

## World Mall 641

### Chapter 641: Pseudo Unique Ability

Aileen could feel the intense gaze of her opponent. With Ragna's victory, there was no need to try hard anymore.

However, she had gotten all the new things from Clovis. She would feel ashamed if she couldn't win this match.

Although she hadn't mastered them, she received two techniques from the mall's bookstore, she had gotten all the clothes and accessories. If she couldn't win against this person, would she be the right person to join the Libation Fiesta?

That was why there was something she wanted to prove in this match.

"Let's start the match. 3... 2... 1... Start!"

The moment they heard the announcement, both of them immediately leaped back and erased their presence.

The Tier 8 referees had to be careful and focused on their senses so as to not lose them. It would be bad if they couldn't find them and let them kill each other.

That was why all the referees were on high alert.

Yet, the moment the competition started, the principal, the three referees, and even Ezekiel couldn't help but stand up.

"This is..."

"En?" Utaha was about to shout to hype the match, but she was confused by the principal's reaction. Even the strong fighters from other academies were dumbfounded.

"Principal Vhalor? Do you find something wrong?" Utaha asked, while tilting her head.

Principal Vhalor shuddered in fear, realizing the terrifying power that the Libation Fiesta had.

Before he could react, the others already started screaming.

"What's going on?"

"Where is Aileen?"

"She is supposed to be there."

"We can see Gray, but where is Aileen?"

"Oi. Are you serious? Move the camera!"

The people were complaining because they couldn't sense Aileen, but for those who were strong enough, their gazes were fixated on a single screen. There was Aileen.

However, her presence was so thin that it even affected the camera.

Principal Vhalor chuckled. "Hahahaha... It's no wonder Clovis told me their new member is their trump card."

"Principal Vhalor? Can you explain what's going on?" Utaha asked, while searching for Aileen as well.

"Pseudo Unique Ability." Vhalor squinted his eyes.

"Pseudo Unique Ability?"

"Yes. That's what you're witnessing right now. Aileen Risevan has a Pseudo Unique Ability. All Tier 9 in this world have one common thing. That is a talent beyond one's comprehension.

"For example, you have Tesron, who will be fighting soon. He has the ability to see the future. This is not predicting but seeing. Even if you train your battle sense and even prediction ability, you won't reach that talent.

"However, there are still uncrowned kings among Tier 8. They're often known as a pseudo Tier 9 human.

"They can be said to be the gatekeepers for Tier 9. Each of them has a talent that is so powerful that it almost looks like the real unique ability.

"In our countries, there are two people with that kind of talent. The first one is the founding father of the explorer association in our country, Mr. Radric. The second one is the current strongest person in our country, Quill Razer. And right now, Aileen has become the third person.

"Her talent lies in erasing her presence. That talent of hers is so powerful that it feels like she is erasing her own existence from the world. You might not be able to see her, but those who have reached a certain point, we can see her standing on that screen." The principal pointed to one screen, which caused an agreement for people of the same level.

Utaha followed the direction, but she still couldn't find her.

"I have never thought that the Libation Fiesta is hiding such a monster." The principal smiled wryly.  
"Even though I have to be fair in my assessment, I can't see any way for Gray to win this battle."

Gray was experiencing the power of that talent firsthand.

'Huh? Where is she? Is she leaving? Is she hiding somewhere? Is she trying to lure me out and attack me? I don't plan to fall for her trick. I'm going to wait here and put myself in a favorable situation. I can't afford to lose...' Gray gritted his teeth.

Little did he know, Aileen's talent had been enhanced even more with the item from Another World Mall. He once gave the stealth equipment that could mask one's presence to Kanaria, but after reaching Tier 4, he got some new equipment.

If Clovis showered her with more items of the same type, coupled with her talent, her pseudo unique ability might actually reach the unique ability rank.

And she used it to show them who was the true champion.

Assassinate!

Aileen waved her short blade.

"Match ends. Won by: Aileen Risevan." The general's voice echoed in everyone's ears.

"!!!" The one who was shocked the most was definitely Gray, because he hadn't been defeated. "Why are you deciding the match already? Is this a sca—!"

Before he finished his words, several pillars suddenly got slashed and fell down, startling Gray's voice.

When he turned his head around, he saw Alan grabbing Aileen's hand while the other referee blocked her attack. The pillars fell down from the residual power.

And it was there he saw Aileen, whose presence finally returned.

"!!!" Gray was in utter shock.

Not just him, even Tesron stood up from his seat. If his grandfather were here, he would have the same reaction.

Even someone like Tesron would have a hard time fighting against Aileen. At the same time, the power Aileen unleashed earlier had far surpassed that of her tier. In fact, he was probably the only one who could match Aileen in raw power alone, but she was an assassin, not a fighter-type vanguard.

He realized Clovis must plan for Aileen to turn around the situation in case they lost the first two battles.

Still, the power was too shocking.

Even Ezekiel realized that her talent had far surpassed what he had seen a couple of days ago.

Aileen completely dominated the battle and captured the attention, not just from the people here but from the entire world.

Chapter 642: Strongest People in the World

"Pseudo unique ability, huh?" Clovis squinted his eyes.

"What? You don't know about it?" Ezekiel was startled. Even he didn't expect Aileen to have such a talent.

"I don't even know the terms about it." Clovis shook his head. "Besides, no one is saying that in Axolonia."

"Well, it can't be helped." Ezekiel sighed. "The knowledge about a pseudo unique ability is not that common. So, they don't suspect it easily."

"It's probably only because he's a dean and pretty knowledgeable that he is able to see through her talent."

"You do know that there are ranks among explorers, right?"

"Yes. My grandfather is among the top 10."

Ezekiel nodded. "Your grandfather is known as a madman, currently number 5 in the world. Although your father has that low number, his fighting style and character are so scary that most of the time, the top ten won't provoke him. Besides, if your grandfather is not really that fixated on his pursuit of the truth, he can probably devour several more people above him.

"I'm number 9 in the world, by the way. But that's not important right now. After the top ten, there is a list for the top 50 people in this world. Basically, these people are the ones having pseudo unique abilities.

"As that dean said, they're basically the gatekeepers for the top ten. If you want to reach their level, you have to defeat them first before challenging the top ten.

"However, there is a shift lately. These people are allying with each other by getting married."

"Married?" Clovis frowned.

