

Destiny 1021

Chapter 1021 Asking For A Favor

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Shin continued to read through the rest of the patch notes and found nothing more interesting than the ones above. The rest was more like additional buffs to certain types of monsters and a certain increase in difficulty when clearing a dungeon.

After reading everything, Shin finally stood up and looked at the rest. "Alright, this should where it ends. Good job, everyone! We can now have a proper rest."

The group nodded their heads as they sighed in relief. Black Hand and S.Tigris even walked over to Shin before the latter said their thanks. "We are grateful that you guys bring us on this quest even though we have not done much during the entire adventure."

Shin laughed when he heard those words and spoke. "What are you talking about? You guys helped a lot, especially Black Hand. Without him, things are going to be complicated."

They chatted for a while Lawless walked over alongside Faker. "I guess this is where we are separating again. That is a good adventure! Let's play again together next time!"

Shin smiled and nodded his head. "That sounds fun. I think we are going to work together again in the Awakened Continent. Based on the patch notes, the monsters, and dungeons there are much harder than the ones on this side."

"Surely!" said Lawless before walking away with Faker.

'Alright, we are done with our job. The next step now is to negotiate with Big Sis when building the city. This time, I will not give her a mile since I now have someone to manage the city for me. I also prepared everything that I need, so I will be having a better edge in this negotiation,' Shin was currently thinking about what he was going to do next when Arthur suddenly called the attention of everyone.

"Alright! Now that we finished everything, it is time to wrap this up with a farewell party!" said Arthur, attracting Shin's attention.

Shin was could not help but furrowed his brows as he could sense something was not right. He knew this brother of his very well and was sure that this guy was plotting something.

But before he could even think about what it was, he suddenly noticed that some of the members of their group were walking towards Arthur's side. They seemed to be dividing the group into two smaller teams.

On the other side, he saw Leonard, Zero, Black Hand, S.Tigris, Ara, Chaotic Luck, and Charlotte, grouping together. And from the look on their faces, Shin could not help but have an ominous feeling. He could already see what was going to happen next.

"Hey! What is the meaning of this? I have too tired of your nonsense. I don't have time to play with you," said Shin with a solemn tone.

Arthur chuckled after hearing those words. "Don't worry. We will make sure that this is going to be quick."

He paused for a moment and kicked the ground so suddenly, launching himself toward Shin while thrusting his spear forward.

Swoosh!

The expression on Shin's face quickly turned serious and swiftly unsheathed his sword to block the incoming attack.

Cling!

Sparks flew in the air as Shin locked his gaze on Arthur's. And when the latter saw that, he continued to chuckle. "You don't have a choice for this."

The moment when those words left Arthur's mouth, the surroundings suddenly changed as an energy boundary enclosed a certain part of the city to create an arena.

Then Arthur continued. "I'm sorry but I don't have a choice either. This is one of the conditions that I have to complete for Eira to become my Dragon's Partner. I have to fight a Transcendent Being in that condition."

"There is no risk on this either. Even if we kill each other, we will not suffer any kind of penalty as it is a special quest scenario."

"Don't take it personally, alright? I'll treat you something good later when we log out of the game," he added as he distanced himself away from Shin and re-grouped with his 'team'.

The corner of Shin's mouth suddenly twitched when he heard those words before asking. "If it is only challenging a Transcendent Being, then can't you just make it a one-on-one duel against the others? Why make it into a group battle?"

Arthur shrugged his shoulders and answered nonchalantly. "Well, it is more fun this way."

Pausing briefly, he pointed at the guys behind him and the ones behind Shin. "See? They are quite eager to try it."

Hearing those words, Shin turned his gaze toward the guys behind him and found that the guys behind him were already preparing to fight. Cloe, Lawless, Faker, Ember, Ravier, Alucard, and Owen – there was clear excitement in their eyes despite showing some signs of being tired.

Shin could only sigh helplessly when saw that. He was someone who liked fighting strong people too, but he was not in the mood right now. He was too tired for it. Aside from the events inside the game, he was also physically and mentally exhausted in the real world too. He really wanted to have a proper rest after finishing the Empire Quest.

He did not even bother to check on his rewards for clearing the quest!

Left without a choice, Shin could only agree to it. He glared at Arthur and warned. "You better compensate me properly later. If not, let's see what I will do to your precious collections."

Psh!

In his room, Shin got off his Gaming Cabin fully exhausted. The supposedly simple scuffle turned out to be a chaotic battle with both sides giving out everything they had.

Even though some of them could not fight at their full strength after entering a weakened state, the entire event turned out to be an intense battle. But despite the complaints that Shin had, he still enjoyed the entire battle.

He could only curse his luck for treating such a troublesome guy as a brother.

Shin threw everything about the game at the back of his head as he collapsed on his bed and close his eyes, planning to take a rest. The servers of the game would be undergoing a major update, so he did not have to worry about in-game matters for the time being.

Right now, he needed to focus on recuperating from his internal injuries and adjusting himself to his current state.

His Martial Arts were currently sealed alongside Uno, so he had to familiarize himself with not having it for the time being. The questions that he had for Uno also needed to wait until that time.

Thinking deeply about it, Shin found that it might be for the better. He could adjust himself to new Mentalism Techniques this way and focused on familiarizing himself with them, especially the sword-drawing style from the Jade Kirin Scripture.

"Now that I think about it, I guess I need to have a talk with Senior Brother about this Mentalism Method," muttered Shin to himself.

The 'familiarity' that he was sensing from the sword-drawing style really bothered him. It seemed like the Jade Kirin Scripture was hiding more secrets aside from the ones that he already discovered.

The more he learned about this particular Mentalism Method, the more mysterious it became to his eyes. It was like diving into a bottomless abyss where he could not see its depths no matter how hard he tried.

Looking at the windows and seeing the morning that was about to start, Shin forced himself to stand up from the bed. Even though he suffered some internal injuries from the berserk energy within him last night, it was not that serious that it would prevent him from doing any kind of activity.

With his healthy physique, it would not take much time for it to heal. At most, he would not be able to do his morning exercises for the time being. But he would be able to focus on meditating and hone his Mentalism this way.

He did not know why, but he felt that he could not afford to be left behind by Uno, who was currently sealed inside his body. He had to become even stronger and more skilled at Mentalism Techniques for the days to come.

Having that in mind, he sat on the floor and meditated for a couple of hours to compensate for the morning training that he would be missing for the day, before heading to the bathroom to shower.

When he got out and changed into a new set of clothes, he quickly walked out of the room and headed down to chat with the others about the new update of the game.

But when he climbed down the stairs, he saw Leonard and Arthur, who were in the middle of going out of the house.

"Hey! Where are the two of you going? You still owe me a meal or two for what you've done earlier," shouted Shin, stopping the two.

The duo halted in their tracks and turned back. There was a constipated look on their faces as if they had eaten something rotten.

Leonard sighed for a moment before replying. "The Combat Depart just contacted us. They want us to come to the campus and meet our seniors. It must be a similar event that happened in your department."

"Tsk! Damn it! Why do we have to go there when we can just do it during the start of the semester!" complained Arthur before saying to Shin. "Don't worry, we will be back before the sky darkens. We will fetch you later and head to the famous seafood restaurant of Ace City."

"For now, you have to think of a way to burn the time while waiting," he added before turning around and walking out of the door.

"See you later, Shin Bro. The earlier match is quite exciting," said Leonard before following after Arthur.

Shin clicked his tongue and headed to the kitchen to look for ingredients that he could use for a simple meal. But just turned around when he saw Jerimiah and Vincent walking down the stairs one after another.

"Yo, Brother Shin! Planning to cook something?" greeted Jerimiah before quickly adding. "You are injured, right? You shouldn't move much and take a rest."

Shin shrugged his shoulder and answered. "It is not that serious. Just minor injuries and it will immediately after a day's sleep or two. I better move my body rather than lie on my bed all day."

Jerimiah thought for a moment before suggesting. "Then let's go eat something outside. I want to test the local delicacies here since the time I arrive. Come and join us since we don't have anything better to do. The game servers are going to be in long maintenance."

"But Arthur and Leonard are going to treat me later. I will not feel good if I eat seafood from breakfast to dinner," Shin replied before adding. "It is just a matter of my palate. I don't like eating the same type of food on a day."

Jerimiah laughed when he heard those words before waving his hand. "Then that's it. Vincent and I will be heading out of them. See you later!"

After that, he walked toward the front door alongside Vincent. The latter gave Shin a slight smile and nod before he left.

It was at this moment that David suddenly appeared beside Shin out of nowhere. "Junior Brother. I have a favor to ask."

Shin almost hit his Senior Brother due to being caught off-guard. Fortunately, he was able to stop himself from doing it when he recognized the person who appeared beside him like a ghost.

"Can't you appear normally like the others? Are you planning to kill someone from a heart attack?" commented Shin before answering. "What is it? Quick, spit it out! But let me warn you – this does not mean I am going to help you."

David cleared his throat for a moment before continuing. "Your Senior Sister created a mess and I have to clean it up before Master hears about it."

Shin blankly stared at David for a couple of seconds before finally reacting. "Huh~!?"

Chapter 1022 Asking For A Favor (Part 2)

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Shin had a blank look on his face as he stared at David. It took him a couple of moments before he could ask absentmindedly. "Huh? Senior Sister? What are you talking about?"

The corner of David's mouth suddenly twitched when he heard those words. He then sighed helplessly and answered. "Your Senior Sister. I've mentioned her to you before. Have you forgotten already?"

Shin raised his eyebrows. "Oh? Have you? I guess you only mentioned her briefly and nothing else which is why I don't clearly remember."

David's mouth kept on twitching as he admitted his mistake. "Well, you are not wrong about that."

Recollecting himself, he quickly added. "She is another disciple who studies under Master's guidance. Aside from her crazy personality that is always eager to cause trouble everywhere, everything else about her is actually good."

"She is very talented in Mentalism which is why Master is too fond of her. She even inherited Master's Mentalism Method and swordsmanship. That Mentalism Technique is comparable to mine even though my 'Myriad Manifestation Method' is a collective art of every Mentalism Method from my Kingdom."

"That sounds powerful," muttered Shin. After training with David and becoming familiar with the Mentalism Techniques of his Senior Brother, he became aware of how strong it was. From his

impression, the Mentalism Method did not have an evident weakness as it cover everything that was needed in all kinds of situations.

