

World Mall 96

Chapter 96 Misunderstandings

"Alright. I have integrated everything. Please try it." The bald man handed back the skyglasses.

Kanaria gave Clovis so that he could try the difference.

When he activated the skyglasses, the first thing he saw was the option to open and turn on the map. Considering they could actually share their screen, it was no wonder that there was an option like this.

However, most of the adjustments were on the hardware, so he couldn't test them. He just made sure that he was able to turn it on.

"I think everything is good enough." Clovis nodded and turned off the skyglasses.

"In that case, I will do the fine-tuning. You can pick them up tonight. For this little missy, I will finish it right away." The bald man winked playfully.

Kanaria smiled wryly. "Then, I will take the rest of the items tonight as well."

"Sure." The bald man looked at these two, who were about to leave the store. He couldn't help but say, "By the way, beware of the mule."

"Mule?" Kanaria stopped on her track.

"Is there something wrong?" Clovis asked.

"There is a rumor among people like us that the mule is in this city. It appears that he is bringing a lot of banned goods, so people are wary of the chance that those banned goods are misused."

"What are the banned goods?" Kanaria asked.

"I don't know. There are a lot of rumors, to the point that I don't know which ones are real or not. But from what I see in the black market, there are three things I recognize. They are hacked devices, monster controllers, and essence poison."

"Monster controllers?" Clovis frowned. "What did they do?"

"It appears that they're producing a sound at a certain frequency that only beasts can hear. Those are good devices for military use because they can direct the beasts to those devices."

"..." Suddenly, both Kanaria and Clovis's expressions darkened.

The bald man instantly realized that both of them had experienced it. He said, "It seems that the situation is that bad. I will try to report to the military that one of them has fallen into bad hands. Also, don't buy suspicious things even if they are cheap, they might be the hacked devices spread by the mule. Just go to a good establishment to buy stuff."

"Understood. Thank you." Kanaria properly bowed to him. She dragged Clovis, who was still in deep thought.

It seemed that the situation was worse than they imagined.

"A smuggler, huh?" Clovis muttered.

"Do you think they are related?" Kanaria asked. It was clear that she was talking about the connection between the smuggler and the people who want to kill Clovis.

"I am not sure right now. Either way, there's not much difference in what we're going to do."

"Well, we can only grow our strength before they grow too desperate." Kanaria nodded. "Since we have taken quite a lot of time, I think we should go directly to Sirius to meet Melody. I am planning to buy some stuff over there too."

"Sure."

Both of them immediately called a taxi. The Sirius in Kanaria's mouth was a shopping mall. Clovis was a bit curious and wanted to see the mall again so that he could see what kind of stores he would have in the future.

Kanaria and Melody had made an agreement to meet each other in the food court, but when they arrived, Kanaria said, "We still have twenty minutes left. Considering Melody's actions in the past, we should just wait until the last minute before going to the food court."

"Ahahaha..." Clovis chuckled. It seemed that Kanaria was still holding a grudge. However, his eye soon caught an interesting shop. "Mhmm?"

"What's wrong?" Kanaria followed Clovis's line of sight and found a jewelry shop.

Unlike the accessory shop in Another World Mall that sold purses or other accessories, this shop was purely about jewelry.

And Clovis was actually pretty interested in this shop. After all, he couldn't help but think, 'Is there similar jewelry as the ones I bought from Another World Mall? If I can get one, shouldn't I be able to trick them by making them think I imbue a certain power into those jewelry?'

That was right. By this time, Kanaria and Jay wouldn't really believe it if he gave them those things since Clovis was with them most of the time. To create a solid story, he had to spend a bit of his money.

"Do you mind if I check that shop?" Clovis asked.

"Eh?" Kanaria blinked a few times. Clovis didn't seem to be someone who liked jewelry. No, it could be said that he was poor enough to care about them.

And Jay would definitely not wear one. Hence, the only person in the group who might wear it was her.

She couldn't help but wonder whether Clovis wanted to buy something for her or not.

"Sure."

As soon as they reached the store, one of the staff approached them with the best smile she could offer.

"Welcome."