"Yes. Don't you notice something?" Ezekiel raised one finger. "You, Christina, Tesron, and one more guy from the younger generation..."

"!!!" Clovis widened his eyes. "Don't tell me..."

"People are wondering if the child of a Tier 9 human has a higher probability of being born with a unique ability."



"..." Clovis fell silent. "Don't tell me. Are you..."

"Not really. I'm just searching for a suitable partner for my daughter. Even if he is weak, I can always train him to become strong. If I'm too fixated on unique abilities, my son won't be the current head of the family." He shook his head.

Clovis didn't ask further. Instead, he was curious about one thing. "How about Mara Leverstrike?"

"!!!" Ezekiel widened his eyes in shock. "Mara Leverstrike... 10th in the ranking. She is the youngest among Tier 9. And that ranking is achieved because people are challenging her.

"I heard the person herself doesn't want to challenge anyone. If she is more aggressive, her rank probably has reached around your grandfather.

"Mara Leverstrike is a unique monster. She is known as the best at ranged attacks. However, the one making her unique is actually her killing intent.

"I have never fought her personally, but according to the people who have fought her, she is like... a demon queen."

"A demon queen?" Clovis raised his eyebrows.

"Yes. Whenever they're feeling the brunt of her killing intent, it feels like the world has changed. According to one person, it felt like a meteor destroyed their entire place. For another person, it was a graveyard."

Clovis looked down, falling into deep thought. "Killing intent, huh?"

"What's wrong? For you to suddenly ask her... I know she is a woman and pretty young, but don't tell me, you..." Ezekiel's eyebrows twitched. "I don't really plan on telling you what to do. Even if I don't doubt your ability, by the time you reach Tier 9, she is already a grandma, you know?"

Clovis shook his head, dispelling the misunderstanding. "She told me that our fighting style was similar, and apparently she had agreed to teach me how to control my fighting style. Well, I'm planning to beat her in the future and make her join my team. That's what she has promised."

"What?" Ezekiel stood up in shock. "Are you serious? Mara Leverstrike is known as a lone wolf. And you..."

Clovis shrugged.

Ezekiel pinched the bridge of his nose. However, he was astonished by Clovis' connection. If he and Christina somehow became Tier 9 while Aileen reached the peak of her talent, coupled with him, Michael Hacfield, and Mara Leverstrike, their group had the power to conquer the whole world.

At the very least, their connection alone was enough to ensure their safety, which wasn't a bad thing.

"Well, I won't say anything about your own matter." Ezekiel let out a long sigh. "Still, you should be careful. Once people know that your group not only has two unique ability users but also one more pseudo unique ability user, people might target your group out of jealousy or kidnap you."

"I know. I'll be preparing for it." Clovis nodded. "Well, it's time for the next match. I will have to send another person. Let's aim for a crushing victory."

Ezekiel sighed. It felt like Clovis had indeed won the bet between them.

...

On the other hand, Tesron was panicking.

"Pseudo unique ability user? To think that he is hiding that trump card. And because of this match, it's already impossible for us to win. Aren't they supposed to be weaker than us?"

"Why is he so lucky to have all these subordinates?" Tesron gritted his teeth, glaring at Clovis. He couldn't afford to have a crushing defeat. There was no telling what his grandfather would do at that moment.

"What am I supposed to do? Does he have another trump card in his sleeve?" Tesron glanced at the empty seat. If his grandfather were here, even though he would be scolded, his grandfather would tell him a solution.

However, he was alone this time. And the arena had been cleaned up, with Utaha saying, "Let's send out another fighter."

As if Clovis were trying to provoke him, Clovis nonchalantly sent out his fighter. "I will send Erwin Tyska for the fourth match."

"!!!" Tesron bit his lips. 'What should I do? Should I bring myself there and get the victory? But the people are expecting me to fight their leader. But that leader is only a Tier 4 human, while this guy is the last Tier 5 we'll be fighting.

'Who should I send?' Tesron was panicking because for the first time during the match, Utaha was asking the same thing twice because Tesron didn't answer immediately.

Because of the time pressure, Tesron had no choice but to send another fighter.

"Jack Hugo."

Chapter 643: Difference

"Yeay! Another victory for us!" Kanaria raised both hands, asking for a high five from Aileen.

"O-oh! Yay?!" Aileen, although accustomed to their presence, still wasn't used to their playful action. She awkwardly gave a high five.

"Congratulations on your overwhelming victory." Christina smiled. "To think you actually have a pseudo unique ability, it's truly amazing. Has your previous master told you about your talent?"

"Mhmm?" Aileen thought for a moment before shaking her head. "No. I don't think he's aware of it in the first place."

"Well, the information about it might be available, but everyone will have a hard time seeing it in the first place, so they might not be aware of it." Christina nodded in understanding.

"Still, what is this pseudo unique ability? I have listened to what the dean said about it, but I'm still confused."

The others looked at Christina, curious about the same thing, especially Jay and Erwin. They had to work harder if they didn't want to get replaced as Clovis' right and left-hand men.

Christina rubbed her chin a few times before raising her finger. "Hmm... How do I explain this? To put it simply, Unique abilities defy logic, while pseudo unique abilities can be grasped by logic.

"Look at me, Clovis, and Tesron. I have the ability to provoke things, not limited to people, which makes you have the urge to attack me. Clovis' unique ability allows him to receive all five affinities. Meanwhile, Tesron's unique ability allows him to see the future. They are something you're born with and can't be acquired any other way.

"However, let's see your pseudo unique ability. While it's true that you were born with this talent, can't you say that an assassin who has reached the mastery of erasing its presence will reach the same result as you?

"How about Tesron? What if there's a man who has trained his precognitive ability to the point his prediction feels like seeing into the future? Still, even if he has reached that level, it's still not at Tesron's level, right? After all, Tesron's unique ability is something he's born with, while the other is something that can be acquired through one's own effort.

"This is the fundamental difference between unique ability and pseudo unique ability." Christina explained.

Jay and Erwin clenched their fists. There was a gap between them because they were not born with the same qualities. Still, they might acknowledge that they didn't have a unique ability. However, both of them knew that if they wanted to retain their positions, they should acquire this pseudo unique ability.

Since Christina said they could acquire it through hard work, both of them swore they would do it. The world might be unfair for not giving them such a thing, but they would be the loser if they died without one.

"Oh my. It seems I have told you unnecessary information." Christina noticed the burning desire Jay and Erwin had.

