

Destiny 1421

Chapter 1421: Visualization Lesson

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Real World, Soaring Continent

Eastern Sea Region, Ace City

Swoosh!

Inside the independent dorm within the Magic Ace Academy, a pair of gaming cabins opened almost at the same time. One of them was Simone Bartolomeo while the other was Thomas Brooks, who just finished playing the game.

Right after they stepped out of their respective gaming cabins, they suddenly turned their heads toward the door of the room almost at the same time.

They saw Jean Camus leaning on the door jamb with his arms crossed in front of his chest.

"Oh! You are back? How is it?" asked Thomas in a nonchalant matter.

Jean shrugged his shoulders as he replied. "Not that much. Those guys are already done with the preparations, all we need to do is wait."

"I see," said Thomas as he stretched his arms and waist while adding. "I guess we also have to make our move."

"About that-... There are some changes in the plan. We have to pull out from the operation and leave the rest to others. We are tasked to stay here even if everything fails," said Jean.

Hearing that, both Simone and Thomas turned at him with a questioning gaze.

Jean stood straight and spread his hands. "Don't look at me like that. It is what my master has arranged. I don't know the reason either, so all we can do is comply."

The two were still confused. But since the great leader issued it, they did not have the right to question it.

Jean was about to turn around and leave when he suddenly remembered something. He turned at the two and asked. "Ah! One more thing. How about the task that I have said?"

Thomas quickly turned in his direction after hearing that and answered complainingly. "Oh! About that. It has been settled. But the others are quite unsatisfied with it. They are asking why you suddenly want to take back your orders when everything is already set in motion."

"They said that our most elite people are already about to set out when you suddenly want to wait a little longer."

Jean thought for a moment before explaining. "It is also not my order. If I am the one to decide, then I will order the quick elimination of the target as soon as possible. It is even better to capture them and hand them over to the higher-ups of the church."

"But what can I do when Master has ordered it? He said that we can't touch the kid for at least a month, but don't give me any reason, which is also why I ask you to come up with a random excuse to delay them," he added with a complaint of his own.

"The great leader has asked you to do that. I thought that he would leave everything about the game to you and would not interfere," asked Simone with a confused look on his face.

"My thoughts exactly! But how can I defy my master? He said that I can't ask about it, so I can only keep my thoughts to myself," Jean shrugged his shoulders with a helpless sigh.

Thomas thought for a moment before asking the main point. "But how can the great leader know about that 'variable'?"

Jean paused for a moment before shaking his head. "How can I know what Master is thinking? Just do what you are tasked with."

"I will join you with the meeting later this night, so they can ask me directly if they want," he added before leaving.

Magic Ace Academy, Research Department

Shin just finished another round of training and sat in a corner to rest. As for his progress for today, he was also quite surprised himself as he had already learned half of the sword principles that he needed to learn, and the ones that were left behind were those complex ones that could not easily be learned such as Mysterious Sword, Profound Sword, Transformation Sword, and others.

Clank!

Almost at the same time as he sat on the ground, the door of his private training room suddenly opened followed by Old Ryong entering the room.

Seeing the old man, Shin suddenly felt excited and quickly ran toward Old Ryong. "Instructor Ryong!"

Due to the number of his teachers, Shin addressed them differently so that others would not be confused when he was looking for them or talking about them. It was also a reminder for himself so that he would not be confused as well.

Old Plum was his Martial Arts Master, who was also his first true master, so he called him Master. Old Benn, on the other hand, was his Mentalism Teacher, whom he called Teacher. Old Henry was his main

instructor within the academy, so he had called him Professor. Meanwhile, Old Ryong was his sword instructor, thus he called the old man, Instructor.

Old Ryong suddenly squinted his eyes when his gaze fell on his student. He knew that Shin was quite talented when it came to Mentalism, particularly in Mentalism Swordsmanship, and used katana as the main weapon. Read the latest on m_v-l'e|-NovelBin.net

He expected Shin to finish mastering all the basic to advanced sword principles in a month or two including those complex sword principles and the combination application. But from what he was seeing, Shin had already mastered all the basic and intermediate sword principles while mastering the majority of the advanced ones.