"I am looking for a necklace and a ring. Do you mind leading me to their section?" Clovis didn't hesitate to tell her simply because she didn't have enough time.

The staff misunderstood him, thinking that he wanted to buy them for his girlfriend.

However, Clovis didn't realize yet that his 'Lucky Necklace' had begun its magic. The moment the staff led them to their destination, Clovis instantly found a necklace with a green jewel on it.

"I want that." Clovis pointed at the necklace without checking the price.

"Mhmm?" This was the third lucky thing he encountered. While he wasn't lucky enough in the shop Kanaria first introduced, he was sure lucky enough in this shop. After all, the moment Kanaria and the staff saw the price of the necklace, they couldn't help but widen their eyes in shock.

"What's wrong?" Clovis tilted his head in confusion.

"It's nothing. I will take it out immediately." The staff's smile became bigger while saying to Kanaria, "Miss, you're very blessed."

Clovis didn't hear them as he had already headed to the ring section and once again found the item he was searching for. While they weren't the exact same, they were similar enough to him. "By the way, take this out for me as well..."

"Y-yes." The staff was, of course, happy since she could earn some commissions if she managed to sell a lot.

Meanwhile, Kanaria couldn't help but fall into a deeper misunderstanding.

'Wait a minute. I don't think I'm ready for this. A ring?' Kanaria turned around, not wanting Clovis to see her expression. 'Clovis is actually buying a necklace and a ring? I can understand the necklace, but the ring... Is he actually serious about our relationship? But we haven't confirmed our relationship yet...

'Don't tell me, Clovis is actually thinking about skipping that process and going straight to propose to me? I thought that my mother was the only one who wanted the relationship to move forward as quickly as possible, but to think Clovis too...'

Clovis didn't know what she was thinking because he immediately proceeded to the cashier to complete the transactions. Kanaria didn't realize at that time that the things he bought weren't for her.

And whether it was fortunate or unfortunate, in her misunderstanding, she actually spotted Melody walking past the jewelry store. Their eyes ended up meeting each other.

"Melody?"

"Kanaria?"

Chapter 97 An Unexpected Person?

Now that they had met each other, all three of them immediately went to the food court.

"This is the money. According to the agreement, 30% of the reward money goes to you, which is 40,500 dollars. And as a mobile operator with a rate of 15,000 per day, the total will be 85,500 dollars." Kanaria transferred the money through Clovis's account.

"Mhmm... I have received the money." Melody nodded. It was rare to get this much with only two days of exploration. Even as a Tier 2 mobile operator, she usually got about thirty thousand for a week of explorations.

Compared to the usual groups, she was definitely lucky to go with them.

However, Melody couldn't help but recall the investigation about Clovis. Even after doing so much, she still didn't have a clue regarding Clovis's identity.

"What's wrong?" Clovis tilted his head.

Melody hesitated at the last moment. "It's nothing."

"Oh. I thought you wanted to join our group."

"..." Melody didn't immediately deny it as if she were still in a dilemma about whether to accept the invitation or not. The money was indeed tempting, but safety was a concern.

"Well, you can think about it for now." Clovis understood her hesitation, considering the danger that came from just being together with him.

Melody nodded. "Alright."

"Then, we'll excuse ourselves." Clovis smiled, satisfied. At the very least, there was a chance for Melody to accept his invitation. Although she hid it with her laziness, she must have a pretty high goal herself, which was something he wanted from a person in his group.

"Mhmm..." Melody waved her hand while thinking, 'Now that I've got the money, I think I can buy the new console.'

Meanwhile, Clovis and Kanaria went toward one of the stores in this mall. In fact, this was Kanaria's original destination when choosing this mall.

"Here we are." Kanaria pointed at the name of the chains. "Overpowered. This is the best chain regarding equipment. This is also where I usually buy our bullets."

"Welcome." A male staff suddenly approached them with a big smile on his face.

"Mhmm... We're looking for ammunition."

"Oh, Miss. You are choosing the right store. Please follow me." The man extended his hand.

Clovis wasn't familiar with all this, so he just followed Kanaria.

They reached the sections where they could find a lot of weapons like swords and spears. However, they skipped past it and reached the last section of the store. There were a lot of guns hanging on the shelves.