"As expected of the unique ability. Even without using it, you are able to provoke those two." Kanaria smirked, teasing both of them.

"Don't be too complacent." Erwin pointed at Aileen. "You might be ahead right now, but I will be the one on top soon."

Aileen chuckled. "If you can beat me, that is, but your ego has just made you say it with words that invite misunderstanding, you know?"

"Huh?" Erwin froze, recounting what he said. He suddenly felt embarrassed and harrumphed. "Anyway, I'll be preparing for the next match. And I'm going to win."

"Yes. I'll be cheering for you from here." Aileen grinned.

Erwin completely lost the momentum and embarrassedly left the room.

"Hehehe." Aileen was smiling from ear to ear. She was probably the only one who could treat the arrogant Erwin like a little boy.

"Erwin is definitely going to have a hard time against her." Kanaria whispered to Christina.

"I agree." Christina nodded.

"By the way, Christina. Are you sure it's alright for you to be here? Shouldn't you accompany your grandfather?" Aileen had the mood of teasing Christina as well. "Let's see... Your grandfather... might be talking about your engagement, you know?"

Christina looked surprised at first but soon turned to Kanaria.

Kanaria simply chuckled. "Well, I have expected it from the beginning. If not for such a thing, there's no reason for her to meet Clovis or even have joint training together."

Christina smiled wryly. "As someone from a prestigious family, there's no way someone like me can have a say about my marriage. My family is more lax regarding this aspect, though.

"They are simply testing multiple people at the same time of the same level and letting me pick who is the one more enjoyable since I will have to live with that person for the rest of my life."

"You're not jealous or something?" Aileen blinked her eyes a few times.

"Why should I? My perspective about family is different from you guys. For me, family is a connection. Even if I have a child, that child will be the one leading the Elseingarde family in the future, so I don't really care about the succession problem.

"Although monogamy has been around for a long time, in ancient times, polygamy allowed you to show that you're wealthy or powerful enough to sustain multiple wives along with their families. Well, love is built, not something we fall into, at least for me. If the others don't mind me, then I don't mind either. And I can clearly say Clovis is much more fun." Christina shrugged.



Aileen smiled wryly. Their views were indeed different. At the same time, it wasn't her place to refute her claim, since that view had also thousands of years of foundation.

Aileen let out a long sigh before saying, "Sorry. I shouldn't have asked that."

"It's fine." Christina nodded. "Anyway, Erwin's match is about to start. I wonder how far he can go, especially with that map."

Aileen couldn't help but squint her eyes, knowing the difficulty of this map. The map was Plain C, which resembled a plain field with only two trees. Erwin's power couldn't be utilized properly in this terrain, so she wondered if Erwin had something that could lead him to victory.

Chapter 644: Erwin's Card in Sleeve

Erwin and Jack stood in the arena. As a thread user, Erwin was wearing a pair of gloves where he could release his thread. On the other hand, Jack was holding his unique spear. Unlike a normal spear, the one in his hand actually had a much longer blade. It was as if his spear's purpose wasn't just for the thrust but also for slashing his opponent.

For Erwin, this kind of opponent would definitely be a unique experience. And to avoid being the one losing to the enemy, Erwin chose to reveal something he had been working on for a long time.

He thought about using it to win against Jay, but this fight would be more appropriate.

"Since the two sides are ready, we'll begin the match. 3... 2... 1... Go!"

The moment they heard the announcement, Jack rushed forth while Erwin took a few steps back.

Erwin's ability required the support of the terrain to set up his net. But in this place, there were only two trees, which were ten meters apart, so they weren't exactly viable to be used.

Jack thrust his spear, forcing Erwin to avoid it by moving to the left. To everyone's surprise, the moment Erwin created a small opening, he actually slipped past Erwin and headed straight to the pillar behind Erwin before striking it down.

Bam!

The pillar fell down and the tree projection disappeared.

"W-What?! Jack is actually destroying one of the two trees in this arena?" Utaha gasped.

"It can't be helped. I have seen Erwin's ability and weapon choice. If we want to stop him, we have to destroy everything he could use to support his threads. Once they're gone, Erwin becomes less of a threat. In fact, this map alone is already a disadvantage against him.

"Now that there's nothing he can take advantage of anymore, Erwin has little chance to win." The principal shook his head.

"Erwin is already in a pinch before the battle even starts? And just like the principal said, Jack is heading back toward the tree on his side to take down one last tree. And Erwin is running beside him." Utaha thought this would be a quick battle like earlier.

However, Erwin planned to change their thoughts. Once they were aligned, Erwin waved his hands, sending forth a few threads to surround Jack.

Jack remained calm, as though he could easily see all those threads. He tried slashing it by taking advantage of the long spear's blade, but this was useless. No matter how hard he cut it, the threads wouldn't be easily cut down. Even Clovis couldn't do it.

So, the threads ended up sticking to the front of his blade. Erwin planned to pull the spear like this to trip him, but there was a reason Jack was chosen to be Erwin's opponent.

The moment he pulled those threads, Jack slammed his spear to the ground so that when he pulled it, the blade would cause a rotation to the entire spear, which propelled Jack upward.

"!!!" Even Erwin was surprised by such an athletic approach.

Jack smoothly landed in front of the second tree and sliced it like the first one. This way, there was nothing Erwin could take advantage of anymore.

"Although this is cowardly, I'm sorry, but I have to win at all costs in this battle." Jack muttered while charging forward. He thrust his spear at Erwin in rapid succession.

Erwin, on the other hand, created a small net between his fingers, stopping the advance of the spear. Even if Jack tried to slash it, the threads wouldn't budge.

"Heh? I'm sorry, but I also plan to win." Erwin smiled. The moment he caught the spear, eight spider legs emerged from his back, reaching for Jack.

"!!!" Jack was startled and came to a halt to avoid them.

However, there was a trick Erwin had prepared for this battle. All of a sudden, several small blades emerged on his hands as he rolled them onto the spider legs.

All of them curved toward Jack. The latter leaped away while swinging his spear to block them.

To his surprise, the small blades actually curved in a different direction, which threw him off.

Jack panicked and struck down several blades, but two of them hit his shoulder and right chest while another blade stabbed his arm.

"This... What is this?" Utaha gasped. "Did the trajectory just change?"

"Indeed." The principal nodded.

"How did he do that? There was supposed to be nothing."

