
Chapter 4: Starting the Paid Service (4)

Laughter emerged. I had to clear my eyes and look again to see if it was a lie. The file extension was TXT. Then this person... The gift he sent me was a copy of his novel?

[You have obtained an exclusive attribute.]

[The exclusive skill slot has been activated.]

I heard a message in my ear after running the file. It wasn't surprising if the world had changed into 'Ways of Survival.' All survivors of Ways of Survival had exclusive attribute and skills.

I quietly said 'Attribute Window' in my mind. I needed to know the attribute that I received.

[You can't activate the Attribute Window.]

What? I once again tried to call out 'Attribute Window' but the result was the same.

It was absurd. There was something like this? If I couldn't use the Attributes Window, I couldn't know what attributes or skills I have.

Knowing oneself and one enemy's meant being invincible. But this was a situation where I didn't even know myself, let alone the enemy.

After staring into space for a while, I gave up and decided to read the text that the author gave me.

[Your reading speed has increased due to the effect of the exclusive attribute.]

I didn't know what the attribute was, but it took me less than a minute to read the first act of Ways of Survival thanks to the attribute effect.

I found it. The place where my finger stopped was the beginning of the work, where the main character was doing some 'action' in the train scene.

「 He saw people gathered at the back door of the 3707 carriage. The wheel of the tightly held lighter was cold.

In this life, he absolutely couldn't make a mistake. He would use any means for his purpose.

The expression of fear on the people's faces. He didn't feel any guilt.

Everything was fleeting.

He looked at the people with merciless eyes. After a while, his fingertips moved and fire rose. Then it all started. 」

A chill went down my spine and I had to read the passage again and again. The reason for my discomfort was soon revealed.

"...3707."

I reflexively checked the number of the carriage I was riding.

[3807].

The carriage I was on right now was behind the carriage that the protagonist was riding. My hands faintly shook.

...Wait a minute. How many people originally survived this carriage?

「 He looked through the blurred window at the 3807 carriage. It was already too late. It was inevitable. Anyway, only two people survived in that carriage. 」

Only two survived. It meant that everyone died except for two people. And I already knew who those two people were.

I raised my head and looked blankly at Yoo Sangah. Maybe this woman would die. Me as well.

"Dokja-ssi, shouldn't we stop this?"

Something was starting in the place where Yoo Sangah pointed. It was groaning. A young man was crouching down in front of the elderly woman.

“Shit, I’m in a bad mood and this old lady keeps whining and groaning! Won’t you shut up?”

The young man was a male student who had been leaning against the entrance.

He was thin and had dyed white hair. His name was written on the badge attached to his uniform.

Kim Namwoon. It was a name that I knew.

「 Only Lee Hyunsung and Kim Namwoon survived in that carriage. It doesn’t matter. They are the only two I need anyway. 」

“Didn’t I tell you to shut up?”

The agitated Kim Namwoon grabbed the grandmother’s collar. The grandmother’s powerless legs staggered. Kim Namwoon’s palm moved through the air.

Slap. Slap.

In normal times, somebody would run to stop this. But now nobody was moving. It wasn’t long before the slaps changed to punches.

“S-Save me. Save me...!”

I could hear the sound of a hard fist hitting flesh. Some of the men around Kim Namwoon hesitated but none of them wanted to go forward. Surprisingly, the first person to act was Han Myungoh.

“Young me, treating an elder like this...!”

However, all he got in reply was a voice mixed with scorn.

“Mister, do you want to die?”

“...What?”

“You still don’t understand the situation?”

“What bullshit is this brat saying?”

Kim Namwoon only laughed at the cursing Han Myungoh. He pointed to the ceiling of the subway carriage with his finger.

“Can’t you see that?”

On the ceiling, a holographic screen was playing.

[S-Spare me!]

[Aaaack!]

[Die! Die!]

It wasn't just train carriages or Daepong High School. It was a live video of people dying all over the country. Kim Namwoon continued speaking.

"You still don't understand? The army isn't coming to rescue us. And somebody must die."

"W-What are you saying...?"

"We have to choose a person to die."

Han Myungoh wasn't able to answer. The hairs of his exposed wrist were standing up.

"Of course, I know what you are thinking. You have to kill your fellow countrymen to live. It is something only sons of bitches will do. But you know, it is a force beyond our control. Beyond our control. We will die if we don't kill. Who will blame us? Are you going to die in the end because of your morals?"

"T-That..."

"Think carefully. The world you have known so far has just ended."

Han Myungoh's shoulders trembled. It wasn't only Han Myungoh. Cracks were showing in people's eyes. It was a scene where the vague morality was collapsing. Kim Namwoon put a wedge in that crack.

"A new world requires new laws."

Kim Namwoon. A young man who adapted to the world of Ways of Survival the fastest.

Kim Namwoon turned around and resumed punching the grandmother. This time, nobody stopped him. Han Myungoh, the other men... Even Lee Hyunsung.

The soldier's fists were trembling as he stared into the air with a lost expression. Maybe he had also made a decision.

"Sigh... It is hard to kill. Are you doing to just watch? Do you want to fall behind?"

People trembled at Kim Namwoon's words. Their facial expressions were as easy to read as the sentences in a cheap novel.

「If there is no killing in five minutes, everyone in this carriage will die. 」

People's eyes were changing.