He could also feel that Shin was capable of combining most of them given the sharp aura that the kid was emitting. It might not be enough to compare to the true swordsmen, who were making the true path of swordsmanship, but it was enough for a Mentalist Swordsman, or even better.

What was even more surprising about this was Shin training this technique for barely a week, which far surpassed the old man's assessment.

Old Ryong gave Shin a deep look before nodding in satisfaction. "I am expecting you to master just a decent number of sword principles before your special mission in the upcoming days, before teaching you the next step, but you surprise me with your results."

Shin halted his tracks when he heard the sudden compliment before awkwardly scratching his head. "I... I did not do that much, Instructor. It is just your teaching method greatly suits me."

"I also can't deny that," said the old man with a chuckle, acknowledging his greatness.

He then looked at Shin with meaningful eyes before continuing. "I was originally planning to check on your progress and see if you can finally start the next step, but it seems like you have given me a great surprise."

"This works well for me as well. Since I can't visit you that much due to my injury, your fast progress will save me a lot of time," he added before looking for a corner to sit before instructing Shin. "Since you have mastered quite a lot of sword principles already, show me your progress."

"Don't hold back. You can even show me your progress in combining them if you want so that I can have a good look at your progress," he added, indicating that he was already aware of Shin's achievements.

Hearing that, the expression on Shin's face suddenly turned serious before giving Old Ryong a respectful bow. "As you wish, Instructor."

After that, Shin walked toward the center of the room before standing there with closed eyes. He took a deep breath to regulate his breathing and focused his mind.

When he opened his eyes once again, there was a sharp glint that surprised even Old Ryong, who was watching from a corner.

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

In the next moment, Shin unsheathed his sword before executing a series of sword movements that carried different sword principles.

Sharp Sword, Straight Sword, Sturdy Sword, Heavy Sword, Swift Sword, Destructive Sword, Unsettling Sword, Illusion Sword, and many others were performed one after another. Shin even performed a few strikes for every sword principle to make sure that Old Ryong would have a deeper understanding of his progress before moving to the next sword principle.

He danced around the training room while swinging his sword for quite a while before mixing each sword movement that carried different sword principles. He even showcased his achievements by combining a few of them to produce a different type of sword principle or to achieve the same level of profoundness as those advanced ones.

From a different perspective, he seemed to be swinging a different type of weapon instead of a katana in each move that he performed.

Old Ryong, who was watching from the side, could not be more satisfied with Shin's performance. With this level of understanding of sword principles, Shin was more than qualified to move on to the next stage.

"It is a pity that he can't be a true swordsman because of his talent. But this is more than enough to put him on the same level as those 'candidates'," he mumbled with a sigh.

Swoosh!

It did not take that long for Shin to finish everything and sheathed the sword once again. He then walked over to Old Ryong and waited for the assessment of his instructor in silence.

It took quite a while before Old Ryong nodded his head and complimented him. "It is good. You did well. You have already gained a deep understanding of the sword principles in just a short amount of time. You indeed have such a good talent."

"But don't rejoice just yet. You may be good, but there are still people out there, who can do the same."

"You can't slack off in this training. Even if you have already mastered most of the sword principles, you can still realize a few things by continuing to train them."

"You still have to swing those weapons at least a hundred times every day even if you have already mastered the sword principle that they represent. And you have to continue writing those 'words' done whenever you are done swing them," he added with a strict tone.

"I understand, Instructor," nodded his head in full seriousness.

"Regardless, you are more than qualified to proceed to the next step," said Old Ryong before saying in a serious tone. "I will be teaching you three things."

"First is poetry, the second painting, and the third is how to integrate those sword principles in your sword-drawing and ever-changing styles."

"Eh!?" Shin was slightly taken aback after hearing those words, particularly the first two parts. "Poetry? Painting?"

Seeing Shin's reaction, Old Ryong smirked. "What? Unsatisfied with it?"

Shin raised his head and saw the meaningful eyes of the old man, so he shook his head. "Of course not, Instructor. I am just a little surprised."

Old Ryong chuckled as he explained. "Remember what I have said in our first lesson? I have said that the mind, particularly the willpower, of an individual, plays a big role in any disciple one."