"Well, I can see the reason, but I don't think it's fair if I expose it here. Unlike the others, this is not very clear to see after all. However, I can assure you that he's not cheating. If not, the three referees would have made their move."

"I see." It was a shame that she didn't get the answer this time, but unlike others, Erwin's method was more mysterious. It couldn't be helped if the principal didn't want to disclose that information.

On the other hand, Ezekiel smiled. "I can see it, but you should know the trick, right?"

Clovis nodded. "Erwin is using several threads. The most obvious ones are those threads with bigger size and a blue glint when exposed to the light. On the other hand, there are threads around his spider arms. They're more dull and thinner, so it's not easy to see them. He makes the obvious ones obvious enough to distract his opponent from seeing other threads. Still, the true essence of this technique lies in..."

"His mastery over threads, huh?" Ezekiel squinted his eyes.

As those two were discussing, Erwin waved his hands and surrounded Jack with the threads one more time.

Jack hurriedly struck them and was ready to leave, but all of a sudden, blades suddenly ran on the threads. The moment Jack struck the threads, it caused them to contract, which ended up tossing the blades toward him.

"Kh!" Jack gritted his teeth when two blades stuck on his body.

This was Erwin's trick. Before he could take advantage of the threads to create a net that others could use. But he had learned how to utilize the net to launch small weapons so that he could attack them in his own.

Chapter 645: Monster

"Kh." Jack gritted his teeth. He had never thought he would be the first one to be in this state.

Erwin might be the left hand of Clovis, but there was no information about him being exceptional. At the very least, Erwin had yet to fight someone in this school and the only video they got was during the Rising Star Competition.

At that time, Clovis defeated him. Even if he had become stronger, it was still insufficient for him to be threatened.

Yet the current state of the battle showed everything.

'Am I really getting pushed back by this guy? Am I going to lose like the others? No. If I win here, I will become the hero.' Jack endured the pain and stomped the ground to forcefully stop his fall. He slashed Erwin with all his might.

Erwin created wires between his spider legs, catching the slash skillfully.

After that, Jack pulled his spear back and thrust it toward his chest.

Erwin blocked it with another net between his fingers, but surprisingly, this thrust actually widened the net before contact.

"!!!" Erwin widened his eyes. 'Ranged attack and beast soul, huh?'

Erwin hurriedly lowered his body, albeit he was a tad too late. The spear managed to hit the top of his shoulder.

It was Erwin's time to endure the pain. He sent forth all eight spider arms to punch Jack.

Jack hit them either with the handle or the blade, wielding it not as a sword or a spear but as a staff.

After that, he took a step back and thrust him one more time, taking advantage of the longer reach of his spear to overwhelm Erwin.

"This is..." Utaha gasped. "What's going on? All of a sudden, Erwin is getting overwhelmed by Jack. Wasn't Jack the one at a disadvantage a moment ago?"

The principal nodded. "That's right. It's true that Erwin was winning previously, but that's due to his unique fighting style. Jack is talented enough to quickly get used to it and adapt.

"In the end, Erwin doesn't have the terrain to back him up, which will create a lot more opportunities for him.

"Once you get used to his attack, it will become a straightforward fight. And Erwin will have a hard time against Jack, like what we're witnessing right now.

"Erwin's plan must be to overwhelm Jack with his new techniques, which will result in him losing a lot of blood or, more like, lower performance due to injury.

"Taking advantage of that situation, he will seize the victory. His biggest miscalculation is that Jack is able to get used to his attack so quickly and turn around the situation." The principal shook his head helplessly.

People couldn't help but sympathize with Erwin. If only the terrain were more advantageous, he might be able to win.

Unfortunately, there was nothing more Erwin could do to defeat Jack.

To prove Erwin would be losing in this match, Jack's attack became even more ferocious.



He thrust his spear in rapid succession.

Erwin had a hard time even blocking one of them, resulting in the blade reaching his body multiple times.

"Ha... Ha..." Erwin gritted his teeth, looking at Jack, who didn't seem to be tired yet. It appeared turning this into a battle of endurance was futile.

At the same time, the people couldn't help but pity him. It was because of the terrain. That was what people said.

However, the most painful gaze came from his team, specifically Aileen. She was worried about him.

It was fine to lose since she had done their part. However, he felt he would lose something important if he got defeated in this battle.

It reminded him of the talk that day.

"Don't worry. I will get stronger than you. If you feel that your strength is a burden, I will just stand in front of you and protect you. You just have to become the reason for me to wield my power." Erwin looked at Aileen with conviction.

"Say that after you manage to win against me." Aileen stuck out her tongue.

"Hmph. It won't be long before I defeat you. At that time, I will officially propose to you," Erwin harrumphed. "Even if you were born with overwhelming talent, I don't believe that hard work can't beat talent. If you take one step, I will take ten steps. If you work hard, I will work ten times harder.

"Mark my words. I will become stronger than you, no matter how talented you are. I will become a man worthy of you and shut up the people who dare to oppose our relationship."

Aileen smiled. "In that case, I will be waiting for you. Don't make me wait too long, alright? I don't want you to propose when my hair has turned white."

Erwin smiled back. Aileen didn't mention she was going to stop or hold back the entire time. Both of them knew if she ever did it, it was the biggest disgrace for Erwin.

Aileen believed Erwin could do it. That was why she also had to work as hard as she could to protect his back.

'Don't look at me with those eyes...' Erwin muttered inwardly after recalling that memory. 'I still haven't lost and I don't plan to lose.'

Erwin got stabbed two more times, but he simply endured it and continued fighting, waiting for the right moment.

'Whether it's Clovis, Christina, or even you... maybe I should include Jay too... All of you guys are too exceptional to the point where I sometimes think that a normal person like me won't be able to keep up.

'But there's no need for that anymore...' Erwin took a deep breath. 'If a normal person can't keep up, then I will stop being a human. I will just have to become the same monster!'

Erwin's eyes flashed the moment Jack stabbed him in the shoulder.

"Got you..." Erwin smiled. He suddenly waved his hands as the eight spider arms on his back made a similar movement. 'With this, I will become a monster.'

All his fingers and eight spider legs suddenly shot out threads, creating a complex array to surround Jack.

"Ten-Handed Thread Wielding, Guillotine."

Chapter 646: Two Vice Captains

"Ten-Handed Thread Wielding, Guillotine."

"!!!" Several people stood up while a lot more people were shocked by what Erwin had just done.

