
Chapter 5: Starting the Paid Service (5)

People panicked as they saw the insects running around the carriage.

“H-Hey! Why would you do such a thi—”

While some people were staring blankly, the quick-witted pushed toward me.

“You son of a bitch.”

“...You better find them soon. There are only three minutes left.”

These words were a signal as people started to look everywhere among the subway seats like beasts who had lost their minds.

“I got it! Aaack!”

The joy of those fortunate enough to obtain an insect, as well as the malicious attacks on them, caused the carriage to become chaotic.

“Hey, why did you do that? Couldn’t you have just given them the insects?”

Looking back, I saw Kim Namwoon raising his body. I responded cautiously to Kim Namwoon, who was stretching his neck, “There are 12 people remaining.”

“...Huh?”

“There were three insects left in the collecting net.”

Kim Namwoon frowned for a moment before smiling broadly. “12 to 3? Hahahahat! Yes. Not all of them can survive anyway? So you threw that thing?”

“Yes.”

“Don’t make me laugh.”

“...?”

“A person with common sense wouldn’t do such a thing for that reason.” Kim Namwoon’s smile widened. “Tell me honestly. You just wanted to see this scene, didn’t you?”

I recalled the Kim Namwoon that I knew from Ways of Survival.

At this moment, I heard a message in my ears, [Exclusive skill, ‘Character List’ is activated.]

Next, a window opened in front of my eyes. I still didn’t know exactly what my attribute was, but I looked at the window in front of me.

[Character Information]

[Name: Kim Namwoon.

Age: 19.

Constellation Support: None (Two constellations are currently showing interest in this person).

Private Attribute: Chuunibyou (General)

Exclusive Skills: Unusual Adaptability Lv. 3, Knife Fighting Lv. 1, Blackening Lv. 1

Overall Stats: Stamina Lv. 3, Strength Lv. 4, Agility Lv. 6, Magic Power Lv. 4

Overall Rating: A chuunibyou who was blackened by a special occasion. It is recommended that you don't get involved with him.]

Most of the chuunibyou that appeared in Ways of Survival committed suicide because they couldn't endure the nightmare that had become real. However, the chuunibyou before me, Kim Namwoon, was different.

He was the Delusion Demon, Kim Namwoon. The young man, who later became known by this nickname, wasn't an ordinary chuuni.

This young man had been waiting for the destruction of the world for a long time and adapted to this world at an 'unusual speed.'

"Team up with me. How about it?" That young man was now making an offer to me.

[The character 'Kim Namwoon' has a favorable impression of you.]

[Your understanding of the character 'Kim Namwoon' has increased.]

My immediate survival was guaranteed if I held hands with Kim Namwoon. If I hadn't read Ways of Survival, my choice might've been a little different.

"I'm sorry but I like to be alone."

"Really? Hmm, it is regrettable." Kim Namwoon licked his lips lightly and stood close to me. "Then can you step aside? I have something to do with that old lady behind you."

Hearing his words, I looked back to see that the bleeding and collapsed grandmother was barely breathing.

"What do you want?"

"Do you have to ask?"

"You aren't catching the insects?"

"Insects? Why would I catch that?" Kim Namwoon laughed. "I already have a caught insect in front of me."

I could feel Kim Namwoon's murderous spirit. The character that had only existed in the novel was facing me with vivid madness. Therefore, I felt a little bit in awe.

Kim Namwoon was really the person I had imagined.

[The character 'Kim Namwoon' has a slight decrease in favorability.]

"What are you looking at? Aren't you going to move aside quickly?"

"It is tough."

"What?"

"I won't move aside."

"Haha, are you now going to imitate the apostle of justice? Do you have multiple personalities?"

I didn't answer.

A dark shadow slowly crept onto Kim Namwoon's face, and his shining eyes were becoming cold. "No, wait a minute. Did you throw the net over there to do this from the beginning? Really?"

"..."

"You want to save the grandmother? Hahaha! Amazing! Really amazing! No? Yes?"

I still didn't answer. As I looked closely at this guy, old memories resurfaced.

"Ah, it turns out that you are the type of person I hate the most. All old bastards are the same."

They were memories of all the times I had been frustrated by this brat during Ways of Survival.

[The character 'Kim Namwoon' despises you.]

"What did you say?"

I considered the timing and lowered my head, avoiding the fist that flew before the words were even over.

