And Hana's action was rather reckless."

"!!!" Kanaria understood where the conversation was going. "So your grandfather caused her to call you? Maybe asking for your help to stop your grandfather from unleashing his anger on her family?"

"Not really. My grandfather was supportive of my decision. That's why Hana acted as a messenger for my grandfather. Apparently, my grandfather was observing me rather closely. He was aware of my rapid advancement. So he gave me something."

"So you're worried about it?"

"Well... It's not that I'm worried about it. I'm just slightly concerned with the content... no, it's more like... the titles."

"Titles? Books?" Kanaria raised her eyebrows. The others also looked interested.

"Yeah. It seems that he has known you as well. Those books are technique books... I think they suit each of you very well. However..." Clovis paused.

"The titles are rather concerning?"

"I wouldn't really say concerning... I think it's better to see it yourself." Clovis took out several books for them to see.

They looked at the titles with various expressions. Jay didn't really care about the weird names as long as it was a good technique. His eyes immediately locked on the 'minotaur' word.

Ragna was more curious about the content because these books came from Clovis's grandfather, the world's Tier 9 explorer.

Melody looked excited. The names only appeared in fantasy games or stories. It made her think that Clovis's grandfather was rather easygoing and playful instead of strict and calculative.

Kanaria, on the other hand, understood why Clovis looked concerned since she had been living with Clovis. He wasn't the type of person who loved to use this kind of term, so the books made him look a bit edgier.

"I see. Let me confirm it first. Your grandfather sent these books, but you could only open them after becoming a Tier 2 human. The fact that you never looked troubled meant you didn't know they were actually books before this. And once you opened it, you understood what they were and their connection to us. But the names complicated things up.

Is that correct?" Kanaria asked.

"Something like that." Clovis nodded.

"I don't really care about the name. But are you sure you are able to share this with us? This is a technique that a Tier 9 human picked personally for us, right? I don't think this is ordinary," Jay asked.

"Well, there's no way I can learn everything. Then again, I'd appreciate it if you could give the books back to me after you learn them since they shouldn't be spread." Clovis nodded.

"Alright." Jay grabbed his book, fully knowing that this minotaur book was for him.

Ragna also agreed with him. As long as it could get him stronger, who really cared about the titles?

What they didn't know was that if Clovis showed them these books without shifting the blame to his grandfather, they would be more concerned about the titles. In addition, they would hesitate to take it because they had gotten so much from him.

However, his grandfather's name cleared it up a bit as if saying, 'I personally chose it for you, so you will take it, right?' with a rather authoritative tone.

"If that's the case, I'll take it." Ragna nodded. "I will definitely learn this technique along with the Star Method. I'll not disappoint this group during the tournament."

Kanaria looked at the three books and glanced at Melody. "It seems that we can share this Eagle Vision, Melody."

"Yeah. I think so too." Melody nodded.

Looking at how they accepted it so easily, Clovis couldn't help but mutter inwardly, 'Thank you, Blue, for suggesting this idea. And I'm sorry, Grandfather. I put the blame in your name.'

#### Chapter 262 Rules

Due to these new techniques, the group realized that their plans might differ after they understood a bit of them.

Jay learned a better way of utilizing the muscles on his arms, which improved his swing's strength significantly. He never thought that the Minotaur's Swing would be that effective.

The same applied to Ragna. He had been training with Jay, getting used to blocking a very powerful attack like what Jay used. The Dwarven's shielding technique increased his blocking strength drastically. He could become bolder in his role with this kind of technique.

Kanaria and Melody were the same. As their pathmaker, Melody should understand the way they conducted the battle. That was why the leadership book was very important. It was similar to a strategy game for her, but it also took a lot of trial and error to understand the battlefield, which caused Kanaria to get the Eagle Vision.

Yes, Kanaria had learned a bit from the sniping position and technique. It even taught her about movement techniques she could use as a sniper. Kanaria had more leisure time because the book resonated with her more than she imagined.