Hearing that comment, David could not help but wear a weird look on his face. It seemed like he did not want to admit something but still gave up in the end. "She IS powerful! Most of her talents may be a little average, but she is very hard working and know how to use her techniques well."

"She is eye candy too. And her figure is like an hourglass. If not for her terrible personality and love for trouble, she would be a good catch," he added, shaking his head in pity and regret.

Then, as if he remembered something, he quickly shared. "Oh! I suddenly recall that when she first arrived in the village and was introduced by Sir-... Ahm... Adamson, Master's husband, I've almost fallen into her trap."

"Then when she got accepted by Master as a disciple, she was so sensitive about seniority and didn't want to be the Junior Marshal Sister, so she challenged me in a duel to decide who would be the eldest disciple."

"I never defeated her, nor she could defeat me. Our duels always ended in a draw, so we decided to go by in equal seniority."

While David was sharing his experience with this so-called Martial Sister, Shin could see some complicated emotions from his Senior Brother. He could tell that the relationship between David and his Senior Sister was not that simple.

Thinking about that, Shin could not help but tease a little. "It looks like you have already fallen into her trap to me."

"Bah! Phew! Who will like such a violent woman? She is a total headache. I rather fancy a tree than look to that woman," denied David strongly.

Shin chuckled a little and added. "Yet you like my big sister who also happens to fall in the same category. I think I am starting to get your type of girl now."

"Hey! That is clearly a different case! My feelings for your big sister are real! I can still remember the 'slow motion' effect that I always hear from fairy tales and dramas when I first see her!" refuted David, trying to defend himself. Unfortunately, the more he denied it, the clear it was in Shin's eyes.

Realizing that he could not save himself in this situation, David decided to go back to the original topic. "Forget that. Let's talk about the matter that I am asking you."

Shir raised his eyebrows and asked. "What is the situation and what kind of help do you need?"

David cleared his throat and explained. "Martial Sister left the village when Master and Sir Adamson are not around. She said that she would be going for an adventure while traveling the world."

"And when she was in the Sun-Moon Continent, she managed to assassinate a corrupt high-ranking official. She was able to hide her identity and erased all of the tracks that might point at her, but she could not leave the country since the whole continent was in a complete lockdown due to her."

Shin could not help but furrow his brow the more he listened. And when he could not endure it anymore, he immediately asked in a sarcastic manner. "So, what kind of favor do you want from me? Don't tell me, you want me to go over there to save her."

David gave his junior brother a skeptical look even though he knew that Shin was only kidding. Regardless, he continued. "Can you ask someone from the Springfield Family to send a few people there in whatever disguise or excuse before bringing her along when they are going back?"

"It is also fine if they are not going back here and just cruising toward another country to not make it suspicious. As long as she could leave that place, it will be fine," he added after a quick thought.

Shin continued to wear his skeptical look and refuted. "Do you think it will be easy? As you already said, the whole country is in lockdown."

Hearing that, David threw a sharp glare at Shin and countered. "And why do you think I am asking for a favor? If it is an easy job, then I will be heading over there myself already! That is why I am requesting some help from the Springfield Family, in the first place."

Shin wanted to tease his senior brother a little more when he saw that reaction but chose not to do it when he saw the genuine concern that the latter was showing. He then took a deep breath and replied. "I can help you explain the situation to Uncle Nathan, but I can't promise that they can help. It is not an easy favor after all."

"So, what will I get from this? And what can I offer to them in exchange for their help? You know, there nothing is ever free in this world," he added, waiting for what David could offer.

David was stunned for a moment before refuting. "That is your Senior Sister!"

Shin shrugged his shoulder and replied nonchalantly. "That is true, but I don't know her personally and we are not that close either."

The corner of David's mouth suddenly twitched and thought to himself. 'If only you know who she really is.'

Releasing a helpless sigh, he gave up and spoke. "I will answer anything that you want. I know that with your intelligence, you already have noticed something. If you are ready to seek the truth about it, then ask me any time."

He then paused a moment before continuing. "As for the Springfield Family – just say that I have important information about an Ancient Dragon Monument. I am sure that they will like it. No, they will surely love it!"

Hearing that, Shin could not help but have some doubts and ask. "If you have such a good piece of information, then why not go straight to Uncle Nathan instead? It is not like this is your first time talking to him."

David rolled his eyes at Shin and started to doubt the intelligence of this junior brother of his. "Hey! Do honestly think that I can request an audience from such an important and very busy person?"

"Even if I have such an important piece of information in my possession, it does not mean that I can see him every time. I am not like you who can give him a call or meet him regularly on a daily basis!" he added with a cursing tone.

Shin laughed it off and agreed. "Well, I know about that. I just thought that you have something in yourselves since you seem to be pretty well connected to every important figure in this continent despite clearly being a foreigner."

David could not help but gulp his saliva when he heard those words. 'It looks like I have been tricked! This guy is still sharp as ever. Has he noticed something?'

Seeing that reaction from David, Shin casually waved at him and added. "Anyway, that is not important right now. I'll deal with your favor and we can talk about the other things later. Just make sure to properly answer my questions when that time comes."

David secretly sighed in relief before suddenly being concerned. He was not sure if it was the right time yet, but from the look of it, he could no longer dodge the serious topic anymore.

Regardless, he now achieved his real goal. The truth was he was supposed to head over the Sun-Moon Continent himself. Given his past experiences, it would not be a problem for him to sneak into such a heavily guarded place. He had already done it in the past, so he no longer had an issue with that.

The problem was he just got an important piece of information. He could not just let such an opportunity slip away from his hands. If everything went well, he would not only be able to foil another huge operation looming in the underworld, but he could also become closer to Shiella if he played his cards right.

This was going to be killing two birds with one stone, so he had 'no' choice but to ask Shin a favor to help his troublemaker Martial Sister. He could not help but praise himself for making such a perfect plan.

He had to thank his junior brother for having such a very reliable background.

Shin was about to head to the kitchen when he suddenly recalled something and stopped his steps. "Ah! Before I forget! I have something I will like to consult you about the Jade Kirin Scripture. I experienced something strange when I am trying it inside the game earlier."

David was initially taken aback before quickly recollecting himself and listening to Shin's experience.

Chapter 1023 An Average Day

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David could not help but laugh when he heard Shin's story. It took him a great effort to stop himself before explaining. "You are hilarious, Junior Brother. As I said before, Jade Kirin Scripture is just a training and meditation method. It can also be used as an energy circulation method if you want to, but it did not have proper techniques for battle."

"You can combine it with other Mentalism Methods to create new offensive and defensive techniques as well as a new form of circulation technique to further enhance the ones that you already have – just like how you and Grandmaster Benn have done to modify some of the techniques from his Four Symbol Scripture."

Pausing for a moment to clear his throat, he continued. "I can't believe that I am explaining this to you again. I've already said how it works during your special training.

"I know about that. But the experiences that I have when using it are really strange," refuted Shin, trying to recall the effects of Jade Kirin Scripture and the Sword Techniques that he thought 'recorded' in it.

David looked at Shin in interest and commented. "That Reality Manifestation that you are talking about is sure interesting. I'll try entering that state when I log back into the game after the long maintenance. I want to experience its wonders."

After that, he immediately went back to their original topic. "Alright, let me tell you again how the Jade Kirin Scripture Work."

"The real purpose of the Jade Kirin Scripture is to 'harmonize'. It can be used for every technique or other method to strengthen or modify them. It can also be used for every kind of discipline – it doesn't matter whether it is Martial Arts, Mentalism, Swordsmanship, or others – this particular scripture can complement all of them."

"That is how it is used in battle aspects. On the other hand, its mediation method and energy circulation method are actually like a self-hypnosis. It is used to calm one's mind and enter a state where you have absolute control over your emotions."

"Don't I tell you before that its purpose is to control your 'Seed of Hatred' and calm yourself down when it is trying to demonize you? This is the reason why I thought you this Mentalism Method in the first place."

"Do you remember now?" asked David while looking at Shin skeptically.

Shin still had some doubts and asked. "Then what about the sword techniques that entered my mind during the battle? It really felt like I am getting those sets of information from the Jade Kirin Scripture."

David smirked when he heard that before explaining. "It is not from the Jade Kirin Scripture but within yourself."

"Huh?" Shin was confused at first before quickly understanding what his senior brother was trying to say. "Eh!? Are you telling me that I already know about those sword techniques before? Those set of techniques are from my memory?"

David slightly nodded his head and continued. "That is most likely the case. It must be the effects of the self-hypnosis of the Jade Kirin Scripture. Don't you have told me before that you have some forgotten memories?"

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"You have to remember what state of mind you have during that time. It must have triggered something within you to awaken some of your forgotten memory. Those awakened memories must be the product of the state of your mind and self-hypnosis at that time," he added while secretly wiping his nonexistent sweat.

Everything that he said was true, but hiding more details about the sealed memories of Shin was not that easy. If he accidentally mentioned something that he shouldn't say, this sharp junior brother of his might notice something.

In the meantime, Shin already had fallen into deep thought as he found those words reasonable. He then thought more about the time when he first time he learned about sword techniques.

During that time, he was indeed thinking about how he was going to make his sword-drawing skills more efficient when he was in the state of Reality Manifestation. When those sword movements flashed through his mind, he felt that something was triggered inside his head.

While he was in deep thought, his stomach suddenly started making sounds, urging him to make food and eat. He clicked his tongue and thank David before heading to the kitchen.

In the meantime, David sighed in relief. He then walked out of the house too, thinking of having a quick jog in the neighborhood while waiting for the good news. He was not in a hurry for his arrangements.

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Shin sat on the sofa in the living room after having a good breakfast. He expended a lot of energy even though he was just lying inside his Gaming Cabin all night. He still had to replenish it by having a good and complete meal.

After that, he quickly gave Nathan a call, planning to consult this uncle of his about the matter that David had told him. He didn't even wait that long for Nathan to accept the offer without any hesitation. For the background of their family which was said to be descendants of dragons, any kind of information about their ancestors were always been important.

The two discussed the details for quite a long time before the other side ended the call. But Nathan repeatedly warned Shin that this could only be classified information. After all, they were not the ones looking for clues about ancient dragons. They did not even know if there were some spies within the military, so it would be safer for them to take precautions.

