

Destiny 1321

Chapter 1321 Battling the Grand Centipedeus (Part 5)

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Bang! Bang!

Leonard continued to face the Grand Centipedeus head-on, not showing any intention of backing down. He bravely charged forward and courageously threw his attacks without holding back.

He ignored the little damage that he was getting from the impact that the giant centipede was throwing at him with its claws and legs. He might be barely able to scratch the surface of the exoskeleton of this monster, but his attacks were gradually growing stronger as he became more familiar with the Ancient Power of the Primal Beast that he was controlling.

Moreover, he was also becoming more and more skilled at using this higher form of mana and making it look similar to the 'Blood Force' that his master had mentioned to him in the real world.

Aside from this, his Qi Circulation Method, the 'Supreme Blood Sutra', was also reaching another level. He was starting to master this method the more he fought the Grand Centipedeus.

The weaker version of this method, the 'Blood Sutra' had already given him a qi circulation that fitted him perfectly. But with this stronger version of it, he started to feel his boiling blood reach another level.

Unknown to him, the crimson aura that was surrounding his body was changing according to his progress in the 'Supreme Blood Sutra'.

At first, the aura that was covering his body was getting a deeper color, making it resemble the color of the blood more. Then sparks of crimson lightning appeared along with this aura from time to time.

As Leonard continued to circulate his Qi and blood simultaneously with the help of 'Supreme Blood Sutra', the changes in his aura started to become more distinct as time went by.

Then, unknown to him, wavy tattoos started to appear on the surface of his skin one after another. It started from his arms and reached his shoulders before spreading to his chest and the entirety of his back.

He did not notice it due to the set of leather armor that he was wearing. It was covering these tattoos that seemed to be containing a power that he could not completely harness.

It took him quite a while to realize that something was happening to his body. He felt a hot energy circulating throughout his body. In response, his entire body was also starting to feel hotter. It was as if his body was on fire.

The more time passed, the hotter the circulating blood became. It felt like the blood had become lava that was circulating through his veins.

Due to this, Leonard could not help but halt his tracks and retreated, disengaging from the battle. He wanted to subdue the raging blood or at least keep it under control first before continuing.

Seeing that Leonard was retreating, the Grand Centipedeus suddenly gave chase while releasing a loud shriek that shook the entire place.

But before it could even cover the distance between them, the shadow underneath it suddenly moved.

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

Multiple black hands stretched out from the massive shadow that the giant centipede had and grabbed its body and legs, preventing it from moving further.

Then a silhouette dashed around its body while leaving a series of small but deep gashes on its exoskeleton. There were also some shadow energies left in those gashes, preventing the hard armor of the giant centipede from recovering.

The attacks might not deal that much damage, but they at least could prevent the hard exoskeleton from recovering its original state and even contaminating it a little.

Swoosh!

The dashing silhouette suddenly stopped a few distance ahead of the Grand Centipedeus before Diablo materializing himself.

At this moment, Diablo was a little different from his previous appearance. His armor was currently covered with a shadow aura that seemed to be alive. Even the shadow under his feet seemed to have a life of itself as it released tentacles that danced along the air.

His eyes were glowing with purple light which was similar to the aura that was covering the blade of his daggers.

Diablo was starting to get the gist of harnessing the Power of the Shadows that he had gotten from the system due to this quest scenario.

This power was perfect for him, it had given him the ability to control the shadows. But despite knowing how to use them due to the inheritances that he had gotten from the Soundless Assassination Technique, he realized that he could not fully display its powers.

The martial manual had taught him quite a lot of things, especially when it came to how to use the shadow. But he also discovered that the technique focused more on assassination, making it a little lacking after he understood the Power of the Shadows.

He might have tried some of the techniques that he had learned from the Soundless Assassination Techniques to the Grand Centipedeus as this monster was a perfect target practice. Given its huge body that made it impossible to miss, Diablo was having a field day when executing the techniques.

But aside from dealing damage to the hard exoskeleton of the giant centipede, he could not move its massive health bar.

Diablo understood that he was lacking something. He needed more powerful attacks that break through these tough defenses. He was lacking a few techniques that he could use along with this Power of the Shadows, matching its prowess.

When he was thinking about this, he could not help but compare himself to Leonard and Shin. He was not sure what was happening to Shin due to the wall of stone spikes blocking his line of sight, but he could at least see Leonard, who seemed to be undergoing an evolution or sort.

He was still not fully understood what was going on, but at least that was what he was thinking based on what he was seeing.

He understood that he at least needed to buy more time for Leonard.

But as he glanced at Leonard, he could not help but feel envious a little. He understood that his Hyperactive Immersion was special, especially with his Demon Eyes. But he was also starting to realize the edge that the Reality Manifestation had.

Being able to perform with that was way above his real capabilities was one thing, but that was only possible if he was utilizing the Demon Eyes well. At least at the fourth pace even if he did not use the fifth one.

But if he took off that particular skill, Diablo fully understood that he would not stand a chance against players of Shin and Leonard's caliber.

Diablo realized the advantage of having a Qi Circulation Method and brought it into the game. They could apply it to their respective mana, granting them a power that surpassed the game's logic.

"Is this the limit of the Hyperactive Immersion?" asked Diablo to himself as he dodged the series of stomps that the Grand Centipedeus was throwing at him.

He then remembered something when he was being treated by Professor Henry, he heard that the Reality Manifestation was based on Hyperactive Immersion.

It was not that Reality Manifestation was better, but it was because he had yet to fully showcase the real powers of the Hyperactive Immersion.

"Is it also possible for me to learn a Qi Circulation Method inside the game?" he asked, talking to himself as he brandished his daggers around, sending a series of shadow crescents forward and blocking acidic venoms that the Grand Centipedeus had spit.

As those thoughts entered his mind, he suddenly sensed an attack coming from his side. He did not know when and how it bypassed his senses, but he knew that he could not afford to face this attack head-on.

He would be afraid if this was before since even most of his escape skills would not help him in this situation given the large area that the sweeping body of the giant centipede was covering. But with the current power that he had, dealing with this situation would not be a problem.

When the massive body of the Grand Centipedeus was about to reach his position, the shadow underneath his feet suddenly expanded as sank on it.

Diablo did not even hesitate to use one of his escape skills. He disappeared from his position and appeared a dozen meters in the distance.

The shadow swallowed him before spitting him out from the shadow of the giant centipede. But right after he was spat out by the shadows, the Grand Centipedeus seemed to have expected that as its giant spear-like legs were already descending from above.

Diablo did not even hesitate to use one of his escape skills. He disappeared from his position and appeared a dozen meters in the distance.

But right after his body materialized in the distance, he suddenly saw a bunch of stone pillars heading in his direction, covering almost all his escape routes.

"Is it able to predict where am I going to appear and attack ahead of time?" Diablo raised his brows as the series of attacks did not pause and continued to head in his direction in full succession.

Diablo continued to use his escape and movement skills one after another, dodging the attacks repeatedly. He was also using the Power of Shadows to restrict the movements of the giant centipede. He even threw a couple of counterattacks, targeting the joints of the monster and trying to destroy them.

However, due to his attacks lacking the proper way to utilize their full potential, they did not deal that much damage. However, he was able to create some cracks in the tough exoskeleton that it had and even corroding it with the residual shadow powers left by the attacks.

That was when the Grand Centipedeus opened its mouth and spat an acidic liquid that flew straight to Diablo.

What surprised Diablo was when the acidic liquid was spat out, portals appeared hovering above the giant centipede before spitting out different kinds of insects and arachnids with large bodies. They might not be as big as the Grand Centipedeus, but they were as huge as bears at the very least.

One of the insects was a huge moth that unknowingly appeared above Diablo. He did not know how long this moth was there, but he noticed that it was gently flapping its wings, which spread an unknown power in the air.

Before Diablo could do anything about it, he noticed that his entire body was paralyzed without his notice. He also could not properly circulate the energy within his body, making him unable to control the shadows.

He knew that he was in trouble, especially when the acidic liquid was already approaching him.

Swoosh!

But before it could reach him, there was a powerful energy wave that blocked its path and halted its advance.

Looking at the color of the energy wall formed by the residual energy of the previous attack, Diablo did not need to look where it came from to know who it was.

Ta-ta!

Shin suddenly landed beside Diablo before swinging the [Yamato], creating a powerful gust of wind that swept through the surroundings. It cleared the air and sent the power that the moth was spreading away.

When it happened, Diablo instantly regained his control over his body. He was about to resume the battle when Shin suddenly extended his head to the side and stopped him.

Diablo was slightly confused and looked at Shin. But the latter did not explain much as he took out a black book from his inventory and passed it.

Looking at the cover of the book, Diablo could see that there was a shadow aura that was covering it. He could also see a golden text on its cover, telling him what kind of book it was.

"Shadowless Art," Diablo read the title out loud before turning to Shin with a confused look.

"I can see that you are lacking something, and I think this will help you greatly to find it," said Shin while keeping an eye in front of them.

The Grand Centipedeus did not make any sudden move after the acidic liquid that it spat failed to devour Diablo. Instead, it focused its energy on keeping the portal activated as it spat out more arachnids.

Shin could see a dense demonic energy shrouding the bodies of these monsters, but he could tell that they did not belong to the Bug Tribe. They would be fine if they did not face any more Bug Tribe members.

"Why are you giving this to me?" asked Diablo instead of accepting the black book. He knew that it was a martial manual, and it was a very advanced one at that.

"It is not for free, though," answered Shin in a nonchalant tone.

Diablo immediately understood and somewhat hesitated. But after putting more thought into it and remembering what he had decided earlier, he sighed before nodding his head. "I just hope that you will be different."

"You can count on us," said Shin as he shoved the Shadowless Art Martial Manual to Diablo before walking forward.

"You can go and learn it for now. You can return after digesting everything," he said as his eyes never left the Grand Centipedeus.

He also sent an invitation to join the Empyrean Talons as he continued. "You can leave this thing to me. I'll buy the two of you as much time as possible."

Diablo stared at the back of Shin before tightening his grip on the martial manual as he hit the accept button in front of him.

Ding

System: Player Diablo had joined the Empyrean Talons!

Shin smiled under his mask when he heard the notification before directing his gaze to the giant centipede. He then mumbled in a quiet voice. "It has been a while since I summoned these guys."

'Equipment Skill (Mask: Nephilim's Gemini Mask): Spirit Summon'

'Equipment Skill (Mask: Nephilim's Gemini Mask): Spirit Fusion'

Phantom Swordsman Skill: Phantom Apparition'

Two clones suddenly appeared on each side of Shin, standing slightly behind him. One was the Eclipse Clone which was the fusion of the Sun and Moon Clones while the other was the Phantom Clone.

With Shin's current strength, both currently possessed a power that surpassed most of the ordinary clones. The pressure that each of them had was no weaker than what a peak Titled Ranker had and almost comparable to an ordinary Godlike Player.

Shin raised his head and ordered. "You two deal with the underlings while I handle the big one."

Chapter 1322: Peak Potential (Part 1): Thunder Eclipse

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"Go!"

Swoosh! Swoosh!

Right after Shin gave his order, the Eclipse and Phantom Clones quickly made their moves.

They separated from each other as they headed toward the direction of the two portals where the pack of insects and arachnids were gathering.

The Eclipse Clone put its hands together, holding its sword with both as it turned into a pair of katana. It seemed like it was using a similar power as Shin, but instead of using the Power of Primordial Eclipse, it chose to wield the Powers of the Brilliant Sun and Brilliant Moon.

The Phantom Clone, on the other hand, had chosen to continue using the higher form of mana as it used the sheathed katana while sprinting towards one of the portals.

Shin was rarely using his clones these days due to how taxing it was to control them under the multiple states that he was in. It would be too exhausting to control them even though he had a monstrous willpower.

But this time, he wanted their AI to control the two clones. They had decent fighting capabilities of their own after all. Since they were facing just a bunch of monsters anyway, Shin felt that it was more than enough.

But what surprised him when he summoned them was the changes that the Phantom Clone had. He did not get any extra skills under this secondary combat class since he had been promoted to Tier 3 aside from the 'True Phantom' skill that still needed him to gather the materials to create.

It might be an overpowered skill, but it would still take a lot of time before he formed his True Phantom.

But after seeing the current Phantom Clone, he noticed that it had undergone some changes. It was now more life-like and shared a lot of similarities to the two clones that he fought during the Class Promotion Quest, the Doppel, and the Sword Phantoms.