"We're only planning to buy the bullets. I want to see the stock for your Tier 1 and Tier 2 bullets."
Kanaria went straight to the point.

While Kanaria was telling him about the specs of the bullets, Clovis couldn't help but wander around, looking at the price of the equipment. Considering all his equipment came from his family, he had never bothered looking for another piece of equipment. Even his clothes came from Another World Mall.

So this was the first time he was actually in a weapon shop.

There was a sword that piqued his interest. It had a glaring red color that was a bit unpleasant to the eyes, so he couldn't help but walk toward the shelf to check it out.

Tier 2 Flaming Abyss

A sword made from the red walrus's tusk.

Price: 97,000 UD.

"A Tier 2 sword is this expensive?" Clovis muttered. He had yet to find a weapon shop in Another World Mall, so he didn't know whether this was expensive or not.

However, he couldn't help but recall the weapon he had. According to Jay, it was a good weapon, possibly a high tier one. Although it wasn't as sharp as other high tier weapons, its durability was the best he had ever seen.

On the one hand, he wanted an expert to give his weapon an assessment. On the other hand, he didn't want his item to be coveted if it turned out to be an amazing weapon.

Hence, he dropped the idea.

While looking at the weapon, a female's voice suddenly echoed from his right.

"Aren't you..."

Clovis raised his head, feeling familiar with the voice. It was there that he met the woman from Ivan's group, Vina. She was the person that Clovis asked not to go on any explorations for two weeks.

"You are the girl from back then. Vina, was it?"

"Yes. It's surprising to see you here. If I'm not wrong, you are called Clovis."

"Mhmm. What are you doing here?" Clovis asked with an innocent face.

"I am still following the agreement. I haven't done any explorations, especially with Ivan." Vina hurriedly replied as if she didn't want Clovis to misunderstand.

"Well, I don't really care much about the agreement. It seems that you are alone too..."

"I am on the verge of getting kicked out. It seems that the Drake Group has made a drastic change since that bet. Even I don't know much about it." Vina smiled wryly. "I'm not blaming you or anything. Ivan was so proud that I sometimes hoped that he got humbled and changed for the better."

"I'm just doing my part for my group."

As he said those words, Kanaria's voice rang from the gun section, calling for him. "Clovis!"

"I have to go. Hope you have a good day." Clovis waved his hand. He never had a grudge against her, so he acted pretty friendly.

"You too." Vina seemed not to mind about the agreement as well. In the end, Clovis didn't get the answer to his question.

He just restocked their ammunition in this store before leaving. And Clovis didn't mention anything about Vina since it was better for Kanaria not to meet her. It seemed that his action was wrong this time.

"Thank you very much." The man smiled brightly before bowing to Kanaria and Clovis as they left the store.

At the same time, Vina was walking toward the man who had just served them earlier.

"Welcome..." the man greeted her with the best smile, but Vina's reaction was the opposite of his.

Her eyebrows were twitching as she couldn't help but ask, "I have been searching for you this whole time. How in the world did you end up being a salesman in this store... Master? What are you plotting this time?"

Chapter 98 Peaceful...or Not!

"Are you ready?" A middle-aged man was sitting on an emergency exit while putting out his smoke.

"Yes, sir." Several people were standing in front of him, fully armed.

"What we will do today will be condemned, but our target remains the same. According to our information, the mule is inside the mall today. Find that bastard and kill him before the police arrive."

...

Meanwhile, Kanaria and Clovis were enjoying themselves inside the mall.

They had been hopping from one store to another. At first, it was about restocking their supplies for the next exploration, but it soon changed to normal shopping.

"What do you think?" Kanaria was trying new clothes: a light brown sweatshirt and plaid skirt. She tried on a lot of clothes that suited her.

Kanaria wanted to know Clovis's reaction to the clothes. At the same time, she also started dragging Clovis to a clothing store for men.

The reason she bought some clothes for herself was so that Clovis didn't feel bad buying some clothes for himself.

However, she surely didn't hesitate to feast her eyes. Clovis's face was above average, but he looked plain because he didn't have a lot of clothes that suited him.