As if it was right on cue, David returned and entered through the front door the moment when Shin put down his Advanced Watch.

Shin was pretty impressed and stared at David for a couple of moments before sharing the words that Nathan had said. "Uncle Nathan agrees, but he wants you to head over to his office to fill him with the information."

"You don't have to worry about-... Ahm-... Senior Sister. Uncle said that he will send one of his trusted people to oversee the matter personally."

"It seems like she is in luck since the military will be sending a delegate to the Sun-Moon Continent to discuss an important partnership. It is related to their newest products and military equipment."

"Uncle said that she can come with them when they are leaving. Though, the next destination will not be here. They are going to the Clear Sky Continent next for another partnership. She can separate from them in there."

"Just tell her to communicate with them when the time comes. Though, I suggest you also keep in touch with her to make sure that she will not make another mess again while the whole country is on high alert," added Shin, reminding David what to do.

He only heard quite a few details about his so-called senior sister, but he could already tell that she was also quite a headache.

David was pretty satisfied with the reply and became even more satisfied when he learned that the troublesome woman would not be heading here yet after leaving the Sun-Moon Continent.

"Okay~! I will pay Sir Nathan a visit later," responded David before heading to his room for a quick bath and change of clothes.

He seemed to be in a pretty good mood and had no intention of hiding it. Shin naturally noticed it but refused to comment. He did not want to poke at something that did not concern him directly.

Instead, he proceeded on relaxing on the sofa and closed his eyes. Aside from resting, he also went through the sword techniques that he just 'remembered'. He wanted to study them further and familiarized himself with them more.

He might not be able to physically train right now due to his internal injuries, but he could still do some visualization inside his head. And if he managed to understand their cores, then he could even do some mind training with them later.

Shin did not do anything more than that. He just went to his room to take a quick nap to replenish his energy and relax his mind more before doing deep meditation and image training right after waking up.

He continued to do that until Leonard and Arthur went back from the 'welcome' gathering of their department. The two were fully exhausted and completely out of energy to do anything.

They did not have any injuries or bruises but Shin could tell that these two got beaten up by their seniors and got healed by a Mentalist who specialized in healing just like what happened to him in the Research Department.

The Combat Department was full of battle maniacs, who would not refuse any challenge nor ignore a chance to fight. This was the reason why Arthur and Leonard chose that department in the first place, but facing multiple seniors successively was way too much even for them.

'Karma sure knows how to bite back,' Shin laughed at them when he saw their current state. They laughed so hard at him when he got back from introducing himself to the seniors of the Research Department, but it was now his turn to return the favor.

He made fun of them for a few more moments before urging the two to pick themselves up from the living room. It was now time for the promised 'compensation'. Even if they were in a completely beaten state, he would not let them off the hook.

Arthur and Leonard knew that Shin would not stop pestering them until they did their part of the deal. But before anything else, they have to take a quick bath first and changed into a new set of clothes. They might not have any injuries but their current clothes were like a rag after going through the beating from their seniors.

Chapter 1024 Lurking In The Shadows (Part 1): Future Plans

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Shin brought his keys with him as he knew that he needed to drive this time. The two were too exhausted to worry about that. They quickly hopped Shin's Black Panther, heading straight to their destination.

Unknown to them, someone was observing their movements from a room in a villa near theirs. That person tapped the earpiece that he was wearing when he made sure that the black car left and spoke. "The target has left riding a Black Panther. He is accompanied by the young master of the Springfield Family and the suspected Crimson Demon of the previous underground boxing ground, so be careful."

The person on the other side of the line did not say anything and just hung up, quickly getting in the work after receiving the information.

They had been waiting for this for a couple of days already. Their client was also very impatient with it, putting a lot of pressure on them. If not for the people of the Springfield and Cilvana Families stationed around the vicinity of the villa, then they had probably made their move a long time ago.

Naturally, they were also aware of the fairly strong young men staying in that particular villa, but they were confident that they would be successful in the end, especially when they were the ones taking the initiative. But they could not do their ambush due to the special guards monitoring the surroundings.

Those veteran soldiers from the Springfield Family and highly skilled special agents sent by the Cilvana Family were not a force that they could face with their current people.

They might be veteran mercenaries and hitmen, but they would never underestimate the special forces of this country, particularly the ones from the renowned Springfield Family, a family famous in both martial arts and military circles.

Now that they had the opportunity to take down their target, they would never let it slip away from their hands. This was their only chance after all and they would never have another one again if they failed.

Failing was one thing, but being hunted by the Springfield Family which was filled with world-class 'monsters' was not going to make them experience the living hell.

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As those guys were plotting something, the trio was currently heading to the Ace City to look for the Seafood Restaurant that Arthur was boasting about earlier. Shin wanted to see if their famous seafood recipes were worthy of their reputation.

"So, what do you guys think about the new update?" asked Shin while driving, trying to find a good topic to discuss.

Arthur, who was sitting on the passenger seat, pursed his lips a little before commenting. "It is quite interesting. But since we are already expecting most of it, I am not that hyped about it."

"The Battle state changes are going to make PVP-ing more realistic. Though, we already experienced insta-killing someone due to our overwhelming advantage in stats. It is not that surprising anymore."

"The wounded state is the only that makes it more interesting. Now, players will have to worry not only getting killed in a single attack from both powerful players and high-level monsters, but they also have to think about minimizing the injuries that they can get during every battle."

"I can already see most of the casual players crying because of it. They may even submit some complaints because of it," he added with a mocking tone.

Then Leonard quickly voiced out his thoughts. "The role of every class is going to be more balance too. Every one of them will now have a huge impact in battle. But the classes that will get the most benefit will be Berserkers, Assassins, Thieves, Mages, and Priests."

"Berserkers, Assassins, and Thieves will be the kings of the prolonged battle. The Berserkers will become stronger the more they battle while their opponents will be weakened during a frontal confrontation."

"On the other hand, the Assassins and Thieves will be torturing their targets with bleed and poison effects – they will be chipping away the health bars of their enemies if they could not kill them with their burst damage."

"As for the Mages, they will still be the kings of large-scale battles. But the prolonged battle will also further enhance their strengths indirectly since their powerful spells can cripple their opponents, slowly or immediately."

"There is nothing to say about priests and other healers since their importance is already been shown in all of those situations, especially their Revive Skills! With the current update about the death penalty, dying will be a huge setback for every player."

"It is not mentioned in the update, but the longest time a player can wait in their spirit form while waiting to be revived is only 30 minutes. Since it is not mentioned in the patch notes, then it will most likely be the same when the servers are up again."

Arthur nodded his head and added. "The ones who will benefit the least from this are the Knights and other Tank-related classes. They are in an awkward spot since they have to be always on the frontlines in every battle, soaking all of the damages for everyone."

"They have to keep their health bars in, or over, 60% if they don't want to be in danger. Any lower than that can make their entire party pay a heavy price. The debuffs of having a low health bar can instantly change the flow of the battle."

"If those tanks became a cripple even for a second, their entire party will be wiped out, without a doubt," he added before continuing. "As for the swordsman classes – they are in a strange spot too. I think they don't have a clear benefit from this battle state update. They seem to have a lot of indirect nerfs too."

"Even when dueling the other melee classes can become a little harder for them, especially Berserkers, Assassins, and Thieves. A prolonged duel will bound to be against their favors."

"Unless they have special skills to negate the special effects of the 'wounded' states or skilled enough not to get injured during a fight, then they are bound to have a hard time in any type of battle."

Reaching this point, Arthur could not help but look at Shin and sneer. "It looks like the developers have some gauges against Swordsmen."

Hearing that, Shin quickly refuted. "As if a meat shield like you will be having a good time. Will suffer more compared to us."

Arthur wanted to defend his class but found it hard to find a good counter for those words. Thinking deeply into it, his situation would be more terrible during the battles. Fortunately, he was among those overpowered characters who could ignore such disadvantages.

Seeing that Arthur was unable to open his mouth, Shin quickly changed the topic. "Actually, I am more interested in the Life Style update."

"With such a massive change, the production classes will benefit a lot. The materials will surely become more expensive as well as all kinds of products crafted by those classes, especially weapons, equipment, and potions. With such high demand, their prices will surely skyrocket."

"Moreover, gathering skills are going to be a must for every player, especially the guys who will be hunting in the wild. I can already imagine some of the wealthy ones hiring some players who specialized in that field. Porters and Gatherers will be in high demand soon."

Shin then could not help but pause for a moment as he suddenly remembered something before quickly clicking his tongue. "D*mn! Big Sis must be jumping with joy right now. This update just boosted her businesses inside the game. Her trading firm will practically benefit a lot from this update."

Arthur also smacked his forehead and agreed. "She will become even richer when the servers are up again!"

He then turned to Shin and quickly asked. "What about the City that we are planning to build?"

Shin smirked at those words as he could read what Arthur was thinking. "Don't worry, everything is going according to plan. I will still have the edge when proposing the business to her. I have all of the cards needed for it."

"As long as it is not the same outcome as the Calderock Town," commented Arthur.

The corner of Shin's mouth twitched when he heard that and quickly defended himself. "Hey! That is my private property, so I can do anything I want with it."

"As for why I shared 50% of the profit with Big Sis is because I don't want to manage it during that time. Big Sis is practically the one running the whole town alongside Ribbit."

"Ribbit is running the administrative office and manages the NPCs while Big Sis is controlling the flow of the players. With them around, I am more like a lazy owner while leaving all of the work to the managers."

Arthur waved his hand. "Alright, alright. I understand. You don't have to be too defensive about it."

He then paused for a moment before asking. "So, what do you plan to do next? Should we tackle the quests required for entering the Awaken Continent?"

Shin thought for a moment before shrugging his shoulders. "We are pretty much qualified for it now. Given our stats, skills, and everything else, we practically have a free pass for it, so there is no need for us to rush into it. All we need to do is pass our advancement quests."

"Even if there are others who beat us at arriving there first, there is nothing much they can do to explore the whole area. We have to remember that this is a high-ranking region and when we get in there, we will be the weakest in that place."

Arthur found it understandable but still refuted it. "But there are always good rewards when discovering a certain place first. There are also the pioneering rights which are what we have gotten when exploring the Frozen Kingdom."

"That is good and all, but do you honestly believe that there is a need for the 'pioneering rights' for the Awakened Continent?" countered Shin with words.