"They are used in a lot of ways, but for me, the most important thing is 'visualization,'" he added as he gave Shin a mystifying smile.

"Visualization?" mumbled Shin.

"That is right. Visualization," repeated Old Ryong as he continued. "Do you know why monks, Taoists, and other branches of disciplines chant long poems or mantras? It has something to do with visualization."

"It is some sort of self-hypnotism or mind conditioning to achieve the ideal state that they wanted before doing anything."

"It is the same for the ultimate techniques and martial movements of the current era as most of them came from visualizations. Even the Domains of a Domain Realm Martial Artist, the Authority of a Venerable Realm Mentalist, or the Sword Fields of a Sword Saint have something to do with visualizations."

"In a sense, it is a combination of their powerful willpower that could affect the world and their visualizations."

"They visualize a certain outcome and project it into the physical realm with their overwhelming powerful willpower," as the old man was talking about this, he the air within the room suddenly changed.

Then Shin suddenly noticed an odd feeling stabbing his skin. After that, he subconsciously turned his head toward the direction where that feeling was coming from. "Ah!"

That was when he saw a massive apparition of a demon with thousands of arms standing in front of him. Its towering size could reach the sky, making it much larger than all the giants that Shin had encountered even within the game.

It had an overwhelming pressure that could kill anyone with just its presence alone. Shin felt like he was drowning as he stared at this giant demon.

Swoosh!

It only lasted for a brief second, but Shin was already kneeling on the ground and supporting himself with both of his hands. Sweat was dripping nonstop from his face while his entire body was soaked with sweat. He was also gasping hard as he felt like the air had left his lungs for a very long time.

"I am quite different from most of the experts out there as I don't possess a Domain despite being at the pinnacle of Domain Realm?" Old Ryong continued as if not had happened. "But my Battle Spirit was way stronger than anyone, which can even destroy the most powerful domain out there."

"It is not even suitable to call it a Battle Spirit given its might, so I changed its name to Spiritual Avatar instead," he added with a pause.

He waited for Shin to recover before continuing. "As for the technique that I am about to bestow you will help you in a lot of ways."

Shin nodded his head solemnly as he understood that he was about to learn yet another unorthodox technique just like Professor Plum's Yin-Yang Arts, particularly the dual-core within him, which was one of its byproducts; or Grandmaster Benn's Four Symbol Scripture, especially the Spirit Pagoda within him which was a different Niwan Palace compared to most of the Mentalists.

But there was still another thing that made Shin curious. "But Instructor Ryong. What does it have to do with my swordsmanship?"

Old Ryong chuckled when he heard that before explaining. "Didn't I mention earlier that willpower and visualization have something to do with each other?"

"Once you learn this technique, you will be able to achieve the ideal Mentalism Swordsmanship that you have."

"Especially when this method is perfect for your Mentalism Technique and Swordsmanship," he added while imagining what kind of achievements Shin would have reached in his path.

Chapter 1422: Unexpected Move

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"Pouring the different intent or sword principle in a single word produces different results," said Old Ryong as he wrote the word 'Blade' multiple times on different paper before showing it to Shin.

Shin observed the words and realized that some words carried the intent of 'sharp', others possessed the intent of 'swift', while the rest carried different intents.

"But you can also produce the same result by putting them on a different with similar properties," added Old Ryong as he showed different words to Shin such as 'Sword', 'Knife', 'Dagger', and such.

Shin observed them one by one before comparing them to the first batch of words with 'Blade' in them.

Then Old Ryong continued. "At the same time, you can also apply that method of combining them that you have already learned."

This time, he wrote the word sword that carried multiple intents in it.

Shin stared at it for quite a while before nodding his head. This lesson was teaching Shin how to transfer his 'intent' to words by writing them. It sounded a little simple, but it included a set of complex steps in them.

Shin first had to put an image inside his head or at least imagine the word that he wanted to write along with the intent that he wanted to project. Then he had to carefully transfer them toward the brush on his hands while writing the word that he 'visualized' inside his head.

"Once you are capable of projecting your intents into words, you can start with the next step and try writing a single phrase," Old Ryong continued while writing on a paper.

When he showed it to Shin, the words written on it showed – "The sword descending from the heaven."