After watching the Phantom Clone charged right at the center of the group of spiders and mantises with a 'Moonlight Splitter' before creating chaos in the formation of the opposing side, Shin realized that it was much stronger than the Eclipse Clone when comparing their stats alone.

What was even more surprising was that the Phantom Clone seemed to possess skills that he did not have. It looked like it had access to the advanced skills of the Phantom Swordsman Class that even he could not access.

Shin frowned a little but did not put too much thought into it. He then turned to the Eclipse Clone and saw that it was wielding the Powers of the Brilliant Sun and the Abyssal Moon quite skillfully. He even saw it fused the two powers and turned them into the Power of Primordial Eclipse when slaughtering the insect-type monsters.

After watching the two clones fight a little longer, Shin finally turned his attention back to the Grand Centipedeus, which seemed to have finally stopped maintaining the two portals after summoning a horde of insect- and arachnid-types of monsters.

Shin raised his brows a little as he felt more confident facing it this time around. After understanding the Power of Primordial Eclipse: Origin, he felt like he would be able to crack through those tough exoskeletons.

Tilting his head to the side, Shin felt like trying to test a few things. The playful nature of his Battle Genius talent seemed to be kicking in, especially when he now had access to the five elements that match innate attributes.

Unfortunately, he had yet to learn the suitable breathing techniques for the elements of water and wood. Even though he could try using the elemental mana that corresponded to them for this battle, the result that he would get would not be as satisfying.

"I guess I will save it until I find the suitable breathing techniques and awaken them in the real world," he mumbled as he circulated the Power of Primordial Eclipse within him.

Then as if Shin and the Grand Centipedeus had tacitly agreed on something, they simultaneously made their moves.

Shin unsheathed the [Yamato] and swung it forward, sending a crescent wave of energy, while the Grand Centipedeus opened its mouth wide and spat out a cluster of venom.

Swoosh! Swoosh!

Bang!

The two attacks met in the air. The venom scattered as it hit the crescent energy and seemed to be trying to reach Shin with its droplets. But the energy from the latter's attack did not end there as a brilliant flame was suddenly ignited upon the collision and spread in different directions, burning the residual droplets of venom that scattered in the air.

Shin had already disappeared at this point before reappearing underneath the head of the giant centipede, preparing for another attack.

The already sheathed sword was unsheathed once again as Shin swung it upwards, releasing a sharp vertical energy that shot straight to the chin of the monster.

The Grand Centipedeus seemed to have expected that attack already and was about to slam its head down, planning to crush Shin with its massive body and hard exoskeleton.

Bang!

But the energy that was released from the [Yamato] seemed to be much stronger than what it had expected.

Its pointed tip accurately hit the chin of the monster, creating a noticeable crack on its surface. At the same time, the force behind the attack sent the giant centipede bouncing toward the air, lifting the upper part of its body.

Clack! Clack!

Sounds of the sharp legs of the Grand Centipede could be heard as they dug into the ground and clutched into it hard, preventing the rest of its body from being lifted into the air.

Swoosh!

Then Shin saw the giant centipede move the lower part of its body, swinging its tail toward him. He felt like a massive train got off the rails and swept toward him after seeing the incoming attack.

Shin wanted to dodge at first since it was what his instincts were telling him. But he wanted to test his current powers.

He took a stance and covered his entire body with the Power of Eclipse. With both of his hands holding the sword, he raised it over his shoulders and inclined its blade upside down.

He focused the mana on his feet, arms, and sword as he waited for the incoming massive body of the monster to come at him.

Bang!

When the massive body arrived, Shin squatted his hips a little before putting more strength on his arms and shoulders.

"Urgh!"

He then absorbed some of the impact before sending it toward the ground underneath his feet. The ground naturally sank and formed small craters as Shin lifted the sword, guiding the massive body upwards.

'Jade Kirin Scripture: Second Movement – Returning Wave'

Swoosh!

The ground shattered as the clutching legs of the giant centipede dragged them up as its body flew over Shin's head.

Despite achieving such a feat, Shin still received quite a decent damage. He still felt that the protection of the current energies that he had was still not enough. Or to be more precise, his control over it was still far from being perfect.

Bang!

When the body of the Grand Centipedeus landed in the distance, Shin suddenly focused the mana on his feet before kicking the ground. He lunged forward and flew straight to the giant centipede, targeting the joints of its leg.

He now wanted to try if he could at least cut one of them.

The Power of Primordial Eclipse gathered on the sword as he raised it. He skillfully manipulated the mana and compressed them into a thin layer covering that sword, which was barely noticeable to the naked eye.

The sword cut through the air as he slashed with the sword. A glowing light was left in the air as the horizontal slash was thrown.

'Jade Kirin Scripture: Fourth Movement – Tempest Stroke'

(-2,000,234)

Swoosh!

The thin line that was drawn in the air cut through one of the legs of the giant centipede, targeting its joints.

Shin was unable to cut it like he wanted, but a deep gash was formed. The exoskeleton was destroyed, and he could see the outer layer of the flesh of the monster.

Green blood gushed out of that wound, making the Grand Centipedeus cry in pain.

Shriek!

He finally could deal direct damage to this troublesome monster despite the attack barely scratching the total value of the Health Bar that it had.

But despite seeing this, Shin was still frowning deeply behind his mask. It was because he felt that there was something wrong.

He was not satisfied with his performance as he found that he was missing something. Or more likely, he was doing something wrong.

"The sword movements of the Jade Kirin Scripture seem to be used with another form of energy. More like wind and water, and lightning and thunder," he mumbled as he suddenly kicked the air and propelled himself toward the opposite direction.

Swoosh!

Acidic and venomous liquids flew past his previous location as the Grand Centipedeus spat at him.

"Basically, the wind is one of the main 'ingredients' for the formation of the lightning bolt. Or more specifically, the air. This is why some in the teachings of cultivation say that the lightning is called a higher form of the wind element," he continued to mumble while dodging the attacks of the rampaging centipede.

"Positive and negative discharges, warm air and cold air-..." Shin was mumbling as he realized that this was also following the principle of duality.

Glancing at his sword which was covered with the Power of the Primordial Eclipse, Shin had gotten an idea. "Should I give it a try?"

He asked himself but he had already decided what to do.

He did not summon the twin katana this time, but he divided the current form of mana that he had and separated them from each other.

The heat that was being released by the Power of the Brilliant Sun as it became the warm air while the chill of the Power of the Abyssal Moon became the cold air.

Shin experimented a little as he circulated the two with absolute control, not letting them collide yet. He observed their movements while comparing them to the scientific explanations that he knew from the real world.

He continued to dodge the attacks that the Grand Centipedeus was throwing at him as he experimented with the two energies that were flowing through his sword.

It was quite bold, but Shin was very confident this time.

He adjusted the heat and coldness of the two while trying to find the right situation where they could produce the lightning.

This was not necessarily the ideal step if he compared it to the lessons that he had. But all he needed was to recreate the scenario where the positive and negative charges were formed and moved.

He just had to create a field that was similar to the highly intensive electric field that was formed during the process.

Crackle!

Then, all of a sudden, a spark was formed. It might be brief, but it was more than enough for Shin. He had already achieved what he wanted.

Boom!

Dodging yet another stone spike that flew out from the ground, Shin suddenly executed one of his advanced movement techniques.

Shin formed multiple afterimages as he flashed through different places, moving around the giant centipede.

'Yin-Yang Arts: Ghost Evanescence'

Then he shifted with another movement technique when a bold idea flashed through his mind.

'Yin-Yang Arts: Mystic Movements'

This movement technique was much faster than the previous one as it contained no illusionary technique. It was also similar to his favorite sword technique that he had, the 'Infinity Edge' or 'Sword Transmigration', which was gradually getting stronger the more it was used.

The movement that he had was gradually getting stronger as Shin continued to move. Then he circulated the energies within him and applied what he had learned just now.

Crackle! Crackle!

The sounds of electric sparks could be heard as Shin covered his body with the Powers of the Brilliant Sun and Abyssal Moon that were circulating and clashing with a certain rhythm.

His speed grew faster as electric sparks could be seen lingering in the air behind him.

It was an original art!

"Let's call this 'Mystic Lighting Steps' then," he smiled

After familiarizing himself with the process, he suddenly gathered more energy into his sword. That was when something unexpected happened.

Boom!

A thunderclap could be heard as was forced to stop.

In his hand, the [Yamato] was releasing a powerful and violent energy. Lightning sparks could be seen crackling around the blade of the sword along with the black and white energies circulating through it.

He had gotten ahead of himself and starting to lose control.

But he was quite stubborn as he forcefully controlled the rampaging energies, suppressing and containing them in the sword.

The Grand Centipedeus saw this an opportunity and suddenly gathered its venom in its mouth before spatting a torrent of green liquid at Shin.

That was when another unexpected thing happened.

The Powers of the Brilliant Sun and Abyssal Moon merged once again and returned to being the Power of Primordial Eclipse.

But this time, it was releasing the black and white sparks dancing on its surface.

Shin was caught off guard, but he did not hesitate to use this energy while following his instincts. His body seemed to move on its own as he performed the advanced sword technique that he could not use from the Jade Kirin Scripture before.

Crackle!

'Jade Kirin Scripture: Sevent Movement – Thunder Eclipse'

Boom!

The attack came a little too fast he swung the sword at the torrent of acidic venom heading his way. It was so fast that even Shin, who performed the sword movement, could not believe that he did it.

Moreover, there was a huge crescent lighting energy that flew toward the acidic venom and cut through it. This energy continued to fly forward, splitting the torrent in the middle before heading toward the giant centipede.

Shriek!

The monster cried in pain as the crescent lighting energy cut one of the pincers that it had at the corner of its mouth before proceeding to hit its body, exploding and shattering its exoskeleton which caused a huge injury and left a massive wound.

Boom!

(-20,524,555)

(-71,023,562)

Then there was a pair of massive red numbers that appeared above the head of the Grand Centipedeus, chunking a huge portion of its Health Bar.

"Woah!" even Shin was impressed at what just happened.

Chapter 1323: Peak Potential (Part 2)

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Shin stared at the enraged Grand Centipedeus with a quite blank expression on his face as he was pretty much surprised at what just happened. He did not expect that the lightning produced by combining the Powers of Brilliant Sun and Abyssal Moon would be this strong.

He was also quite surprised at the seventh sword movement of the Jade Kirin Scripture. Its power was way beyond his imagination.

He was not sure if it was because of the advanced lightning or if the sword technique itself was that powerful.

The Jade Kirin Scripture had a total of thirteen sword movements aside from the quick-draw attacks that he usually used. These thirteen movements were divided into four levels. The first to third movements were basic level, the fourth to sixth movements were intermediate level, the seventh to ninth movements were advanced level, and the tenth to twelfth movements were Master Level.

As for the thirteenth and final movement, it was on another level that was way beyond his current understanding, so he did not think too much about it.

Previously, he could only perform the first to sixth movement, and he could hardly perform the sixth one. It was because it was his current limit in the real world.

But here, in the virtual world, where he had access to a higher form of energy, he could perform the movements that he could not in the real world.

Currently, his limit was the seventh movement. It was not because he could not control the energy that he harnessed properly, but because mastering these advanced movements and above required him to gain a certain level of insight before he could perform them.

The 'Thunder Eclipse' that he just performed was inspired by the lightning energy itself. It was fast and explosive, focusing on reaching the pinnacle of speed. This sword movement had a few more variations that could be used, and the one that Shin had used just now was one of them.

It was a form of sword wave, which was an energy-release type of attack. There were a few more applications that focused on melee attacks, which were meant for quick attacks.

As Shin familiarized himself with the current form of the Power of Primordial Eclipse, the Grand Centipedeus immediately went on a rampage.

It glared at Shin with its hundreds of eyes before opening its mouth and breathing out a green mist, which was venomous and acidic.

The lightning covering Shin's body flickered along with the black and white flame as he suddenly kicked the ground and distanced himself away from the giant centipede.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

The Grand Centipedeus quickly gave chase, crawling with its hundreds of legs and charging with an unstoppable momentum. It dragged the venom mist with it as if it were some sort of Qi Armor or something similar.

Shin knitted his brows a little as he found this situation a little troublesome. He wanted to test the quick-draw attacks under his arsenal while using this 'Primordial Lighting' or so he called it. He still did not know how to call this energy, so he just came up with this name since it was from the Power of Primordial Eclipse.

Shin wanted to throw a few more crescent lighting strikes at this moment since it was meant to be used as a long- to mid-ranged attack. But it consumed quite a lot of energy and mana, so he could not blindly use it repeatedly.

