
Chapter 3: Starting the Paid Service (3)

People reacted differently after the dokkaebi disappeared. Some people tried to get out of the train while others called the police.

Yoo Sangah belonged to the latter group. "Police, the police aren't answering! What, what should I..."

"Calm down, Yoo Sangah-ssi," I said, staring straight into Yoo Sangah's unfocused eyes. "Yoo Sangah-ssi. Have you ever played the game that the development team made? A game where the world is destroyed and only a few people survive."

"Huh? What are you say..."

"Think about it. We are in a game right now."

Yoo Sangah silently licked her lips. "Game..."

"It is simple. Don't hesitate to do as I tell you. Understood?"

"U-Understood. What should I do?"

"Stay still."

Finally, I slowly controlled my breathing. I too needed time to properly accept all of this.

[Three Ways to Survive in a Ruined World]

The descriptions that existed only in the novel were now unfolding right before my eyes.

「The dokkaebi stretched out its antenna. 」

「 The bodies scattered like trash in the carriage. 」

「 The bloodied office worker shaking. 」

「An old lady groaning in her seat. 」

I watched every scene intently. It was like Neo in the Matrix, who suspected reality. Observing, questioning, and then eventually being convinced... I had to admit it. I didn't know the reason why, but there were no doubts about it.

'Ways of Survival' had become a reality.

Let me think... How should I survive in this new world?

"Come on, everybody! Everybody calm down. Start breathing calmly."
Someone stepped forward exactly five minutes after the dokkaebi disappeared.

He was a sturdy man with short cut hair, one head taller than the average height.

"Are you calm yet? Please stop your actions and pay attention to me for a moment."

The people sobbing or making calls stopped. Once everyone's eyes were gathered on him, the big man opened his mouth again, "As you know, in the event of a national disaster, small disturbances can cause large human casualties. That's why I will now control the situation."

"What, who are you?"

"A national disaster situation? What are you saying?"

Some people belatedly recovered and strongly resisted the world 'control.' Then the young man pulled a government official card out of his wallet. "I am currently an army lieutenant serving in the 6502 unit."

Some people's faces became relieved. "A soldier, he is a soldier."

However, it was too early to be relieved.

"I just received a message from my unit."

People gathered in front of the soldier's smartphone. I was able to read the contents without difficulty because I was near it.

-A level 1 national disaster situation has occurred. All troops gather quickly.

I could hear gulps all around me. It was a national disaster situation. I wasn't surprised because I had already expected this. In fact, I was surprised because of something else.

Army lieutenant Lee Hyunsung... That 'Lee Hyunsung' was this man.

I knew who he was. It was the first time actually seeing his face, but his name was clear in my head. He was one of the main supporting actors of Ways of Survival.

「 Steel Sword Lee Hyunsung. 」

A character from the novel had appeared. Now I really had to acknowledge the situation.

"Soldier-nim! What is happening?"

"I have been trying to contact my unit, but..."

"The Blue House! What is the Blue House doing? Please contact the president quickly!"

"I'm sorry. I am just an ordinary soldier and don't have a hotline to the Blue House."

"Then why are you taking control?"

“For the sake of the safety of all citizens...”

As Lee Hyunsung calmly responded to the absurd questions, I realized that the descriptions in the novel weren't wrong.

However, did Lee Hyunsung originally appear like this? While thinking about these complicated questions, I had a strange hunch.

As the only reader of Ways of Survival, I could assure you that Lee Hyunsung's first appearance wasn't like this. The point at which he appeared in the novel was at the end of the first scenario.

...Then what was this situation? My mind became confused. I would know more clearly if I could read Ways of Survival once again.

“The prime minister is making a speech! It is really a level one disaster!”

Everyone turned on their smartphones at someone's cry. Yoo Sangah turned her screen toward me. “...Dokja-ssi, look at this.”

There was no need to enter a search term. It was because the first result for all portal sites was ‘Prime Minister's Speech.’ Of course, I already knew the content of the video.

–To all my fellow citizens, unidentified terrorists are currently active in an unspecified number of areas, including Seoul.

The contents of the speech were simple. The current government would mobilize all means and methods to fight the terrorists, and there would

never be any negotiations. Thus, everyone should confidently continue with their lives...

I hadn't thought much of it when I read the novel, but now I was a bit shocked when hearing those words. Terrorism... Yes, that would be more comfortable.