"Oh, not bad?"

Despite knowing it was coming, I felt a sense of heat from above my head. It wasn't an ordinary punch.

[Blackening Lv.1]

A dark aura rose from Kim Namwoon's whole body. This was the exclusive skill of the 'chuunibyou' attribute.

It was rare to release a skill before the end of the first scenario, but Kim Namwoon was already showing a skill. There was a reason why the main character had recruited him, despite his psychopath nature.

Peeok!

After he hit it, my right shoulder spasmed. There was no way to win if I kept fighting this way.

...Should I use 'that' now? I was calculating the time when I heard a message.

[Your understanding of the character 'Kim Namwoon' has increased.]

[You are close to the conditions of use for the exclusive skill 'Omniscient Reader's Viewpoint Lv. 1.]

Omniscient Reader's Viewpoint? What was this?

[The conditions of use for the exclusive skill 'Omniscient Reader's Viewpoint' Lv. 1 have been reached!]

Kim Namwoon's fist missed me and struck the ground.

"Haha, what? Haven't I become stronger?"

A faint fist mark was left on the ground. Kim Namwoon was realizing his current strength little by little.

Kwang!Kwang!Kwang!

The fist that could break a bone with a single blow kept hitting the ground. Kim Namwoon was frustrated and couldn't control his temper. "Ah, why can't I hit you?"

Of course, he couldn't hit me. It was all thanks to my second skill.

[Exclusive skill, Omniscient Reader's Viewpoint Lv. 1 has been activated!]

As soon as this skill was activated, I was able to observe Kim Namwoon's attack direction like I was reading his inner thoughts. For example, like this...

「 Right side. 」

I quickly moved away from the direction of the attack.

「Right eye. 」

Then I quickly bent down and avoided the flying fist.

"You really are good at not being hit!"

It was unreasonable to counterattack because I was poor at sports, but I could at least avoid most of the attacks.

「 Left thigh. 」

This was enough to endure it. The important thing was to buy time. I avoided Kim Namwoon's first and pointed at the clock in the air. "There are two minutes left, Kid."

The distressed Kim Namwoon alternated looking between me and the grandmother. "Dammit!"

At the moment of choice, Kim Namwoon's gaze was fixed on the grandmother's side.

I was forced to grab the grandmother and roll away. If the grandmother died, Kim Namwoon would clear the scenario. No matter what, I absolutely couldn't send this guy onto the next scenario.

"Haha, I knew you would move like that." As Kim Namwoon took something out of his bag, I had an ominous feeling.

A blade shone in the fluorescent light. It was a portable MacGyver Knife. I had forgotten. This person was a diehard military otaku.

Swiiik-

There was a link between the technical skill 'Knife Fighting' and the strengthening skill 'Blackening'. The direction that the blade was pointing was obvious.

「Heart. 」

It was an attack that couldn't be avoided even if I knew the direction. So, I made a quick judgment. If I couldn't avoid the attack, it was better to be hit somewhere with minimal damage, if possible.

Chiiiik! The blade narrowly missed my heart and made a deep cut on my shoulder.

It hurt. It really hurt. There was a searing pain in my skin. My vision shook, and it felt like death was approaching.

"Haha, now die!"

The time remaining to the end of the scenario was 1 minute and 30 seconds. I glanced toward the grandmother. I was sorry for the grandmother, but now I really had to use 'that.'

"Chungil High School, 2nd year, Kim Namwoon. I have one question for you."

"...What?"

"Do you think an insect egg is a living thing?"

I took out the body of the grasshopper I had killed earlier from my pocket. The plump egg-sac was clearly abundant. There was the sound of something popping, and something fluid spilled out. The disgusting feeling spread over my hand as I heard a message.

.....

[You have killed a living thing.]

[100 coins have been earned as additional compensation.]

[You have killed a living thing.]

[100 coins have been earned as additional compensation.]

.....

Multiple messages bombarded my ears.

Kim Namwoon frowned. "Insect egg? What are you suddenly saying? Are you trying to waste time?"

"I guess so."

"How would I know something like that? I was always sleeping in Biology class." Kim Namwoon looked at my bloody shoulder and laughed happily. "But there is one thing I know for sure. Do you know what it is?"

"What is it?"

"You will die right now!" Kim Namwoon moved his Swiss knife before I could answer. It was an attack that was hard to avoid.