When Kanaria bought him some clothes, his aura changed. His new shirt barely covered his muscles. His muscles might not be that big, but it still made him more pleasant to the eyes.

After what felt like hours, they finally stopped and took some rest.

"Ha... I think we have bought everything here..." Clovis sat down while putting down everything they had bought so far. Both of them were holding the same amount, yet Kanaria still looked pretty energetic.

"We still need a few more items and supplies. Also, we have to rent another car. I want to buy a car for our group, but I think it's better to wait until we have secured a bit more funds. After all, it's better to customize the car for exploration," said Kanaria while handing him a bubble tea.

"How do you have all that energy to buy all this stuff?" Clovis sighed.

"What's wrong? As a Tier 1 human, you shouldn't feel exhausted after all that, right?"

"No, but I'm mentally tired." Clovis shook his head. When he was going to Another World Mall, he was mentally tired because of the expensive price. But in this mall, he was tired because Kanaria kept asking him to change from one outfit to another.

In the Another World Mall, he didn't bother to choose after all. As long as the effect was good, he would buy it. But the real world was different.

"Shopping is a guilty pleasure." Kanaria shrugged.

"Hmm..." Clovis looked around once again. He couldn't help but have a lot of thoughts regarding the future stores that would come to Another World Mall. In fact, this was the reason why he accompanied Kanaria; he wanted to see all kinds of stores this mall could offer.

He muttered inwardly, 'Now that I think about it, there was supposed to be a bookstore in this mall. But because most of the stuff is now digital, the book store is gone. What about the Another World Mall?

'If it has a bookstore, won't it show a lot of weird books? Wait a minute, there are elves and the like, right? Will I be able to learn magic from those books? But... I think that this magic will bring me a lot of trouble and I don't know if I have the aptitude or not. Instead, martial arts are probably better.

'Or maybe a guide to creating weapons by a dwarf? Either way, it seems that the bookstore is something that I want to have in the future.'

"What's wrong? You look so serious." Kanaria had returned, trying to assure him with a smile.

"Ah!" Clovis smiled wryly. "It's nothing. I'm just thinking what kind of place will be visited the most in a mall..."

"The most visited place?" Kanaria didn't seem to expect this question. When she thought about it, there was only one place that came to her mind. And she couldn't help but think this was Clovis's hint.

In her mind, the most visited place in the mall wasn't a store. It was a movie theater.

As expected, this was truly a date. While they were at it, it would be fine if they had some fun together like watching movies and eating together, right?

"Do you want to visit that place?" Kanaria asked.

"Yeah." Clovis nodded.

"In that case, let's go." Kanaria smiled. "What kind of movie would you like to watch? I haven't checked which movies they have today."

"Oh?!" Clovis forgot that this was indeed the most visited place in the mall. When he heard movies, his imagination went wild.

That was right. What kind of movies could the Another World Mall offer? Would it be just a normal movie? Would it be a movie about another world? Or would it be a movie that allowed him to gain an understanding or abilities?

This just made him realize that there were still a lot more things that Another World Mall could offer.

Clovis thought for a moment. Since he had agreed to her invitation, he thought it would be fine to spend the day leisurely. It was important to rest after all.

"Sure. Let's go, shall we?" Clovis smiled.

"Yep." Kanaria looked happy, but this happiness was short-lived.

All of a sudden, a big explosion occurred.

Boom!

"!!!" Kanaria and Clovis couldn't help but stand up while raising their heads. They certainly heard the explosions coming from the other side of the building.

"Kyaaa!"

"Ahhhh!"

The people were screaming as they frantically ran toward the other side, away from the explosion site.

"What is going on?" Kanaria's expression turned serious.

Clovis couldn't help but press his chest, specifically the necklace hidden underneath his t-shirt. He wondered if this necklace was effective or not. At the same time, not getting caught in the explosion was probably considered lucky.

However, the terror in front of his eyes had just gone one step further.

The building suddenly collapsed.

"!!!" Clovis hurriedly grabbed Kanaria and pushed her down. "Get down!"

Clovis even flipped the bench to protect themselves from rubble. Some of the smaller ones ended up flying toward them. A few people got hit and their status was unknown.