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Seeing that phrase, an image seemed to have been projected inside his head. He saw a giant sword falling from the sky before destroying the land where it landed.

In that image inside his head, Shin could sense multiple intents such as Straight Sword, Swift Sword, Heavy Sword, and Destructive Sword. These principles united into one and produced such a result.

Shin could not describe what he was feeling.

After Shin digested everything inside his head, Old Ryong continued. "You can also project similar things when you are painting, but in a more complex manner and much clearer."

The old man picked up a brush and started drawing a sword before showing it to Shin.

After looking at the drawing, Shin could not help but compare it to the words that Old Ryong had written earlier. This drawing carried similar intents as the previous ones, but it projected a much more intense 'feeling' in them and clearer as well.

As Shin was looking at the sword, Old Ryong was already painting the scene that Shin had seen inside his head.

When he showed it to Shin, the latter felt like his consciousness was transported into a different dimension where he could see the scene within the painting. It was as if the painting had become lifelike.

While Shin was too immersed in the vision that he was seeing, Old Ryong's voice sounded inside his head like a clap of thunder, waking him up.

"Once you reach a certain level when practicing this method, you will be able to visualize your desired 'outcome' whenever and wherever you want."

"Being able to visualize these scenes inside your head, which also projects your understanding of your sword, your path, and your ideals, will produce results that even yourself will become surprised."

"This method will not only be good for your swordsmanship but will also be of great help for your Martial Arts and Mentalism, especially the latter since it is a method perfect for making use of a strong willpower trained through Mentalism."

"That is enough for now," Old Ryong paused as he found that should be enough for today.

"You should focus on projecting your intent into words first since putting them into painting is much harder than you think. You should start with the fundamentals before moving one step at a time."

"Remember this, haste makes waste. And even if you have taken longer, it doesn't mean that you will not reach your destination. Building a more solid foundation is more important than achieving your goals in haste."

"This will create a sturdier building that cannot be shaken easily compared to something that is built with lousy materials as it will easily crumble."

Hearing that, Shin nodded his head. This was something that his Master and Teacher had repeatedly warned him about, so he was not a stranger to it.

Seeing that Shin fully understood his words, Old Ryong nodded before standing up to leave.

Shin also stood up as he bowed to the old man, sending off Old Ryong. After that, he quickly sat down as he excitedly practiced his 'calligraphy' based on the lessons that he had just taken.

He felt that this method that he just learned perfectly suited what he needed. But he still felt something was missing. It was as if Old Ryong was not telling him everything and holding back a little.

But given the Old Ryong's temperament, he could tell that there must be a reason for it. It is either it is not time yet or he had to find the answer himself.

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Later that day, Shin went back to his room and took a quick shower. Even if he did not achieve much progress in his training, it had given him a deeper understanding of the sword principles that he just learned and the similarities and differences between the intents that they possessed.

He could not easily infuse more distinct intents when wielding the sword and even fused more sword principles in a much easier way. He also found a few tricks that could help him when using his sword techniques.

But the thing that made him more interested in this was the fact that he could combine his Mental Energy and the Sword Principles to some extent. This became a crucial clue for his Mentalism Swordsmanship.

With this trick, he was able to make him use the sword-drawing and ever-changing styles more freely.

"Is this what Instructor Ryong wants me to find by myself?" he mumbled as he walked out of the bathroom while drying his hair with a towel.

Right at the same moment, he suddenly sensed that the atmosphere within his room was somewhat odd.

The air seemed to carry the scent of death.

His vigilance level instantly went up to maximum as he sharply scanned the surroundings with his fierce gaze. He particularly paid extra attention to the darker corners of the room, especially the ones with curtains.

Even if all the lights were on, there were still some corners that had 'shadows' lingering in them.

'How can they sneak here when the entire hotel is heavily guarded by the people of Flying Dragon Corporation?' mumbled Shin as he carefully looked for traces of the person, who managed to sneak inside his room. 'They must be highly skilled assassins.'

Due to the recent events that happened, Shiella and Nathan increased the protection for Shin and the rest of the group, especially for him due to the most recent assassination attempt.

Since he was the main target, the people responsible for guarding him secretly were the most skilled and most trusted people from the Springfield Family.