"But where is the president? Why is the prime minister making the speech?"

"The president has already been hit."

"What? Really?"

"I'm not sure. A Naver comment—"

"Shit, then it is fake!"

Of course, I knew it wasn't a fake comment.

"Uwaaaaack! What?"

People dropped their phones as gunshots were heard from all over. It originated from their smartphones.

Chiiiik, there was a loud sound, and blood filled the screen. After a moment, people held their breaths as they realized what had happened.

"P-Prime Minister..."

The prime minister had died. His head had exploded in real-time. There were several more sounds like gunfire before the screen became silent. The next thing that appeared on the screen was a dokkaebi.

[Everyone, I've told you already. This isn't a game like 'terrorism.']

People were at a loss for words as their mouths gaped open like dumb goldfish.

[Do you still not understand? This won't do. Do you still feel like this is a game?]

It felt so ominous because his tone was so relaxed. Subconsciously, I made a fist using all my strength.

[Haha, according to the data, the people of this country are very good at games. So, why don't I try raising the difficulty?]

Beeep. A huge timer appeared in the air. At the same time, it started decreasing rapidly.

[The remaining time has been decreased by 10 minutes.]

[There are 10 minutes remaining.]

[If the first killing doesn't occur within the next five minutes, all lives in that carriage will be wiped out.]

“W-What is this? Is it a joke?”

“Didn’t you hear the message just now? Hey, didn’t you hear it?”

“Soldier-nim! What do we do now? Why isn’t the police coming?”

“Everyone, calm down and listen to me—”

The words of the dokkaebi caused the situation in the carriage to become so severe that Lee Hyunsung couldn’t fix it. I could feel Yoo Sangah gripping my collar tightly.

Still, I couldn’t shake off the incongruity of this situation. Lee Hyunsung, a supporting character, had already appeared. So, why hadn’t ‘he’ emerged? According to what I knew, I should’ve seen him by now.

“T-There is a murder back there!”

A scene from the 3907 train car could be seen through the aisle window. The complexion of the killer in that carriage was white.

“We have to keep them out! Don’t let anyone in!”

People held tightly to the iron door, but it wasn’t necessary. The enemy wasn’t there in the first place.

[All types of access to the carriage will be restricted until the scenario is complete.]

Along with this message, people were thrown back from the iron door like they had hit a transparent barrier.

“W-What is this?”

Once again, the voice of the dokkaebi rang out, [Haha, there are some places that are quite fun while other places haven’t started yet. Okay, this is a special service. I will show you what will happen if nothing occurs in the next five minutes.]

A giant screen appeared in the subway. The place that appeared on the screen was a classroom. Girls in their navy blue school uniform were shaking.

A boy bit his fingernails and muttered, “...Is that the school uniform of Daepong?”

Beep beep beep beep— An ominous beeping sound was heard.

Then the high school girls started to scream.

[The given time has run out.]

[Paid settlement will begin.]

Once the announcement ended, the heads of the high school girls sitting in the front row exploded.

One by one, one by one again... More and more heads exploded. The high school girls screamed and ran toward the classroom doors or windows.

"Ahh, uh, how—"

Cleaning tools broke and nails were torn out, but the doors didn't open. No one could get out.

Peong, peeong. The heads of the high school girls continued to burst. Then a high school girl strangled her friend, who died with a groan. After a while, the only thing that remained on the screen was the last schoolgirl looking around.

[#Bay23515 channel. Daepong Girls' High School, Year 2 Class B survivor: Lee Jihye.]

The figure of the girl on the screen disappeared. Then the dokkaebi asked, [How is it? Interesting?]

The dokkaebi spoke with a smile, but people weren't looking at the screen anymore. The people who made eye contact were gradually moving away from each other.

"Shit! What is this?"

Even Yoo Sangah released her hold on me. However, she didn't move away from me. Both my hands were freed, and I turned on my smartphone.

Why was 'that guy' still not showing up? There was a mixture of information that I knew from the novel and information that I didn't know.

The only way to break through this situation was to read Laws of Survival again. However, where else could I find the novel? The novel wasn't popular enough to be shared illegally... No, wait a minute.

[1 attachment.]

I was stunned for a moment as I saw the notification on my smartphone. Perhaps... No? I was confused the moment I opened the mail attachment.

The name of the attachment sent by the author was:

[Three Ways to Survive in a Ruined World.TXT]