He did not even wait for Arthur as he continued. "Based on the announcements that we have, everyone is going to start on the same region, the Divine Empire. It will be a starting point in that continent. And if that is the case, even if there are some rewards for the players waiting there for being the first arrivals, it shouldn't be that big."

"To put it in simpler terms, that place is slightly the same as being the 'Beginner's Village' but with absurdly powerful monsters and NPCs."

"What is more, there are still new mechanics to explore. If you are going to head into an unknown region without understanding all of the changes added to the game, then it is no different from committing suicide. Especially with the new injured state update on the next patch."

Shin gave Arthur a sidelong glance before saying. "I know that you are a veteran when it comes to games, but I have to say that you need to change your view when it comes to this one. After all, this game was slowly turning into a second world with its too realistic features. It is no longer the same as those virtual games that you played before."

Hearing those words, Arthur could not help but fell into deep thought and re-evaluate the game and his view of it. He found that Shin was right and listened. "So, what is your plan?"

Shin pursed his lips and answered. "What I am thinking is let the members of our team do their own thing for the time being and train separately. We just went through a lot during your Empire Quest and the previous ones that are similarly tiring – I am sure that everyone is pretty much exhausted."

"Even though we will be having a long break due to the week-long update – quickly hopping on another intense and long quest will quickly exhaust everyone."

He then paused briefly before continuing. "We should let everyone adjust first on the new update and get familiar with the new mechanics. Then we are going to teach them how to enter the Reality Manifestation as this will be our great advantage over everyone."

"We are already familiar with it and understand the advantages that it has during a battle. Letting the others experience it too will greatly increase their overall fighting capabilities."

"Then we will proceed on our respective advancement quests when everyone is ready. We will also be having an easier time exploring the new regions at that time."

At this point, he suddenly remembered something. "Oh! We also have to let the others do their individual quests too! Archimedes has to strengthen his class. He mentioned before that he will be getting the full inheritance of Garuda after clearing a solo quest."

"There is also Owen. He did not have the time to finish the quest to get his special class – the one that Justin previously have. It is a pretty strong class and I suspect that it can evolve into a powerful Ascended Class."

"Alucard too! Dracula said that he will be giving his inheritance to one of my comrades. I forget about it earlier because we are too focused on clearing the main quest, but I am sure that he receives a special reward after the quest is cleared. He is one of his 'kins' after all!"

"Tsk! Given that Dracula is a Sovereign Being, that guy must have received something really good," he added while clicking his tongue repeatedly.

Leonard suddenly added. "We should distribute the proof of qualifications too. Those special classes can turn the others Class into an Ascended Class or promote their current classes into their respective Tier 3 Classes."

"It is one of the requirements for the Tier 3 Promotion Quest after all. Of course, excluding us who have Transcendent Classes," he added as he remembered the prerequisites for the next advancement quests.

Hearing that, Shin could not help but fall into deep thought. He was trying to recall the classes of each member of their team. Then he quickly said. "Out of our members, Daulla and Ithilien are the only ones who don't have a special class or race, we should give them one of those beads."

"As for the rest, we can save them for the future. Who knows if we can give them to our future members? Especially the ones that we get from Caelum and Nel," he added after careful thought.

There was a brief silence before Shin spoke once again. "I also have to think of a way to lure Diablo at joining us. He will be a great addition to our team."

Leonard and Arthur also nodded their heads, completely agreeing with it. Their adventurer team did not lack that much, but a skilled assassin was definitely one of them. And if they successfully invited such a top-tier assassin into their team, then their overall strength would skyrocket by a few stages.

At the same time, Arthur suddenly remembered something. "Oh! What about the matter that Wing's Alliance requested from us? When are we going to lend them a hand on it?"

"It is going to be a good business opportunity for us, especially that such a huge guild has deep pockets and possessed a lot of things that can't be found anywhere," he added as he grinned evilly.

Chapter 1025 Lurking In The Shadows (Part 2): Alerted

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After arriving at their destination, Arthur led Shin and Leonard to the most famous seafood restaurant in Ace City.

Shin thought that it was supposed to be a fancy and high-class restaurant, but he found out that he was entirely wrong when they arrived.

The restaurant was far from fancy. It was not from a huge and luxurious building nor had an expensive-looking establishment. Instead, it was an ancient-looking, traditional house with bamboo walls and a nipa roof. Though, the establishment itself was pretty large and had three floors including the ground floor.

The location of the restaurant was also quite isolated from the main city too and a little closer to the fort city of the Corner Stone City. And with such a clear area, the upper floors of the restaurant had a good overlooking view where they could see the sea from afar. It was just a pity that it was already dark, so it was impossible to enjoy that view right now.

But despite all of that, there were a lot of people gathered around and heading toward it. The flow of people coming in and out of the entrance was quite large. They were from a different variety of people. Regardless of their social statuses, these people clearly enjoyed the food of this place.

This constant number of customers indicated that the business was bursting.

"Not bad," commented Shin as he entered the seafood restaurant. And when he saw the interior of the place, he could not help but repeatedly nod his head. "This is a good place. No wonder everyone likes it."

The inside of the restaurant was pretty simple but it was very clean. The tables and chairs were also made of bamboo and other wooden materials. There were also a couple of wooden sculptures at the corners together with some bonsai trees.

Shin looked at the busy people eating at the respective tables. Some of them did not care about their surroundings and minded their own business while there were others who were chatting and laughing as they eat.

There were also the busy waiters running around, taking orders left and right, and assisting the other customers who were arriving and leaving.

Shin liked the atmosphere a lot as it was giving him a light-hearted and easy-going feeling.

"The first floor is open for everyone. Most of the people here are from different social statuses. This is also where the 'common' people are mostly gathered," explained Arthur before pointing at an isolated passage from another entrance of the restaurant. "That one leads to the second and third floors."

"You know that not everyone like this kind of busy and noisy atmosphere. The second floor is for the ones who like to eat in silence but had a similar arrangement as this floor. The third floor, on the other hand, is mostly for people with 'high' social status and too prideful to eat with others or for people who want to eat in privacy. That floor is filled with different rooms with isolation barriers cast on them."

Shin raised his brows when he heard that. "Seems like the third floor is for VIPs."

Hearing that, Arthur shook his head. "Nah! That floor also has a variety of people with different social statuses. It just has a more private place for customers who don't want to eat with other people around."

"The VIP rooms are at the back of this place. They have a separate building," he added before looking around.

After that, he quickly asked. "So, where do you want to eat? Anywhere is fine by me."

Shin did not hesitate when he heard that and answered. "Let's go with this floor. I like this atmosphere a lot."

"So do I!" said Arthur as he snapped with his fingers. "Let's go look for a table."

There was no need to ask Leonard as this guy was fine with anything. He was someone with a humble background, to begin with, and grew up in the streets. He was just lucky enough to have wealthy brothers. Even though he also had quite some money now from the games that he played, he was still thankful for these two since they were the ones who changed his and his sister's lives.

He followed the two silently while looking around.

"Excuse me, can we have a table for three?" asked Arthur after arriving at the counter.

The person on the counter was a young girl who was around the same age as the trio. She was quite stressed at the moment since the number of customers right now exceeded the normal times. It was naturally a good thing but also very exhausting. She was barely able to catch her breath due to the constant flow of customers.

She was about to reply to Arthur just like how she responded to everyone but was suddenly stunned when she raised her head. Her mind seemed to have turned black when she saw the trio standing in front of the counter.

They were such eye candies and with different flavors at that. They were all good-looking but had different temperaments from one another. One resembled a prince charming that could only be seen in fairy tales while the other one looked like a handsome bad boy that could strangely make the heart of any girl flutter. Then there was a mysterious guy who could arouse the curiosity of anyone, making them become attracted to and interested in him unknowingly.

She tried to open her mouth to accommodate them but found it hard to force out the words that she wanted to say. She could only stare blankly at the sight in front of her and dumbly maintain that expression with her mouth agape.

Arthur was not paying attention to her as he was already sweeping his gaze around, looking for a good spot they could take. But when he heard nothing from the counter even after a couple of minutes, he could not help but turn his head back to her. It was at that moment that he saw the expression that she was making while staring absentmindedly at them.

He could not help but chuckle a little when he saw that. He was already used to this kind of situation since it already happened to them quite a lot of times when the three of them were together.

He knocked on the wooden table of the counter before waving his hand in front of the girl's face while saying, "Hello? A table for three please."

It was only at that moment that the girl snapped out of her daze and turned to the side, dodging the eyes of Arthur, embarrassed. She waited until the redness of her face subdued before turning back to Arthur with a forced smile. "Please wait for a moment, sir. We will prepare it for you."

Arthur slightly nodded his head and added. "If it is possible, please let us have a table beside a widow."

The girl was able to calm herself down at this point and responded. "Note, sir. You can sit there while waiting for your turn," while pointing at the rows of bamboo chairs in a corner near the counter.

Arthur thanked the girl once again before leading Leonard and Shin toward the rows of chairs.

At this point, Shin felt something strange and cautiously swept his gaze at the surroundings. He did not know why, but he was feeling a little restless. His intuition was telling him that something was going to happen, though he was unable to pinpoint what exactly it was.

He was also not entirely sure if it was directed to him or other people since he could not locate their sources and the malicious feeling was not exactly directed to him – or at least for now.

He quickly informed Leonard and Arthur about it so that the two would be ready any time if something really happened. It was better to be prepared than be caught off-guard, especially with the current state of his body.

Having that in mind, he quickly circulated his Mental Energy within his body and used some healing Mentalism Techniques to hasten the healing process of his internal injuries so that he would be ready to get in action anytime.

Professor Henry and Luvenia Potter to let his wounds heal naturally since it would be beneficial for his body in a long run. But he did not have a choice but to heal it with his mentalism techniques since it will get much worse if he fought in his current state.

Even though he was not sure if they were really the targets, he would not hurt to be always ready in this kind of situation.

"D*mn! How are we going to enjoy the feast if we have to worry about them? Should we inform Uncle Nathan about it? We can relax and eat while leaving the rest to his people," said Arthur in a very annoyed tone.

Shin gave him a strange look before replying in a whispering voice. "I already send a message to Uncle Nathan. His people will be arriving here in a couple of minutes. They are already been on standby since the previous incident with Cloe, so they are able to quickly respond this time."

