

## World Mall 166

### Chapter 166 Inexperienced

"Clovis! Look!" Melody pointed at the mountain and even marked it so that they could see the same thing. Kanaria squinted her eyes to check.

"That's..." Clovis's expression turned serious the moment he thought this was going to be the ruin.

"I think that is the entrance. I can see the gap between those vines!" Kanaria nodded.

The spot that Melody chose was like that of a cave. The entrance wasn't that big and it had been covered with boulders and vines. However, once spotted, it was easy to determine that there was actually a room inside that entrance.

Without hesitation, Clovis ordered, "We'll climb right away."

"Safety first!" Kanaria stopped them and asked them to put on the harness they had brought. This way, they could somehow attach themselves to the wall. Even if they somehow slipped, they wouldn't fall too far.

They exchanged looks. Clovis was the first one to put it on so that the others did the same.

The preparation was brief. However, they didn't attach themselves to each other with ropes this time.

After all of them were ready, they started running toward the mountain. Melody had prepared the path, so they only had to follow it.

As expected, the moment they began climbing, their position became exposed since there were no trees covering them.

There were roars and howls filling the air.

Clovis turned his head around, finding more than ten beasts coming straight at them.

"Tsk." He clicked his tongue. The current terrain only had a narrow path, so it would be hard to fend them off. Looking at the beasts' movements, it was clear that these beasts planned to climb the steep wall as if they didn't care about such terrain.

The assistant AI had identified them and given them the information on the screen.

The beasts turned out to be Chalicotherium, a large herbivorous mammal with a unique body structure that lived around twenty million years ago. It had a long neck, a robust body, and long forelimbs with large, claw-like hooves. These adaptations allowed them to navigate through various landscapes, including steep and rocky terrain.

Its size was also enormous. Each of them had a height of more than two meters. It would be easy for these beasts to grab humans and fall together.

"Attach yourself to the wall!" Clovis shouted. Instead of using the normal equipment, Clovis simply stabbed the rock with his short sword.

After that, he took out the pistol and faced the first beast to buy them some time.

When the first beast arrived, Clovis took a deep breath, looking at this beast in slow motion. The pistol was his last resort, so he waved his blade while following the movement of those large claw-like hooves.

His sword managed to avoid the huge arm, but when he cut the beast, the latter didn't actually show any sign of pain.

It was simply ignoring this pain and trying to grab Clovis as if wanting to drag him down. Clovis hurriedly kicked his body away so that this beast would fall down.

To his surprise, the beast actually hung on with its other hand.

Clovis cut down those fingers, causing the beasts to fall to the ground. It rolled down for twenty meters. While it wasn't a full drop, there were a lot of pebbles and boulders on the way, so it should be pretty painful even for a Tier 1 beast.

Yet, the Tier 1 beast actually stood up as soon as it stopped.

"!!!" Clovis finally understood what was going on. It appeared that this beast had gotten used to the pain of falling.

There were still other Chalicotheriums that were climbing up at a fast speed. The nearest one would be the beast that was about to reach Melody.

Without hesitation, Clovis pulled the trigger.

\*Bang!\*

The bullet pierced through the beast's head, killing it.

It looked so easy to kill one when he couldn't do it earlier. Hence, Clovis said, "Kanaria, Melody. There is no need to hold back. Release everything you've got on these beasts!"

"Alright."

Kanaria aimed at these beasts' heads with her rifle. When she shot one, the bullet pierced through the head and killed it easily.

However, the moment Melody shot this beast, they suddenly covered their heads with their giant arms.

\*Bang!\*

\*Bang!\*

\*Bang!\*

The bullets all hit their thick arms, unable to actually pierce their flesh.

It seemed that the beasts managed to learn how to protect themselves after just two kills.

Clovis couldn't help but wonder if the beast's stronger ability originated from the harsh terrain or because it was close to unknown territory.

Unfortunately, he didn't have the time to analyze the situation. He just overwhelmed the beasts with all the bullets. A few beasts sneaked around and climbed the mountain through the same narrow path as Clovis's group.

Jay immediately moved to the rear and slashed them with all his strength. However, such power required a good surge of strength from his lower body, meaning that he had to step on the ground a bit harder.