At least not on the same scale as the earlier attack.

He could execute a similar type of attack, but with a smaller amount of energy, which would produce a smaller form of electric sword wave accordingly.

"Let's do what I can do for now and wait for an opportunity where I can use the quick-draw attacks later," he mumbled as he swung the sword repeatedly and sent a series of lightning crescents in the process.

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

These crescent lightning energies flew with a speed that almost reached the Grand Centipedeus almost instantly. They cut through the air, leaving electric currents in their path. They separated the venom mist and created a path before exploding after hitting the exoskeleton of the giant centipede.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

They left some cracks and gashes on that hard shell before an electric current sipped into it and spread throughout the body of the monster. The status effect that they produced was not that strong individually and the Grand Centipedeus could ignore it at the very least. But when they stacked up, the paralyzing effect that they could cause hindered the movements of the giant centipede.

Shin tried to repeatedly target a single spot, trying to break through the tough defense of the monster by stockpiling these attacks.

But the Grand Centipedeus seemed to be able to see through him and continued to move its body, preventing the same spot from being hit repeatedly. It also dove into the ground and dug deep before going up and appearing on another spot, mostly underneath his feet.

The venom mist was spreading wide, limiting the choices that Shin could use to escape.

As Shin retreated, he repeatedly swung the [Yamato], sending more lightning crescents. These attacks could at least deal decent damage to the giant centipede, but the real purpose that he had in doing this was to familiarize himself with this new form of mana that he controlled.

Right after he had fully mastered controlling this 'Primordial Lightning', the area that he could use to escape was already limited.

The Grand Centipedeus was able to use its earth elemental abilities to change the terrain. It used its stone spikes and earth pillars to form a barrier that blocked almost all his escape routes while the venom mist slowly approached him.

When he was about to summon his wings and fly in the sky, he suddenly sensed a pair of presence moving rapidly toward his direction.

"Already?" he mumbled as he could guess who they were.

Well, they were the only ones, who were currently on this island, so it was very obvious already.

Bang!

The wall of earth behind him exploded and shattered into fragments that flew in every direction.

Swoosh!

Then someone landed beside Shin and greeted him. "Sorry about that. Something unexpected happened."

"I can at least tell that," said Shin smirkingly.

Then he turned his head to the side to glance at Leonard. But the moment he did, he could not help but raise his brows in surprise. "Eh!? What happened to your equipment?"

"Are you planning to work as a stripper or something?" he teased after seeing the current appearance of the latter. "I am sure that Lorraine will love your current appearance."

At this moment, Leonard was currently topless, putting his well-toned muscles on display. He still had his leather armor pants, combat boots, leather belt, a pair of gauntlets, and the lion-head helmet, but his upper body was practically not wearing anything.

But what was surprising was the crimson tattoo that was spreading through his arms, chest, and the entirety of his back. They were in a deep crimson color that resembled blood and were quite close to being black due to how dark it was.

At the same time, there was a flame-like aura covering his entire body as crimson lighting danced throughout its surface.

Leonard ignored the latter part of Shin's words as he inclined his head to the side, recalling what he just heard from the system. "I am not sure what happened. But from the looks of it, this is some sort of transformation. It takes off my armor as it finds that my armor is not worthy of this power or something like that."

"It lowers my defenses a little, but it grants me a huge boost in strength as well as an enhanced regenerative ability," he added as he recalled what he just heard from the system.

He then recalled something and continued. "Ah! Another thing. These tattoos are similar to the ones that I have seen during the awakening of my bloodline. It is very similar to what that tribe has."

"So it is a bloodline power-..." Shin was commenting when an attack headed their direction.

Swoosh! Swoosh!

The two quickly kicked the ground and retreated, dodging the attack, before continuing their chat. It was as if they no longer saw this monster worthy of their time.

"Do you want to give it a try?" asked Shin while casting his gaze at the Grand Centipedeus. "I can cover you."

Bang!

Leonard bumped his fists into one another as he looked ahead. "Let's go. I feel like I can do anything with this current state."

"Then I will pave a path for you," said Shin as he held the [Yamato] with both of his hands before charging ahead.

Swoosh!

Then he suddenly swung the sword and sent a powerful energy wave that flew forward. It was an energy produced by the 'Eclipse Slash' but infused with the power of the 'Primordial Lighting'.

Crackle! Crackle!

A beam of lightning flew forward and headed straight to the venom mist. It cut through the green mist and paved a path ahead.

Swoosh!

Leonard quickly ran toward it, following the path that was created. He transformed into a streak of crimson light as he charged ahead.

He clenched his fist and lowered it on each side of his waist during his sprint. The crimson aura and lightning that was covering those fists suddenly grew stronger, producing a series of crackling sounds and erupting with small explosions.

When the venom mist in front of him was separated by the earlier attack from Shin and revealed the Grand Centipedeus hiding behind it, Leonard suddenly stomped on the ground and leaped to the air while raising both of his arms.

Then he slammed them down like a pair of hammers as he descended toward the head of the giant centipede.

It was a similar technique to what he had used earlier. But this time, there was an apparition of a titanic figure that was formed behind him, which slammed its huge fist down.

Rumble!

Bang!

There was also a thunderclap that could be heard as the fist descended. A crimson lightning fell from the sky and fused with that huge fist, heading straight to the head of the Grand Centipedeus.

Shriek!

The giant centipede opened its mouth wide while raising its head. But due to the loud thunderclap that reverberated in the entire place, the monster was paralyzed and unable to move its body free.

This prevented the Grand Centipedeus from escaping as the huge lightning fist landed on its head.

'Supreme Blood Arts: (Thunder Lord Reinforced) Blood Hammer'

Boom!

(-30,029,552)

(-60,502,773)

The successive appearance of huge numbers appeared above the head of the giant centipede, showing the massive damage that Leonard had dealt.

Leonard quickly jumped off from the head of the monster and swiftly retreated after completing that attack. But the Grand Centipedeus was so enraged that it wanted to crush this little 'bug' (ironically).

It raised its massive upper body and planned to crush Leonard with its weight.

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

But before it could even slam its body down, the shadow under it seemed to come alive. Multiple hands made of shadow came out from it and wrapped themselves around the body of the giant centipede, preventing it from moving.

Then multiple black swords appeared in the air out of nowhere and surrounded the monster as they pointed their tips at it.

They formed a series of circular formations and spun around the Grand Centipedeus before flying forward.

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

They stabbed the body of the giant centipede, piercing through its thick and tough exoskeleton as if it were nothing.

'Shadowless Art: Grim of the Shadows'

(-1,230,523), (-1,599,815), (-1,892,676), ...

A string of numbers appeared above the head of the giant centipede one after another, showing the damage that the shadow swords had dealt. They might be small and negligible given the massive pool of health that the monster possessed. But given that there were at least a hundred of them, the accumulated damage was not less than what Shin and Leonard had dealt.

Casting his head to the side, Shin saw Diablo materialize out of thin air beside him.

"That is a cool skill," commented Shin with a smile.

Diablo shook his head. "I still lack in terms of control. This new power is quite tricky and hard to learn. But I can at least do some experiments on how to properly wield it."

"And with this massive target dummy in front of us, I don't think that I will miss a single shot," he added as he played with his daggers that were currently shrouded with black and purple aura.

Diablo turned silent for a brief moment before saying. "Thank you."

He had to thank Shin for this since it was only possible because the latter had given him those two martial manuals. Moreover, he could also tell that he could gain a similar form of power in the real world as long as he diligently trained himself.

He now had the perfect martial manuals that Professor Henry had required to get.

Shin had a nonchalant smile behind his mask while saying. "It is nothing. You are one of us now, anyway."

He then turned his attention back to the Grand Centipedeus and said. "Shall we wrap this up?"

Chapter 1324: Peak Potential (Part 3)

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The Grand Centipedeus went into a rampage as it received a beating from the three.

Leonard bravely challenged it head-on and exchanged blows without backing down. He stood in front of it and threw a series of punches at the giant centipede while dodging all the attacks of the monster or countering them with his attacks.

The huge apparition of the Thunder Lord also kept on appearing behind him for every move he took. But it was also throwing punches after punches that were reinforced with lightning, exploding every time they hit the giant centipede. But instead of having the golden lightning that it was supposed to have, the mutated crimson lightning was the one appearing on its fists and falling from the sky.

At the same time, Shin and Diablo circled the other places and attacked the Grand Centipedeus from multiple angles.

The former seemed to transform into a black-and-white electric current that ran through the massive body of the monster, leaving deep gashes and wounds in the process, while the latter had become a

purple shadow that appeared in different places and threw a series of attacks that greatly wounded the monster.

The two of them were moving so fast that the Grand Centipedeus was unable to properly defend itself, especially when it was already entangled with Leonard, who was aggressively challenging it.

It could only coil its body whenever it was about to receive a powerful attack, trying to protect itself against the three. Then it would spin around and use its massive body to sweep through the three, trying to attack them with a large-scale attack.

At the same time, it would also be spitting a venom mist from its mouth, covering the entire place in a venomous mist that would prevent the three from attacking it freely.

But the three used their respective means to protect themselves while diving toward the venom mist and continuing their onslaught.

Thunderclaps erupted as Shin dashed through the mist with the black and white electric currents covering his body. Now that Leonard was constantly getting the attention of the Grand Centipedeus upfront, Shin was free to do whatever he wanted and attack with any sword technique that he could think of.

Crackle! Crackle!

As he moved at extreme speed, Shin executed a sword-drawing attack with the Primordial Lightning being the one that infused with his sword.

Shing!

'Jade Kirin Scripture: Quick Draw – Flash Final'

A flash of lightning flew forward and cut through the venom mist as Shin thrust the [Yamato] forward. Unlike the previous times that he had executed this sword technique, the feeling that he had gotten this time was more natural, making his attack much easier to execute.

Boom!

(-59,242,552)

The impact that was created when the tip of the [Yamato] hit the surface of the exoskeleton of the giant centipede was so strong that it blasted a huge hole in it. A large chunk of the health bar of the monster was taken out while a part of the hard exoskeleton was taken out by the explosion.

Crackle! Crackle!

Electric currents were inserted into the body of the monster and spread throughout its flesh, paralyzing it, and preventing the giant centipede from moving.

Shriek!

The Grand Centipedeus cried in pain as it received that attack.

Leonard and Diablo took that opportunity to throw another powerful move from their arsenal and deal with a huge damage of their own.

Leonard squatted his hips while lowering his right fist beside his waist. He slightly twisted his waist and pulled the fist back while placing his left palm in front of it.

Sanguine energy gathered around the right fist, which spun rapidly and formed a spiral around the fist and covered his entire forearm. The crimson lightning currents flickered around the spiral energy, producing a series of loud crackling sounds.

Bang!

He then kicked the ground and lunged forward, heading straight to the Grand Centipedeus, which was still crying in pain.

He leaped in the air and arrived beside the face of the giant centipede in almost an instant before swinging his fist and detonating the spiral energy that he had gathered in front of his fist.

This was a Martial Skill that just appeared inside his head after the bloodline awakening. He had not gotten the chance to showcase this skill until now since he was not good enough for it. He also did not have the right conditions to execute any of them, especially when he was lacking the right energy for it.

But after what happened earlier, when his bloodline seemed to have been brought into the virtual world, Leonard had just met the bare minimum conditions that he needed for it. He then took advantage of this situation to try this martial skill while combining it with the Blood Force and the inheritance of the Thunder Lord.

The effects turned out to be much better than what he just expected.

'Supreme Blood Sutra: Asad Tribe Arts – Sanguine Lion'

Roar!

A huge head of a majestic yet ferocious lion appeared, surrounding Leonard, who threw the punch. It opened its mouth wide and bit the neck of the Grand Centipedeus. Its sharp fangs crushed the hard and thick exoskeleton and sank deep into the flesh of the monster, not letting go and spreading the crimson lightning on the body of the giant centipede.

If Shin's Primordial Lightning had powerful penetrative and strong paralyzing effects along with decent destructive powers and absolute speed, then this crimson lightning that Leonard possessed had the true essence of destruction and overwhelming scorching powers.

Boom!

(-60,552,311)

Meanwhile, a cluster of dark energy gathered above the Grand Centipedeus, which was gradually growing larger. Strings of black mana came out from the shadows and flew in the air, fusing with this cluster of energy and creating spiraling vines of shadows.

Not long after, this cluster of dark energy formed a giant sword that was hanging in the air upside down and pointing its tip toward the giant centipede beneath it.

