

World Mall 316

Chapter 316 Interview

"Ouch!"

Clovis couldn't help but furrow his eyebrows when he determined the person's identity. As expected of them, they were truly 'dedicated' to their job. They even sneaked inside this place the moment they realized he had come here.

Clovis glanced to the side, noticing the barrier that was supposed to keep the people out. She must have climbed it and tripped.

The woman was rubbing her nose while standing up.

"Ugh..." It only took her a moment to switch to work mode as soon as she remembered Clovis was right in front of her. "A-ah! Mr. Clovis. Please wait for a moment."

"..." Clovis remained silent, but he already knew what she probably wanted.

"I am Rina from Welsen. If you don't mind, could I interview you for a little bit?" She asked.

"Your way of speaking is rather civilized..." Clovis glanced to the side, specifically the barrier that blocked the path. "If I accept, it feels like I'm rewarding a person who breaks the rule..."

"Ahahaha." Rina scratched the back of her head. "I'm desperate. If I can't get anything, I won't be able to feed myself next month."

"..." Clovis furrowed his eyebrows as if contemplating whether he should accept it or not. Then again, this might be the only chance to talk about this battle, considering the final would definitely stir up another wave of questions.

Besides, Jay had worked extremely hard this time. He raised three fingers. "Only three questions. I have to go back to check on my team's condition after all."

"Y-Yes. Thank you very much!" The reporter politely bowed her head. She was searching for the three questions she should ask about this precious chance. As expected, the first question should be the most obvious. She just tried to buy some time to think about the second and third questions. "How did you feel the moment Jay defeated Rafael from the Eight Swords?"

"I would be lying if I didn't feel good about it. The Eight Swords were a very strong group. We had been conserving Jay's strength since yesterday for this one moment. I left this match in his hand."

"If we take another look at the score, you could actually throw a few matches and defeat the Eight Swords while preserving most of everyone's strength, which should be a better state for Libation Fiesta. This way, you would be able to fight the Bloody Rose with five members. Why did you not do it?"

"That's a good question." Clovis nodded. "Indeed. I could do it that way, but please take another look at our age."

"Now that you mention it, three of you are only 16 years old. In fact, you would be able to dominate the first competition had you decided to participate there."

"Yes. However, it was only due to this competition that we were able to progress even further. This competition would definitely teach us a lot of things, especially the path for us to move forward."

She frowned. "Does that mean you're only seeing this competition as a challenge?"

"Not really. It's indeed a challenge. The reward is also pretty tempting. However, above all, there is another meaning behind this competition... the original meaning of why this city holds this competition."

"To inspire the people?"

"Indeed. I don't know if it's true or not. But it doesn't change the fact that everyone needs the courage to fight the beast, including normal people. Instead of seeing how a Tier 2 human could defeat a Tier 4 human, please look with this perspective... A Tier 2 has the courage to fight a Tier 4 human. Most people won't even bother, right?"

"Isn't that obvious? The difference in strength is clear."

"That's the problem. For us, Tier 2 humans still have the probability of defeating Tier 4 humans. It might only be 10%, 1%, or even less than 1%. But it's never 0%. The only time it reaches that point is when people give up before even fighting."

"Just one more step... Just one more swing... Just do one more thing. And the result might be different. Not a lot of people have the courage to do such an obvious thing, but I believe that this message has been transmitted to everyone. Jay has done a great job in that regard." Clovis smiled.

She paused for a moment, amused by his answer. "My last question. If you have another chance, will you change your plan to defeat the Eight Swords, such as not sending Jay?"

"I'll answer that question with a simple analogy. There are two types of scenarios. In the first one, the city is under attack and normal people have no choice but to take up arms in order to survive. In the second one, your group is currently exploring a new area and getting ambushed by the beasts. You can choose to fight or escape, which might lead to a different outcome. Jay is the former."

"Are you saying that there are battles that you can't escape? The only thing you can do is have the courage to face such a challenge."

"Yeah. It might be foolish, but if you are not going to do it, then who will? There are times where we have limited choices, so instead of lamenting about it, we should think about how to succeed and make it a reality."

She fell silent. The answer was exceptionally good, but it was too good.