[A large number of coins has been acquired! Do you want to check the coin usage tips?]

I omitted the explanation that entered my ears. There was no need to listen when I already knew the contents.

"No, it is you who will die," I spat out while inwardly muttering something else.

[2,700 coins have been invested into 'stamina'.]

[Stamina Lv. 1 -> Stamina Lv. 10]

[Your stamina level has increased dramatically!]

[The durability of your body has greatly increased!]

Kim Namwoon's knife penetrated toward my heart. To be exact, it looked like it was penetrating.

My skin was like solid rock, and the only thing that remained on it was a scratch.

Kim Namwoon's eyes showed that he was astonished. "How?"

"I'll tell you the correct answer to my question. The answer is: an egg is a living thing."

"W-What?"

"And in spawning season, grasshoppers lay more than 100 eggs at a time."

Egg, living thing, 100...

Unfortunately, the time left to understand the meaning of the information was too short for the schoolboy with a bad brain.

"What are you saying?"

"It doesn't matter if you don't understand. There is one minute left."

Now fear appeared on Kim Namwoon's face. "Aaaah! Die! Die!"

The knife moved toward my neck. I didn't even bother defending against the attack.

Kakakang!

Was it because the area was more vulnerable than the chest? The wound was a little deeper than before, but it still didn't hurt much.

"Kim Namwoon."

Behind Kim Namwoon, there were people who were still crawling and looking for insects, as well as those who were willing to hurt each other for their own survival.

"You are right. I am the same type of human as you."

Maybe I could've saved some of those people.

"Shit! Why won't you die! Why won't you just die!"

55 seconds... 50 seconds... 45 seconds...

The knife kept leaving only scratches. Blood flowed but the blade couldn't reach under the skin. There were 30 seconds left when Kim Namwoon opened his mouth. He dropped the knife and knelt before me.

"S-Save me."

25 seconds.

"Save me! Please! Help me!"

"Why should I?"

20 seconds.

"P-People's lives are important! That's obvious!"

"That is the rule of the old world. It is just as you said. A new world requires new laws."

10 seconds.

“I don’t want to, I don’t want to! I don’t want to die! Aaaaaaack!”

5 seconds.

Kim Namwoon ran at me with a loud scream and aimed for my eye. The moment that the knife tried to dig at my retina...

[The given time has run out.]

There was a loud sound, and Kim Namwoon’s head exploded.

[Paid settlement will begin.]

Beginning with Kim Namwoon, people’s heads started exploding everywhere. One, two, three, four...

The bursting heads were like fireworks announcing a new era. I watched the scene with a bit of joy, a bit of guilt, and a mysterious feeling.

Why? Why was I so calm at the sight in front of me? It was like I was looking at a novel.

[You have killed 124 living things.]

[Kill History: One grasshopper, 123 grasshopper eggs.]

[You have killed non-resistance living things, so the number of coins you have acquired is reduced by half.]

[6,200 coins have been acquired!]

[The number of coins used for the stats level up is automatically subtracted.]

[You have a total of 3,500 coins.]

[The 'Mass Murderer' achievement has been gained through excessive killing.]

My face could be seen on the darkened window of the carriage.

It was a face I had never seen before, despite looking into the mirror countless times in my life. I wiped at the blood on my cheeks. The blood wasn't erased. It turned out to be blood on the window.

Kkiiik.

There was a lurching feeling, and the train started to move again. It made the familiar train noise.

Soon, light flooded in, and darkness was lifted from the windows. We had arrived at the surface ground section of Line 3 between Apgujeong and Oksu.

Outside the window, the Han River and Seoul were revealed.

Ahh. Someone let out a moan. It was a moan which contained deep relief that they survived.

However, it didn't take long for the meaning of that moan to change. Ah, ah...

The landscape outside the window was no longer the Seoul that they knew. Smoke and dust rose from the ruined city.

The Han River bridges had collapsed. The Han River itself was red with the bodies of soldiers, while among the fallen buildings, a monster was trampling on a K1 tank like it was a toy.

[Main Scenario #1 – Proof of Value has ended.]

[300 coins have been acquired as a basic clearance reward.]

[100 coins have been reduced for the channel usage fee.]

[Additional compensation settlement will begin.]

One world was destroyed, and a new world was born.

...And I was the only reader who knew the ending of this world.