Diablo, who was standing a few distance away from the Grand Centipedeus, was currently wearing a deep frown as he extended his hand and made a grabbing motion in the air. "This is much harder than I think it will be."

Controlling this much Power of the Shadows this way was much more difficult than harnessing a small amount of it and using it for a regular skill. He could not help but be amazed at Shin and Leonard as they seemed to execute such skills effortlessly.

After putting much effort into controlling the Power of the Shadows and maintaining the form of the giant sword, Diablo suddenly swung his hands down as if he were pulling something from the air.

In response, the giant Shadow Sword suddenly fell from the sky. It gradually sped up as it descended and slowly gathered its momentum until it reached its maximum strength.

Swoosh!

'Shadowless Art: Judgement of the Shadows'

Boom!

(-55,245,819)

Shriek!

The Grand Centipedeus was impaled by the giant sword, making it waggle its body while crying in pain. Blood splattered everywhere, gushing out of the wound that the shadow sword had created.

Moments later, the giant centipede raised its head and released a deafening shriek that was much louder than the previous ones that it had.

Hearing that, the trio suddenly felt that the mana in the surroundings seemed to become heavier as a huge portal was formed in the air.

Then the three saw insect- and arachnid-types of monsters raining down from the sky as the giant portal was spitting them out. They varied from different size, producing loud sounds as they landed.

Shin and Leonard were about to make their moves to reduce the number of these monsters, but Diablo quickly volunteered for it. "I'll handle these guys. You two focus on finishing that centipede."

As he said that, he suddenly waved his hands in the air, exhausting his mana pool to summon hundreds of swords made from the shadow energy. Those shadow swords hovered in the air for a moment as they adjusted themselves and pointed toward their respective target.

When Diablo swung his arms down, the shadow swords quickly followed and started raining down and hitting slaughtering the huge insects and arachnids that were being poured out by the giant portal.

Shin saw it and nodded his head before giving an order to his two clones to assist Diablo. After that, he turned his attention back to the Grand Centipedeus and looked at its health bar.

At this moment, the giant centipede currently had a quarter of its total health after receiving the beating from the trio. It was already at the borderline where it could enter its enraged and berserk state.

Seeing that this was already about the end, both Shin and Leonard adjusted themselves before dashing forward and releasing a large amount of energy from their bodies.

Bang! Bang!

Crackle! Crackle!

The black and white lightning and the crimson lightning crackled through the air as they charged forward, leaving intense electric currents behind them.

...

Not long after, Shin could be found sitting on top of the massive corpse of the Grand Centipedeus with his sword left stuck beside him. His arms were resting on his knees while holding the mask on his left hand.

The final battle was much tougher than they had thought.

He was currently reassessing his performance in the battle and trying to remember the feeling of wielding the Power of Primordial Eclipse. He knew that this was the key to how he would be able to fully awaken all his innate attributes in the real world and also the clue on how he would form his Spiritual Force.

Leonard, on the other hand, was lying on his back while looking at the sky. His chest moved up and down as he tried to catch his breath. He was too exhausted to move right now. He did not know that trying to wield the Ancient Powers of the Primordial Beast would be this exhausting when it was used along with his bloodline powers and the inheritance of the Thunder Lord.

Regardless, he was quite thankful for this experience as he now had an idea of how to properly awaken his innate attributes in the real world. He might even form his unique Natural Force once he was done with it.

Diablo was in a slightly better state than the two. Even though the number of monsters that came out from the portal was huge, he still had the assistance of the two clones that Shin had summoned earlier, so the battle on his side was much easier than them.

Even though the quest scenario had already ended, and the Power of the Shadows had already been taken back from him, he still received a special item from the system called 'Fragment of the Shadows' that he could use to understand the powers that he was wielding earlier.

Once he had completed his Tier 3 Promotion Quest, he would be able to use that item with a special 'Training Instructor', who would personally train him to regain that power. Once he acquired it again, he would reach a new height that he never reached before.

Of course, he also felt indebted to Shin for receiving the two Martial Manuals that perfectly fitted his fighting style.

These manuals would not only help him grow inside the game but would also allow him to practice Martial Arts, precisely Assassination Arts, in the real world.

Glancing at the pair of clones cleaning up the battlefield, Diablo walked toward Shin and asked. "Can I have some of the materials from this Demon? I am thinking of creating a new set of equipment and a pair of weapons to replace my current ones."

"What I am using right now is already outdated and can't properly hold the advanced form of mana that I currently wield," he added.

Shin looked at Diablo and chuckled. "Of course, you can. You are already a part of the Empyrean Talons. It is natural for you to get the best."

He then tapped and knocked on the corpse that he was sitting on while saying. "Moreover, this guy's remains are too large. I think it will take a lot of time harvesting it."

"Although, I will not be helping you with that since I still have a lot of things that I need to take care of. But I can recommend you with the best blacksmith that you can find in the game."

"I will be sending you the details on how to contact him. But make sure that I am the one who recommends you since that old dwarf has quite a temper when it comes to strangers," he added before falling into deep thought.

After that, he suddenly said. "Make sure to give the rest of the materials to him since he will not be making you what you need unless there is something that piques his interest. He will not be receiving any form of payment other than these super rare materials and the experience of forging them into a unique set of equipment."

Glancing at the series of notifications that he had received from the system, Shin ignored most of them before looking at the time.

He then turned to Leonard. "Hey, Leo! I will be leaving the task of reporting everything to Sister Adept Hands and Brother Tinker. I have to log out now since am already late for my morning routine."

"As if you are the only one! I also have to do my morning routine as well," complained Leonard as he remained lying on the ground.

"But I am asked to report to Professor Henry first before I can go to the class," said Shin as he read the message that he had gotten from the real world.

From the contents of the message, it seemed to be about a new training regime prepared by Professor Henry. "Tsk! Tsk! More training. I wonder what it is this time."

"I trust you to deal with rest, alright? I'm going now," he said before quickly logging out, not giving Leonard the time to complain.

As for his clones, those two had already harvested enough materials from the corpses of the monsters lying around. They were already transferred to his inventory directly as he left the remaining ones to Leonard and Diablo.

Seeing that Shin directly logged out, Leonard could only sigh before looking at Diablo. He was about to say something when the latter immediately rejected it.

"I am just a new member. I still don't know the ropes in your team. Moreover, I also need to properly gather the usable materials from this big guy. Do you think it will be easy?"

Leonard swallowed the words that he was about to say before sighing helplessly. "I guess I have no choice."

He then picked himself up from the ground before looking around. There was a mischievous thought inside his head and said. "Then I will leave this job of harvesting the rest of the materials that he missed to you."

Before Diablo could say anything, Leonard suddenly crushed a return scroll that sent him back to the Sacred Light Kingdom.

Diablo opened his mouth but was unable to say anything since Leonard had already disappeared in front of him. He then looked around, sweeping his gaze at the hundreds of corpses of the monsters that he and the clones had killed before, before turning back to the massive corpse of the Grand Centipedeus.

Felt that he was starting to regret joining this adventurer team. But he suddenly could not stop himself from smiling as he felt like he was already a part of them.

"I guess I have to start work now."

Chapter 1325: The Danger Arrives

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Real World

Headquarters of the World Gaming Organization

The people of the Monitoring Department did not know how they would react to what they were seeing. He did not know whether to celebrate the success of the raid or to think about them unlocking multiple types of ancient powers all at once.

Defeating the Grand Centipedes, which was a larva form of a Bug Tribe, was their original goal since it would prevent the acceleration of the Portal Opening that the Pandemonium Descendants had opened.

But with the three unlocking the three ancient powers altogether, they now had another problem that they had to face.

The questline for the 'Living Armor' being unlocked this early in the game was already a headache, so if they added this to their problem, then it would not be strange to call it a serious migraine.

Shin and the others might have helped them solve the most urgent crisis that they had, but they had given the developers another set of problems that was equally hard to solve.

"As expected from Miracle Players. They will not be helping us for free."

"Bro, not only that. Have you not seen it earlier? That guy just triggered another evolution quest for his Elemental Spirits!"

"How many is it now? Five already? And the remaining two are already in the middle of evolution, am I right? At this point, the Elemental Spirits that he possesses are either a Supreme or a Monarch."

"What the heck? He is not even an Elementalist."

"Now that you have reminded me that that girl is equally troublesome. She has already made contact with the Spirit Kings! With how things are going, I think it will not be long until the Spirit World to open."

"Bruh! Don't jinx it! We are already facing the invasion of the demons – at least one of their major Army! If you add more content, I think we can handle the job. How can we monitor everything at that point?"

Lohengrin knitted his brows a little as he saw the entire course of events before turning to Carlos, who watched everything with them. "What do you think about this, Sir? Do we have to report it to the departments responsible for it?"

Carlos chuckled. "Of course, we are. That is our job. But don't worry since it is not as serious as it seems. There are still a lot of conditions to unlock the other contents related to what these guys have done."

"But to make sure that we are ready if something unexpected happens once again, we better urge the other departments to rush their jobs while informing them about this."

"We can't be the only one working overtime all the time. They also have to experience what kind of suffering we are experiencing here," he added as he turned around. "I'll leave the rest to you while I will go to the chairman and report about the current progress."

"Although, I doubt that he is unaware of this. I bet that Troy's obsession with the kid already rubs to the chairman," he mumbled as he exited.

Lohengrin looked over and stared at the back of the department head before turning back to the people, who were already complaining about the extra work. "Alright, guy. It is time to work. Team one, tell the Research and Development Departments that they may be getting busy for the next few days."

"Tell them that they have to be prepared for the worst-case scenario."

"Team two, tell the Events Department that they must make haste preparing the United Cup. They have to organize it as soon as possible since most of the top players are already adjusting themselves to the current update."

"Team three..."

Soaring Continent, Eastern Sea Region

A man suddenly appeared on its coast without anyone's notice. The presence of this man was so overwhelming that it could suffocate anyone around him. Fortunately, there were no people present in the area when he arrived.

He had long purple hair that was left hanging behind him. His facial features were quite handsome despite the long scar that he had on the left side of his face. It started from the corner of his brow going down until it reached his jawline.

His build was quite lean, but not in an awkward way as it complemented his entire body proportions.

The set of clothes that he was wearing was similar to the robe that the kings used to wear in ancient times. It had a luxurious design and exquisite embroideries on its edges.

He looked around as he put his hands behind, crossed. He observed the place for a moment before looking at the density of the 'Force of Nature' lingering in the air.

"Not bad," he mumbled as he nodded his head.

Swoosh!

Not long after, he turned his head toward a certain direction where he could hear someone heading his way at extreme speed. He did not move as he could feel that the presence of this person was quite familiar.

He remained standing on his spot and waited patiently. After a couple of moments, he finally saw the person who came to greet him.

"Master!" said the person as they kneeled on a knee and lowered his head right after arriving.

The mysterious man smirked as he saw how his disciple greeted him. He then observed the latter for a few moments before nodding his head in satisfaction. "Not bad. Your progress is much better than what I have expected. I guess sending you here is the right choice."

"Have you completed the mission yet?" asked the man as he started to walk.

Jean Camus, who was kneeling, quickly picked himself up and stood. He then followed behind the man as he reported. "I am sorry, Master. We find this mission more challenging than we have expected."

Jan Mateo, the mysterious man, smirked when he heard that. "Of course, it is. I will not be sending you here if it is not."

"But the real purpose of me sending you here is to make you understand their system and teachings. The mission is just an extra job that can be considered as a bonus."

"You have to grow as fast as the 'others' until you 'unite' with them once again. That is when you will reach the heights that I am about to achieve," he added after a slight pause.

"I understand, Master," replied Jean Camus with full seriousness.

Jan Mateo then proceeded with another topic. "About the kid that you have said from your last report. Is he really that special? Can I use him as a nutrient?"

"You should have known that become a picky 'eater' after my last meal. I will not consume just anyone right now because it will only hurt my foundation if they are not enough," he added.

Jean Camus quickly shook his head and said. "I am sure about this one, Master. The Great Demonic Codex and my core have responded with this kid when we get into a bout against each other!"

"I am sure that he has the special one," he added, trying to reassure his master.

Jan Mateo nodded his head when he heard the reassurance from his disciple. "Then I will expect that this will be a worthwhile trip."

"I will be staying here for quite a while since I have to move discretely in this place. Those cunning old foxes are surely setting up a trap for me after learning about my plans."

"I may have cleaned up the loose ends where the information has leaked, but it is better to be prudent than letting them entrap me. Enough I am confident with my current strength, those old monsters are still quite a challenge to deal with."