"Since I've answered three questions, it's time for me to go back." Clovis nodded and walked away. At the very least, Jay's fight would be glorified even further after this. This was the only reason he accepted those three questions.

Looking at Clovis' back, she couldn't help but ask, "Are you a hero?"

"What hero? I'm nothing but another human just like you all. I'm just slightly more stubborn... not wanting fate to dictate to me. Just a bit of luck is needed to achieve it. That's all." Clovis waved his hand.

The answer took her breath away. Clovis' last answer immediately brought other answers back, making him look more down to earth. She clenched her recorder tightly, knowing what to do with the recording.

Chapter 317 Father and Son

Clovis returned to the medical room. Fortunately, nothing happened to Jay. After closing his wounds, the doctor sent him to the hospital for more intensive care. He couldn't do anything for one week, but Clovis planned to give him some stuff from Another World Mall. So he would probably be back in three days or even faster.

Rafael ended up suffering the same fate. He was sent to the hospital, causing him to be unable to fight in the next match to decide third place.

In other words, the Eight Swords had to deal with the Tier 4 fighter from the Dragon Fist group. While she was injured pretty heavily in the last match against Aileen, she was still able to participate.

The Eight Swords showed their determination. The people cheered at the top of their lungs, supporting the Eight Swords so that they didn't lose.

Unfortunately, losing Rafael had settled the match before it began. Still, the Eight Swords did everything they could. In fact, they showed an even stronger strength than what people knew from them.

They managed to gain a tie during the group match as Jane did everything she could to stop the Tier 4 martial artist.

It took her everything, so when the individual match came, Jane was defeated by another person.

Melvin was in a berserk state, still believing that they lost to Libation Fiesta due to his mistake. That was why, no matter what state he was in, he was determined to win the match.

After a bloody battle, he managed to defeat his opponent. Unfortunately, Farhan had to fight against their captain, which ultimately resulted in the Dragon Fist's victory.

The Eight Swords ended up losing the honor of third place despite being the hosts.

But after that match, the audience was applauding their determination instead of booing them. They thanked them for doing everything they could for the city.

Obviously, the one responsible for this result was none other than their captain, Rafael.

He had already woken up from his injuries, staring at the window with blank eyes as though his soul had been sucked away.

Nothing but humiliation awaited them from now on.

The first person to visit Rafael was none other than his father, the commander of the base. The person who had ordered him to win.

Rafael's face became pale when he saw his father's face. He looked down, unable to meet his eyes.

"I'm sorry. I've lost. I've smeared the name of our family. I'll receive any pun—"

He abruptly stopped when his father actually patted his shoulders. Rafael raised his head in shock, finding such a gentle smile on his face.

"Well done, son."

It had been more than a decade ago since he received such praise, especially with that gentle face. He was completely confused because this wasn't what was supposed to happen. He should have gotten kicked out of the family if he had judged his father's character correctly.

"Father..."

His father simply handed him the tab in his hand as though he were trying to show him something.

The news about the battle had spread all over Skynet.

"The Eight Swords have lost against the dark horse."

"A complete victory."

"Libation Fiesta taking the championship?"

"Eight Swords' Captain Rafael lost to a Tier 2 explorer?"

The titles were extremely painful to see. There was no way his father would show him something like this. When he scrolled down, he finally saw the real reasons.

There were various comments on Skynet.

"I think I'll pick up my weapon again."

"Captain Rafael has lost, but I'll forever become his fan. He has inspired me to do what I'm supposed to do."

"I'm glad that I'm able to watch the battle between Rafael and Jay. I learn a lot from them."

"Who cares about the threat of a beast wave? Since there's no place to run, I will fight those beasts. I'm weak, but I hope to make a difference."

Not only the comments, but the interviews also showed similar responses.

They were thankful for Jay and Rafael.

Seeing all of these caused Rafael's body to shake. He had lost, but the citizens were actually this kind to him.

His father's voice echoed from the side. "It's true that we need to win the competition. However, what is the original purpose of the competition? It's to inspire the people so that we can protect this base. I don't think anyone has inspired more people than you in all three competitions.

"I have been harsh to you, not because I hate you or something. I simply want you to understand the weight you currently carry. These people... are the weight you have to shoulder if you are still trying to chase after me."