"For now, we have to act normally, so that we will not alert the other side. We will catch them this time," he added as he sat casually on the seat prepared for the waiting customers.

Following him as an example, the two also took their seat and started chatting about random topics in disguise. They might be acting leisurely on the outside, but they were actually fully on guard on the inside and patiently waiting for the right opportunity.

They had already done this in the past during the special assignments given to them by the Springfield Family, so they were able to act properly without alerting the opposing side. And when the situation called for it, they would spring into action without any hesitation.

Chapter 1026 Lurking In The Shadows (Part 3): Who Are The Real Targets?

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Nathan was very troubled. After discovering the re-emergence of the Hextech Laboratory, he could not shake off the feeling that something big was going to happen. He had already reported to his father, Samuel Springfield.

As one of the highest-ranking military officials of the Soaring Continent, Samuel Springfield had the authority to form a special unit that would work with the police forces at catching a high-profile criminal organization such as the Hextech Laboratory.

Unfortunately, this matter did not concern the Elder Council, or else, solving this problem would be much easier.

Nathan had to keep an eye on high-profile criminals such as the Butcher and Coffin Maker as he was the only one who could face them. If a clue about these two powerful experts appeared, he had to personally investigate it to avoid unnecessary casualties.

He could ask for some help from his friends such as Elias Stuart and Eugene White, who were currently in the Eastern Sea Region. There was also Joaquin Giovanni, who was already looking at this matter. With the four of them working together, those two criminals would have to be wary of their movements. Any form of carelessness would instantly spell the end of them.

Nathan's main purpose in coming here was to keep an eye on his troublesome nephews. As candidates for being the representative of the Soaring Continent for the upcoming 'Hundred Empire Wars' and 'Battle for Supremacy' in the years to come, he had to make sure that the two of them were going to be safe.

Leonard was also added to the list just recently, so his job had just gotten a little more troublesome. Keeping an eye on just one of them was already a headache, yet he had to deal with these three troublemakers.

Fortunately, the trio was always been together, so monitoring their movements and protecting them was not that hard.

The problem was the number of enemies that kept on coming their way. Aside from the Shadow Alliance that made their appearance in the Main Region, the Hextech Laboratory was now added to the list. There was also the Black Serpent Mafia that was constantly lurking in the dark and waiting for an opportunity to strike like a venomous snake.

What's more, there were also those guys from overseas. The guys were hired by the enemies and competitors of the Cilvana Family. The situation on that side was also getting serious and they could not let them fall. The Cilvana Family was close friends and partners of the Springfield Family. Most of their weapons and firearms were produced by the company under the Cilvanas, so there was nothing much to say about that.

While Nathan was busy organizing the special force units and monitoring any strange movements that could possibly be his main targets, he suddenly received a message from one of his troublesome nephews.

Shin told him that there were some people lurking in the dark near them. Their target and purpose were still unknown, but it was already confirmed that they did not have any good intentions.

The expression on Nathan's face immediately changed the moment when he saw the message. He quickly sent reinforcements without any hesitation. Regardless of whoever those opponents were, he had more than enough reason to be wary of them.

Based on the current information that he had, Nathan could only think of two organizations that could possibly be targeting Shin and the others. It was also possible that the target was not them given that they were currently in a public place.

"Is it the Hextech Laboratory?" he thought at first before quickly rejecting the idea. "No, those guys are currently laying low because their recent movements are exposed. They are not stupid enough to target people in a public place where they can easily attract the attention of the government."

"They will also not target the members of the big and influential families if they want to continue their operation in our country for a little longer," he added before falling into deep thought.

After crossing off the Shadow Alliance from the list as well as the Black Serpent Mafia which was now part of that organization, Nathan came up with the final name on the list. "Then it must be those mercenaries. But why are they targeting those three? Isn't their main target Cloe? Is it for revenge because Shin and the others got in their way and fail their mission? Or is it because of something else?"

After making a couple of deductions, Nathan quickly stood up from his seat and decided to take this matter into his own hands. The rest of the mercenaries were not that strong and the trio of Shin, Arthur, and Leonard were more than enough to deal with them alongside the reinforcements that he sent. The problem was the person who was leading this operation.

According to the reports that were sent to him, there seemed to be a sighting of one of the top mercenaries disembarking from one of the ships docked on the Corner Stone City. And from the information that he received, that person was hired by the competitor of the Cilvana Family.

While riding the military vehicle, Nathan reviewed the data about this particular mercenary.

"Mad Dog. he is a notorious mercenary known for doing dirty work for anyone as long as they have the right price. He may look like someone who values money a lot but he never goes back to his words. Once he accepts the job, he will make sure that he will see it to the end whether it is a success or a failure."

"This guy is not that strong and only a peak of the Ethereal Opening Stage and close to stepping into the Void Manifestation Stage. But his crafty mind is the most troublesome to deal with. He can even give some headache to the Domain Realm Experts due to his special powers."

The strength of this guy was nothing in front of Nathan. As someone who was at the Peak of the Domain Realm, he could not put anyone in his eyes aside from the Old Monsters of Transcendent Realm.

But that was him.

It would be a completely different case when it came to Shin and the others who were only at the peak of the Core Formation Stage. Someone of that caliber was still out of their reach unless they were as strong as Shiella and David who were also at the peak of the Ethereal Opening Stage.

Nathan was planning to inform the two about the situation, but he suddenly remembered that Shiella needed to accommodate the guests from overseas and she invited David to accompany her due to not having any suitable escort.

It might not be as important as the current situation that Shin and the other two were facing, but they still had to accommodate those guests, especially the younger ones since most of them were accompanying the delegates from other countries and representatives of huge international companies.

His only choice was Jerimiah and Vincent who were staying with Shin and the others right now. But the problem was he did not have any contact with those two. He could only instruct his subordinates to get in contact with them and inform those two of the current situation.

Things were starting to get complicated the more time passed and Nathan was starting to get a bad premonition about it. He could not shake off the feeling that something bad was about to happen.

"Looks like the time of peace is starting to get shaken," he muttered as he closed his eyes after urging his driver to increase their pace.

...

In the meantime, the said trio who was the center of this incident was currently busy with their feast in the seafood restaurant. But despite the high-quality and delicious food presented in front of them, they could not bring themselves to fully enjoy their amazing taste.

They were continuously devouring all of the food in front of them and seemingly eating their fill to their heart's content on the surface. But in truth, their minds were currently occupied by their surroundings.

They were even using their respective secret methods to digest their food at a much faster rate and convert them into nutrients that could strengthen their bodies and refill their energies.

These techniques were only being used on battlefields by soldiers to make use of their time and avoid getting an upset stomach when they suddenly called for the battle.

It was not advisable to use on normal occasions since these techniques would waste quite a lot of nutrients of the food in the process. But the trio did not have to think about that given their current situation where they had to fight at any given moment.

Regardless, they were now in a very bad mood. This was supposedly their time to relax, especially for Arthur and Leonard who just went through an intense 'welcome party' from their seniors. But who would have thought that this was going to be this troublesome? They felt that they went back to the days when they were under constant pressure during their recent special training.

The two of them were constantly cursing here and there as they munch on the crab and lobster meats on their plates. They were even aggressively chewing their food as they started to get impatient at waiting for their opponents.

They dared those people hiding in the dark to make their moves now so that they could teach them a lesson.

Shin, on the other hand, was checking his Advance Watch for the updates from the people sent by Nathan. He could not shake off the feeling that something bad was going to happen.

Chapter 1027 Lurking In The Shadows (Part 4)

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Trio already finished their meal and was currently resting to digest everything. Despite the good and delicious meal, the three of them did not feel satisfied due to their current situation.

Shin checked his current condition and found that he was currently at 70% of his full power. It might not be the best, but it was better than his previous state. He could at least unleash enough power with this to protect himself.

When they were done resting, Shin quickly sent a message to the head of the unit sent by Nathan earlier. "We are ready."

The reply came quickly after that. "Roger that!"

After that, the trio exchanged glances before making standing up to leave. Of course, they did not forget to pay before leaving. They even left a good tip for the good service that they had received.

The three acted normal and headed to the Black Panther parked in the distance, quickly riding as if they had no idea about the enemies hiding in the dark. They had already confirmed that they were the target of these people since the gazes that they felt were directed at them. It might be brief and quickly disappeared after checking their movements, but it was more than enough for the trio to confirm their suspicion.

"Tsk! It looks like this car will not have a good end," commented Arthur after sitting in the passenger seat.

The corner of Shin's mouth suddenly twitched when he heard that. He might not like fancy things, but knowing that his car was going to be destroyed later was still not a good feeling. He had to make sure to protect it with his Mental Energy later.

After setting up the Mentalism Runes that could help him summon a sturdy barrier later, Shin finally started the car and quickly drove it away from the seafood restaurant.

He drove quite fast as he wanted to distance themselves away from the civilians. If a fight really broke out, then it was hard for their side to fight when there were innocent people around. They had to get away from the rest to make sure that there were no accidents would happen.

Arthur and Leonard also got ready while waiting patiently for the start of the upcoming battle. They just returned from the 'welcome party' of their department, so they still carrying their weapons in them.

Arthur held the silver cylindrical item in his hand. He could release both of its ends later to turn it into a silver spear. Leonard, on the other hand, put on his combat gloves before bumping his fists together, showing his eagerness to fight.

The two of them got beaten up by their seniors pretty badly earlier, so they were quite excited right now since they could vent out their frustrations to these guys targeting them. Unfortunately, Shin did not bring his dual katana with him this time. But it did not mean that he would be defenseless since he could just borrow some tools from the soldiers following after them.

When the black panther was already away from the restaurant, taking the road connecting it toward the city, Shin suddenly sensed an intense bloodlust coming from the front.

He quickly hit the break and turned the driving wheel, making the car drift as it drew arching tire marks on the ground.

Skrrt!

The screeching sounds of the wheels echoed as Shin summoned his Mental Energy and formed a barrier that coated the entire car.

Bang!

A powerful explosion suddenly erupted on the spot that the car was supposed to take if not for Shin's actions. If it hit them, then it would not be hard to imagine the outcome of the car, much less the trio riding it.

Fortunately, Shin's senses were sharp enough which help them avoid the disaster.