"Moreover, a few old acquaintances are gathered around here. Nathan and Joaquin are already a handful, much less adding Eugene, and Elias in the equation."

"I am still recovering from my injuries after bumping with that guy. I can't risk worsening it when I am about to step into the higher realm. Once I reach the peak, I will come back here and take care of these people, who are always getting in my way."

Jean Campus quickly bowed his head. "I will arrange a place where you can stay, Master."

Ja Mateo waved his hand as he refused. "Forget it. I will find a place myself. You can't be staying by my side when I am here to avoid any unnecessary attention. If they suspected your identity, then your mission will be as good as a failure."

"Go do your things while I explore this continent a little," he then paused before continuing. "The government and the other organizations will most likely focus on exploring the ancient ruins. Since you are already being sent there, I will not visit that place and leave the rest to you."

"I understand, Master!" replied Jean Camus with some excitement. His master was entrusting him with such an important job.

He knew how obsessed his master about collecting information about the previous eras, so this ancient ruin was quite important to him regardless of how strong or weak the owner was.

Seeing the enthusiasm of his disciple, Jan Mateo suddenly added. "But I must warn you. Those primitive people will most likely make their move during your exploration of the ruin. You must be careful of them and don't engage in battle if it is not necessary."

"Keep your cover is more important than this ruin," he emphasized.

"I will keep your warning in mind, Master," answered Jean Camus.

"Go! Return to your post. I will take care of myself," said Jan Mateo, sending his disciple away.

Jean Camus bowed deeply before disappearing.

Jan Mateo then focused his gaze on the city in the distance before mumbling. "I have to stay here for a long time as I wait for them to let their guard down. Taking up a disguise will not be a bad choice."

As he said that, his pupils seemed to glow with a purple light as he gazed in the distance. That was when he saw a lone person pulling up his boat toward the shoreline and tying it to a wooden log embedded in the ground.

There was a huge plastic basin full of fish on the boat the man climbed on it and set up a slide that he could use for the basin.

It was clear that this man was a fisherman.

Looking a little further, Jan Mateo could also see a few more fisherman boats approaching the coast. That was when he saw a small village in the distance and a few people were running out of it to greet the returning fishermen.

He then focused on the lone man before mumbling. "Well, this is a little convenient."

After that, he disappeared from his current position before reappearing right behind the fisherman, who was busy doing his own thing.

Jan Mateo was like a ghost as he appeared there completely unnoticed. He then extended his hand and grabbed the head of the fisherman while closing his eyes.

"Urgh!"

The fisherman seemed to groan in pain upon contact while Jan Mateo watched a series of information and memories flash through his mind.

"I see," he mumbled after a long time before slowly opening his eyes. He then let go of the fisherman and let the latter fall.

He digested everything inside his head for a few seconds before turning back to the unconscious man. "Be thankful as your sacrifice will lead to the birth of the strongest demon of this world."

After that, a purple flame ignited the body of the fisherman, turning it into ashes.

On the other hand, Jan Mateo's appearance was starting to transform, taking up the features and appearance of the man that he just killed. Even his clothes change along with the transformation.

"Ahem! Ah! Ah!" he adjusted his voice for a moment to make it sound like the fisherman's voice before continuing the work of the poor man.

He moved as naturally as a seasoned fisherman, completely mimicking the movements of the dead man as well as their habits.

Jan Mateo would be staying in this place as that man until he found the right time to continue his plans.

Chapter 1326: Hidden Threats

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Nathan knitted his brows deeply as he read through the reports that were given to him. He was keeping an eye on everything that was happening in the Eastern Sea Region. Things seemed to be getting chaotic recently, especially when the recent incident with the inheritance of the Thunder Lord spread in different organizations.

But the thing that troubled him was the news about the arrival of one of their greatest enemies. The person, who could at least contend against their friend. The 'Great Demon' Jan Mateo.

Click!

The door of his room suddenly opened when he was in deep thought. Hearing the sound, Nathan turned his head and saw that three of his friends entered the room.

Elias Stuart, Joaquin Geovanni, and Eugene White entered the room one after another before taking their respective seats on the sofas at the center of the room, not even greeting Nathan.

They felt completely at home. Joaquin even put his hands behind his head and raised his legs, putting them on the table in front of him to get a more comfortable position.

Elias glared at Joaquin for being unclassy, but the latter ignored him and closed his eyes while whistling. Eugene, on the other hand, remained quiet and crossed his arms while hugging his sword.

Nathan sighed helplessly before standing up and walking over to them. "How is it? Did you find any traces of him?"

"I am afraid that we won't find anything. It seems like he sneaks in the continent through unusual means," Elias was the one to answer first while shaking his head.

"You should know that he also has a top-notched disguising ability. Given his achievements in both Martial Arts and Mentalism, it will not be strange to take up a disguise that even the elders can't see through," commented Eugene.

Joaquin nodded in agreement. "His disguise is better than mine in certain areas. I even heard that he used some Demonic Techniques to read the memories of his victims when stealing their identity. I doubt that we will be able to find him unless he shows himself."

"The Elder's Council is already making preparations to face him. But due to the fractures appearing more frequently, I'm afraid that not all of them will be present when Jan Mateo appears," said Nathan as he joined them.

"But I heard that the Top Military Schools and Magic Ace Academy will also be sending their people," asked Joaquin with a deep frown.

"Those guys are to guard the ruins and keep an eye on the other organizations that come from the other continents," said Eugene.

"Meanwhile, the government will be focusing more on that place since they know that it is more important than the other issues," added Nathan. "They are also obsessed with acquiring the inheritances or any form of information related to the ancient era, which is why they will focus on guarding the ruins rather than doing anything else."

"But Jan Mateo is also the same. From the information that we have on him, he is using it as a reference to break through the higher realm," said Elias with a frown.

"Breakthrough? Just setting foot on either the Transcendent Realm or Exalted Realm is already hard enough, yet that guy wants to break through on both disciplines? That guy is still delusional as ever," scoffed Joaquin.

Everyone in this room was half-step away from breaking through the peak of their respective disciplines, so they fully understood how hard it was to reach those realms.

They were geniuses in their respective disciplines and one of the top experts of this era. Even their elders would have to look highly at them given their respective achievements, yet they were still far from reaching the pinnacle of everything.

The fact that even their elders had yet to reach the peak of their respective disciplines already proved how hard it was to break through.

Nathan and Joaquin were only a few of the experts of their generation who were close to reaching the Transcendent Realm in the path of Martial Arts. Elias was one of the Mentalists closest to becoming an Exalted Realm Expert while Eugene was the swordsman to achieving the Saint Realm in the path of sword.

Yet the four of them were still expected to break through only after the next dozens of years.

"That is not impossible for him. You should have known that he is not an ordinary person. He is a True Demon, who already let his inner demon consume himself," said Nathan.

"We have also confirmed that he has the gift that gives him the ability to consume the other seeds of hatred. Thus, his growth is much faster than everyone else," added Elias with a serious tone.

"Tsk! This will be much easier if Adam is around. No matter how strong Jan Mateo has become, he will still be scared out of his wits when faced with the 'real' demon," said Joaquin as he recalled some incidents of the past.

At this moment, Eugene suddenly said to Nathan. "I suggest you keep an eye on people who have unusually strong seeds of hatred."

Hearing those words, Nathan smiled as he understood that Eugene was talking about his nephew, Shin. "We have already thought about it and asked the kid to be excluded in the exploration of the ruin."

He then paused for a moment before adding. "But since we don't know if any accidents will happen. I will ask the elders to at least put a few people to watch over him."

"We will be in serious trouble when something happens to that kid," commented Joaquin as he knew that Evangeline would beat the crap out of them when she learned that something bad happened to her son.

Elias, on the other hand, wore a strange expression on his face as he recalled how his dear daughter acted recently. He was keeping an eye on her, and he discovered that his girl seemed to have been acting strange recently. He guessed that it had something to do with Shin – or at least that was his biased thinking.

"Are you sure that it will be enough? You should know that even with the four of us fighting together, there is still a high chance that we will be defeated by that guy alone, much less if he brings a few of his people," Eugene could not help but raise his concern about this matter.

He could tell that his son somewhat saw Shin as a friend or sort, which was quite rare. He did not want his son to lose a friend this soon, especially when the latter could also be a good rival who could drive the inner potential of his son.

"I also am concerned about it, but Senior Lin Huang reassured me not to worry. He said that he has made the necessary arrangements, so I can trust his words," said Nathan. Although, he was still quite concerned himself.

After that, Nathan proceeded to another topic for the time being. "Let's talk about the Hextech Laboratory and the Black Serpent Mafia."

"How is the investigation going on that side?" he asked as he turned to Joaquin.

"Don't worry about them. I make sure to squeeze all the information from the people that we have captured. Those guys will not be able to do anything for the time being due to the losses they have suffered," reassured Joaquin as he understood that they had to keep an eye on these underworld organizations.

"And with Jan Mateo's involvement, I highly doubt that they are willing to risk sending their top agents. They will only be a nutrient to that guy," he added.

The four continued to discuss the other related matters to their current jobs and started making their respective preparations for the upcoming opening of the ruins.

However, during the entire meeting, Nathan and Eugene could not fully focus on the discussion as they felt that they were missing something.

They were not sure what it was, but they could sense that it was also a very important matter. It was at least equally important, if not more, with the current issues that they were facing.

The more these two experts thought about it, the more uncomfortable they became. They knew that they were overlooking something, but they could not tell what it was.

Somewhere in Ace City, Jean Camus just returned to the academy and was about to head to his dorm. But as he walked through the secluded path toward his destination, he suddenly sensed a gaze directed at him.

He suddenly paused and focused his senses. A moment later, he suddenly disappeared from his current position while also completely erasing his presence.

In the distance, behind a tree, someone was observing the lone student walking through the path when the latter suddenly disappeared.

A moment later, this person suddenly sensed something sharp heading straight to the back of his head and about to reach him.

Swoosh!

Jean Camus suddenly appeared behind that person and was stabbing his hand as his Demonic Qi covered it.

But to his surprise, his target seemed to disappear before materializing in the distance.

"I knew it! You are not a simple student. That kind of awareness, speed, and strength are not supposed to be something that a kid of your age and handle," said the person as he looked at Jean Camus warily.

"You must be an agent, I suppose. Which organization are you from? Is that how you greet your seniors?" he added as Jean Camus silently stared at him.

Jean Camus observed the other party for quite a while before finally opening his mouth. "You. You are not a student here... or should I say that you are currently disguising as someone... you have stolen the identity of the real student that you are using."

"Let me guess... You must be... Coffin Maker?" he added.

Having his identity guessed correctly within an instant, Coffin Maker suddenly turned serious. His eyes turned cold as a dangerous glint appeared in them. He could not afford to have loose ends now that he had successfully infiltrated the academy.

But at the same time, he also could not help but become warier about this student standing in front of him.

"Where does this guy come from? Is he from one of those hidden organizations?" mumbled Coffin Maker to himself as he was getting ready to finish off the other party.

Even though he was quite curious how this guy had guessed his identity right in their first meeting, he could not afford to risk anyone being aware of his presence.

Seemingly able to read the latter's intention, Jean Camus remained calm. He knew that the opposing side was a Domain Realm Expert, which was way beyond his current realm. But he did not have to be scared as he knew the weakness of the famous Coffin Maker.

"I suggest you think twice before making a move. I know that you are strong, and I am not your match, but you can't kill me in that form," he said smirkingly.

"I know your disguise is one of the best out there – even my master has acknowledged it. But it has a fatal weakness..."

He trailed his words for a moment as he let Coffin Maker slowly digest his words. "...I heard that you can't fully unleash your power when you just taken over the body of your target. I heard you need an entire month or so before you can fully control it."

"And from what I can see, you are still far from fully taking over this body. Am I right? Or else, you will not be sneaking like this in the academy," he asked with a mixture of provoking and mocking tones.

The expression of Coffin Maker suddenly turned dark when he heard that and asked. "Who are you!?"

Jean Camus smirked when he saw Coffin Maker was getting ready to attack. "You can't take me on with that vessel. Unless you reveal yourself, you will not be able to get rid of me."

"But if you reveal yourself, the old monsters of the academy will instantly sense you. I wonder how you are going to escape when it happens."

Coffin Maker had become completely silent when he heard those words. He fully understood his current situation. He was also aware of what was going to happen to him once his identity was exposed.

"I don't know what your business is here, but I suggest that we don't bother each other. You do your thing while I continue with my own," he said before retreating.