There were also some specially arranged people meant for his security because of his connection with the Black Serpent Mafia, who were currently in an active state in different parts of the world despite most of their bases being obliterated by a monstrous couple.

Cloe was also put under heavy protection due to the competitors of the Cilvana Family. Even if one of their major rivals had already been dealt with, there were still a few people, who were intending to fish on troubled waters.

There were also those organizations that were currently in the Soaring Continent due to the recently discovered tomb of an ancient cultivator.

The current state of the continent was quite unstable due to these foreign powers that were setting their eyes on a few inheritance places that the country had.

Recently, he heard from Arthur and others that some geniuses or talented individuals within the academy were being ambushed left and right. The attempt might not be enough to kill them, but all the victims were seriously injured and they had to be hospitalized for at least a whole month or even more.

From their assessment, this might be a scheme that those outsiders were cooking to limit the number of people who would participate in the exploration of the cultivator's tomb.

This also caused some chaos within the academy as some people took advantage of the situation to get back on the people that they had conflicts with.

Information about the assailants was quite accurate as well as all their targets were the selected participants for the mission. The majority of them were from their class, which indicated that there was most likely a mole within the academy that was feeding those people enough information.

'But why am I included in the target list? I am not included in the mission,' as this thought crossed his mind, his eyes suddenly turned wide as he realized. 'These people are most likely from the organization that is specifically targeting him.'

There were only two major dark organizations that were targeting him – the Black Serpent Mafia, which had had a history with, and the Shadow Alliance, which he had messed with during the incident in the Central Region.

As this string of thoughts ran through his mind, he was already sending distress signals to the people close to him, particularly Shiella, David, and Nathan.

But he later realized that the signal was being jammed. By spreading his Spiritual Sense into the surroundings to further look for the intruders, he also noticed that multiple formations stacked on one another were sealing off the entire room.

'Tsk! Now this is troublesome. I don't know who they are, but their skills are no joke. I never noticed the formation until they were activated,' Shin frowned deeply as he glanced at himself.

He was currently topless while the pants that he was wearing were meant for sleeping. Aside from the spatial rings that contained his swords and the advanced watch on his wrist, he did not have anything else on him.

Not long after, shadows within the room seemed to move as multiple figures in dark cloaks revealed themselves one after another.

There was also a buffed man in a set of assassin outfits but with a sleeveless shirt. His muscular arms were fully exposed, signifying that there was a lot of strength in them.

But what caught Shin's attention was the black serpent coiled in a dagger tattoo on one of this person's arms.

'So, it is them,' the expression on Shin's face suddenly turned grave when he realized who these people were.

But what confused him was that these people were only at the peak of the 'Qi Refinement Stage' with some being in the early stages of the 'Core Formation Stage'.

If they wanted to assassinate someone, then these people were more than enough. But with Shin's current strength, these people were far from being enough to handle him. He easily wiped the floor with them within a couple of minutes.

The only problem that Shin had to worry about was the buffed guy and the mysterious person behind their formation, who happened to be a Mentalist as well. Shin guessed that this person must be the one who set up the set of arrays inside his room.

Seeing Shin remained calm despite the current predicament that he was in, the buffed guy, who seemed to be the leader of the group suddenly said. "You can't rely on those people outside. All of them are pretty much occupied with our people."

"As for your friends... all of them were currently trapped within their rooms. I reckon that they will only be able to escape once we leave the vicinity," he added with a provoking look on his face.

'The others as well?' Shin's eyes suddenly turned cold as a dangerous glint appeared in them.

The buffed guy was quite surprised at the immense killing intent coming from Shin, but he was able to recover himself within an instant.

He then crossed his arms in front of him and said. "Don't get too agitated yet. We don't have enough people to deal with all of you since we also have to keep the Dragon King busy."

"Some of our people are also keeping an eye on the Junior Dragoness of the Springfield Family, the Wanderer, and those two Young Ghosts of the Valentine Family."

"But the traps that we have set up within this hotel are more than enough to harm them and the other innocent people staying here."

His eyes then suddenly turned dangerous as he continued. "Deserter Uno. All we need is for you to come with us and your friends and the others staying within this building will be fine."