Jack didn't have such a leeway because he realized he had been surrounded.

He struck the threads in front of him and planned to escape by tossing himself up.

To his surprise, the moment he swept the threads down, he realized there were more threads behind them. As a result, he couldn't escape from this trap.

"This is..." Jack widened his eyes in shock. He couldn't process what was happening. How many threads did Erwin actually have? He was supposed to only be able to control ten fingers' worth of threads. Yet, there were simply too many of them.

Erwin clutched his fingers with the spider legs doing the same thing as the threads tightened, ready to slice Jack.

'Ah. Shit.' Jack cursed inwardly, realizing he was outwitted.

Alan patted Erwin's shoulder, signaling him that the match was over. The other two referees stopped the threads with their bodies.

"The match is over, right?" Alan smirked.

Both of them couldn't really say anything.

"Match ends. Won by Erwin Tyska." The general announced out loud.

The people couldn't help but gasp. Erwin had been the ones at the disadvantage the whole time, yet for some reason, he managed to win. They simply didn't understand how it could lead to his victory.

"W-What's going on? How is he able to win?" Utaha gasped. "This is an upset!"

Principal Vhalor chuckled. "As I thought, there's no one normal in the Libation Fiesta."

"Principal Vhalor? May we hear your explanation?" Utaha asked.

"Sure." Principal Vhalor smiled. "What do you think Erwin's strength is?"

"Erwin's strength? I suppose it's his unique weapon. After all, not everyone is used to fighting someone who uses wires."

The principal shook his head. "While it's true that his unique weapon increases his prowess, his true strength doesn't lie on it. Instead, it's his eyes."

"Eyes?"

"Yes. Eyes. I could only confirm it during the last attack. Let's put the amazing technique he has and focus only on the eyes. He was able to read his opponent extremely well.

"In the last attack, he sent forth so many wires, right? But if you took another look at it, there were two layers of wires on Jack's right, while the rest only had one. If Jack actually turned to the left, he would have escaped and Erwin might have lost.

"However, this was not luck. Erwin had been observing his opponent the whole time like what was his habit?

"Before the last attack, Erwin knew Jack would escape to the right, so he sent the additional wires from there to overwhelm him.

"For me, this is Erwin's true strength. His eyes are able to capture the opponent's habit and movements from their expression or any other clues.

"He managed to overcome the disadvantage of not having a terrain by using his eyes.

"Of course, his unique weapon was also a part of the reason he was able to win. But the moment he didn't have the terrain advantage, the battle was supposed to be over.

"That's why I believe that his observant eyes are the deadliest weapon he has."

Utaha was overwhelmed by the explanation. She had never expected that Erwin's strength would come from his eyes. "Is this like the pseudo unique ability you mentioned previously?"

"Nope." He shook his head. "This is completely a normal person's way to overcome their limit. I don't know him personally, but after seeing his skill, Erwin must have practiced extremely hard. That kind of observant eye is not something you're born with."

"I see. Thank you very much for the explanation, Principal Vhalor." Utaha took a deep breath. "Did you hear that, everyone? This is completely shocking. To think that our pair of normal eyes could allow us to overcome such a gap."

"It appears we have to re-evaluate ourselves. Instead of getting fixated on nothing but numbers, we should improve on our body. Muscle is not the only way anymore. Eyes or senses might be the future."

"This is completely an unexpected battle. Erwin waited until the right moment and defeated his opponent."

"But with this, the score is 4-0. That's right. Libation Fiesta has actually won four times. There are only two battles left!"

When Utaha reminded them of the score, the people couldn't help but widen their eyes. That was right. Tesron had humiliated the first academy in the past week by defeating them without giving them a chance to fight back.

Even if Jay and Clovis didn't win, the Libation Fiesta would still have the victory.

The question was, would Jay and Clovis simply give up? There was no way the two would pass on individual victory.

In other words, the Libation Fiesta was planning for a complete victory. This was clearly an upset.

Tesron, who thought he was going to humiliate the Libation Fiesta, ended up getting humiliated. That was right. One of the top teams in the world among the younger generation was about to experience a crushing defeat.

Tesron was furious. He was scared, knowing that his grandfather might punish him because of this.

Meanwhile, Clovis remained calm, enjoying the people's reaction with Ezekiel.

"This is insane."

"Libation Fiesta is going to win 6-0."

"Are they going to do it?"

"They will definitely do it. We have to believe it."



"No. We have to cheer them on."

"That's right. Go, go. Libation Fiesta!"

"Libation Fiesta! Please win!"

"Crush them!"

The people cheered. The atmosphere was completely in their favor. And this time, each team was sending their vice captain, Jay Havenson and Yasen Kavika.

The battle between two teams that had garnered the attention of the whole world. No one would expect Tesron to be beaten this harshly.

At the same time, the people started gaining interest in this unknown team who was capable of such a feat.

From today onward, the name of Libation Fiesta would be implanted in everyone's mind.

And Jay planned to ensure that the name would be glorious by defeating his opponent.

## Chapter 647: Battle That Couldn't Be Lost

"We have witnessed four amazing battles today. And this time, it will be the fifth battle, the battle between two vice captains of the team.

"Right now, Libation Fiesta has won all battles. Will Team Melesviet be able to finally achieve their first victory? Or will Libation Fiesta remain undefeated?

"We can only know the answer after witnessing their battles." Utaha looked excited. Even the principal had a smug look on his face.

All the bets he had placed were worth it.

If he lost that bet, he would lose everything he had built so far. But with this result alone, it would be clear that the Libation Fiesta would be in everyone's mind.

If Clovis could give a decent performance against Tesron, they would know that the first academy would ever be the best choice for them to go to. They could proudly declare that Clovis was once a part of the academy.

Meanwhile, other academies had their faces distorted. They were gnashing their teeth, not expecting such a result.

They thought Tesron could crush them like how he defeated the student council. But they were wrong.

Libation Fiesta was much more monstrous than they imagined. At this rate, they would be the ones losing everything.

In fact, without them noticing, a few investors had backed away so as not to be seen as their accomplices. If their schemes succeeded, the nation would probably tolerate them for bringing an outsider to wreak havoc. But with them failing, the nation would probably give them punishment.

They might even take a portion of their resources and give it to the first academy that brought pride to their nation, which would be a good thing for all the students in the first academy. In the end, the battle between academies wasn't limited to reputation. It was also a battle of resources.