Rafael's body was trembling. His tears were swelling in the corners of his eyes.

"Besides, you have fulfilled my request by fighting them fair and square. If you still wish to know everything, climb to my position. But for now, I think you already know what I'm going to say. Respect your rivals and cheer for them now that they have defeated you. However, continue moving forward so that you will be the one winning next time." His father patted his shoulder again.

While walking out, he said, "Rafael. Good work."

Rafael bit his lips as he was unable to contain his tears. He thought he shouldn't cry because it would be seen as a weakness.

But when he finally understood his father and saw all these comments, he couldn't contain them anymore.

"I will... I will protect them." Rafael held the tab in his embrace as if it were something important. He had been chasing after his father this whole time without knowing how to do it. But today, he learned the meaning of responsibility...the burden his father had shouldered this whole time.

When he thought about it, he began treating him harshly the moment he told his father that he wanted to become a commander like him. He finally knew what his goal truly meant.

Chapter 318 Final

The match to determine third place had finished. The only match remaining was the main dish, the match that would determine the champions.

Obviously, the people were excited to see this match, especially Libation Fiesta. On the one hand, the Libation Fiesta had defeated their team. On the other hand, after gaining things from the match, they chose to cheer for Libation Fiesta.

Mayor Revan glanced at the trainer. "What do you think? Will they be able to win again this time?"

"I don't think it's possible. I don't look down on them anymore, but currently, they only have four members. Madam Vania is taking care of Jay right now, so unless the Bloody Rose is benching one or two of their members, I don't think they have the opportunity to win. And their captain, Aileen, is very strong... probably the strongest among all Tier 4 participants."

"Is that so?" Mayor Revan paused for a moment. It seemed that he was too greedy. He had never thought that Libation Fiesta could go this far. 'I should just feel happy about it.'

He couldn't help but listen to the discussions of the people around him.

"I hope Libation Fiesta wins the championship. They have done so well this whole time, so they might as well go all the way. They have defeated the Eight Swords as well."

"Yeah. They conserved their captain in the last match, so he should be at full strength for this match."

"But won't the Bloody Rose match their number?"

"I don't know. I personally want to have them go all out. That's the best respect they can give to the Libation Fiesta after all."

"I just want to see an exciting match."

"Well, we'll see what they'll do then."

The people were looking forward to this fight even though Jay couldn't participate in it.

Since the time had arrived, Shion sent out her hologram on top of the match.

"Welcome, ladies and gentlemen. I'm sure that you are looking forward to this fight... the fight between Libation Fiesta and Bloody Rose.

"Due to the result of the previous battle, one person from Libation Fiesta can't participate in this match. On the other hand, the Bloody Rose is sending all their members for the group match.

"Captain Clovis has been showing unbelievable results, so I believe that we will see yet another unexpected result.

"On the other hand, Captain Aileen has shown how strong she is the whole time. I'm actually looking forward to the battle between the two captains.

"Can Captain Clovis overcome the biggest wall of this tournament and claim the victory? Or will the Bloody Rose prevail? Without further ado, let's call all the participants to the arena."

"Uoohhh!" The people cheered.

"Clovis!"

"Libation Fiesta!"

"Win all the way!"

The people were cheering for them like they did for the Eight Swords. The Bloody Rose would definitely feel this pressure, which should be enough to make the battle a bit more equal.

While walking down the corridor, Clovis extended his hand, asking, "Melody. Do you carry a flash grenade?"

"Flashbang? Yeah. Do you need it for this match?" She grabbed one of the grenades and placed it on top of his palm.

After receiving the grenade, Clovis handed it to Ragna. "Take this."

"Huh? Me?" Ragna looked confused.

"Yeah." Clovis nodded with a serious expression. He came closer to him while whispering, "Your role will be crucial in this match."

Ragna listened to Clovis whisper a few instructions. He was shocked at first, but soon nodded his head.

Kanaria and Melody couldn't help but furrow their eyebrows. Considering their senses were sharper, they could hear what Clovis whispered to him.

Clovis then turned to them while raising one finger. "I'm sorry, but I want you two to move together in this match."