She was the fastest to comprehend the technique assigned to her. And she took that opportunity to learn about the Eagle Vision, which changed her perspective on how she viewed the battlefield. And it even gave her the correct way to increase the sharpness of her vision.

Meanwhile, the slowest one was Clovis. After all, he'd picked up three techniques at the same time.

The basic swordsmanship was extremely beneficial for him. This whole time, his grandfather never taught him swordsmanship. He just kept sparring with Clovis, allowing him to refine his movement bit by bit. It was a technique that focused on survival.

However, with this book as the foundation, Clovis's swordsmanship became even more refined. His footwork received a similar result.

Unfortunately, he only had five days to prepare. Hence, Clovis focused on something that he could learn in a short period of time. It was the Demon Dog's technique.

Clovis felt like he was flying. The speed of his swing increased as the flow between each swing became connected and actually acted as the foundation for the next swing.

Clovis's swing speed, which was already deadly to beasts or humans, became even more terrifying.

After seeing the improvement in himself and his teammates, he realized that the plan had to change. Now that their individual strengths had been upgraded, they could execute an even higher level of strategy.

...

Time passed by so quickly. Without them realizing it, the competition had finally come.

In the stadium, the first competition was over.

Ivan was standing on the second-place platform. Considering this was a competition with multiple cities fighting against each other, the fact that he managed to reach second place was already enough to show his talent.

It could be said that he was the number one person under Tier 2.

Sadly, Ivan was not happy with the result. It wasn't because he was satisfied. He simply wanted to beat Clovis, but his group simply chose to participate in the second competition.

If Clovis got a good result as well, it would be over for him.



Even the Drake Group couldn't really be happy after learning of Clovis's participation. They were anxious and wanted to see Clovis's group fail.

On the other hand, the mayor was happy with this result and celebrated every single win like a fan. He wondered if the second competition would give him another surprise or not. After all, he heard that there would be multiple Tier 4 people competing.

Now that the first competition was over, it was time for the second competition to start.

Everyone was staring at the arena, looking at the participants that were appearing on the stage one after another.

A female commentator appeared in the form of a hologram.

"Hello, everyone! We are about to start the second competition, the Shining Star Competition! I will be with you for this tournament. Allow me to introduce myself, I'm Shion." The commentator was a woman in her late twenties. She had long brown hair and a cheerful personality that made her look younger than her actual age.

The people cheered for her like an idol. "I'm a Tier 3 explorer, so I'll make sure to cover everything with my experience. Please take care of me."

"Allow me to explain the rules for this Shining Star Competition. There are a total of 46 teams that will be participating in this competition. During the preliminary stage, this number will be cut to only 16 groups."

"These 16 groups will be competing in the main stage, which I will explain tomorrow. For the preliminary stage, the groups will be sent to the Little Star Forest to hunt beasts.

"A Tier 0 beast will give the team 1 point, a Tier 1 beast will give them 5 points, a Tier 2 beast will give them 20 points, and a Tier 3 beast will give them 100 points. This Little Star Forest is only a Tier 3 area, so there won't be any Tier 4 beasts.

"Of course, the team can steal points from other teams as well. However, killing or intentionally delivering permanent damage is forbidden. If they are caught, they will be disqualified and punished severely according to city law. We are here to compete, not kill each other after all.

"The 16 teams with the highest points will advance to the main competition. Let's wish all the competitors the best as well as the fairness of the competition!

"We have more than a thousand drones spread around the area so that we will be able to monitor them. We have an advanced team that is helping with advanced AI to maintain the fairness of this round.

"Once again, welcome, all competitors, to the Shining Star Competition!"

"Uoohh!" The spectators cheered, supporting their own teams.

Mayor Revan was clapping his hands while staring at the four teams that represented his city.

At the same time, the competitors on the ground were already facing off against each other, meeting their respective rivals.

Clovis was the same as he was standing in front of the blond-haired man he met yesterday, Erwin.