When he did it, the rocks on the edge slid down, destabilizing his stance. As a result, his strength was only a third of what he released, which was easily blocked by even a Tier 0 beast.

This showed how inexperienced they were on this type of terrain. Yet, their misfortune hadn't ended yet.

All of a sudden, they heard a series of cries coming from the air. A single glance was all they needed to see giant birds flying toward them.

That wasn't all. There were a lot of roars coming from the opposite side of the Chalicoteriums.

The cave where they were supposed to go suddenly released one beast after another. It only took them a moment to realize what was going on before they began to go down to reach Clovis's group.

"What?" Clovis was stunned. He didn't expect that the ruin would have so many beasts. Still, this caused them to be pincerred in three different directions. Clovis hurriedly said, "We're going down! Jay is to open the path, Kanaria and Melody will assist him, and I will protect our rear!"

"Got it!" They nodded after hearing his order.

Clovis gritted his teeth, looking annoyed. To think that the first climb would be so disastrous.

Chapter 167 Disastrous Retreat

Jay moved down quickly, facing the incoming beasts from below. Unlike Clovis, who relied on techniques, Jay focused on his strength. He simply struck the beast from above.

The beast tried to protect its head by raising its two giant arms, but it was futile. Jay applied every ounce of his strength and sliced through the arms, splitting the beast into two.

At the same time, Jay did his best to watch his step so that he didn't slip again. The battle was very tricky for him because he had to refine his normal movements.

Meanwhile, Melody shot the beasts from above, suppressing them so that they didn't climb anymore. There were a series of cries from the flying beasts, but Kanaria was there to stop them.

Unlike the ground beasts, they didn't have a powerful defense since they focused on their mobility. And at their level, it was practically impossible to outrun the bullets.

**\*Bang!\***

A single shot was all it took for Kanaria to kill one flying beast. However, these beasts started to fly around so that it would be hard for them to be shot. In addition, Kanaria had to continue moving down or the group couldn't proceed.

Still, Clovis definitely took the hardest job. The beasts that came from above seemed to have gotten used to traveling on this narrow and steep path.

They ran so fast that the first beast managed to reach him in just ten seconds after Clovis gave his order.

"Tsk." Clovis clicked his tongue while waving his blade, trying to push the beast. However, due to its momentum and the high ground, Clovis found himself unable to throw this beast off the path.

He attached the short sword to the wall and grabbed the beast with his now free left hand. Without hesitation, he jumped to the side, dragging this beast down. But Clovis skillfully pulled himself back up and took out the pistol, blasting all these incoming beasts.

Even his Tier 1 bullet actually had no big effect on these beasts. In addition, he noticed that there were more Tier 1 beasts than he imagined.

Normally, a Tier 3 territory would have 80% of their population be Tier 0 beasts and 15% of them be Tier 1. The rest were Tier 2 and Tier 3 beasts.

But ever since coming here, they have encountered more than twenty Tier 1 beasts. In fact, it looked like the number of Tier 0 and Tier 1 beasts in this area was the same.

He had also seen several Tier 2 beasts among them, which clearly indicated that this was no ordinary Tier 3 zone.

Not only were the beasts much stronger than normal, but they also had a higher tier. He was completely baffled to find a place like this.

Still, Clovis knew that this place was perfect for their training even though it was extremely dangerous.

As long as they can regroup on the ground, they should be able to turn around the situation.

"Watch out!" Melody shouted.

The others were startled. And the first one to react was Clovis.

He turned around to find Melody raising her head. When he looked up, he saw a few beasts trying to jump off the cliff.

Without hesitation, Clovis pulled Kanaria toward him, which resulted in the beast missing its target and falling down to the rocky ground.

"Go!" Clovis shouted to Melody, making sure that she continued forward with Jay.

"!!!" Kanaria, on the other hand, was dumbstruck, never thinking that she was close to being dragged down. She hurriedly aimed up, but the flying beasts let out a cry, using that slight gap to close in.

"Focus on those flying ones. I'll take care of the rest," Clovis hurriedly warned her. He shot those beasts with his gun while repelling the beasts from the ruin with his other hands, feeling a bit overwhelmed.