Shin did not immediately respond as he was trying to come up with a plan to deal with the current situation. At the same time, he was also trying to figure out what these guys were planning to do with him.

'It has been a long time since these guys made a move on me. What are they plotting this time to risk waging war against the Springfield Family?'

He was not sure about it yet, but he felt that it had something to do with the current events within the Soaring Continent.

Chapter 1423: Abducted?

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In the corridor outside the rooms of Shin and his friends, the people who were assigned to protect the group were currently lying on the ground.

Two people were still conscious and kneeling on the ground. They were hugging their stomachs and pressing on the grievous wounds to prevent them from bleeding further. They were also glaring at the person standing in front of the door of Shin's room and Arthur's room across it.

"What a monster like you doing a place like this-...?" asked one of those soldiers kneeling on the ground.

The other guy, who was in the same state as him, also added. "It seems like the rumors about the Black Serpent Mafia are true for people like you to join them, Poisonous Beauty 'Belladonna'."

The woman was standing in the middle of the bodies of the comrades of the two due to a certain poison. They seemed asleep, but their mouths were agape as their drool flowed from them.

The woman was wearing a seductive and revealing set of clothes. There was also a whip rolled and hanging on the side of her waist while her hands were holding another.

This was Poisonous Beauty Belladonna, a famous assassin in the underworld. She was known to be someone, who liked to move on her own and was unwilling to join any organization as she enjoyed her freedom the most.

But it was clear that she was already a part of the Black Serpent Mafia since she was currently wearing a tattoo unique to the members of the organization on part of her waist, which was also right beside her nave.

"That is none of your business," said Belladonna as she licked her lips painted with green lipstick.

She glanced at them before continuing. "But you guys better not annoy me with those useless questions. Aside from you not being my type, you also have annoying faces. You better behave if you don't want to die here."

"My instructions only include those little hatchlings trapped in their rooms, so I can end your lives if you make me unhappy," she added before turning her gaze to Shin's room.

Her eyes seemed to be able to bypass the walls and able to see what was happening inside.

At the same time, one of the two conscious soldiers suddenly growled. "Are you declaring war on the Springfield Family?"

Belladonna took her eyes from Shin's room and turned at that soldier. Then her wrist flicked for a moment before her whip suddenly lashed the face of the latter, leaving a gash on the person's face.

"That is your final warning," said the Poisonous Beauty before adding. "As for the Springfield Family – we have never been afraid of them. But poking on a hornet's nest will make the others to make a move as well."

"But that is in the past. Since there are also a few people who want to get a slice of 'that' pie, we can just pin the blame on them," reaching this point, her words trailed a little before smiling mysteriously. "That should be enough. You two can no longer hold on any longer, so you better sleep now and forget what has happened here."

The two soldiers were trying their best to stay awake, but they could already feel that the drugs that Belladonna had used on them were already taking effect. They could already feel that their consciousness was slipping, and their eyelids were gradually dropping.

Thud! Thud!

Seeing that they fell on the ground with a soft sound, Belladonna smiled while whispering. "You guys sleep well. Then you will tell everyone that those representatives from the Silver Wing Continent have done this."

"I am excited to see how this is going to unfold," she giggled before turning her attention back to the room.

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Inside the room, Shin was trying to find a way out while also trying to buy as much time as he could. He also sent a hint of his consciousness inside his spatial rings to make sure that the talismans that his senior brother and Grandmaster Benn had given him were still there.

One of those was a protective talisman that could protect him against a Domain Realm or Venerable Realm experts for a certain period of time while the other was a long-distance teleportation talisman that could send him back to the Springfield Household.

"Why would I trust you? I know better than anyone what kind of people you are," he said he kept on sending distress signals while also looking for a way to escape.

Hearing those words, the buffed guy suddenly said. "That is the same reason why you must come with us if you want to save your friends."

"As you already know, a 'deserter' like you are often executed on the spot. But as you can see, here we are, negotiating with you. Isn't that enough proof of our 'sincerity'?"

He then paused as he smirked at Shin, knowing what was running inside the latter's head. "You are smart, so you should know our purpose here. It is either we need something from you, or you have to do a certain thing for us."