Chapter 263 Starting

"Uoooh!" The people cheered for the participants more than the people from the first competition. They knew that this competition would be the most interesting because the first competition was for budding sprouts, while the third competition was for late bloomers.

The second competition was for people at their peak. Obviously, they had proven their strength and they would show what they could become in the future.

That was why people actually paid more attention to this competition.

Obviously, the participants were also staring at each other. The fact that they had 'proven' their power meant they were quite famous.

On one side, Erwin was actually standing in front of a woman with light blue hair.

"Hmph. You are one step ahead of me, Aileen. However, don't think you are superior to me yet." Erwin snorted.

"It doesn't really matter. I've defeated you multiple times, one more time is not a problem."

"Say that after you win against me. Just look at you... it seems that your evolution has caused more mutations... your black hair has turned light blue." Erwin snorted. "Besides, you are not my only target in this competition."

"..." Aileen furrowed her eyebrows. She couldn't help but glance to the side. Her gaze focused on two people.

The first one was a man with a white uniform, the Stellar City's scion, Tier 4 Rafael. The second person is a woman with a red martial uniform, the Martial Master, Tier 4 Rika.

Aileen thought that these two were the people in his mouth. However, she was surprised when Erwin suddenly walked away, heading for a rather young man.

"!!!" Aileen couldn't help but furrow her eyebrows, thinking, 'A young man? Is he the one Erwin mentioned? Is he... still under 20 years old? No, I don't think he's even 18. But his strength is already Tier 2. Still, Erwin might look dumb, but his eyes for talent are exceptional.'

Does that mean this young man is actually stronger than he seems and is participating in this competition with the intention to win? Is he serious?'

Erwin walked toward Clovis while smiling. "You've truly come for the competition. I'll be looking forward to our duel in the main competition."

"..." Clovis was speechless. It was precisely because of this man that he had to change his strategy a little bit. Clovis could feel several gazes on them, not only curiosity but also hatred.

Most of the teams here definitely thought they were weak and would become a perfect target.

Clovis said, "If we happen to meet in the competition, I'm sure going to beat you up so hard."

"Hahahaha!" Erwin laughed. "You're really interesting. In that case, I'm looking forward to it, if that's even possible."

The others were staring at Erwin. There were a total of five seeded groups that would most likely compete for the title. Erwin's group was number four. So he got a fair bit of attention.

As he expected, all the seeded groups were staring at him. However, only one person took more caution against him. It was the person who knew Erwin the most in this competition, Aileen.

Aileen glanced at her teammate, saying, "Lana."

"Yes?"

"Investigate him and his group."

"Him? But isn't he only a Tier 2—" The girl abruptly stopped when Aileen looked at her coldly while asking, "Are you questioning my decision?"

"I'm sorry. I'll give you the investigation report tonight."

The participants had gotten enough time to talk among themselves. It was time for them to go to their destination.

In that instant, they heard multiple helicopters hovering above the stadium.

"Look! Helicopters?!"

"Such an extravagant competition."

Clovis looked up while listening to Kanaria.

"They are truly going all out. They even use the helicopters that are usually used to bring supplies, and a lot of people... the tandem-rotor helicopter." Kanaria smirked. "It seems that the competition will be more exciting than I originally thought."

As Kanaria said, they were actually more insane than they imagined.

When they boarded the aircraft, there was a staff member from the military asking them to put on a blindfold.

After that, they took off to the sky, heading to their battlefield.

Apparently, each team had its own spot, and the helicopters would drop off one group after another.

To avoid other groups from finding them, they were blindfolded until it was their time to board off.

This way, all groups were able to be dispersed within a short period of time without knowing each other's location to ensure the fairness of the competition.

Clovis's group was taken into a small plain within the forest. There was nothing remarkable, so they could simply go around once the competition started.

It only took them thirty minutes to drop all the participants.