Kanaria gritted her teeth and focused back on the flying beasts.

Fortunately, Jay and Melody were advancing pretty swiftly. So, they were about halfway down.

The same couldn't be said of Clovis. He began to get overwhelmed after getting pincered from two sides. Normally, he would have no problem even if he got surrounded. But on this mountain, everything changed.

He realized that he had become complacent in his abilities just because he had killed a Tier 3 beast. If there was another Tier 3 beast that was stronger than a normal one, he was sure that he might not be able to beat it, even with Jay's help.

That was why, once he saw Melody and Jay had gone far enough, Clovis put back his pistol and pulled out the short sword. He put his long sword in his mouth and used his right hand to grab Kanaria's waist before impaling the rock with his short sword.

"Wha—!" Kanaria was startled, but there was no time to react.

Clovis jumped off this 80 degree cliff while using his left hand so that they didn't fall directly to the rocks.

However, the beasts seemed to have expected it. Those beasts that had been waiting to jump finally took off. They either aimed at Clovis or his sword, trying to push him down.

"!!!" Clovis gritted his teeth, knowing that he had no choice. He took a glance at the terrain below him before swinging to the wall and using it to jump away. He didn't forget to pull out the short sword.

The beasts missed them, but Clovis also had to fall to the ground. That was why he took a glance earlier and saw a boulder.

He jumped in that boulder's direction to break his fall. However, there was no way he could allow Kanaria to get hurt.

He pulled her into his embrace and spun his body, using his back to land on the boulder.

\*Bam!\*

"Gah!" Clovis felt a sharp pain on the back, but thankfully, the jacket increased his defense, which prevented the bones from breaking. But the fall still made her entire left arm numb.

"Clovis, are you alright?" Kanaria asked. It seemed that the lucky necklace had protected her this time since even her feet were hanging down instead of hitting the boulders.

"Y-yeah! Let's go down! We have to use the trees as cover from those flying beasts."

Chapter 168 Trust

"Yeah! Let's go down!" Clovis endured the pain. Fortunately, he was still able to use his left hand somehow. He did his best to retract his short sword and grab his long sword with his right hand. Since they were already at the foot of the mountain, the angle wasn't that steep anymore. Hence, Clovis and Kanaria hurriedly ran to the woods.

Obviously, the beasts chased after them. They would never let their prey get away.

While running away, Clovis glanced to the side. Thankfully, Jay and Melody had gotten down as well and seemed to be running into the forest.

Still, they had to handle at least sixty strong beasts even if the flying beasts didn't interfere. It would be hard, especially since they hadn't regrouped or gotten into position.

Clovis kept asking himself how to regroup in this situation. He had to come up with a plan fast before regrouping became impossible.

When the woods covered his eyes for a split second, he realized something.

"Jay! Come toward me and trust me! Melody, create a trajectory!" Clovis thought of something and informed the two. After that, he pointed forward while saying, "Move a bit further from this spot and get into the sniping position."

'Are you alright?' was what she wanted to say, but when looking at the beasts and understanding the severity of the situation, she knew she shouldn't ask such a useless question. She nodded. "Okay."

Clovis halted his steps and turned around as if he were ready to fight the beasts.

When the beasts were about to reach him, Clovis smirked and ran to the left.

The beasts were confused as they split up, with the majority following Clovis. There were only less than ten beasts that chased after Kanaria.

Still, the most important problem would be Jay and Melody. If they didn't play their parts, the plan would have crumbled.

However, there was no sliver of doubt in Clovis's heart. In fact, before Melody could even react, Jay had already turned diagonally, heading straight to Clovis.

The captain and the vice captain had complete trust in each other. This was the essence of their group.

Clovis couldn't help but smile when he saw Jay already closing in. If Jay reacted a tad too late, the beasts would have caught up to them before they could execute the plan.

Melody was confused about what Clovis wanted her to do, but when she saw the two moving toward each other with a lot of beasts behind them, she couldn't help but say, "They are like... those games that depict ancient warfare... What is it again, wedge formation? Wait, game?"

Melody noticed something and hurriedly put her thoughts into the instruction.