Clovis gritted his teeth while saying, "A gas explosion? It doesn't seem like it. Is the mall under attack?"

"A terrorist attack?" Kanaria turned her head but couldn't see anything due to the bench.

"I don't know. However, if this is true, then this entire mall will soon become a battlefield." Clovis's expression turned grim. He didn't have his weapon or special clothes with him. The only thing that accompanied him today was the lucky necklace. He hadn't even bought anything related to recovery from Another World Mall.

There was one more thing he was concerned about. It was Melody. He didn't know whether Melody was still in this mall or not. If she ended up dying in that explosion, it would be a great loss to his group.

"What are we going to do, Clovis?" Kanaria asked.

"We have to join hands with others and save as many people as we can. We'll have to evacuate the people, but I don't know where to go. The other side of the building must have been compromised as well. The best way to go is..."

"Should we find a cafe or a store that has windows to the outside?"

"Yes. However, we have to be careful. There is a chance that the enemy is lurking inside this mall as well." Clovis looked at Kanaria with a solemn face. "Promise me. Don't do anything too reckless. If there is a chance not to stand out, make sure you use it and assess whether there is a hidden terrorist or not."

"Got it. What about you?"

"I'm going to look around. There will probably be a lot of people trapped here, so I will be looking for Melody. She might be the only one who can locate all those people." Clovis thought for a moment. Although it was a shame, he immediately took off the necklace and put it on her hand. "I hope this necklace can keep you safe."

"This is..." Kanaria was stunned as this was the necklace that Clovis bought earlier. But she didn't remember that Clovis did something to the necklace.

Still, it didn't matter. Clovis entrusted the necklace to her. Although she didn't know what the necklace could do, she trusted Clovis.

What both of them didn't know was that the necklace had once again been working at full power. The explosion this time had actually angered several people.

"Are you serious?" Melody gritted her teeth while looking at the empty cashier. "I haven't paid for my game yet... And I'm not a thief. Who in the world ruins my chance to buy this game?"

"What's going on?" Vina gasped while her master, who had been disguising himself as a store employee, couldn't help but look at the situation with a cold face. "To think that something like this would happen while I'm inside this place."

There were two more people annoyed by this explosion. They were the two assassins that were assigned to monitor Clovis and eliminate him if it was possible.

"Oi, oi. You bastards. What the hell are you doing here? If you're gonna kill someone, we will be the ones getting eliminated."

"I don't care what the terrorists do, but how dare they do it when that Hacfield bastard is inside?"

Both of them looked like they were raring to kill some people.

Chapter 99 Rescue

Clovis opened the device and checked the signal. Seeing that he still got some signal, he couldn't help but call Melody to check whether she was still inside the mall or not.

Kanaria, on the other hand, looked around to see where the terrorists were. This kind of explosion shouldn't come from a gas leak, after all.

"Melody?" The call was connected.

"You guys are still in the building?" Melody asked.

"You too?"

"Yeah. I'm not that far from the explosion. The people are going in the opposite direction, but I'm staying in the store for a moment. It doesn't seem like this is an accident."

"Do you want to regroup with us? It's going to be much safer that way."

Melody paused for a moment while looking at the situation around her. She didn't seem to find another person in the area. There were some crying sounds in the rubble, but she couldn't dig them up.

"In a time like this, you should help each other out. I think it's better to come to this area. If this is a planned attack, they won't be near the destruction since it might also bury them."

"Got it." Clovis nodded and turned to Kanaria. "Let's go to Melody."

"Yeah." Kanaria agreed. They could grab a weapon first, but there would be a problem if they were considered terrorists. So, for the time being, they should regroup with Melody first before positioning themselves near the weapon shop.

As soon as they reached an agreement, they moved pretty swiftly.

"You go up. I will remain on the ground floor." Clovis pointed up. "Melody is on the third floor."

"Got it."

When they were moving, they heard gunshots coming from the opposite direction.

"!!!" Both of them raised their heads, trying to look at what was going on.

"Hurry. We don't have a lot of time."

Clovis and Kanaria sped up while Melody explained, "The first responder has been dispatched. It seems that they are already aware that this is a terrorist attack."