But that was only the beginning as a series of fireballs suddenly fell down from the sky and started bombarding them. There was also a series of gunshots coming from behind the trees on both sides of the road.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

It was a clear ambush set specifically for the three. Unfortunately for them, Shin was already prepared and blocked all of the attacks with the mental energy barrier, blocking off the bullets and fireballs that he failed to dodge.

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

It was at that moment when the soldiers protecting the trio revealed themselves and started attacking the people who were hiding in the dark.

An intense battle quickly broke out as the trio jumped out of the car right after Shin skillfully parked it on the side of the road. Then Arthur and Leonard quickly opened the car doors and swiftly headed to the woods and help the soldiers at taking down their assaulters.

Naturally, Shin did not forget to activate the strengthening runes he prepared earlier and threw a bunch of talismans above the car, creating a sturdy barrier that protected it.

This black panther was very expensive. Even if he already earned quite a lot from the game, it would still hurt his pocket if he wanted to buy another one. He really liked this car a lot, so he would spare some effort to protect it.

After that, he followed the two, planning to help them. But he just took a single step from his when he suddenly noticed that there was something wrong. Without any hint of hesitation, he summoned his Mental Energy and covered his entire body with it while preparing for the battle.

Swoosh!

It was at that moment that he noticed that the space within the 20-meter range radius seemed to have distorted. A screen of mental energy sealed off everything within it, trapping Shin completely.

He then realized that he was the main target. 'Who are these people? Are they another group of agents sent by the Shadow Alliance?'

While he was making a guess on who was targeting him, a person suddenly appeared a few distance ahead of him. It was a guy with a ghost mask that was normally worn by some of the special forces soldiers in the war zone. He was also wearing military pants and a combat vest over his sleeveless shirt.

'A mercenary,' Shin quickly came up with a conclusion after seeing the attire of the person slowly making his way toward him. He became more confident about it when he felt the bloodlust of that person. It was a unique feature for the people who survived in the war zones for a long time.

He also saw the demon's tattoo on the shoulder of that person and quickly recognized it. 'Oni Mercenary Group!'

As someone who used to train in the mafia training camp and grew up in a military family, Shin was naturally familiar with the famous groups from the war zones. And from what he could remember, these guys were notoriously famous for kidnapping and killing any targets as long as the offered price was alluring enough.

Of course, they would avoid targeting powerful people who had the strength to slaughter them. But they would not refuse the job if the target could be taken down with their current strength.

"Flame, we have five minutes! Finish it quickly before the Dragon King arrives! Our men cannot delay someone like him for long!" said a person on the radio of the mercenary.

"Don't worry, that is plenty enough," said the person who seemed to have the codename 'Flame'.

Shin also heard those words given his senses enhanced by mentalism techniques. He quickly assumed a battle position and got ready for the battle. He was quite injured but buying enough time with it would be more than enough.

Glowing runes suddenly appeared on the surface of his skin as he partially activated them. Once the opponent made their move, then he would immediately show this guy the might of the Mentalism Runes when it came to battle, especially when it was combined with orthodox methods of Mentalism.

At the same time, he spread his Spiritual Sense in every direction, establishing a partial connection with the surroundings. He was still not used to using this since he usually used it alongside his False Territory to create his self-created secret art, Zone.

But this did not mean that his sensing ability became weaker. In fact, it even became stronger as there was mixed energy within it. It became a weapon that made the Mentalists famous for their senses.

'I will not hold back!' thought Shin as he steeled his resolve before casting another mentalism technique. It was the ocular technique that he had developed with the inspiration of the one that he had the game, True Sight!

There was a pair of runes glowing on each of his eyes, giving him the ability to see everything in front of him. Whether it was an invisible force, a hidden weapon, or a secret technique – Shin could see through it. Even faint attacks and illusions would not work against him.

Flame, the mercenary, was suddenly taken aback at the series of changes that Shin had gone through. Whether it was the dense and pure Mental Energy, the strange Mentalism Runes, the sharp Spiritual Sense, or the pair of glowing eyes – every one of them was something that could be rarely seen by other Mentalists.

He knew from their captain that this operation was going to be very troublesome, but he was not expecting that it was 'this' troublesome. He was now starting to have doubts about whether the five minutes were enough to take down this kid.

'Well, the captain will always have a plan. And that scary guy is with us too, so all we have to do is to follow their arrangements,' he thought to himself as floating balls made of fire started to appear around him one after another.

"At most, I'll just have to give my all at facing this kid. This hurts my pride, but I don't have a choice since I am facing one of the blessed ones of heaven," he muttered as he made his way toward Shin.

He was an average person with a humble background – no, it couldn't even be called a humble background since he lived a life worse than a sewer rat. And after his family died in hunger one after another, he was discovered by the captain of the Oni Mercenary Group due to his special abilities.

He thought he had talent in martial arts due to the fire superpowers that he awakened before. But who would have thought that he was destined to be an average martial artist despite the advantage that he had compared to the others? He was already in his late thirties yet he was only at the early phase of the Ethereal Opening Stage.

He envied these young people who were called 'geniuses.' And now that one of them was currently standing right in front of him, he had to make sure to vent out all of his frustrations in life.

"You have to blame yourself for being too talented! We are going to cut you down before you can even grow further!" he said quietly as the bloodlust in his eyes became even more violent.

Chapter 1028 Battling A Wielder Of A Superpower (Part 1)

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"In a dense forest, the tallest trees are the ones that will be cut down first or swept by the storm. You have to blame yourself for being one," said Flame as the fireballs floating around him started revolving around his body before flying toward Shin with an insane speed.

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

Shin slightly knitted his brow when he heard those words. He started to get confused about which force sent this mercenary group to come after him. Unfortunately, he did not have enough time to think about it since the fireballs were already heading his way.

With a step forward, he waved his hands in front of him in a circular manner, creating a thick wall of mental energy in front of him. And when he pressed his palms forward, the Mental Energy Wall took a tall-looking hexagonal shield standing in front of him as a huge glowing rune appeared at its center.

'Four Symbol Scripture: Heavenly Black Tortoise – Protection of the Turtle General'

Bang! Bang! Bang!

A successive explosion erupted as the shield came in contact with the flying fireballs. The sturdy shield stood strong as it endured the bombardment of the opposing party. And because of it, none of the fireballs was able to harm Shin.

But at the same time, Shin felt the sudden change in the air. Due to repeated explosions, the air became too hot and gave him some trouble when breathing. The hot temperature was also starting to affect his senses, messing up his Spiritual Sense.

Shin controlled his Mental Energy and created another layer of protection over his skin, minimizing the effects of the surrounding temperature. He also put a screen on the holes of his nose to filter the air that he was breathing.

Swoosh!

It was at that moment when Flame suddenly broke through the cloud of smoke created by the explosions. He appeared beside Shin while ducking forward and throwing a flaming fist for a powerful hook punch.

Despite his senses being slightly distorted by the heat in the air, Shin was still able to sense that attack coming from miles away. His arms quickly move as he tried to block the incoming fist with it.

"Heh!" Flame gave Shin a mocking look when he saw those actions.

Right before Shin could even set up his defensive posture, the strong fire suddenly erupted behind the fist of his opponent, accelerating the speed of the punch greatly.

Bang!

Swoosh!

The blazing fist headed straight to Shin's face with an unstoppable force. Flame was even grinning evilly as he was waiting for the head of his opponent to get blasted by his fist.

Swoosh!

But contrary to his expectation, his blazing fist hit his target and passed through his opponent. And due to his attack missing its mark, he was suddenly thrown into an awkward posture, unable to stop the momentum of his fist.

That was when he realized that the person standing in front of him was nothing but an illusion.

'Four Symbol Scripture: Heavenly Black Tortoise – Illusionary Substitution'

Then a sudden chill run through the spine of Flame as he felt Shin standing behind him and was currently in the middle of throwing a powerful punch.

Shin's fist was glowing with white light as he threw a rotating punch at the exposed back of his opponent. There was even an illusionary image of a tiger standing behind him and pouncing forward as he threw the punch out.

'Four Symbol Scripture: Sacred White Tiger – Fist of Slaughter'

Roar!

The glowing fist drilled the spine of the mercenary as he was sent flying almost immediately, right after the punch was thrown out. The illusionary tiger even opened its mouth and devoured Flame during the process.

Shin had no intention of stopping there as he quickly stomped on the ground and planted his foot on it. A series of cracks suddenly appeared on the surface of the ground before broken pieces of rocks and small boulders were sent up in the air.

Bang!

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

Strings of Mental Energy wrapped themselves around those rocks as Shin threw them toward the direction where he sent his opponent flying.

Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh!

Bang! Bang! Bang!

Flame was quickly hit by those rock boulders, unable to protect himself. He was also buried by them as Shin continued to send boulder after boulder without stopping.

But despite having a great advantage, the expression on Shin's face still remained serious. He just used three of his advanced techniques, yet he was already sweating bullets. It was not because he was running out of Mental Energy, but because of his internal injuries getting worse.

Since earlier, he was continuously pouring his Mental Energy into healing his injuries. But since they were caused by his conflicting Internal Qi, the effects of his Mentalism Techniques were fairly limited, especially when most of those injuries were due to his Demonic Qi.

Even though he could heal them to a certain extent, his Mental Energy was still not strong enough to fully heal them since his Demonic Qi was much denser and more powerful compared to it.

And even if letting them heal naturally would give him a good amount of benefits, his current situation forced him to heal them with his Mentalism Techniques.

This was his current problem, fighting an opponent much stronger than him while trying to heal his body was much harder than how it sounded. Shin did not only need to focus his mind in this battle to make sure not to commit any mistakes, but he also had to constantly push himself to the limits despite the current condition of his body.

Boom!

Then an explosion erupted from the pile of rock boulders where Flame was currently buried. And when Shin focused his gaze in that direction, he saw the mercenary was currently covered with his fire element superpowers which seemed to have the form of armor.

"A partial Qi Armament? This is bad. To think that he already reaches that kind of control over his superpowers? I'm in deep trouble now," muttered Shin as the expression on his face turned even darker. "Looks like this guy's position within their group was quite high."

'Qi Armament' was a skill unique to Martial Artists who reached the Void Manifestation Stage of the Ascension Realm. It was a stage where they could create weapons and armor that could aid them in battle using their Natural Force (a higher form of Internal Qi).

At the same time, these Qi Armaments could also enhance their strengths and give them special abilities during a battle.