All of a sudden, an arrow appeared in their skyglasses, showing their route.

When Clovis smirked, it was a sign that she had gotten it correctly.

Jay's expression turned grim, knowing what would happen if they failed. Still, that grin on Clovis's face felt like he was asking, 'It's not going to fail, right, Jay?'

The beasts almost caught up to them, but the distance between Clovis and Jay was only five meters.

The moment there was only one step away from each of them, Clovis and Jay stomped the ground and jumped to the left at the same time, missing each other only by an arm length.

On the other hand, the beasts were going too fast to change their direction and ended up crashing into each other.

Some beasts flew into the air from the collision while others simply crushed the opposite beasts with their tougher skin.

Still, there were still some beasts on the back and they hurriedly changed directly, some directly stood in Clovis and Jay's ways.

Now that they were on the ground, they didn't have to worry about the terrain anymore. Jay stomped the ground as hard as he could to get every ounce of his strength. Then, he activated the beast soul to increase his speed before cutting the beasts up.

"Oraaa!" Jay let out a roar.

Meanwhile, Clovis took a more elegant approach. He dodged the beasts at the last second while slashing his blades multiple times as he passed them, injuring them and even killing three of them. Their advances were so quick that the beasts couldn't do anything.

Once Clovis broke through, he said, "Melody, help Kanaria and bail out Jay!"

Melody looked in the direction where Clovis was going and immediately turned around, showing her back toward the beasts that chased after her. However, it didn't matter. Clovis had arrived from the side and plunged into the beast's rank, wreaking havoc.

Melody took this time to reach Kanaria's position and started shooting and throwing grenades, suppressing the several beasts that chased Kanaria.

"!!!" Kanaria stopped in her track and used the momentum to actually step on the trunk so that she could pull herself up.

As soon as she landed on the tree's branch, she pointed her rifle at the beasts around Jay and started peeling them off one by one, allowing Jay to pick up the pace.

Although the situation was still quite bad, they had indeed escaped the worst.

Clovis continued killing one beast after another with his swift and precise movement, killing more than ten beasts in just two minutes.

Some of the beasts did everything they could to harm Clovis, which resulted in him getting some light injuries all over his body. Still, Clovis looked like a demon as he continued swinging his weapons as if there were no injuries.

The moment Kanaria bailed Jay out, Clovis had arrived next to the two girls, regrouping with Jay.

Now that they had gotten into positions, nothing could stop them anymore. Clovis and Jay handled the front with their brute force, Kanaria supported them, and Melody took care of the small details.

When they thought the battle would be concluded soon, they heard a roar coming from the enemy's rear.

**\*Roar!\***

"!!!" Clovis raised his vision, seeing an ape that was more muscular than the Tier 3 proconsul he fought on the surface.

#### Chapter 169 Unprecedented Strength

The roar startled even Clovis. While he didn't mind fighting against the Tier 2 beast, there were several problems. First of all, he was injured. And the second problem was that the beasts here were much stronger than normal beasts.

He had to assume that fighting this Tier 2 beast would be the same as fighting against a normal Tier 3 beast.

Jay didn't care about this. He didn't hesitate to advance, planning to kill the Tier 2 beast by himself.

However, Clovis shouted, "Jay. Together!"

"..." Jay didn't reply to him, but he dropped his pace, allowing Clovis to catch up.

After that, they increased their speed together, killing one beast after another while approaching the ape on the back.

The ape didn't seem to be pleased with their actions. Before the two could cut down all the beasts around here, the ape rushed forth and appeared before Jay.

Jay stomped the ground and swung his sword. To his surprise, the ape did the same. It stomped the ground and even cracked it before punching the sword with the entire strength of its upper body.

\*Bam!\* Their clash actually resulted in Jay's defeat. He even had to use both of his hands to barely stop the punch.

"!!!" Jay was quite surprised. Even though he didn't push his muscles to the limit, his strength should still be enough to fight against a colossal Tier 3 beast. Yet, this beast actually fought like a human and knew what to do to get a surge of strength like him.

The ape shocked him once again when the other hand swept in the opposite direction. Jay had to change his stance and block this fist with the blade's body.