"Do we have information about them?"

"Not at the moment. I heard gunshots earlier, so there might be a few explorers fighting them. We might get their information pretty soon."

"Is there any instruction?" Clovis asked.

"In terms of terrorist attacks, all explorers are allowed to use their weapons to engage with their enemies."

"We don't bring any equipment with us though." Clovis's expression turned serious. "And I think it's better if we focus on helping people. Let the explorers have weapons to engage them. Melody. Can you contact the people outside and ask for their advice?"

"I'll try." Melody nodded.

"Kanaria. Position yourself near the weapon shop. If the terrorists are moving toward us, bring back some weapons to use. We're not at the level where we can fight guns yet, so we also need guns."

"Got it."

Melody suddenly added, "We've got some information right now. There are two people engaging the terrorists. The first one is a Tier 3 explorer called Jacksia. The second one is a Tier 4 explorer called Ran. There are also several explorers, but they are Tier 0, so it's not advisable to fight them."

"The enemy?"

"They are covering their faces, but according to the explorers, the leader is about Tier 4. The rest of the soldiers are ranging from Tier 0 to Tier 2."

Clovis's expression turned serious. The situation was more terrible than he originally thought. "Alright. Tell them that we'll help with the evacuation on this side. Make sure they don't shoot us."

"I'll tell them about it." Melody nodded. Even though Clovis said evacuation, the only people that remained on this side were the injured ones that got buried by the rubble.

As soon as they saw the escalator, Kanaria immediately climbed to the higher floor while Clovis was approaching the ruined area.

"Do you have any idea how to do this without making it crumble?" Clovis asked. It was horrible.

The left side was destroyed to the point where he could see the sky from the ceiling. The right side hadn't completely collapsed, but it looked brittle enough.

"Better go to the right side and move fast. There is a chance for it to collapse as well, so be careful not to destroy anything." Melody instructed.

"Got it." Clovis nodded with a serious expression as he immediately moved to the right side, specifically the half-ruined store.

"Are you alright? Is there anyone here?" Clovis shouted while listening carefully.

"I am on my way there. My senses are sharper than those of normal people, so I should be able to find them. Do your best in the meantime."

"Got it." Clovis looked around the empty store. He checked the rubble, especially the big ones, to see if there was anyone underneath them.

"He...lp..." Suddenly, he heard a faint voice coming from behind the rubble.

"Hello? Where are you?" Clovis tried to follow the voice while looking around the rubble. There was a big piece of concrete slab that covered a part of the store, so he took a look underneath it.

He found the first victim. It was a little kid who was leaning on the wall. Her eyes had lost focus and her body was bleeding.

There was a woman next to her, lying on her stomach. It looked like she was her mother.

Without hesitation, Clovis sneaked inside the gap and checked their conditions. Fortunately, they didn't get squashed by the rubble, so he should have no problem dragging them out.

"Stay with me." Clovis looked at the kid and gently grabbed her. Although he was strong enough to push away this big rubble, he was afraid that the rubble would break apart and a small piece would fly in their direction and hurt them. So, he gently dragged them outside.

While he was at it, Melody had reached the second floor and simply jumped off as though the fall wouldn't hurt her. She saw Clovis finding two people and was prepared to help.

All of a sudden, Kanaria's voice came out of the device.

"Clovis. We've got a situation here."

Chapter 100 A Different Course of Action

A moment ago.

"Don't kill us!"

"Mama..."

"Nooo!"

The people had been gathered by the terrorists in the entertainment zone. Some had escaped, but there were still about seventy people in this place.

There were five people with guns watching the hostage. The other terrorists were preparing their weapons to find the rest.

"The mule is not among them, sir."

"How is the situation outside?"

"A few of our members on the outside have said that the mule is not among the people who manage to run away."

"In that case, continue to monitor the situation. Team A and B will go with me to search the entire mall. We can't let the mule escape."

"Got it."

They started moving in an organized manner, which was much different from what people expected from a terrorist group.

The first team was searching for every store on the left side, while the second team took care of the right side. However, they remained on the first floor, probably trying to search the second floor after they reached the end of the first floor.

...