With Libation Fiesta's help, the first academy would definitely flourish.

The principal was ready to take action against all those academies for ganging up on him.

Meanwhile, the two fighters were under immense pressure.

For Team Melesviet, Yasen Kavika was their line of defense. If even Yasen lost this battle, even if Tesron defeated Clovis, people would think Team Melesviet was nothing beside Tesron.

That was why Yasen was determined to win.

"You have to win. Do you hear me? If you don't win, we're going to be doomed!" Tesron's voice echoed through the Skyphone.

Yasen nodded his head. "Yes, Master. I will do anything possible to win this match."

Drugs? As if he could do it. The battle was monitored closely from both sides. As a result, nothing could escape from them. The moment they used drugs, the reputation of that team would crumble and they would be disqualified.

It was thanks to Ezekiel's existence that they could restore the balance between the two, stopping the other party from being shameless by turning a blind eye to their illegal actions.

Yasen took a deep breath, concentrating. 'If I have to become a monster, I will win this match.

'If I can't win, it's all over anyway.' Yasen's expression turned grim. The bridge had been crossed and collapsed. There was no turning back.

No matter what he had to use, he would win this battle.

Yasen clenched his fists and started walking to the arena.

...

On the other hand, Jay was closing his eyes, resting his head on his saber. He had one task, which was to win.

That was because of Clovis' words a few days ago.

...

A few days ago.

"Haaa!" Jay shouted while waving his sword down.

Bam!

The water inside the massive pool was sliced in two and got pushed to the side by the power of Jay's attack.

"Ha... Ha..." Jay panted a few times. He was drenched in both sweat and pool water, as he had already been training for six hours.

"Jay." Clovis' voice echoed from behind.

"Yeah, I know. Let me do it for a bit more. It's fine if it's cold. I will still eat it." Jay casually replied, thinking Clovis was dispatched by Kanaria to tell him to eat.

But Clovis simply walked to Jay and stood next to him with a serious expression.

Confused, Jay turned his head around. He didn't ask after seeing that expression.

Clovis closed his eyes for a moment before saying, "In the battle against Tesron, no matter what happens, you are going to be the last person to fight before me."

"!!!" Jay raised his eyebrows. He understood the meaning behind his words.

This was Clovis' trust in his vice captain. No matter what happened, Jay was the only one who would fight before him. Even if they lost all the battles, Clovis entrusted him to turn the situation around.

No matter how bad it was, Jay would be their last line of defense. It was a trust that Erwin or anyone else had.

Clovis suddenly smiled while asking, "Are you up for the task, buddy?"

Jay couldn't help but recall how they first met. It might be just a coincidence, but to him, it felt like fate.

He and Clovis met during that hunt and decided to ask each other to follow them. Although he lost this time, he realized Clovis was truly a much more capable captain than him.

Even so, this was a duel between two men. They had unleashed everything they had and would respect the result.

Beyond that result, they received something much more precious. They had become friends, the friends that they could entrust their backs to.

They knew it; they could feel it because their personalities in that regard were similar to each other.

From that point on, he witnessed all the growth they had. And the Libation Fiesta had reached this point.

There was only one answer he would give to Clovis when he entrusted that spot for him.

Jay couldn't help but smile as he stood up and turned to the arena.

"That's right... I have promised my best and oldest friend that I will win." Jay started walking to the arena. "In that case, I'll win, no matter who my opponent is."

Chapter 648: Jay vs Yasen

"This is it. Both fighters have finally stood in the arena. This will be the battle of two vice captains, Jay and Yasen.

"Jay is a swordsman while Yasen is a martial artist. This will be the battle of concept and the pride of the team. Who will win? Let's watch the battle together!" Utaha announced out loud.

Jay and Yasen examined each other.

Jay had rather casual clothes and didn't have the big build of someone who was overwhelming in strength. It was weird, considering Jay had muscle affinity, which boasted about its strength.

Meanwhile, Yasen was a martial artist. He was wearing a pair of big gauntlets made of light blue-colored metal.

He wore a sleeveless shirt, exposing his big muscles. He was also taller and bigger than Jay, making him look menacing.

With the same affinity as Jay, this battle would be determined by their strength.

Jay and Yasen took a deep breath as they heard Utaha counting down.



Jay pulled out his sword while Yasen raised both hands forward and started making a small jump to lighten his stance.

The moment the count reached zero, both Jay and Yasen leaped forward.

Because of his footwork, Yasen moved faster than Jay and punched him with that huge gauntlet.

Jay struck the gauntlet with all his might. Unfortunately, the difference between their momentum was a bit too far.

As a result, Yasen actually pushed Jay several meters away.

"..." Jay's expression turned serious. This first clash reflected their strength and control over their strength.

Jay realized that while both of them focused on power, their foundation was different. Yasen focused on momentum and strength, which was similar to Clovis. Meanwhile, Jay drew all that strength from his muscles.

Even though he had a ranged attack that took advantage of the momentum, unlike Clovis, Jay had been doing it mostly due to his superhuman strength. That was why, instead of training the technique, Jay just kept swinging his blade on the pool hundreds, thousands, if not hundreds of thousands of times.

He just unleashed his power again and again until his muscle remembered it and became stronger.

Unfortunately, that wasn't enough against Yasen.

Yasen knew he had the advantage this time. Without hesitation, he took that opportunity to close in, punching Jay head-on.

Jay stomped the ground with his right foot and struck Yasen's gauntlet one more time.

Clang!

Their clash was so hard that it produced a deafening tone in the arena as a shock wave shook the stage.

However, this time, Jay actually stopped Yasen completely.

'This is...' Yasen squinted his eyes. It looked like they were equal, but they were not.

Jay might have stopped him, but unlike Jay, who had unleashed all his strength, Yasen hit him with the power of momentum. As a result, he still had enough strength to move his other hand and punched Jay's side.

"!!!" Jay's eyes flashed as he took a step in the opposite direction before waving his blade at that fist, trying to stop him.

Unfortunately, he didn't have enough strength to stop it, resulting in him getting pushed back again.

Still, Jay wasn't injured yet. Even if Yasen could overpower him, it didn't mean Jay would go down without a fight.

Yasen, of course, understood that fact very well. They might have underestimated Kanaria, but after that first round, they had stopped underestimating them.

Yet, even with their best strength, they failed to defeat them. In other words, the Libation Fiesta was indeed stronger than them no matter how hard they tried to deny it.