However, due to that little shift, his lower body wasn't solid enough, causing him to be blown to the side.

At the same time, Clovis appeared behind the ape and struck its back multiple times, leaving as many wounds as he could.

The ape spun its body, using the centrifugal force to blast him like Jay.

Clovis watched the incoming fist in slow motion, allowing him to react. He jumped two meters above the ground to avoid the palm, but he soon noticed that it was just a fake. The beast had prepared the second fist.

Clovis hurriedly raised both swords and blocked the punch, but it still launched him several meters away, causing his body to roll a few times on the ground.

A few remaining beasts came toward Clovis, trying to deliver a finishing blow.

But before they could do it, Jay came from the side, killing three beasts in rapid succession. The ape punched Jay from above, trying to stop him. But Jay was actually the one stopping him.

After all, Clovis had used that time to get up and reach the ape.

"!!!" The ape looked surprised and tried to stop him, but Clovis's speed was like a bullet. He tried to cut the right arm, but was unable to pierce through the hard flesh. Hence, he changed his approach by looping around the ape while leaving numerous slashes on the ape's body.

\*Roar!\*

The ape tried to hit him, but that became an opportunity for Jay to slash the ape's waist, piercing five centimeters deeper than Clovis's strike.

Clovis placed himself in the opposite direction of Jay and began to swing his blades with his fastest speed. Jay followed suit counterattack.

The ape tried to block their attacks with his arms and even tried to counter attack.

However, the first one to get injured was the ape. When the arm was about to reach Clovis, he jumped onto the arm and used it as a foothold before leaping toward the ape's head. Clovis slashed the ape's head, cutting from the jaw to the right forehead and blinding the right eye in the process.

Out of anger, the ape used the other hand to punch Clovis down, slamming him to the ground and pinning him down.

Jay's eyes flashed. The muscles on his arms bulged as he swung with every ounce of his strength, severing the ape's left arm.

**\*Roar!\***

The ape looked angry, but Clovis hurriedly attacked his right arm in order to stop him from doing anything to Jay. It also provided Jay a good opportunity to close in and strike the ape in the chest, leaving a big and deep wound.

The other beasts turned around, trying to save the ape. Unfortunately for them, they only became prey to Kanaria and Melody's bullets.

Clovis only took a glance at them to ensure everything was going well. After stopping the right arm, he approached him from that direction and took advantage of the eye he blinded earlier to stab the short sword near the ape's head.

Unfortunately, he missed the target and hit his jaw instead.

The ape struggled for one last time, shaking everything on its body. And it was lucky enough to actually hit Clovis in the process, blowing him away.

Still, it didn't change its fate. Once the ape calmed down, Jay came from the opposite side and severed his head.

The ape eye was glaring at Jay before the head dropped to the ground.

The ape was indeed abnormal to possess such strength while being a Tier 2 beast. Sadly, they didn't have time to analyze the ape's strength as both of them had to eliminate the remaining beast that Kanaria and Melody struggled with.

It only took another five minutes before they killed the remaining beasts. Clovis immediately dropped on his butt after killing all the beasts, saying, "What the hell are these beasts? No, should we just call them monsters at this point?"

Kanaria rolled her eyes. "You look monstrous enough for other humans, you know."

"..." Clovis smiled wryly. He knew that he wasn't one to talk, considering he was a Tier 1 fighter who could kill a Tier 3 beast.

"Can you guys gather the essence? I'm going to check my injury for a bit." Clovis pointed at the corpses.  
"We'll just camp here for today before trying to climb it again tomorrow."

#### Chapter 170 Another Method

Clovis was leaning on the tree while looking at the bright night sky, his gaze didn't have its focus as though he were deep in thought.

"To think it would be a disaster like this." Kanaria shook her head helplessly.

"We could still do it if we pushed forward," said Jay while shaking his finger, gesturing that she was wrong. "I believe that we have retreated far too fast."

"But the strength of the beasts was much higher than anything we'd faced so far." Melody didn't agree with his opinion. If they had made a rash decision earlier, someone might actually have died.

"Still, don't you think that we could still fight against those beasts a bit longer? Maybe we'd find another way to break through." Jay furrowed his eyebrows.

