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## *Chapter 7: Protagonist (2)*

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[Sponsor Selection has ended.]

I took a deep breath as I watched the messages floating in the air.

[Some constellations are greatly affected by your choice.]

Yes, it was starting now.

[The constellation 'Abyssal Black Flame Dragon' is greatly displeased at your choice.]

[The constellations belonging to Black Cloud are shaken by the anger of the Abyssal Black Flame Dragon. You won't be sponsored by any of the Black Cloud constellations for a while.]

I wasn't surprised because it was an expected message.

To make every member of his group turn away because he was rejected...it seemed that this guy was Kim Namwoon's sponsor in the original work. As expected of the incarnation of this constellation.

[The constellation 'Demon-like Judge of Fire' is disappointed in you.]

[She will persistently monitor your justice in the future.]

In the case of Archangel Uriel, it was just disappointment. In the first place, the constellations of absolute good would rarely hate someone unless they committed a great injustice.

[The constellation 'Secretive Plotter' is interested in your choice.]

[200 coins have been sponsored.]

The Secretive Plotter's case was unexpected. Given the characteristics of the name, maybe he valued my caution.

[The constellation 'Prisoner of the Golden Headband' is interested in your choice.]

And the Great Sage the Equal of Heaven...

I was concerned. Did I make the right choice? I didn't know. Maybe I had lost the tremendous opportunity right in front of me.

[You haven't selected a sponsor.]

But choosing a certain constellation meant being limited by that possibility. The sponsor contract was never a fair deal.

I would survive. But I wouldn't survive by being their toys. And if my expectations were right, there was a way to become strong without a

constellation. Maybe it was a way to become stronger than the incarnation of the strongest sponsor.

[Haha, is this true...isn't there one interesting choice? Well, yes. There will be another chance.]

The dokkaebi's crescent moon eyes stayed on me for a moment.

[Now now, everyone has finished the selection. Rest here for a while. I have to go prepare the next scenario. I'll see you in 10 minutes!]

After the Sponsor Selection finished, the dokkaebi disappeared. He told us to rest, but these 10 minutes were really crucial.

In 10 minutes, I needed to sort out this situation and prepare for the following scenarios. I tried to recall my abilities in my head.

[Character List] and [Omniscient Reader's Viewpoint].

I didn't know the precise use yet but I had a general sense of these skills. This will work somehow.

"Let's all gather together."

The survivors gathered at my words. The first one to reach out a hand was Lee Hyunsung.

"Hello, I am Lee Hyunsung."

"Kim Dokja."

"Nice to meet you...although I don't know if these words suit the situation. As I said earlier, I am a soldier...well, I should say that I was a soldier."

"You can't contact your unit?"

"...Yes."

The grip around my hand was considerable. As expected from the tanker that appeared in the early stages of Ways of Survival.

I must take Lee Hyunsung with me. He might not look like much now but Lee Hyunsung was an increasingly important figure in the latter parts of Ways of Survival.

"Ah, Dokja-ssi."

"Yes?"

"I wanted to thank you. If it wasn't for Dokja-ssi, we would all be dead."

"No, that isn't the case."

"Even if I had lived, I would've have been able to live as a person. Thank you very much. And...I am ashamed."

Lee Hyunsung bowed deeply. My mind was a bit complicated. In fact, Lee Hyunsung would've survived even if I didn't do anything.

Then somebody grabbed my shoulder.

"Haha, our contractor did one big thing. Dokja-ssi, do you know my name?"

I could tell who it was without looking back. I took the hand off my shoulder and said.

"I know, Han Myungoh-ssi."

"Huh, Han Myungoh-ssi? Shouldn't you call me Department Head?"

Han Myungoh was still trying to use his position in this situation. He really was the king of authoritarianism in Minosoft.

"This isn't the company."

"Hah, look at this. Are you planning to not go work now? Where did you learn your basic etiquette?"

Once I saw Han Myungoh's angry face, I once again realized that the world I knew was over.