Now that they have recognized this fact, what should they do?

As the vice captain, Yasen understood his role. He charged toward Jay, not letting him get even a second to catch his breath.

"Haaaa!" Yasen punched Jay in rapid succession.

Jay, while maintaining his calm, parried each attack skillfully. However, Yasen kept pushing him back, forcing Jay to keep taking a few small steps to keep his balance. The moment his body was off balance, Yasen would definitely deliver a powerful blow.

Still, despite all the suppression, Jay's expression remained unchanged. He kept looking at the attacks and blocking them. It didn't seem he was frustrated either.

In fact, Jay was actually receiving his blow willingly.

'Coming from the right, stop the one on the left, then he moves up...' Jay muttered inwardly, observing the movement. All of a sudden, Jay's eyes flashed.

He struck the gauntlet on the right, deflecting it and pulling Yasen in.

"!!!" Yasen was startled, but he accepted the challenge. 'You might be stronger than your typical Tier 4 human, but I'm already close to Tier 6. You won't be able to best my strength!'

He punched Jay with his other hand.

Jay inhaled deeply and shifted his blade slightly, putting the tip on the trajectory of the gauntlet.

Clang!

The clash felt weak, but Yasen couldn't help but widen his eyes because the gauntlet was actually deflected to the side.

Yasen gritted his teeth and forcefully returned it to the correct trajectory, albeit he barely managed to do it and hit Jay's arm instead of his face.

Bang!

Jay was launched several meters away as his body bounced two times before coming to a complete stop.

Utaha gasped. "Is this the end? Yasen is actually overpowering Jay right now. Is this the time for the Melesviet Team to turn around the situ—!"

Before she could complete her sentences, Utaha was dumbstruck. There was suddenly a wound on Yasen's arm as if it was freshly cut. The blood spurted due to the pressure he put on his arm.

"W-Wha—What happened? When did Jay strike his arm?" Utaha gasped.

Even the principal couldn't believe what he was seeing. "This is..."

"Principal Vhalor?" Utaha turned to him, wondering if the principal could provide some explanations.

The principal's body shuddered. "Soft Sword. A high-level sword technique that allows you to deflect a blade with less strength. It's the same as martial arts that are using their opponent's weight to defeat them. However, this kind of technique is impossible to grasp due to the complexity of the control over one's strength. If the user exerts less strength than necessary, the opponent's attack will overwhelm them.

"If the user uses too much strength, he will be stuck in that stance and won't be able to launch another strike. With the muscle affinity, he has to control the strength he puts in his muscle, which is normally possible once you reach Tier 6 or Tier 7. He is actually able to use such a high-level technique?"

Chapter 649: A Single Slash

The people were shocked. No one would expect Jay to have such a technique. However, there was one person who understood it when he was only Tier 3. And that person was none other than Clovis.

That was right. Clovis and Jay fought a lot. It couldn't be helped if Jay understood the Soft Sword bit by bit. After all, Clovis learned this difficult technique due to the movie that allowed him to experience the role of the protagonist.

And Clovis shared that understanding with Jay, which allowed Jay to understand the essence of the sword technique.

Unfortunately, he learned it from others, not experiencing it himself. As a result, his mastery was still quite low.

If his mastery were as perfect as Clovis', he would have knocked away that attack properly instead of getting hit.

Still, learning such a technique when he was only a Tier 4 human, specifically an 18-year-old Tier 4 human, it made people wonder if Jay's talent was actually better than Aileen, who had the pseudo unique ability?

It was no wonder why Jay remained as the vice captain of the Libation Fiesta, a group with such abnormal people in it. It was because Jay had that qualification.

"What kind of talent is this? Is this also a unique ability?" Utaha gasped. "There's no way such a talented human exists... It's only been two years since he became an explorer!"

The principal smiled wryly. Even he didn't know Jay was this talented. However, he couldn't say it out loud to avoid people thinking they were the ones leeching on the Libation Fiesta.

The principal explained, "No. Jay's talent... How do I say this? It's hard to explain. Unlike the unique ability or even the pseudo one, Jay's talent is still extraordinary, but not at the level of those two.

"However, Jay works harder than any of us. Even Clovis has told me that Jay doesn't have a lot of time for his personal life because he uses all of it for training. Even during physical training, he doesn't just swing his sword. He also trains his mind with image training. By doing all that repeatedly from the beginning, he is able to achieve this level.

"Still, I can't define Jay's talent accurately. All I can say is that this result doesn't come only from his talent. Even hard work pays off. That's why... don't ever give up and continue pursuing your dream. After all, the chance you succeed never reaches zero. Whether it's because of an unknown inheritance or a meteorite falling from the sky, you still have the chance. Keep working hard for your dream." The principal ended his explanation with sincere advice.

'As expected of the principal, he does know how to come up with something random but reasonable.' Hana was laughing inside. 'In the end, Jay is helped by Clovis' items. Of course, I can't deny Jay's talent and hard work as well. He has the sense of responsibility as the vice captain and I know that even without Clovis, he can keep everyone in check.'

As Jay gained the recognition he deserved, Yasen couldn't help but get more and more frustrated.

"Haaa!" He punched Jay, only to be deflected again. Instead of attacking, Jay fully focused on deflecting the attack this time as though he was using Yasen to practice his Soft Sword.

"You bastard!" Yasen shouted and punched Jay with his beast soul.

"!!!" Jay reacted almost immediately, shifting his stance to block it instead of taking it. The punch pushed Jay back one more time.

However, Yasen's attack had yet to end. Once he got some distance, Yasen gathered all his strength into his fist and punched forward. Whether it was his beast soul, technique, or pure strength, he concentrated it on this punch.



The shock wave coming from the punch was overwhelming. It shattered the ground it ran through and quickly reached Jay.

"..." Jay maintained his calm, as though he wasn't bothered by the attack. He took a deep breath.

Clovis' image training that his grandfather taught him was proven to be useful. Even in this situation, Jay couldn't help but imagine that single slash he had been doing for thousands, if not tens of thousands, of slashes during his training in the pool.

He kept slashing and slashing even when he couldn't feel his arm anymore.

And that slash could now be unleashed.

"Huu..." Jay raised his sword. Just like what he had done until now, he would slash it forward. The incoming shock wave was just like a raging wave.

Jay swung his sword downward, unleashing yet another profound technique. This time, it was the Hard Sword, the opposite technique that Clovis used for his ranged attack.