His figure faded away as he entered the shades of the tree. He was not afraid of Coffin Maker exposing him since the latter knew that his identity would also be exposed to the academy once tried to do that.

Coffin Maker also did not know if this kid was the only member of their organization. Or if they were also aware of his existence in the academy. But given how informed the kid was, he could only guess that they came from an extraordinary background in the underworld.

If something happened to him and the other members of his organization exposed his identity, then he would be captured without being able to fight back.

"Tsk! This is going to be troublesome. Let's just hope that their job is not the same as mine," he mumbled before disappearing into the woods.

Chapter 1327: Thousand Arms Demon Asura (Part 1)

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As Shin got ready to leave and headed to the academy, he suddenly received a message on his advanced watch. He paused and did not start the car immediately and looked at it.

He saw that it was from Old Man Lin and immediately realized that it must be the details about the solo mission that he was supposed to do in exchange for not joining the exploration of the ruins.

He could not help his surprise when he skimmed through it. "Eh!? Why does this place sound familiar?"

As he read more about the details, he realized that it was indeed what he was thinking about. It was the same place that the rest of the group were talking about. The place that was supposed to be near the event place that Laurent was asking them to perform previously. However, it suddenly got canceled.

From what he remembered, Molton had done a little research about the place and discovered that there was a strange phenomenon going on there. Deep in the forest, which was a little far from the city, the trees and plants seemed to be wilting for some unknown reason.

When he read about it, he could not help but be reminded of the quest that they just went through the Sacred Light Kingdom, inside the game. It was oddly similar to that quest, yet also somewhat different.

This phenomenon was slowly spreading throughout the forest, but it was not as fast as the one that they had experienced inside the game. The wilting of the plants and trees was so slow that it would take at least a whole month or two before it became noticeable to the people of the nearby city.

The Military Forces were able to discover it. They quickly sealed the place and did not let anyone enter the perimeter of the area. It was just recently when some people, who wanted to go in hiking or harvest some plants reported it.

Fortunately, there was no serious casualty yet, but the first few people had become ill after coming in contact with it, although they quickly recovered after some treatment from the military forces.

The military had sent some people to investigate the cause, and they discovered that the wilting had no effects on people trained in any kind of discipline. But they failed to discover the real cause even after thoroughly investigating the place.

In the end, it had become a mission that was given to both the Top Military School and Magic Ace Academy. With what the military had discovered, the mission seemed to be graded as above-average difficulty without much risk. It was even a solo mission, which was a perfect fit for what Old Man Lin was looking for. It was the perfect assignment for Shin.

But since it was still a strange phenomenon, the military had suggested to any students, who would accept the mission, to be careful and follow the military protocol. This was not much of a problem since Shin was familiar with such things. After all, he was still raised in a military household.

After skimming through everything, Shin nodded his head and closed the message. The mission would require him to head out next week, which was the same as the special mission that the class was going to do. This gave him enough time to prepare.

He could even train a little before it happened.

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Not long after, Shin arrived at the place of the Research Department and quickly entered. Professor Henry told him to head straight to the training ground, so he immediately headed over there right away.

Right after entering, he quickly noticed three people waiting for him there. The first two were Benedict and Professor Henry just like what he had expected.

He was about to greet them when he noticed the third person among them. He halted in his tracks and trembled as he looked at that person. He remembered that this was the same old man that he had seen not long ago, standing at the entrance of the school.

He was immediately reminded of the experience that he had after his eyes met this old man, and it was not a pleasant experience. He felt that he almost died during that time. A single gaze that could almost kill him was terrifying.

Fortunately, nothing happened this time as the old man observed Shin in the distance before nodding and smiling.

"It turns out that we meet again, young man," said the old man, greeting Shin first.

It was at that moment when Shin snapped out of his daze and greeted back. "Greetings, elder."

He might not know who this old man was but given the presence that he was giving off and the strength that he had experienced, he was sure that the old man was at least of the same generation as his masters.

Then Professor Henry finally responded. "You two already know each other?"

The mysterious old man waved his hand and said. "It is not like we know each other. Remember the kid that I have told you earlier? He is the one."

"Ah!" Professor Henry seemed to realize something as he remembered what the old man had told him. He then nodded his head as he knew that Shin must be the only one, who could survive that encounter given the secrets that he had inside his body.

"No wonder he survives the notorious 'Gaze of the Demon'," he commented while nodding in understanding.

"But I don't expect that the disciple that the Old Benn was talking about will be the same kid that I have seen just recently. Now this has become even more interesting," said the old man as he observed Shin.

That was when Shin reached them and heard their brief conversation. He then came to understand a few things. 'This old man must be the swordsmanship teacher that the old fatty is talking about.'

He then began to observe the old man as the latter did the same to him.

Professor Henry smiled and began to introduce Shin. "Shin, this man over here will be your Swordsmanship Teacher as per what Grandmaster Benn has arranged for you."

"I have already talked to Old Man Lin Huang and Professor Kyrie to excuse you with the next classes for this week. After all, their class will only focus on training everyone for the upcoming exploration of the ruins, which you are excluded from."

"You will be training under him every day for the entire week. You can drop the rest of the plans that I have prepared for you for the time being, but not the training for your innate attribute. You must complete the two to three hours of training in the rest of the chambers until you fully awakened all of them and mastered a decent control over their energies."

Professor Henry was not done with the introduction when Benedict leaned over and could not help but tell his little junior about the real identity of the mysterious man. He whispered. "Hey, remember the one that I have told you about before? About the man who can wield different kinds of weapons?"

"Thousand Arms Demon Asura?" asked Shin as he whispered back.

Benedict nodded and pointed his chin at the mysterious old man. "Yeah. That is the man."

"Eh!?" Shin could not help but turn to the old man once again and scrutinize the latter with his gaze.

Professor Henry sighed as he heard the interaction between the two while the old man smiled at Shin and nodded.

"That is long in the past now. It has been a while since I heard that name," said the old man before adding. "For now, you can call me Old Ryong. Most people call me these days as Gosu Ryong. You can also address me the same way you want. I don't mind."

"Since I have agreed to train you as per my agreement with your master, then I will make sure that you will learn properly under me. I want to see how long you will take until you graduate learning the art of the sword under me."

Shin immediately gave the old man a salute before giving the latter a deep bow as a sign of respect.

Old Ryong nodded his head as he watched Shin. The more he looked at this young man, the more interested he became. He was also starting to understand why Grandmaster Benn would go to such lengths just to convince him to teach Shin swordsmanship.

He had also heard that the young man was also the disciple of Professor Plum, an Old Monster that even Old Ryong, himself, would be wary of.

From what he had heard, this young man was supposed to be a dual practitioner, but due to unforeseen circumstances, it was sealed inside his body.

'Studying Martial Arts under the tutelage of Old Monster Plum, Mentalism from Old Fatty Benn, and now he is a student under the guidance of Henry-...' As Old Ryong thought about this, a playful thought suddenly crossed his mind.

He turned to Professor Henry, which caused the latter to be surprised. The old professor could already guess what Old Ryong was planning to do just by seeing that gaze.

Professor Henry sighed a moment before nodding his head. He also had become interested in what Shin would become once he also became a student of this legendary figure.

"But I have another suggestion for you, young man," said Old Ryong after seeing that nod from Professor Henry.

Shin was confused when he heard that and looked at the old man with an inquiring gaze.

Old Ryong put the cane that he was carrying in front of him and placed both of his hands on it, one over the other, before continuing. "I heard from 'glasses' over here that you are practicing a pretty peculiar swordsmanship inside the virtual world."

"I also heard that you even created your swordsmanship through it," Old Ryong smiled as he continued. "I have given it a look last night and find it a pretty interesting idea."

Shin could not help but turn to Benedict as he knew that his senior should be the one that the old man was talking about when he heard the name 'glasses'.

He wanted to laugh, but he wanted Old Ryong to continue.

"I have a similar style that I have created just recently. I also have completed it. It happens to perfectly fit what you are looking for," Old Ryong fixed his gaze on Shin to see the expression that the young man

would be making as he continued. "I want to hear if you want to learn it alongside the sword-drawing style you are learning from me."

Shin was naturally going to be interested in it. After all, if it was something that this legendary figure had created, then it would be without a doubt an amazing art.

But he did not immediately agree as he knew that there were no such things as free lunch in this world. He knew that the old man would be asking something from him, so he had to hear about it first before deciding whether he would agree to it or not.

Old Ryong nodded his head when he saw that Shin did not immediately agree. Young people of this age were supposed to be hot-headed and would be very excited when they heard such things. Most of these people wanted to find shortcuts that would make them stronger.

Such young people were bound to deviate from their respective paths and lost into it. They were the ones, who were likely to fall into the abyss and become drunk with power.

He had already seen people like that and watched them become consumed by their inner demons soon after. He wanted to see that Shin would be different from them, especially when he had special circumstances.

"Become my student in the path of the sword and I will guide you properly," said Old Ryong, catching both Shin and Benedict completely off guard.

Shin stared blankly at the old man while Benedict seemed to have his brain short-circuited after hearing those words. The latter even forgot to close his mouth as he was too stunned to process everything inside his head.

Seeing their expressions, Old Ryon chuckled. "What is surprising about that? You are already studying under different teachers anyway, so there will be no difference if you take another teacher from what I can see."

"But I am neither a pure swordsman nor a sword practitioner majors in swordsmanship, Sir," said Shin.

Old Ryong laughed as he said. "It is fine. Neither of those is a requirement to learn from me. I can't even say that I am a pure swordsman myself since I have learned all kinds of weapons in my life."

"But what you will learn from me will become a nourishment that you can use in any kind of discipline, which is a perfect fit for someone like you," he added with a mystifying tone.

Chapter 1328: Thousand Arms Demon Asura (Part 2): Power of the Will

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Shin sat at the center of one of the training rooms as Old Ryong stood a couple of meters away from him. He stared at the old man, closely observing this new teacher of his.

Old Ryong thought for a moment before finally speaking. "I will not introduce myself any further since what happened in the past is already in the past. What I have achieved before is already useless, but the insights that I have gained are what is important."

"Right now, I am no different from a retired veteran, who left the battlefield," he added as he looked at Shin.

After a brief pause, he continued. "I have seen your swordsmanship through the videos that Henry and that glasses kid last night. It seems like your style is something that you have come up with after playing that game."

"I will not ask about the sword-swapping since it is something that the game has let you achieve, but those sword-drawing techniques and a couple of sword techniques that you possess are different. May I know where you have learned them?"

Shin hesitated for a moment before sighing. "I don't exactly know the answer to that, Teacher. It seems like something that I already knew before, and after learning a certain mind technique, these sword techniques seemed to have flashed through my mind as if I am remembering something that I have already learned in the past."

Old Ryong raised his brows when he heard that before asking. "My I know the name of this sword technique."

Shin smiled bitterly and shook his head repeatedly. "It is not like I don't want you to tell its name, Sir. But I don't know what it is called exactly. For now, I am calling it based on the mind technique that helped me 'awakened' this swordsmanship."

"I called it Jade Kirin Scripture," he added.

Old Ryong fell in silence for a moment as he thought of something. From what he could see, this sword-drawing technique that Shin possessed was somewhat similar to the one that he had seen in the past. It was almost the same as the swordsmanship of a certain mentalism genius who shook the world once.

A swordsmanship that destroyed almost every Mentalism Family and crushed their reputation.

The old man stared deeply at Shin for a moment before continuing. "Alright, let's forget it since it is not that important. But if you have the chance to learn its true name, I suggest that you look into it."

"The name of an art is not there just to identify itself, but that is also where its true meaning lies. If you learn its true name, then you will find its true strength and what kind of art it is supposed to be."

"You will have a better understanding of this swordsmanship once you know its name, and fully master it."

Shin paused for a moment before nodding his head. From what the old man had said, it seemed like what he was lacking lay in the true name of the 'Jade Kirin Scripture'.

"But you don't have to worry that much since you have already reformed it into a new sword style, which fits your habits and ideals," added Old Ryong as he asked. "What do you call this ever-changing sword art?"

Shin was silent as he was hesitant to say it, worried that an old expert found his naming sense funny. He then closed his eyes as he answered. "It is Myriad Transformation Swordsmanship, Sir."

"Myriad Transformation Swordsmanship, huh?" mumbled the old man, repeating those words, before smiling and nodding his head. "'A Sword with multiple forms.' What a very fitting name."

"Not bad," complimented Old Ryong as his smile grew.