On the opposite side, Vina was hiding inside the store, asking, "What should we do, Master? At a time like this, we have to help each other."

"Oh? It's rather surprising for those words to come out of your mouth. Normally, you are only thinking about your own safety."

"..." Vina couldn't answer him. She still remembered the excuse Clovis gave to defeat them in the competition. And she couldn't really refute that claim either.

She thought that she might be able to gain something if she saved the people. That was all.

"If you are going to save them, we need to know the enemies first." The middle-aged man came outside the store while looking at all the stores. It seemed that several people were still hiding among the stores.

Once captured, they would be dragged to join the rest of the people in the entertainment zones.

But among them, he saw a man in his late twenties. There was an explorer badge on his chest and the guy also had a big sword on his back.

It seemed that he also felt the gaze, which caused their gazes to meet.

Vina's master pointed up as if signaling the man to go up and meet him.

Surprisingly, the guy actually followed his order and came up.

"Are you..." The guy abruptly stopped and corrected his introduction. "I am a Tier 3 explorer, Jacksie."

"Tier 4 Ran."

Both of them introduced themselves. Considering the other party had a higher tier, Jacksie asked, "What are we going to do now?"

Before answering that question, Ran called, saying, "This is Tier 4 Ran. I've met Tier 3 Jacksie. Currently, we are in the mall that was attacked by terrorists, please tell the people in charge that we're planning to attack the terrorists."

"Please wait a moment. Is there a hostage?"

"Most likely." Ran paused for a moment while squinting his eyes as if he were able to see far away in this darkness. "There are a lot of hostages, and their number is gradually increasing. We don't know the exact number, but I can see a bunch of Tier 0 and Tier 1... Correction, I spotted two Tier 2 humans among them.

"They're coming our way, so please advise. We are ready to attack them in order to buy some time."

"Please wait, sir. If you attack, the terrorists might harm the hostages."

"If we wait, we will be captured by them and the chance of saving them becomes much lower. We have to engage the terrorists to understand their intentions. Don't you have a negotiator? What is the situation over there?"

"We haven't received any calls from the terrorists."

"..." Ran frowned. "Correction. We need an immediate response. I have spotted someone who is at least Tier 3... No, he might be a Tier 4."

"Sorry, say again?"

"I repeat. I found a Tier 4 terrorist. We don't really have any options... We might need to retaliate." Ran then turned to Jacksie, saying, "What's your affinity?"

"Muscle."

"Tsk. In that case, I will be the bait since I can avoid their bullets. Once I lure them enough, you eliminate them as quickly as possible. Be careful of Tier 4."

Jacksie couldn't see that far away, but Ran seemed to have Brain Affinity, which sharpened his senses. It was no wonder he could spot them.

Still, this action looked reckless. "But... won't the hostages be harmed? I think it's better to retreat from here."

"They are searching one store after another. It's clear that they are trying to find someone. If we retreat to the opposite side, they will get more people and there is a higher chance that they will eliminate those people. Although this sounds ruthless, it's better to abandon the captured people and prioritize the safety of the people who haven't gotten caught yet.

If we wait for the police, it will be too late. From their movement, the terrorists are elites."

Jacksie fell silent. If there were fifty hostages and fifty more that had yet to be found, Ran wanted to sacrifice the first fifty hostages to save the other fifty. Jacksie's original plan was to retreat and let them take all one hundred people. And if the terrorist really killed the hostages, Ran's plan was much better than his.

Jacksie took a deep breath to gather his resolve. "What should I do?"

"Hide there." Jacksie pointed at the first floor's store. "I will be the bait and let them chase me. If possible, take care of the right side. Once you show yourself, I will take care of the left side. Do you have any armor?"

"I didn't bring it with me."

"Let's go to the store. There should be armor that can withstand Tier 2 bullets in the shop."

"Got it."

While they were talking, the person behind the call changed. His voice was deep and heavy, saying, "This is from the SWD anti-terrorism. We have sent our finest to your side. You have to wait for them."

"We will lure them to the opposite side. Your squad can ambush from the opposite side where they gather the hostages. We can't let them take any more hostages," Ran replied while rushing to the shop. It seemed that the clash was imminent.