"I don't mind." Kanaria nodded while glancing at Melody.

"Sure. It's the strategy, so let's do it." Melody cracked her fingers.

"Alright then." Clovis smiled as their group finally emerged from the corridor. The cheers erupted once again, greeting those who had just arrived in the arena.

"Look at this cheering." Shion smirked. "I'm sure that everyone can't wait anymore. Then, without further ado, let's begin this match!" Shion announced.

The countdown began.

Clovis, Kanaria, and Melody went to their positions.

Before the count reached zero, he couldn't help but raise his head. It was a clear day, so the woods would be quite dark. Even he would be taken out in an instant if he were careless. After all, his opponent this time was an assassin who Erwin claimed to be the best in her generation.

That was why he made a plan.

It seemed that Bloody Rose also had some sort of plan. After all, five of them positioned themselves in the middle, leaving only one to guard the flag in case something went wrong.

Even Aileen looked eager to come. Her expression turned extremely cold as if she were going for the kill.

She couldn't help but remember what Clovis said to her a few hours ago.

"No matter what kind of plan you have, it won't work. The result will go according to what I have in mind. And you will have no choice but to dance in my palm. This will be the result." Clovis took out a piece of paper.

"Huh?" Aileen frowned. "You have already stated a ridiculous request, and now you're actually saying such a thing?"

"I'm serious."

Aileen paused for a moment. It didn't look like Clovis was lying either. She said, "You need to pay me for that favor first."

"What do you want?"

"You're about to have a party after this match with this guy, right? I will also attend it." Aileen pointed at Erwin.

Erwin looked baffled while Clovis nodded his head. "Sure."

"Oi." Erwin didn't expect it to be that easy to make Clovis agree when it was supposed to be a party for only Imemine and Libation Fiesta.

"And if you are able to achieve such a thing with me going all out, then I don't mind giving you one of the rewards for the first place. But if you aren't able to do it, you're going to follow us to our city after this competition."

"Oi, oi. Are you trying to kidnap me or something?"

"It's just an invitation."

Clovis sighed. "Fine. Let's do it that way."

After recalling that agreement, Aileen definitely wanted to make Clovis fail so that she could bring him back to her city.

Hence, as soon as the count reached zero, she immediately rushed forward.

Chapter 319 Swift Kills

In this match, Clovis decided to attack from two sides. The right side would be him alone, while the left side consisted of Kanaria and Melody.

Clovis used his fastest speed to reach the other side.

As expected, the Bloody Rose's members were marching forward together. Their plan must be to stick together.

"There is one person coming so fast. Kanaria and Melody have never shown such a speed, only Clovis."

"In that case, we'll change our plan accordingly!"

In that instant, the person they had left behind earlier actually came forward. She was helped by another person.

This way, Kanaria and Melody would fight against two people.

Meanwhile, the rest of the team went to the other side, ready to stop Clovis.

Clovis was moving extremely fast so that he could open up.

Of course, it was for Melody's sake. She warned him, "Clovis. You have to be careful. There are only five dots. I'm assuming that one of their members is staying behind to avoid any unexpected occurrences. So you have to be careful... One of those dots must be Aileen."

"Alright. You guys should move in as well!"

"Yes." Melody and Kanaria sped up, confronting the two dots. If Aileen was among them, they swore to stop her for a while until Clovis took his opponents down.

However, the moment Clovis made contact with the opponents, he only saw two figures even though there were three dots among them.

The one stopping him was none other than Lana, Aileen's best friend and a muscular woman.

With this, the third dot should be Aileen, waiting for her chance to eliminate Clovis.

"Oh! It seems that I'm pretty popular." Clovis smiled, stopping in his tracks.

"Indeed. Just look at the audience, they're cheering for you." Lana shrugged, nonchalantly replying to him.

"To think that you would even reply to my casual remark."

"Sure. If that can lower your guard... Or do you want me to kiss you or something? I don't personally mind kissing someone like you." Lana winked her right eye.

"Hahaha. That's an offer hard to refuse. Then again, I'm not very interested." Clovis chuckled. "You guys know Erwin, right? Including what kind of person he is..."