It was also similar to 'Magic Arms' of a Mentalist in Ruler's Realm. It was a technique that a Mentalist used to create weapons and armor in a battle. Though, Mentalists leaned more on manifesting multiple weapons that could become projectiles when they were fighting.

Those weapons could also be used to form Mentalism Arrays and Formations which could give them more strength during a battle.

But this did not mean that these skills and techniques were only limited to those experts. Some people could imitate them through special means.

Just like people who wielded Superpowers.

Superpowers were said to be a manifestation of an individual's potential, desire, and ambition. It was different from the Bloodline powers of Martial Arts and Mentalists Families with a long history or Divine and Special Bodies of blessed individuals. They had some similarities but come from a different source.

Bloodline power and Special Physiques came from the blood of certain individuals that they inherited from their ancestors while Divine Bodies was a gift from Heaven. People who possessed these kinds of abilities were destined to be great and could become the pillars of their respective families or sects.

On the other hand, Superpowers were things that were awakened by people when their inner desires and state of mind reached a certain level. Even though it sounded so simple, not everyone had the ability to do it.

But if a wielder of superpowers could reach a particular stage of mastery over it, they could create various skills and abilities that could rival people who were on higher attainment of martial arts and mentalism than them.

The records of history said that Superpowers were another path for the innate powers that an individual had in them. If it was nurtured properly, then it would grow into a powerful weapon that could aid their growth, but it could also become a blade that could cripple them.

Not all Superpowers were the same; they could also vary based on different wielders. And if the individual relied too much on their superpowers, they would reach a certain bottleneck that they would never be able to break in their entire lives.

And when they reached that point and were unable to overcome those challenges, then the Superpower Wielders would deviate into another path where their superpowers devoured them and became its puppet.

Great Scholars said that Superpowers were a double-edged sword. There were even others who said that it was another side of a coin where its counterpart was called Demonic Abilities. And since it came from an individual's inner desire and ambition, old scholars suspected that it was another form of 'Seed of Hatred'.

This theory was greatly supported by a lot of wise people since the outcome of the wielder who failed to control it was similar to someone who was consumed by their inner demons.

Shin learned about these during his previous training. Professor Plum and Grandmaster Benn had discussed it with him since he had not only a single 'Seed of Hatred' within him. They were studying this subject as they were looking for a way to make him control those demonic powers without losing his mind.

David, his senior brother, also gave him some material about it. Even though, it was not useful to him at the current moment since his 'Seeds of Hatred' was currently sealed alongside his dantian and Uno, the knowledge that he gained from them would still be helpful in this kind of situation.

And right now, he was standing in front of someone who mastered his Superpowers to a certain level. It was a stage where his person's strength was almost comparable to someone who was almost reaching the Void Manifestation Stage.

Even though there was still some distance before this person reached that level of strength, this opponent was still something that Shin could not face in his current state. If he was not careful, then he might lose his life, if not suffering a grievous wound.

Chapter 1029 Battling A Wielder Of A Superpower (Part 2)

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Shin observed his opponent closely with his 'True Sight' technique. And after a couple of moments, he discovered that even though Flame managed to reach a high level of control over his superpowers and also imitate the Qi Armament Skill of Void Manifestation Stage experts, the form of his armor was not that stable.

At the very least, Shin could occasionally find some flaws in the flame armor which he could take advantage of when the fight started.

At the same time, he could also use his own technique to further enhanced his strength. His Martial Arts were currently sealed, so he could not use his Qi Reinforcement Skills to strengthen his body. He was also unable to activate it even though his body had fully adapted to it.

Fortunately, the Qi Reinforcement Skill that Professor Plum had created to complement his Yin-Yang Arts was out of the ordinary. It could not only enhance his abilities during the battle, but it could also

toughen up his body when training it. And because of this, Shin was able to retain some of its powers even though it was not at its full might.

Aside from this, his Mentalism Techniques would also not lag behind. If Martial Arts had Qi Reinforcement Skills, then Mentalism had its Mentalism Enhancement.

Qi Reinforcement Skills could make a person's body tougher and more powerful while Mentalism Enhancements could further improve the already powerful body of an individual. In a sense, their purpose was the same, though their methods were slightly different.

Shin still hadn't reached the desired mastery over his Qi Reinforcement Skill and Mentalism Enhancement to combine them, creating his personal Unified Strengthening. But he at least had a deep understanding of these two.

At his Mentalism Enhancement was also different from the norm since it was derived from the technique that Grandmaster Benn had created, another usage of Mentalism Runes.

The glowing runes that seemed to be engraved on Shin's skin released a more brilliant light. The runes on his arms spread up and reached his shoulders, forming a Mentalism Sequence. It even reached his chest and back before joining together and forming a magical circle at the center of his chest strange patterns on his back.

The runes on his legs also climbed up and formed a similar-looking sequence but did not reach higher than his waist. They stopped on his hips before joining together just like what happened on his upper body.

This was the Mentalism Enhancement of Shin and it boosted all of his combat capabilities by a large margin. But despite gaining a powerful upgrade, the expression on his face remained dark as he fully understood his current situation.

Keeping this Mentalism Enhancement active would be added to the burden that he was already enduring. If he committed a single mistake, then the price that he had to pay would be pretty disastrous for his body.

'It is coming!' thought Shin as he saw the fireballs surrounding his opponent disappear in a flash. He could sense their movements through his Spiritual Sense and knew that they were moving at a much faster speed than the previous exchange.

Since he did not have the time to put up a mental energy wall to shield him, Shin had no other choice but to face them head-on.

He read the trajectory of the fireballs before moving his hand accordingly to either block or deflect them.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

His movements were short and simple. But every time he gently waved his hand, a smooth trail would be left in the air as he changed the course of the fireballs and sent them away with either his palm or the back of his hand.

His Mental Energy was protecting his arms, so he did not suffer and burn or scorch marks from the fireballs.

There was a brief moment when Shin got a space to catch his breath but he chose not to grab that opportunity and instead spread his arms wide before moving them in a circular manner. One hand was stopped above him while the other was right in front of his crotch. And the moment when they stopped a hexagonal shield appeared in front of him as he pressed his palms forward to support it.

Swoosh!

It was at that moment when Flame suddenly appeared and threw a thrusting punch forward as his entire arm was covered with a raging flame. The front of his fist formed a sharp tip, making his arm look like a blazing pike spear.

Boom!

The attack came a little too sudden and could surprise any other opponent. Unfortunately, it was ineffective against Shin as he was able to see it from miles away with the help of his True Sight and Spiritual Sense.

Shin planted his feet on the ground to stand firmly as he prepared for a counterattack. But at the same time, his opponent had the same thoughts in mind.

Flame was a veteran mercenary who already went through a lot on the battlefields of war-torn areas, so he was able to quickly see through the plans that Shin was trying to accomplish. He had to take the initiative before the situation got out of control.

Bang!

An explosion erupted from behind his shoulder, pushing his arm forward and producing more pressure on Shin. And due to the strong force produced by that explosion, Shin was pushed back despite his feet firmly rooted in the ground.

A long trail was drawn on the ground as Shin was continuously pushed by his opponent, dragging him away with a forceful advance.

Shin knew that he could no longer continue this way since it would only worsen his internal injuries further. He quickly disengaged with the help of the Four Symbol Scriptures: Holy Azure Dragon Techniques.

Naturally, Flame would not let Shin get away just like and quickly gave chase without any hint of hesitation. He knew that he had the advantage in frontal confrontation since he was in a higher realm in terms of martial arts and physique. Moreover, he had the aid of his fire superpower, so he could continuously pressure Shin with his attacks until he found the right opportunity to land a fatal blow.

Shin continuously moved around with the help of his foot techniques to avoid a frontal confrontation with Flame. Even though he was confident that he could exchange blows with his opponent, he was not in the right state to do it.

Aside from throwing a couple of counterattacks from time to time, he was mostly moving around the space that he had while thinking of a way to get out of his current predicament.

Fortunately, his combat and movement techniques were strong enough for this current situation. He might not be able to find a chance to use a more advanced move due to the continuous assaults of his opponents, but it was the same for the other side since he would quickly advance forward and intervene whenever he saw the opponent preparing for a more powerful move.

Flame understood these two and chose to continue what he was doing right now. Given his advantages with physique and martial might, he would sooner or later suppress Shin as long as he did not commit any mistake.

But this decision was also favorable to Shin since he could buy enough time for Nathan to arrive and save. He heard earlier from the radio his opponent that there were some people that were trying to delay Nathan, but given his understanding of his uncle, Shin knew that the five minutes that the opposing side had mentioned would not be that accurate.

Reinforcement could arrive earlier than that!

But at the same time, it did not mean that Shin would passively wait for Nathan to arrive. He would still give his all in this battle and take down this enemy if an opportunity presented itself.

In terms of pure strength and raw power, Shin was obviously on the weaker side. But he was not taking much damage as he was meeting the opposing punch with a gentle palm. And every time he came in contact with the opposing side, he would always take a step back and turn his feet as a pivot.

He was using a gentle fist to face an iron fist!

He continued to move this way with a particular rhythm to control the movements of his opponent. And this went on until he finally created a chance where he could use an advanced mentalism technique. But instead of using a powerful offensive strike, Shin chose to go with a more defensive move.

He had left a small amount of Mental Energy in every place that they went through in preparation for this move.

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Shin quickly took a large hop to disengage from his opponent and quickly put his palms together which produced a huge energy ripple in the air.

Flame wanted to chase after Shin but a thick mist suddenly appeared out of nowhere and hid the tracks of his target. And when he stood at the spot where Shin was supposed to stand, he found nothing but an empty space.

When he swept his gaze around, he found that he was already standing in the middle of a spreading mist that blocked his line of sight.

'Four Symbol Scripture: Azure Dragon and Black Tortoise – Illusionary Ghost Tracks'

With the combination of the movement techniques of the Holy Azure Dragon and the illusion techniques of the Heavenly Black Tortoise, Shin was able to create an environment that could confuse the sense of his opponent.

By constantly moving in different directions and continuously releasing his mental energy coupled with other special methods, this technique was created. And with its help, Shin would be able to buy enough time for himself to regulate his breathing and calm his muscles.