"A battle royale, huh?" Melody smirked. "I play this kind of game a lot. We have the zone and the timing. It seems that we'll be fighting here for two hours or until there are only 16 groups left. The zone will remain the same, so the sixteen groups with the highest points will advance to the next round."

"Do you have any plans for this, Melody?" Kanaria asked.

"Camping." Jay surprisingly gave the answer. "Conserve our strength and let them take out each other first along with the beasts. After they are tired, we'll hunt them down."

"Yep." Melody pointed at Jay, implying that he took those words out of her mouth.

"Will you do it, Jay?" Clovis smirked.

"Not really. This is a perfect time to test my new strength. However, it's not like we can show off all our strength, right? In that case, how about letting me take care of them? Let them focus on me."

"I think that's good too. If necessary, Melody will take part." Clovis nodded. "I and Kanaria will focus on taking down the demons and Ragna will become the buffer between us."

"I think we've got a plan." Jay pumped his fists, getting excited.

After a moment, they finally got the signal, symbolizing the start of the competition.



## Chapter 264 First Encounter

"Each participant has taken their position. The preliminary match is about to start. Let's count together, everyone!" Shion raised three fingers. "3!"

The audience also participated in the countdown as they looked at the numerous live videos coming from the drones.

"2!"

"1!"

"Start!"

...

In the forest, Clovis looked up, finding countless drones that were hovering in the air. Once the countdown was over, they shot a firework into the sky.

The loud bang symbolized the start of the competition.

"Let's go! This is the only competition for today, so it's fine to overwork a little." Clovis waved his hand.

Clovis's group headed north according to Melody's instructions. The area itself was quite spacious. Tier 2 and Tier 3 humans could easily cover the distance from one corner to another, so it didn't really matter for them.

The beasts were still roaming around.

In fact, the first thing that most groups, including Clovis's group, encountered was a pack of beasts.

They started killing the beasts to get the initial points. Because of the drone shots, there was no need for them to get their essence as proof.

All of them were monitored and calculated by a group of experts and AI.

Hence, after the beasts died, Clovis led his group to the next destination.

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In the stadium, Shion slammed the table and shouted enthusiastically. "Uooh! We've got our first battle. It's the Bloody Rose against the Red Ant!"

"But..." Shion paused for a moment as the battle lasted only an instant. "Bloody Rose obliterated them!"

"Oh! What is this? There is a group that has already encountered the Tier 3 beast? They are..." Shion paused for a moment before saying, "Li...ba...tion Fiesta! I apologize if I pronounce it wrong. Still, is this luck?"

Will they still have enough strength left to fight against other beasts after dealing with this Tier 3 beast?"

...

As announced, Clovis actually found a Tier 3 beast. It looked like a lizard and had a very long tongue.

"Jay." Clovis abruptly stopped.

"Alright." Jay nodded, feeling excited already. "We're lucky to meet a Tier 3 beast right away."

The lizard had a long neck and an elongated body and tail. It was moving swiftly toward them and swing its head.

Jay moved forward and swung his sword down.

'It's time to test the power of Minotaur's Swing.' Jay took a deep breath and struck the lizard's head.

\*Clang!\*

A clicking sound echoed, indicating the head's toughness was similar to that of metal. However, this was a Tier 3 beast. Its strength should be above that of a Tier 2 human.

Yet the clash only lasted an instant before the lizard's head was knocked down to the ground.

\*Reee?!\*

The lizard was wailing in confusion, not understanding what had happened. In fact, it was shocking that it actually lost against a human despite swinging the head with such momentum.

The one that was shocked was not only the lizard, even the audience in the stadium couldn't help but drop their jaws.

"W-What?!" Shion gasped. "The lizard is known as Tanystropeus. As you can see, the body's structure makes it very agile and the skin is actually as tough as metal. It can easily destroy a building with a swing of its head, but he is able to knock the head down?"

Everyone couldn't believe what they saw.