"I'm not sure about anyone else, but I do know him quite well. My best friend is a pretty handful after all. But... I still want to know why you refuse a kiss from me. Am I not beautiful enough? Or is it because of your girlfriend?" Lana smirked, teasing Clovis.

Buying time and lowering his guard, these two tasks had been entrusted to her. Since Clovis went all the way to engage in a conversation with her, she was happy to oblige.

"Nope. It's just... that guy has given me something more than just your casual information... such as your three sizes." Clovis chuckled. He was bluffing. Erwin never mentioned Bloody Rose's information.

However, Lana couldn't help but frown. Erwin's eyes were extremely scary in that regard. She personally felt being stripped bare when Erwin observed her.

"Are you going to threaten us with that information?" The smile on her face had changed. Even the other woman was ready to plunge at him.

"Threaten you guys?" Clovis took a deep breath.

"Don't tell me..." Lana panicked.

"Eight—" Clovis opened his mouth as if he were about to shout some numbers. As if knowing what he was about to say, Lana hurriedly charged at him, thrusting her spear at him.

Clovis parried her spear while saying, "Why are you panicking right now?"

"You..." Lana's eyebrows twitched.

The other woman came from the other side, swinging her sword. Unfortunately for her, Clovis easily blocked her. In fact, he began to swing at full speed, planning to overwhelm them in an instant.

But the annoyed expression on Lana's face suddenly turned into a smile as she continued her words.
"...have lost."

The moment she said those words, the third dot finally moved in.

"Clovis!" Melody warned him while shooting a few rounds on the enemy. She was already engaging the two people that the Bloody Rose had sent and Aileen wasn't among them. It was certain that the last dot was Aileen. Even if Aileen was good, she wouldn't be able to escape from radar unless she had some equipment. But that was banned in this competition.

Even if that person wasn't Aileen, they could easily see if Aileen chose to come.

The moment he heard Melody's voice, Clovis struck the spear and sword, knocking them back, before turning around to face Aileen.

However, the person who came toward him was not Aileen, but the sixth member of Bloody Rose.

Clovis instantly parried all three of them while Melody gasped. "What? Aileen is not there?"

Kanaria nodded. "In that case, everything becomes even more simple. We will deal with them and make our way to their base. Make sure that you pay attention to the radar, Melody."

"Of cour—" Before Melody could finish her words, she and even Kanaria sensed something coming from above.

In that instant, another dot appeared out of nowhere in the radar.

Both Kanaria and Melody gritted their teeth while turning around, trying to stop whatever was coming.

Sadly, they were too late. In an instant, both of them were hit on the head, knocking them out of the competition.

"Aaah!" Kanaria and Melody fell to the ground and were immediately restrained by the referees.

The one appearing out of nowhere was actually Aileen.

"What?" Melody gasped in terror. "What is going on? How is it even possible for her to appear out of nowhere like a ghost?"

Aileen didn't even bother with them and went straight to Libation Fiesta's base. On the other hand, the two people who stopped Kanaria and Melody turned around and headed to Clovis.

With this, Ragna had to deal with Aileen while Clovis was under siege from five people.

"Don't tell me..." Kanaria clenched her fists. "Did she already arrive in this place and hide herself with the help of the referees? There weren't any rules regarding that, and it was not like the referees would move since we were already close to them. That's why we weren't able to see her sign on the radar..."

"Did we underestimate Aileen too much?"

Chapter 320 Unexpected Victory

"Did we underestimate Aileen too much?"

As they expected, Aileen was simply moving as quickly as possible for an ambush. It didn't really matter if she was going to face Clovis or the two girls. She would definitely defeat them.

Aileen had erased her presence, lowered her heartbeat, and done other things in order to make herself disappear. By using the referee, he managed to escape the radar.

After that, the team called the sixth member, who was supposed to protect the flag. This way, they would look like they had left Aileen behind.

This was Aileen's plan. The rest was just a matter of positioning.

Aileen was running to Libation Fiesta's base.

She muttered inwardly, 'With the current situation, I have two options. I can defeat Clovis first and then Ragna before taking the flag or I can defeat Ragna and get the flag.

'If I go with the first scenario, I can definitely win right away. However, it will also cause a lot of hate from the people. The reward is simply not worth the hate.