「If the grandmother doesn't die, we will die in five minutes... 」

The most primitive eyes that a living creature could have.

"Yes... This bastard is right. If we don't do this, everyone will die."

The first man rushed towards Kim Namwoon. He kicked at the old lady who had collapsed and was curled up.

“Have you forgotten? Someone must die! So we can live!”

“Ah fuck... I don’t know.”

The second and third.

The people standing aloof from the grandmother. The cowardly men who had been lingering. The university student filming this with their phone. The mother of the child and Han Myungoh.

They all lynched the grandmother, aiming for her death.

“Die! Die quickly!”

They were like guards cooperating for the death penalty. Like the guards pulling the lever at the same time so they couldn’t tell who killed the prisoner, these people passively kicked and punched the grandmother.

And I was watching all of this. I was standing by, like someone watching what happened in another world.

The grandmother whose name I didn’t know was someone who wasn’t meant to live. In the original scenario, the grandmother died. So... It wasn’t a sin to observe that death.

At that moment, Yoo Sangah got up.

"You will be killed." I reflexively grabbed her. "I told you not to move."

The arm I was holding was shaking. Yoo Sangah made tight fists in an attempt to hide her trembling.

"I know, I know...!"

"Yoo Sangah-ssi will die if you go now."

Yoo Sangah's eyes were shaking with fear. Even so...

I realized it. Despite the genre of the story changing, some people still shone brightly.

"Yoo Sangah-ssi. Sit down."

However, the person who could change this story wasn't Yoo Sangah. Yoo Sangah wasn't the protagonist of this world.

"Huh? But—"

"Do as I say, just this once. I won't interfere after that."

After forcibly putting Yoo Sangah back in her seat, I took a deep breath and turned around. I straightened my back and shook as I breathed out. I slowly loosened my ankles and wrist.

In fact, it was a little early to come forward. This wasn't my plan originally.

"...Dokja-ssi?"

I didn't answer her call as I looked at the people. The people intent on assaulting the grandmother.

I wasn't still because I was afraid of Kim Namwoon and the people, nor did I consent to their inhumanity.

I was just waiting. It was for the moment I had to move. Thus...

Kwaang!

Right now.

"Ack! What?"

An explosion filled my ears and the train shook. People cried out. Smoke rose from the front right corner of this carriage. It had started. 'He' had moved.

I kicked off from the ground as hard as I could with my right foot. I passed by the people screaming and sitting down towards the grandmother.

"What? Eeeeek!"

Kim Namwoon collided with me and fell to the ground with a scream. At first glance, it seemed like I was saving the grandmother, but that wasn't what I was aiming for.

Where was it? I looked around quickly.

Somebody had fallen towards the grandmother due to the explosion. It was a kid crying in the middle of this hell. The kid who was holding the insect collecting net before.

"Excuse me a moment."

I took the net from the child.

Once I put my hand into the net, the chitin of a grasshopper reached my fingertips. I took one out and placed it in the kid's hands. Then I turned towards the people.

"Everybody stop. You can't live if you kill the grandmother."

My voice was surprisingly clear due to the temporary silence after the explosion. One by one, people started looking at me.

"Let's say you kill the grandmother. What next?"

Their surprised faces looked good. Let me tell you a bit more.

"The grandmother's death will be recognized for what the dokkaebi calls the 'first murder' and some time will be bought. Then what next?"

“Ah...”

“If what the dokkaebi says is true, you each have to kill one thing. So who will you kill after the grandmother? Will you kill the person next to you?”

The people who thought about something retreated from each other. Horror was in their eyes. In fact, everyone knew. The grandmother was just the beginning.

Kim Namwoon noticed the shaky atmosphere.

“Haha, what are you all worried about? Then kill him next! Cowards. Don’t worry about your turn in advance! The odds are equal!”

I figured that Kim Namwoon would say something like this. I cut him off with a slight wave of my hand.

“There is no need to gamble like that. There is a way for you to survive, even if you don’t become a killer.”

“What?”

“W-What is it?”

The people became greatly agitated. Kim Namwoon’s expression distorted.

“Have you forgotten? The scenario clear condition wasn’t to ‘kill a person.’”

Most people were still puzzled but a few people noticed something.

[Kill one or more living things.]

That's right. From the beginning, the word 'person' was never specified in the contents of the scenario.

Kill one or more living things. In other words, any life was possible. A quick-witted person shouted at the collection net in my hand.

"Insect! Insects!"

The grasshoppers were jumping in the collection net. People's eyes were shining. I nodded.

"That's right, the insects."

I put my hand into the net and took out a grasshopper. It was a chubby one that I saw earlier.

"G-Give that to me! Quickly!"

"One only! I just need one!"

I stepped back slowly as I looked at the approaching people. I was now facing the explosive madness that tried to kill the grandmother. Yet a smile

emerged. Why? Even in this breathtaking tension, why was my heart beating with joy?

“Would you like it?”

I waved the net like a trainer provoking an animal. Several impatient people leapt towards me.

“Then catch them!”

I smashed the grasshopper in my hand.

[You have achieved the ‘First Kill’ achievement!]

[100 coins have been earned as additional compensation.]

At the same time, I threw the net in my other hand as hard as possible. It was towards the opposite side of the area where the grandmother and the crowd was gathered.

“This is crazy!”

The insects were released and jumped as hard as they could for freedom.