"He must be very famous for having that kind of strength. Allow me to check his information—!" Shion abruptly stopped. "What is this? The man who just knocked down the lizard's head is actually only 16 years old? He has also reached Tier 2. However, he must have evolved to Tier 2 just recently.

"Is this for real? A Tier 2 human who evolved recently managed to knock down a full-fledged Tier 3 beast? No, wait! Actually, three of them are actually 16 years old and already Tier 2... Is this serious? They seem to come from the same city as the runner up of the first competition.

"Why haven't we heard such geniuses this whole time?" When Shion was focused on looking at their information, the audience suddenly cheered. Shion couldn't help but raise her head, finding yet another interesting encounter. "This... this is... Oh! To think that on top of a Tier 3 beast, they also encounter another group.

"They only have four members, but all four of them are Tier 3. What will happen in this battle? Will Libation Fiesta overcome the challenge and possibly become the dark horse of the competition?"

Mayor Revan looked at the screen anxiously. He was excited at first that he heard a lot of praise for Libation Fiesta since they would become the pride of the city. However, it would be troublesome if they lost in this first fight, especially since the opponents were quite strong.

Ragna was already stepping forward, standing between the group and their enemy.

"Hmm? A bunch of Tier 2 guys? Isn't that... the famous Ragna?!" One of them seemed to recognize Ragna.

"You mean the infamous weakling?"

Ragna had already gotten used to insults. Even though he already had the strength to oppose them, he didn't let the emotion take over him.

Clovis only glanced at them and said, "Ragna."

"Yes?"

"Are you okay?"

"Of course. We are here to win."

"Hahaha!" Suddenly, they laughed. "Did you hear that? They come here to win? With only them?"

"Jay, Melody."

"There are only four of them. All of them are here. Don't worry." Melody assured him, looking at these four, who seemed to be using melee weapons.

"Should I take care of them?" Jay asked with a cold tone, disliking the fact that they dared to insult their teammates.

"Will that be a problem?" Clovis smiled.

"No. Take your time with the lizard." Jay leaped toward them. Melody was the same, but from the outside.

"They're coming?!"

"Fools!"

Those four people looked down on Jay, who was only Tier 2. They focused more on Melody, ready to intercept her if she came closer.

Meanwhile, Clovis immediately took over Jay's position and played with the lizard.

On the other hand, Jay had closed the gap between them.

"I'll take care of this brat. You two go for the woman. Rain, you watch out for the others."

Jay sped up, seeing the one who was commanding the group swing his sword. "Little brat. I'm going to teach you the strength of a Tier 3 human! It's not something that can be compared to a—!"

Jay struck his sword before he could even finish, blowing him away.

Bam!

The guy crashed into a tree with such force that it dented the tree.

The enemies couldn't help but drop their jaws to the ground.

"Too much chit chat."

Chapter 265 Destroying the Enemies

"Too much chit chat." Jay harrumphed.

"!!!" The two comrades that were supposed to stop Melody got distracted, not believing that their captain was actually defeated in a single swing.

Melody smiled, using this distraction to swiftly loop around.



"Not good!" One of them noticed and turned around, trying to stop Melody.

However, Jay abruptly rushed toward them.

"He's coming!" Both of them were forced to stop. After their captain was blown away just like that, it was obvious that they couldn't stop Jay's attack alone. They needed to work together.

Still, there was still the fourth person standing in Melody's path. He was supposed to stop Clovis and the others, but because Melody was aiming for their captain, he had to stop him.

However, both Melody and Jay abruptly came to a halt, their hands covering their ears and their heads turning away.

"!!!" Their opponents didn't understand what was happening, thinking this was their chance.

But the next instant, the flash grenade exploded.

\*Bang!\*

The explosion occurred for a split second, but it instantly caused the three fighters to scream out of pain.

"Aarrgh!" They were clutching their heads, feeling the painful ringing in their ears.

Melody continued running and leaped into the air, acrobatically wrapping her legs around the guy's neck and tossing him to the ground.