'On the other hand, the second scenario will allow me to win with 6-point gap. All five of them will definitely tire Clovis out. This way, I will defeat him during the first individual match. Or even in the worst-case scenario, they will simply tie the score. There's no way they can win the extra round.

'That's why even if I go with this scenario, I will still win, no matter how Clovis is trying to manipulate it.'

She still remembered the paper. She hadn't taken a look at the result that Clovis predicted, thinking it would only be fair to open it after she won the tournament.

'One minute should be enough to wear him out. If I use this trick for too long, people will definitely think of me having no sportsmanship or something.' Aileen had slowed down her pace.

It didn't take her too long to reach the other side.

While looking at Ragna, she thought, 'I can exchange a few blows with him. Since this is a head-on clash, no one is going to say anything if it lasts for a minute or two. He is a good defender after all.'

She had found the strategy to win.

Without hesitation, she exited the forest, heading straight at Ragna. The latter put his shield in front of him. Ragna looked determined to protect that flag.

'We won. And Clovis will visit our city. We can recruit him during that time.' Aileen smiled inwardly.

...

On the other side, Clovis was completely surrounded by these people.

Lana smirked. "You should have gone serious to defeat one of us. You've underestimated Aileen too much, Clovis. You have no chance to win against us."

"Is that so? In that case... the match is settled then." Clovis smiled.

Lana was confused. Clovis was supposed to be under pressure since he would have to fight them.

Even Clovis should have realized their plan, which was to tire him out.

But to her surprise, Clovis remained calm as though he had expected it this whole time. In fact, Clovis lowered his swords as if he had given up.

And two seconds after that, they suddenly heard an announcement.

"Match ends! Winner: Bloody Rose! The score is 5-0!"

"5?" Lana was astounded by the score as this was outside her prediction. "You... what did you do?!"

The match ended so fast that they couldn't even fight Clovis.

Clovis couldn't help but smile after seeing that panicked face.

...

A moment ago.

When Aileen approached Ragna, the latter had put his shield in front of her, trying to block her vision from his spear.

Aileen was already aware of this trick. Her purpose was to buy some time before defeating Ragna, so she decided to strike the shield to bait Ragna.

However, when she was about to reach him, Ragna's right hand moved, symbolizing that he was about to thrust his spear.

Aileen took a step to the right, planning to avoid this thrust.

That was the time Ragna showed Clovis' plan. Ragna suddenly tilted his shield, revealing the flashbang that Clovis handed him earlier.

'Grenade? Is he trying to kill both of us? No, is that flash—' Aileen hurriedly covered her eyes.

Ragna hit the grenade with his shield a little bit, raising the grenade to their eye level. He had also closed his eyes.

Bang!

The grenade exploded. Both of them gritted their teeth, enduring the pain. Their heads were ringing like crazy and they couldn't open their eyes.

As a guardian, Ragna was the first one to recover and make his move. He swung his spear from the side.

Aileen might not have Brain Affinity, but she had the instincts of a veteran. She could feel the approaching spear even if she couldn't see or hear it.

She used her dagger to block the spear. To her surprise, that block caused Ragna to drop his spear. It seemed that the damage to his body had weakened his grip.

'I'm lucky. I need to reco—' Aileen wanted to jump away, but Ragna's action was simply a method to locate her.

Now that he had found her, the only thing to do was make one more move that would seal the battle.

Suddenly, Aileen felt something coming into her embrace. Aileen was confused since she was supposed to have knocked the spear away.

In addition, her other hand had to block the shield since Ragna chose to ram her with his shield.

"Kh!" Aileen endured it and fell on her back. Still, both of them were blinded. There was no way Ragna could defeat her during this time.

However, that was enough, since the plan had succeeded.

"Match ends! Winner: Bloody Rose! The score is 5-0!"

"!!!" Aileen's body shook when she heard the announcement. What was happening? Did they win? But they hadn't taken the flag.

In that instant, Aileen remembered the thing that came into her embrace. It wasn't dangerous, so she ignored it at first and focused on Ragna's shield.

But upon that realization, Aileen tried her hardest to open her eyes, confirming her guess.

The one she held was actually the flag.