Shin could not help but sigh in relief when he heard those words. It seemed like a huge boulder was lifted from his chest when he saw the old man satisfied with the name of his swordsmanship.

Old Ryong then stared at Shin before saying. "But it will be hard for you to apply it in the real world since you can't always carry multiple swords with you."

"It will be different if you are already in the Rulers Realm, where you can use the energy materialization that can help you form different weapons with your Mental Energy."

"The ideal way for it is to let you learn the partial materialization in the early stages. But it is usually learned by Ethereal Opening Stage or peak of the Grandmaster Realm."

"You are still in the middle of awakening your innate attributes and have yet to form your own 'Spiritual Force', so I doubt that you will benefit from learning such a technique in advance."

"But since I have told you that I am going to teach you my swordsmanship, then you will be able to use this swordsmanship of yours even without using different types of swords."

Old Ryong paused and walked a little further before asking. "Shin, what do you think is the most important thing in practicing a certain discipline?"

Shin thought hard, trying to find the answer. He was a dual practitioner before his Martial Arts was sealed due to a certain accident, so he could at least compare his experiences when training his Martial Arts and Mentalism.

"The mind?" said Shin with a little uncertainty.

Old Ryong smiled. "You are half correct with that, but the right answer is our 'will'."

"The 'Force of Nature' is important to practice our respective disciplines, but it is already a part of our world. It has already been there since the beginning, so it is a 'constant' – it is always present."

"But the three major paths of modern times apply it differently."

"Martial Arts refine this energy and make it our own before gathering it in our dantian, thus it becomes our 'Internal Qi'. It then nurtures our bodies making them tougher and stronger than what a mortal can do."

"Mentalism follows the principles of ancient cultivation where the 'mind nourished the body'. They use the power of the mind, their mentality, in the process while also combining it with the 'Force of Nature', which produces a product called 'Mental Energy'."

"Swordsmanship and other weapon arts are a little trickier since they follow a certain principle, but they are not that different. The 'Force of Nature' is present in everything, including the earth, the metal, and other objects."

"Swordsmanship uses these energies within their sword that have been refined through forging. They filtered everything through their will and transformed the 'Force of Nature' into a pure energy that has the properties of their sword such as sharpness, straightness, quickness, destructibility, and such. Thus, it is called the 'Sword Qi'."

Old Ryong paused for a moment as he turned around and faced Shin. "But regardless of the method to utilize the 'Force of Nature', these three major disciplines are following a certain principle, and that is using their 'will' to forge their path."

"The 'will' can be a lot of things. It contains our mind and other aspects that it has: the perseverance, the determination, the discipline, the resolve, the tenacity, the patience, and many others."

"All of these become one and become our will – some people call it the 'willpower'. Having an immense willpower will bring you to the heights that you will never be able to imagine."

"The three major disciplines follow a certain path, and they are forging the body and techniques until they reach the peak. But before achieving anything higher than that, one needs to hone their mind and forge an unbreakable will."

"This is why most of the experts at the pinnacle of their respective discipline focus on training their 'will' after reaching the peak of their physical strength and techniques."

"Their bodies and techniques have already reached the limits of our world. But if they want to break through the restrictions of being a mortal, then they have to forge a will that will help them break the chains restraining them and reach the transcendence."

"Transcendent Realm, Exalted Realm, and Saint Realm are said to be the highest points of the three major disciplines. They follow a different path, yet they all require to have a firm 'will' that is powerful enough to break through our true limits."

He then paused and asked. "Do you know why the 'Kaleidoscope Mentalists' are said to be stronger than most of the Martial Artists and Swordsmen in the same realm?"

If Shin heard this question before, then he would need help to answer it. But after hearing everything that Old Ryong had said, he could at least see the whole picture. "It is because they forge their 'will' much earlier than the others."

Old Ryong nodded. "They have trained their minds much earlier than the rest, which is why their will is much stronger than anyone else. This is the edge that a 'Kaleidoscope Mentalist' has over the others."

"Although the Psychic and Combat Metalist also train their will in earlier stages, they lack certain aspects that make them equal to the others practicing their respective discipline. The former lacks a strong physique while the latter has slightly weaker mind techniques."

"But this doesn't mean that it is true for all cases as there are still a few occasions where the said Martial Artist and Swordsmen possess a will that is no weaker than a Kaleidoscope Mentalist while there were certain Psychic and Combat Mentalists who overcome their weakness through certain means."

"At most, all of them are on equal terms so long they meet these requirements."

After that, Old Ryong twirled the cane that he was holding before fixing his grip on it. He held it to his side as if he was holding a sheathed sword.

"Now, what I am about to teach you is something that will help you infuse your will into your sword."

"It is neither a Martial Art nor a Mentalism nor a Sword Technique. Instead, it is a special method that can be used with any of these three disciplines. You can use it with any form of energy as long as you have the right 'will' when using it."

He then paused and assumed a stance that was very familiar to Shin. It was a sword-drawing stance. The old man was using his cane as a sword as he took that stance.

Then Shin felt that the surroundings seemed to have changed along with the air filling the entire room.

He found that his sense of time seemed to have been changed by the current atmosphere. Everything seemed to be normal at first glance, but Shin knew that he was moving much slower than he was supposed to be.

He had already experienced something similar before when his 'Immediate Response' talent had evolved once. His mind seemed to be processing whatever was around him normally, but his body was unable to respond to it accordingly.

But this time, he knew that there was something different. Whatever was happening, it was nothing but a mere illusion.

Click!

That was when he heard the familiar clicking sound when a sword was about to be pulled out of its sheath.

He then saw Old Ryong pull the upper part of the cane on his hands before swinging it forward. It was at that moment that Shin confirmed that the cane was hiding a sword in it.

Shing!

Shin saw Old Ryong swing the sword at a speed that he would not be able to imagine. His perception of time seemed to have slowed down, so he was supposed to see how the old man would swing his sword frame by frame.

Instead, the thing that he saw was a flash of light that before a sudden sharpness reached him in almost an instant.

"Fast!" – was the only word that he could think of. This speed was so fast that even his quick draw could be described as slow as a turtle.

Before he was able to properly process what just happened, he suddenly saw Old Ryong raise the sword over his head before swinging it down.

It was a simple swing, yet Shin saw something completely different.

The thin and slender sword seemed to have become a huge and heavy sword in his eyes. At the same time, he felt that a huge mountain was pressing on him as the sword locked on his position.

Boom!

He knew that he would not be able to dodge this attack no matter how fast he was.

"Heavy," – was the next word that came to his mind as he watched the sword descend.

Shin had yet to completely process everything when Old Ryong changed the position of his sword. He twisted his wrist a little, holding the sword parallel to the ground, before swinging in a horizontal fashion.

Swoosh!

This time, Shin saw that the sword was able to cut through anything as it drew a horizontal line in the air.

"Sharp," – was the best word to describe it.

After that, Old Ryong performed a few more basic movements of the sword as Shin watched everything. Every time the old man swung his sword, the young man would get a different word to describe them.

Shin had seen the old man bring out the characteristics of a specific sword with just the thin sword in his hand: fast, heavy, sharp, firm, light, slow, powerful, flexible, straight, extreme, variable, profound, and mysterious – all of these appeared one after another.

These characteristics sound only be possible to perform when using the corresponding sword such as a heavy sword, greatsword, shortsword, flexible sword, versatile sword, rapier, and many others.

As this thought crossed his mind, Shin finally understood what Old Ryong meant when he saw something about the 'will' infusing with the sword.

Chapter 1329: Thousand Arms Demon Asura (Part 3): Old Ryong's Warning

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It took Shin quite a while to recover from what he had just seen. He stared blankly in the air even until Old Ryong was done performing the sword movements and sheathed his sword back.

Old Ryong let Shin digest what he had learned from watching the performance for at least an hour before finally pulling Shin back to reality. "I have created this technique after learning and experiencing different Martial Arts."

His voice was like a thunder inside Shin's head, snapping the young man out of daze.

Shin turned to the old man in amazement as he continued to listen.

"I also have experienced how to wield different kinds of weapons, which is why I can understand their properties and characteristics well."

"After I have retreated from the battlefield and gone in seclusion, I have gotten certain insights that I never think I will get before. This flood of ideas enters my mind as I continue to remise the past and my experiences on the battlefield."

"Thus, this method is created. It is something that contains all my experiences and insights, and I am entrusting it to you."

Shin nodded solemnly as he felt yet another responsibility on his shoulders. Aside from the personal Martial Arts of Professor Plum and the unique Mentalism Method of Grandmaster Benn, it seemed like he would be carrying another banner on his back.

"Can I know the name of this method, Sir?" asked Shin carefully.

Old Ryong thought for a moment before shaking his head. "I have yet to give a name for it. I can't seem to find the fitting name for this particular method."

He then turned to Shin and gave the latter a meaningful smile. "Which is why I find the name of your swordsmanship very interesting."

"How about you give a name for it?" offered the old man.

But before Shin could even respond, Old Ryong immediately added. "You don't have to rush. You can take your time naming it as you learn this method. Once you have learned its true meaning, I am sure that you will be able to think of a fitting name for it."

Shin did not answer but nodded his head firmly. His eyes were full of determination.

Old Ryong smiled as continued. "Training this special method is rather simple, but it is not going to be easy."

"I heard that you are a Battle Genius, so I prepared a specific training method for you. But since you are also a Mentalist, I will also be giving you the ideal way to learn it."

"For you to understand the different properties of the swords, you must experience using them yourself. You also must explore the other weapons with similar properties to broaden your horizon."

After saying that, he waved his to the side before piles of weapons appeared beside him. They were neatly segregated depending on the properties that they had.

Shin could see a huge mace, a hammer, a club, and other heavy weapons piled with the greatsword and heavy sword. Then there was a variety of whips, flails, and other similar weapons grouped with the flexible sword. The other piles were just like these, giving Shin an idea of what was going on.

"You will be swinging each of these weapons at least a thousand times a day," said Old Ryong, making Shin gulp hard as he swept his gaze at each of them.

"You can only pick a pile until you feel that you have understood their characteristics before you can proceed to the other."

"But before you can switch with the next pile-..." The old man paused for a moment as he summoned a table with a stack of paper on it. There was also the traditional ink along with a brush and plume on the side.

Old Ryong picked up the brush and dipped it a little on the ink in an elegant and smooth movement. He then took a piece of paper, and placed it in the center of the table, before writing something to it.

After that, he placed down the brush before picking up the paper and showing it to Shin.

Shin saw that the word written on it was 'Sharp', and he could feel a powerful will infused with that word. Just looking at that word gave Shin a sharp feeling that seemed to be poking at his skin. He felt that he would be cut once he touched that paper.

It was at that moment when Old Ryong continued. "Once you are done with a pile of weapons, I want you to write down the word that correspond to their characteristics. Only if you can infuse your will like this into your writing that you can proceed learning the other properties."

"This may look simple in your eyes, but it is much harder than what you think. This does not only need you to understand the properties well, but it also requires you to have better control over what you have learned."

"If you use too much force, then you will most likely cut or crush the paper depending on the characteristic that you want to write. If it is too little, then you will not be able to project the same feeling that you want to show."

"Swinging these weapons are best for Battle Geniuses while writing those insights can help you with your Mentalism," Old Ryong pointed at the piles of weapons and the table with stack of papers.

He then turned around, heading toward the exit of the room, before saying. "We will proceed with advanced lessons once you have perfectly finished this assignment. Until then, I will not teach you anything."

"You have to master at least five words for a decent result. But if you want me to teach you the next part of the training, then you must master ten to fifteen words at the very least."

Once his words disappeared, the old man also exited the training room, leaving Shin alone.

Shin stared blankly at the door before turning his head back to the piles of weapons and the table in the distance. He then picked a pile to start his training.

And the pile that he chose was meant for the weapons used for quickness.

He felt that he was close to understanding this property since most of his techniques were based on speed and quickness, thus he chose it as the first to learn.

But he later realized that his thoughts were too naïve as he was far from completely understanding it.

...

Outside the training room, Professor Herny waited for Old Ryong. When he saw the latter exited, he could not help but ask. "Are you sure about this? You should know how much the government covets this method of yours. One of those elders desperately wants to get his hands on it."

"Aren't you putting the kid and yourself in danger by teaching him?" he added, voicing out his concern.

Old Ryong chuckled when he heard that. He then turned to Professor Herny as he said. "Herny, you, of all people, should understand how the government treats people who possess what they covet."