The man in front of me was a 'predator' of the world before the scenario began. And I was merely a prey to the predator. It was certainly like that.

"No matter how I think about it, your actions were too much. Yes? If you had the insects then you should've tipped me off. Why would you throw them like that?"

"..."

"Dokja-ssi, you have to be good to me. How much time do you have left on your contract?"

All of a sudden, it became ridiculous. In the world I had lived in, I was too weak.

"Han Myungoh-ssi."

"Eh?"

"Shut up."

"W-What?"

"You still don't understand the situation? Weren't you hit by that bastard earlier? Minosoft? Do you think the company still exists when the end has come?"

Han Myungoh's face was white and stricken.

I turned my eyes towards the other people. Since I was already saying it, I should make it stick.

"Han Myungoh-ssi isn't the only problem. Everyone, you need to wake up. As the dokkaebi said, this isn't a joke."

"..."

"I think you should've all roughly noticed the situation. Exclusive skills in the attributes window. A game-like interface. Is there anyone who still hasn't caught onto facts?"

Indeed, no one raised their hand. South Korea was easy. Due to the high penetration rate of smartphones, there wasn't one person who hadn't played a RPG game.

Even if they didn't play a game, they would've read a fantasy novel at least once.

Lee Hyunsung sighed.

This is like a novel I was reading while standing on duty, but I still can't feel it. This really isn't a dream?"

"This is reality."

My stern answer caused Lee Hyunsung's eyes to slightly change.

[The character 'Lee Hyunsung' feels a faint trust in you.

[Your understanding of the character 'Lee Hyunsung' has increased.]

Lee Hyunsung nodded.

"It is good that you are certain. Then what do we do now? Dokja-ssi, do you have an opinion?"

"We have to go."

I answered without hesitation.

"G-Go? Are you insane?"

"Dokja-ssi, I don't think..."

This time, Yoo Sangah joined it. It seemed everyone still hadn't woken up.

"Then how long we will stay here?"

In fact, my argument didn't make much sense. Outside was a heaven of monsters. But I knew. Right now, we have to get out of here.

"Have you thought about your parents? Do you think your parents are safe in this mess?"

"T-The line has been dead for some time. No Kakaotalk..."

Yoo Sangah cried out desperately.



Indeed, Confucianism was still strong in South Korea. Even Lee Hyunsung and Han Myungoh's expressions darkened at the word 'parents.'

I grasped Lee Gilyoung's shoulder, whose head was bowed. The first person to get up was Yoo Sangah.

"Go. I will go out."

"N-No! Didn't you hear what that thing said? Take a break here! If we move then our heads might explode!"

"Let's take a majority vote."

Yoo Sangah raised her hand first, followed by me and Lee Gilyoung. But it was up to there.

"...I have to go to my base but it seems dangerous to move in this situation. There was also the warning."

"Shit, you all go by yourselves! I'm not going! I'm not going outside!"

I didn't care about Han Myungoh but the problem was Lee Hyunsung. I had to take Lee Hyunsung with me no matter what...

Kuuong!

The thick iron plate made a loud sound. The iron door to carriage 3707 was slightly distorted.

“W-What?”

Han Myungoh’s cry was ignored as the iron door made a deafening sound again.

Kuuong!

Someone was trying to break the door from beyond it. This was an unexpected situation so I had to think.

Was it the next scenario? No. The dokkaebi hadn’t come back yet. Then...

My brain moved quickly. Small hairs stood up and a short shiver struck my body. That guy.

“W-What? Everybody stop it!”

Han Myungoh shouted and moved towards the door. Lee Hyunsung moved towards it as well but I stopped him.

“You can’t stop it.”

“Huh?”

“We have to go.”

I looked at the iron door with heavy eyes.

“Huh? But...”

“If we don’t go now—”

The only survivor of carriage 3707. I was well aware of who was beyond the iron door.

“We will all die before the next scenario arrives.”

Yes, that guy was finally coming. The ‘real’ protagonist of this story.