"Gah!" The guy didn't understand what was happening, while Melody simply changed her magazine and shot this guy in the chest.

This was the bullet that the organizer had asked them to use in case they were fighting against another group. The bullet was painful, but not lethal. The tip was also made of a ball of paint, so when it hit the guy, the paint splattered on his chest.

After that, Melody came to the knocked captain and shot him in the head as if there were a personal grudge. He was the one who insulted Ragna, so she thought this was justified.

Meanwhile, Jay punched the other two people, launching them into other trees.

Melody approached them and swiftly executed them with her bullets.

"It's done." Melody harrumphed while changing back her magazine to the real one. "It's annoying to use these fake bullets. Then again, I can understand that guns are powerful in the low level while gradually becoming less powerful in the higher level... It can't be helped, I guess."

Melody sighed instead of getting overjoyed by the fact that they managed to defeat a group of Tier 3 people in an instant.

Jay, on the other hand, glanced at Clovis, who had actually killed the lizard. Its eyes had been pierced and its jaws were cut open. It was clear how this Tier 3 beast died under Clovis's hand.

The ones who were shocked by Libation Fiesta's strength were not only their enemies but also the people that watched them in the stadium.

They all dropped their jaws to the ground, unable to suppress their shock.

"W-what is going on?! Libation Fiesta has just defeated their enemy in an instant? I didn't even have enough time to comment. Strong, very strong! They are very strong! Are they going to be the dark horse of this competition?" Shion screamed excitedly.

She hurriedly replayed the battle between Clovis and the Tier 3 beast.

"First of all, let's calm down and check what has just happened. In the first exchange, it seems that the captain of White Bird said a few things. I'm not good at reading lips, but the Libation Fiesta clearly didn't like it.

"Jay from Libation Fiesta chose this time to attack him. The captain of White Bird underestimated him because of the difference in Tier, which caused him not to use 100% of his power.

"However, the gap between tiers was not that easy to overcome. Even if he didn't use his full power, unless there was a big gap in their strength, it was impossible for his opponent to blow him away in that manner.

"In other words, despite being a Tier 2, Jay Havenson was able to overwhelm him. I couldn't really believe it, but his strength was unprecedented, even among Tier 3. Just imagine if he were a Tier 3 or a bit older so that he could develop his muscles more. That was unbelievable.

"Still, the one who held the key to the victory was actually their operator. She looped around to distract the opponents before shifting their focus back to Jay. That distraction allowed her to toss a flash grenade without anyone noticing.

"As a mobile operator, she was also expected to inform her teammates about it, so you could see here that she typed a few things on her device while moving.

"After that, she took down her opponent before securing their captain. Now that she has dealt the finishing blows to all these squads, White Bird is now officially eliminated.

"From my perspective, the biggest reason for their loss was that they underestimated Libation Fiesta. If I were to be their opponent, I wouldn't underestimate them. They might become the biggest dark horse in this competition.

"Still..." Shion paused for a moment. "While we were too focused on their battle, we actually missed what happened on the other side.

"Their captain, Clovis, was able to eliminate the Tier 3 beast so swiftly. Unlike the humans, the beast wasn't careless at all.

"We actually needed to slow down the video to actually see his swings. One... two... three... WHAT?! 12 swings in one second?! A normal Tier 2 could only do 4 to 5 swings in one second. What's the deal with this group? How could they be so strong?

"He actually slashed the beast multiple times, hiding his real attack, which aimed for the beast's eye. He did it twice and gradually cut down the beast from its mouth. After realizing that he couldn't penetrate the outer skin, he began from the inside. Amazing, strong! I can't describe their performance... No, I don't even know whether I can win against them or not!

"Clovis and Jay Havenson, we will definitely hear more of them after this competition. And two of them still hadn't made their moves... the other Tier 2 human, their sniper, Kanaria Renvolt and the Tier 3 guardian, Ragna... Ragna?!"