"They will never touch them unless it is necessary," he paused and pointed at the professor. "Look at yourself. Aren't you in the same position? You are someone, who is closest to discovering the method how to combine Martial Arts and Mentalism aside from those two, yet they did not dare to touch you."

"You know why? It is because they are afraid to repeat the same mistakes that they have in the past. They don't neither want to lose the person possessing what they need nor push us to become another sword that points at their necks."

"They don't want to lose another genius processor and turn them into a mad scientist, nor want to create another 'Heavenly Demon', who is a serious threat that they can't stop."

"Just like you, they will most likely protect the kid instead, rather than letting the other powers have him."

"But if they want to turn me into their enemy, then they will have to pay the price for it. I will show them what the Thousand Arms Demon Asura has become after going in seclusion," he added as he continued walking.

He just took a couple of steps when suddenly he remembered something. "Ah! And another thing. I am aware that that kid hides some secret inside his body aside from the 'Seed of Hatred' that he possesses."

"I am guessing that you are already aware of that," he said as he looked at the old professor with a scrutinizing gaze.

Professor Henry smiled as he admitted it. "That kid's secret may be much more shocking than what you can think of."

Old Ryong raised his brows and commented nonchalantly. "Is that so? Then I guess that kid's background must be very special."

"I first thought that he must be a part of a prestigious family or a renowned organization, but after seeing how much of a mess it is, I know that it is not the case."

He paused briefly as he thought of something. "I can only think of one person who can afford to have such a 'mess'. No wonder among you people of the Research Center dare to touch him and protect him instead."

"You have done quite well at hiding it. If not for my first encounter with the kid, and if he doesn't attract my 'gaze' and awaken my inner demon by accident, then I will never be able to discover him."

Old Ryong then turned around and resumed his steps. "But I must warn you. Time is against the kid. At this point, he may not even last until he is eighteen."

"You must be finding the cure, am I right? Then you must stop hesitating and be decisive. The only way for that kid to survive is to break that seal and defeat that 'thing' much earlier."

"He may not be able to fully consume it, but he can at least buy himself enough time for another round and build another seal. Although, I doubt that there is anyone out there who can create such a delicate and amazing seal as that little lass. I fully understand why you, old people, are hesitating."

"I am telling you this based on my experience. It is better to face it earlier rather than let it grow stronger since the longer it is trapped, the hungrier it becomes."

"Once something provokes the kid beyond his tolerance, then he will surely lose his mind in an instant. At that time, it will already be too late since that 'thing' will have a feast on his 'hatred'."

Professor Henry watched Old Ryong walk away as he remained silent and continued to stay on his spot. He thought deeply at the words that the latter had said before turning his head at the door of the training room.

He understood why the kid's parents chose to send him away rather than keep him on their side. It will only make the seed inside the kid much stronger if he stays beside his father, which would make it impossible for them to save the kid from being devoured by it.

But the choice seemed to be biting them right now due to the two other seeds that were formed along with the first.

Professor Henry did not know why Adam let that happen as he could only see it as killing their son much sooner.

Shin might have already refined the first two seeds, or rather the alter ego had done it. But as it made them stronger, the other seed had also become affected and grew stronger along with them.

Right now, Professor Henry was in a dilemma on what to do. Professor Plum and Grandmaster Benn had entrusted Shin to him since those two could no longer help Shin with it aside from the special mission that they had.

They had run out of ideas on how to delay the growth of the 'Seed' and did not know what to do.

Hearing what Old Ryong had said, it seemed like they only left with a single choice – and that was to face it head-on.

Professor Henry only hoped that Shin would be strong enough when it happened.

When the professor thought about this, he was suddenly reminded of what David had said to him before.

– "Professor, I hope that you don't only focus on Shin. Have a look at Uno as well since they are one. That is what Master and Sir Adam have said. They trust that you will understand when the time comes."

–

Recalling those words, Professor Herny seemed to come to a realization. "Could it be...? Don't tell me they want the kid to...?"

Chapter 1330: Thousand Arms Demon Asura (Part 4): Demon smells other Demons

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Shin spent quite a lot of time trying different kinds of weapons until he found what was the best to learn from. He first thought that the weapons used for quickness were much easier to learn compared to the rest, but he later found that he was wrong.

After learning that he might take much longer than he thought, Shin tried the weapons on the other piles to see if he could grasp their characteristics and other properties better. After testing everything, he realized that he was surprisingly more proficient in handling heavy weapons aside from the katana.

Realizing this, Shin picked a huge mace and started swinging it with both of his hands. He wanted to see what would happen if he swung these weapons a thousand times like what Old Ryong had said.

Despite those thoughts, he did not swing recklessly or aimlessly. Instead, he properly took a stance and held the mace with both of his hands, and imagined that an opponent was standing in front of him before finally swinging with everything he had.

He repeated the process, not concerning himself about the time. He even failed to notice that Benedict had entered the room a couple of times to ask him for lunch together. But after seeing Shin was too immersed in his world, Benedict shook his head and quietly left.

Benedict felt that he was inferior to this junior when it came to dedication to become strong.

"Am I slacking too much in my training?" he mumbled as he closed the door behind him as quietly as possible.

...

As Shin was too busy with his training, Arthur was also summoned by Nathan. He was also excused from attending the class as his uncle personally fetched him.

"Uncle, where are we going? I need to attend the class since it is meant for the upcoming exploration of the ruins," complained Arthur as he sat with Nathan in the backseat of the car.

"Don't worry, this is also meant for that specific mission. I just need to train you with some things before sending you there," said Nathan as he leaned back and closed his eyes.

Arthur might not be the brightest, but he could at least sense that something was going on. He frowned deeply as he turned to Nathan. "Is there something wrong, Uncle? It sounds a little serious."

Nathan was silent for a moment before sighing. "It is not as bad as you think. But it will never hurt to be prepared for all things."

He tapped his finger on the armrest of the backseat as he continued. "We have to entrust you and your friends with the matters within the ancient ruins since we can't enter it."

"Whatever you find it will not be helpful to you anyway, unlike the rest. That is why I want you to focus on keeping an eye on a few people instead."

Arthur knitted his brow when hearing that. "If it is just keeping an eye on a few people, then I will not have any problem with that. Why's the need to train me especially for it?"

Nathan sighed once again. "It is not as simple as that. What I want to teach you is how to awaken your innate attribute much faster than the rest."

"You are already aware of what kind of attribute you have, so it will be too much of a waste if you stay the way you are and delay its awakening."

"Or should I say... It will be a waste not to let you know how to form your 'Natural Force' when you met all the requirements for it," he added with a solemn tone.

Arthur was aware of this. He met everything to break through. His bloodline powers were one of the major factors that played in this. With such a dense and powerful bloodline, the True Blood of the Golden Divine Dragon, his physique was said to evolved matching the 'Natural Physique' that he needed for the breakthrough.

But he also remembered that the elders in the Dragon Valley to not make haste. His body would naturally transform and evolve so long as he continued to cultivate the 'Imperial Tactics'.

He would also slowly awaken the 'Natural Force' meant for him along with it, which possessed the 'Imperial Flame', one of the major forces of the Springfield Family along with the 'Flame Emperor Flame' that Shiella had.

He was instructed to play it slow and let the energies within him grow naturally, especially when his bloodline was slightly different from the rest of the family since his Golden Divine Dragon Bloodline also awakened the legendary 'Divine Lightning', which was another type of force.

The Divine Lightning was an ancient force that used to appear only once in the entire history of the Springfield Family, and that was when their first ancestor had gotten the inheritance from the Ancestor Dragon of the family.

The elders of the Springfield Family let the 'Imperial Flame' and 'Divine Lightning' merge naturally and form a new type of force.

Nathan naturally knew about this, so he quickly explained. "Don't worry, this will not hinder your progress, nor hurt your foundation. I will only help you awaken the innate attributes much quicker since you will be needing them in this particular mission."

Arthur still had yet to fully understand what Nathan was trying to do, but he trusted this uncle of his. He knew that Nathan would not do him any harm, so he just nodded his head and behaved himself in his seat.

From what he could see in the actions of the teachers in the academy, he knew that something big was going to happen when the grave of the ancient cultivator was opened. He could also feel it from the mood that Nathan had.

But what made him anxious about this was something different. He felt that something bad was about to happen, and it gave him a very unpleasant feeling. He was not sure what it was, but he just hoped that it would not be for the people close to him.

...

Somewhere in the outskirts of the Eastern Sea Region, there was a small village, where the residents lived as fishermen, fish traders, and fish vendors, Old Ryong suddenly appeared.

He slightly raised his head to reveal his eyes hidden under the shade of his hat. He swept his gaze in the village, seemingly looking for something.

The village was quite busy despite how small it was. The residents were busily running back and forth while carrying a basin filled with fish and other sea creatures. Some of them were even pushing a cart with a basin filled with seafood.

But despite that being the case, no one seemed to notice the old man despite him standing in the middle of the street. The people seemed to ignore his existence despite almost bumping into him.

Old Ryong did not care about these people as he continued to walk toward the different parts of the village. He walked for quite a while until he reached a particular house that was someone isolated from the rest.

He stopped in front of it while mumbling. "This should be the place."

Not long after, someone walked out of that house and looked at the old man as if he was expecting the latter's arrival. "It is surprising to see a senior visit my humble place. May I know what I owe you for this visit, Senior?"

Old Ryong squinted his eyes as he looked closely at the man standing in the doorway. From what he could see, this man seemed to be nothing but an ordinary person. But his instincts were telling him something completely different.

He might not be able to see it, but he could at least feel it.

And right now, what he was seeing through this 'feeling' was a massive darkness in front of him with a pair of abyssal eyes.

"Who are you?" asked Old Ryong as his aura was also starting to leak out.

The scrutinizing gaze that Old Ryong was giving him earlier did not affect the man, but this pressure that he was getting from the old man was completely different.

For some reason, this man wanted to give it a go, especially when the opposing party also possessed something that might be helpful to him.

But if he did that, he would not be able to achieve what wanted from coming here. He suppressed the urges that he was getting and calmed himself down. "I suggest not to do that, Senior. Do you want those innocent people to get implicated in this?"

Old Ryong glanced at the nearby village before turning back to the man in front of him. "I should be the one asking you that. Why is someone like you doing in this kind of place, when you are supposed to be distancing yourself away from other people."

"Isn't it the reason why I isolated myself from the rest," refuted the man in a calm tone.

"Don't play words with me. You know what I am talking about," said Old Ryong as his tone grew more solemn with every word. "What a Demon like you doing in this place."

The man standing at the door, who was Jan Mateo in disguise, smiled evilly as he responded. "I don't see any problem with that when a senior like you seems to be doing the same."

"Your 'Demon' may not be as powerful as mine, but it sure has its edge over mine," he added smirkingly, seemingly provoking the old man.

Old Ryong ignored that comment as he continued. "There are only a very few 'Demons' with such a dense demonic power around, but I can't seem to remember someone like you."

"Just what are you exactly?" he asked as his hand slowly fixed his grip on his cane.

This time, the 'respect' that Jan Mateo had completely disappeared. "Hey, old man. You better do your own thing and don't get involved in my business."

"Since you are an old fossil, you should have known about the unspoken rule," he added as he crossed his hands behind him and leaned forward. "How about I use mine now? Let's not bother each other for a month and I will leave this place peacefully without creating any kind of disturbance."

Old Ryong smirked. "You are talking about the unspoken rule, yet you are unwilling to introduce yourself properly? It looks like the younger generation is getting bolder since we secluded ourselves."

Jan Mateo smiled as he said. "Trust me when I say this, Senior. You not knowing who I am is the best for the both of us."

"Never trust the words of a Demon. That is a basic rule," replied Old Ryong.

Shing!

As those words left his mouth, his suddenly flicked upwards. It hit the handle of his cane and sent it upwards, unsheathing the sword hidden under it.

Swoosh!

Old Ryong's figure suddenly flickered at that time as his other hand caught the flying sword. There was a flash of light as the old man suddenly appeared in front of Jan Mateo while pointing the sword forward.

Jan Mateo did not move as he stared at the incoming attack, completely unbothered. The shadow underneath him seemed to have as it extended itself and formed a group of tentacles that grabbed the blade of the sword tightly, preventing it from moving further.

Jan Mateo wanted to try fighting the old man, but he knew that he could not afford to do that since it would only expose him to the others.

Just like Old Ryong could not see through his disguise completely, he was also unaware of the real identity of the old man. He only knew that he was an old expert and a fellow Demonic Practitioner.

There was a tense atmosphere between the two as they maintained their positions.

A fight between demons was about to break out.