Suddenly, Clovis opened his mouth. "No. Retreating was the best option. The beast's unprecedented strength might play a role, but the biggest reason we lost today was because we underestimated the terrain. Weren't your swings not as powerful as usual?"

"That was because I misstepped."

"That's exactly what I mean by underestimating the terrain. If you could swing like you were on the ground, you would be fine. If the path wasn't so narrow, I could increase my speed. Kanaria was in an awkward position and couldn't see the overall situation like usual and Melody had a hard time supporting us because she had to watch her step."

Kanaria and Melody lowered their heads, knowing that their performance was only half of their best.

Jay gritted his teeth, unable to deny those facts.

"Still, the biggest mistake would be that I underestimated the terrain and didn't make a thorough plan that allowed everyone to do their best." Clovis shook his head helplessly. As the leader, he was to blame.

That just pissed Jay off even further. But if he was just taking his anger out on him, what was the difference between him and a baby? Even a baby could cry if they didn't like something. It was his job to think about the solution.

Unlike usual, Jay bit his lips and took a deep breath, thinking about this matter over and over again.

"I have to step lightly while trying to get as much strength as possible." Jay thought for a moment. His current technique allowed him to gain double the power from his lower body by stepping on the ground as hard as possible.

But that certainly didn't work during the previous climb.

After thinking about it, Jay couldn't help but say, "The problem with the previous climb was that we were too slow."

Clovis raised his eyebrows. It was unusual for Jay to say something regarding the plan. "What do you mean?"

"Literally. We were too slow to reach our destination. If we could be faster, the beasts wouldn't have noticed us."

"So, you mean we have to go faster? Do you know how dangerous it is to climb this mountain? While it's not tall, the climb is still a challenge."

"No." Jay raised a finger. "Not the speed, but the method."

"!!!" Clovis's body shook as though he realized something. He was too fixated on the normal method of climbing, but this was not a normal hike. Because their target was the hot spring on the top of the mountain, he might have treated this as a field trip instead of a challenge.

If he was talking about a method, there was indeed one thing that they could actually try. And they might reach the ruin much faster with this method.

"To think that there would come a day where I'm too impressed by Jay's idea to the point where I can't say anything to deny it." Clovis pinched the bridge of his nose.

"Oi! I told you many times that I didn't like to use my head. It didn't mean I was a fool!" Jay raised his fist. "Do you perhaps have so much energy that you want to have a spar with me?"

"You can only bully an injured man?" Clovis shook his head helplessly. "I thought I raised you to be a better man than this."

"What are you? My mom?" Jay cracked his fingers.

"Alright, alright. Let's just go to sleep so that you can recover as much as possible." Kanaria pushed him to the tent while chuckling, fully knowing that these two were just joking as usual.

...

The next day.

Clovis looked at the steep wall and tossed his short sword as high as possible. His short sword had an incredible sharpness that could easily penetrate the rock. In addition, the armband allowed him to change the short sword's mode and make it stick.

After that, he pulled himself up, climbing almost ten meters in less than four seconds. After that, he stabbed the wall with his other sword before pulling the short sword and tossing it up again.

He repeated this process three more times and reached the height of their previous climb in just fifteen seconds.

He had some climbing equipment and lots of ropes on his back. So, when he reached the narrow path where they could stand, he screwed the bolts into the walls and tossed the rope.

This way, Jay and the others could climb.

Instead of waiting for them, Clovis continued climbing the wall at a high speed. In just three minutes, he managed to climb for more than a hundred meters while preparing the ropes for the other three.

This was the method that Jay was talking about yesterday. He took this challenge as a trip, so he thought about climbing it together instead of using the most effective method.

In the previous attempt, the beasts noticed them after four minutes, so they would definitely alert the others at any time by now.

Even though they had killed all the beasts in the area before climbing, there was no guarantee that the other beasts would just sit down in their original location.

That was why Clovis moved as quickly as possible. Finally, five minutes into the climb, he reached the level where the ruin was located.

He hurriedly screwed the bolts into the rock and tossed the ropes again before hearing a howl from the west, alerting the beasts in the area.

\*Aoooo!\*