Unlike the ranged attack he had used so far, this one was more refined and concentrated at the tip of the blade.

"This roaring shock wave that looks like a dog that is all bark but no bite... Let me cut it." Jay also activated his old beast soul to increase his power.

Once the two attacks collided, they produced an even more powerful shock that shook the entire arena.

However, the conclusion came almost immediately.

Jay's sword attack actually sliced through.

That was right. Unlike the fist attack, Jay's sword strike was more polished and concentrated. On the other hand, the shock wave from that punch was spread all over its body.

As a result, there was no way it could withstand the sword strike.

The sword strike sliced it into two and gradually reached Yasen.

"!!!" Yasen widened his eyes in shock as he put both of his arms in front, taking Jay's attack head-on.  
"Kh!"

Yasen was dumbstruck after feeling the power behind Jay's strike. His feet were sliding on the ground for over ten meters before Jay's attack stopped.

Meanwhile, the sliced shock wave ended up missing Jay.

This was the battle between the two captains, the two prides of the two groups. Jay, who had been suppressed by Yasen's strength this whole time, finally struck back.

Chapter 650: Blinking Boxing vs Nature Sense

"This... This is... Jay has finally struck back!" Utaha gasped. "Despite all the overwhelming power we have seen from Yasen, Jay has managed to turn around the situation and strike him back."

Principal Vhalor frowned. "This is unexpected. I have never thought that Jay is able to unleash all that high-level technique. Do you perhaps know anything?" His glance shifted to Hana.

Hana shook her head. "Not really. All I know is that he is the vice captain. Even someone as strong as Christina can't get that title. Clovis' eyes might be better than mine, so there must be a reason for Clovis to choose him as his vice captain."

Principal Vhalor closed his eyes. Unlike the other participants, the principal noticed something that Jay had while the others didn't. It was the sense of responsibility.

Even Erwin claimed he could be a better vice captain because he had the skills and techniques to do it. However, Jay remained as the vice captain because of one thing.

Responsibility. There was no one who had a sense of responsibility higher than Jay in the group. Even Clovis might lose despite being the captain.

That was why Clovis could lead the group confidently and remain decisive. He knew that if there was anything, his vice captain would be there for him. If he made any mistakes, Jay wouldn't hesitate to beat some sense into him.

It was because of this reason Clovis could place absolute trust in Jay.

"You..." Yasen gritted his teeth. He never thought he would be the one with the worst condition. This couldn't go on, thought Yasen.

Without hesitation, Yasen charged forward and punched Jay straightforwardly.

Jay wanted to activate his Soft Sword to deflect the attack, but for some reason, the fist became blurry and arrived right in front of him before he realized it.

"!!!" Jay widened his eyes in shock. The moment he noticed the change, Jay was already flying toward the wall.

Bam!

"Gah." Jay spat out blood. He was confused for a moment, but soon understood what happened. In the end, all of them had taken a look at a few videos about their opponents.

Utaha became excited again. "There it is. The Blinking Boxing! This is the unique martial art that Yassen has. Blinking Boxing. According to the rumor, this Blinking Boxing has such a smooth movement that it feels like they're faster than they are, which, without their opponent realizing it, has already landed on them.

"Jay couldn't block the attack because of this. Yassen has once again gained the upper hand in the battle."

Jay broke free from the wall and looked at Yassen. "I see... That's what I should defeat, huh?"

Jay took a deep breath while wiping off the blood with the back of his hand.

This time, it was Jay's turn to charge forward. Yassen didn't plan to hold back anymore.

His movement started blinking again in Jay's vision, but that didn't stop him. It was as if Jay could actually see him perfectly, but for some reason, Jay's eyes actually stayed still, as though he didn't use them.

That was right, Jay actually didn't use it.

Ezekiel was the first one to notice what was going on. "This is... Don't tell me..."

Clovis just smiled.

'What's going on? This guy's smell suddenly changes... He looks like a beast this time...' Yasen frowned. However, it didn't stop him from punching Jay with the Blinking Boxing.

Just like the previous attack, Yasen's punch should have hit his sword and overwhelmed him before Jay could put up a proper stance.

But at the last second, Jay shifted his stance and took the punch head-on. The attack overwhelmed Jay and pushed him several meters back, but Jay blocked that attack. It wasn't with the Soft Sword, but Jay really did it as though he was able to see it coming.

"!!!" Yasen widened his eyes in shock.

"W-What?!" Principal Vhalor dropped his jaw, recognizing what Jay was doing. "How can this be?"

"Principal?" Utaha tilted her head in confusion, not understanding his reaction. She thought Jay was good to be able to block it, but that was it.

"Hahahaha. We did fight so many of them out there," Radric laughed while crossing his arms. "To think that this guy is one of them."

Ezekiel squinted his eyes. "The nature sense. He has acquired the nature sense? After fighting so many beasts, people tend to develop it. But... for a Tier 4 human like him..."

"After fighting so many beasts, humans can start imitating the beasts themselves. They're developing such a natural stance that develops their beastly instinct. Basically, their instinct is heightened.

"Still, even though people can acquire it, it's not like there are a lot of people who have it. Only people above Tier 8 who have it." Ezekiel gasped. "How in the world... No, wait."

Ezekiel turned to Clovis. There was one more way to acquire it. And that was Clovis, specifically Clovis' partner, Reolf.

Clovis smiled. "Well, Jay's sense of responsibility is too high."

Because of that sense of responsibility, Jay, of course, tried to understand Reolf like how he understood Kanaria and the others. And during that time, Jay was exposed to Reolf's strength.

Unlike those who acquired it after fighting so many beasts, Jay got it through assimilation.

A possibility that wasn't supposed to happen, but it happened because of Clovis. And Jay was someone who proved that possibility.

Jay and Yasen exchanged several blows, but every time, Jay's movement became faster and sharper, as he started getting used to it. No, he was actually polishing his movement even more.

Jay could sense the incoming attack even more clearly. His eyes' only purpose was to see the general trajectory while his instinct told him the timing.

With the combination of those two, Jay actually fought Yasen's Blinking Boxing on equal ground.

No, he actually pushed him back.

Jay suddenly unleashed his sword strike, which overpowered Yasen because of that perfect timing.

Jay pointed his sword forward while smiling. "I have promised my best and oldest comrade to win. That's why I'm going to win."