After the earlier exchange, Shin felt that his arms were getting sore due to the heat and power behind each of his opponent's attacks. Even though he was he managed to nullify most of it because of his positioning, his body still received a certain amount of shock and accumulated heat from the successive blazing strikes of the opposing party.

But at the very least, everything was worth it since he could now take the initiative in this battle. Even though he was still on the back foot, he could at least lessen the burden that he was carrying with this particular technique.

Chapter 1030 Battling A Wielder Of A Superpower (Part 3)

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With the mist that was filling up the surroundings, Shin was able to hide his tracks which gave him enough room to catch his breath. But unlike his opponent who could not see through the mist, he was able to clearly see within it which gave him the opportunity to occasionally harass the latter whenever he got the chance.

But that did not mean that he already gained the upper hand. Given the stronger physique of his opponent and a higher level of martial arts attainment, his attacks were not that effective. Was even forced to hide deep in the mist due to the large range of attacks that Flame had.

The fire superpowers were still not to be underestimated, especially when its wield reached a high level of mastery on it. Flame, the mercenary, was not an idiot either – when he realized that he was already

trapped inside an illusionary boundary, he chose to stay in a single place instead of randomly moving around. This way, he could properly feel his surroundings while protecting himself.

With him constantly throwing an attack with a wide range, his opponent would find it hard to approach him, especially when he was covering every direction with his fire attacks.

Within this mist, Flame understood that he already lost the initiative to control the rhythm of the battle, so he focused on a different area instead. He knew that the time was currently not in his favor – if he continued to linger on this place and was unable to take down his target, then the Dragon King would immediately arrive and that would be his end.

He had to think of a way to clear this mist or at least force Shin from hiding.

Having that idea in mind, Flame suddenly took a stance where he separated his feet, parallel to each other, before squatting his hips. He then placed both of his arms beside his waist with his fist facing the sky.

After that, he constantly released the fire from his body, filling up the air with its heat. The flickering flame that shrouded the mercenary's body formed a spherical field with a radius of 3 meters away from him.

His appearance looked like a miniature sun at the center of the mist.

Shin knew that his opponent was planning something, so he quickly threw a barrage of attacks in hope that it would interrupt his opponent. He bombarded his opponent with Mental Energy Waves, pouring out everything that he had in it, but they still ended up ineffective against Flame.

Pop! Pop! Pop!

A popcorn-like sound erupted from Flame's body as he continued to maintain his stance. The air around him also started to respond to it as the crackling sound of a burning wood could be heard.

With the constant heat that he was released, the surrounding air a dozen meters away from him started to rise sharply. The scarlet flames around him started to melt the ground and slowly turned it into magma that spurted out from underneath.

Boom!

A violent ripple was suddenly sent in every direction, affecting the air with the immense heat. And when it swept through Shin's body, he felt that his air began to bend and even gave off a charred smell.

Under the influence of the shapeless heat, his pores seemed to become affected and made it harder for him to breathe. Without any hesitation, he quickly released his Mental Energy and covered his body with it, protecting himself from the immense heat of the surrounding air.

This forced him to stop his tracks which cost him the collapse of his technique.

Alongside the pause of his movements, the mist produced by the 'Illusionary Ghost Tracks' slowly dissipated, revealing him in his opponent's view.

Now that Flame had found his target, he quickly kicked the ground and launched himself toward Shin as fast as he could.

Bang!

Whoosh!

Supported by the erupting flame behind him, the air was suddenly torn apart as Flame propelled toward his target like a flying missile. He did not stop as he swung his fisted hand, throwing a blazing punch forward.

The might of that punch gives Shin the impression of a gigantic cannon launcher shrinking back and charging up before delivering a powerful shot straight to his face.

Shin was forced to make a choice this time. He either had to face this attack head-on and worsen his internal injuries or try dodging it risking himself to get burned by the raging flame surrounding the blazing fist of his opponent.

This particular attack from his opponent was really tricky to deal with. The power behind the punch was so strong that it could crush and blast anything upon contact, especially with the explosive force that was accompanying it. But at the same time, the raging flame surrounding the fist was composed of pure energy from the superpower which could still burn anything in its path despite the punch missing the target.

Regardless of the choice that he was going to take, Shin would still suffer a serious injury that would affect the battle.

"If a single technique is not enough to stop it, then I will use four of mine!" muttered Shin as a resolute look surfaced on his face.

The Four Symbol Scripture was a combination of different types of Mentalism Techniques which could be used in every situation. Shin still remembered when Grandmaster Benn first demonstrated the combinations of those techniques to create a unified form.

He might not have reached that level of mastery yet, but he could still imitate those moves by combining all of his understanding of each technique.

Stretching his arm forward, a hexagonal shield made of mental energy was summoned in front of his palm as a series of runes appeared on its surface, reinforcing its defensive capabilities.

Bang!

But despite how sturdy-looking it was, the shield was still shattered into pieces right after it came in contact with the blazing punch of his opponent. Though, Shin did not get disheartened. This shield was not meant to stop the attack after all. Its purpose was to lessen the momentum of the punch and briefly slowed it down to buy him enough time to prepare his next move.

Mental Energy gathered on his other hand as he clenched it into a firm fist before sending out a punch. The same illusionary figure of a tiger shrouded his entire being as he threw that punch forward, seemingly trying to devour the incoming, blazing fist of his opponent.

Roar!

Boom!

Upon contact, Shin felt that something had exploded inside him as the force accompanying the punch of the opposing side. He felt that the muscles on his arm were shredded and torn apart before being burned by a raging flame.[please visit](#)

He forcefully suppressed its feeling as he quickly covered his arm with his mental energy, quickly using the healing abilities of the Celestial Vermillion Bird Method of the Four Symbol Scripture before the damage completely shattered his entire arm.

He then absorbed the force of his opponent as he quickly retracted his arm. He rode the momentum produced by the impact to move backward while using the movement technique of the Holy Azure Dragon Method of the Four Symbol Scriptures to widen the distance between him and the mercenary.

On the other hand, Flame was about to give chase when he suddenly felt a powerful pounding force from Shin's punch. The initial collision with the barrier lessened the momentum of his punch before the latter's attack somewhat nullify the major force of his own punch.

Then the pounding force quickly followed after that which gave Flame a numbing sensation on his arms. It did not cause him any damage, but it still forced him to stop in his tracks due to the uncomfortable sensation that it had.

That particular punch from Shin was a combination of three techniques that he knew. Its outward appearance was similar to the offensive strike of the Sacred White Tiger Method which carried a powerful force. But hidden within it was a tremor force that triggered the 'poison' that he prepared earlier.

This so-called poison was not entirely harmful but it could cause the target to feel dizzy and numb in their muscles after repeated exposure to it.

Shin had mixed this 'poison' with the mist that he had created with his previous technique. It was ineffective against opponents with a higher level of physique if they just inhaled it, but it could still cause them to feel its effects clearly if it was triggered by an external force.

The tremor force that Shin had hidden on his earlier punch produced a pounding force that repeatedly shook the muscles and innards of his opponent, triggering the hidden effects of his 'poison'. Due to that, Shin brought himself another precious time to catch his breath.

This could also affect the movements of his opponent in the upcoming exchange.

Flame shook his head a little quickly resuming his attacks. He instantly caught up to Shin with the help of his booster-like flame that pushed him from behind before continuing to harass Shin.

The howling of the wind was getting louder as Flame gradually gained momentum on each of his strikes. His powerful punches and whipping kicks were like a barrage of missiles on a battlefield.

There were no feints mixed on it and just pure and raw firepower. But despite the straightforwardness that they had, the consecutive and concentrated attacks had thrown Shin in a difficult predicament.

Despite him constantly dodging and blocking those attacks, he was still receiving considerable damage on his body. His injuries were also worsening every second. There was even blood dripping on the corner of his mouth as he suppressed the urge to vomit blood.

The surrounding air was also gradually heating up, making it harder for Shin to breathe and causing his movements to become a little sluggish.

He was relying heavily on his Spiritual Sense and True Sight to read the movements of his opponent, minimizing the damage to his body. But he was still constantly being hit by a couple of attacks due to his worsening movements.

In not for the 'poison' technique affecting the movements of his opponent, then Shin had most likely turned into charred, pounded meat already.

Shin clearly understood his current predicament and knew that he would lose if he let his focus slip even for a brief moment. And with his willpower, he stubbornly held his ground despite the worsening condition of his body.

In front of the monstrous strength and crazy attacks of his opponent, Shin's fists, arms, and elbows were gradually getting numb from the exchanges. His legs were constantly moving back as they could no longer support his body in withstanding the blows of his opponent.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

Shin's entire arms were shaking violently as he continuously blocks the attacks. There were already burn marks on it, clearly indicating that his healing techniques could no longer keep up with the damage that his opponent was causing him.

The surrounding temperature was also getting higher and higher which made breathing the air impossible. If he breathed in, then his windpipes would most likely burn.

He created a screen on the holes of his nose earlier to filter the air that he was breathing, but even it could no longer help him with the current temperature of the surroundings.

Due to that, his vision was starting to get affected – whatever he saw seemed to be distorting. He was only relying on his Spiritual Sense right now to read the movements of his opponent, but even it was also starting to get affected too due to the intense heat.

Bam! Bam! Bam!

Flame's attacks were continuously being thrown out and seemed to be not going to stop until he killed Shin.

The area below Shin was sinking in as dust and gravel were sent flying away. He was constantly taking a step back for every attack that he blocked.

Bang!

Another powerful punch was thrown at Shin as his already burned arms shook and shivered. He left a deep footprint when he stomped on the ground after blocking the attack. He felt that his innards were going to explode but he stubbornly held his ground and firmly stood on his feet.

The expression on his face was dark, but he was still thinking of a way to get out of this hopeless situation.

Making a stride and cutting in, Flame retracted his breathing and instantly exploded it. He raised his right arm and threw it forward with a punch fully packed with all of his force.

A raging flame spun around his blazing fist as he pressed it toward Shin, who forcefully raised his arms and crossed them in front of him. He hid his head behind it before summoning his remaining Mental Energy and covering his body with it.

Boom!

Shin was sent flying like a meteor in the opposite direction. Flame, the mercenary, quickly chased after his flying body and caught up to him within an instant.

He did not hesitate as he immediately smashed his fist down, smashing Shin's body on the ground. He then followed it up with another powerful strike that buried Shin underneath a pile of rubbles.