"Either way, it is something related to our mission. If we can't take you away, then we can only kill you along with your friends. But if come with us, then everyone will be able to walk out of this place alive."

"We will also not do any dirty trick when we leave as we need you for something. If we dare to do such things, then you will only rebel and not do our job for you, which will also make our mission fail."

"And you should know what a failure means to the organization," he added as he grinned at Shin, seemingly telling the latter that it was already checkmate.

After a brief moment of silence, he also added. "Ah! Another thing, you also better not think of running away right after we leave this place as we also have certain means to get back at your friends."

Right after he said those words, the hooded person behind the buffed guy suddenly stepped forward and took off their hood, revealing their appearance.

"You!" Shin's eyes suddenly turned wide when he saw the other party.

It was because he knew this person. They were also one of his classmates in the special program class of the academy. They were fairly lowkey but also got along very well with the rest of the class.

"Tsk!" Shin now knew who the mole within the class was, who was feeding information to those assaulters ambushing their classmates.

At the same, Shin also realized the real predicament that he was in. This also indicated that he would only have a limited choice when doing the so-called 'task' that these people had mentioned.

He could neither delay it nor sabotage the operation midway as these people would have someone pointing a knife at his friends.

"And you are not afraid of provoking the Springfield Family and the Magic Ace Academy?" said Shin, trying to buy more time.

The buffed guy chuckled as he knew what Shin was trying to do. He then stopped smiling and said with a cold voice. "I know that you are trying to buy time for your reinforcements to come, but our people stationed to delay them are also not simple. Even the Dragon King will take quite a while to receive the news, much less to come here."

"But since you are dying to know, then I will fill your curiously," he added with a pause before continuing. "We are indeed hesitant to provoke such major powers. But what if I tell you that we have already found a person, who will take the fall?"

Shin's pupils suddenly contracted when he heard those words as he realized that this sudden 'ambush' was a well-crafted plan.

Before Shin could say anymore b*llsh*t, the buffed guy continued. "You better tell us your answer with your next words if you don't want those guys outside to die."

Click!

Right after the buffed guy said those words, the door of his room suddenly opened followed by the appearance of a beautiful woman with a bewitching body. Around her littered the bodies of the soldiers who were supposed to protect Shin and the others.

Belladonna smiled and waved at Shin before tugging her whip and showing another guy, who was being strangled by her whip.

Seeing that person, Shin clenched his fist and was about to move, when the hooded figures in the air also prepared to stop him.

That person was one of the soldiers, who was holding our earlier and also one of the close aides of his Uncle Nathan.

Understanding his situation, Shin relaxed his body before sighing. "Alright, you guys win. But you better not touch anyone of them after we leave."

The buffed guy smiled in satisfaction as he said. "Naturally! We still you for a job, so we can't just go back on our words, can we?"

He then extended his hand and commanded. "Take off that advanced watch of yours and let our people check your body if you are hiding a weapon or something. Being careful will never hurt."

Shin complied and did not do anything else. He tossed the advanced watch while spreading his arms.

As for his spatial ring, it was hidden by the special camouflage technique that Grandmaster Benn had cast, so no one would be able to see through it unless they were someone as powerful as the old fatty or more.

After making sure that everything was under control, the buffed guy turned toward a person in the corner of the room, who was also typing rapidly on his laptop and messing with the advanced watch that they had gotten from Shin.

They were making sure that Shin did not plant a secret code on it while also planting some fake evidence that they had prepared.

After that, the person tossed the watch to the buffed guy, who threw it on the ground and smashed it.

Shin watched everything unfold with a calm gaze while also checking the woman outside his room. From his estimate, that woman was at least in the Domain Realm, albeit slightly weaker than Nathan.

With such an expert on their side, there had never been a chance for Shin to escape this place.

Not long after, Belladonna walked toward Shin before tying his body with her whip. She then turned to the buffed guy and said. "Then I will be taking this cutie first. Let's meet again at the rendezvous point."

After that, she disappeared alongside Shin, not waiting for the latter to respond. It looked like she was very excited about something.

"Tsk!" The buffed guy clicked his tongue before turning to the others who were left with him before turning to spy classmate. "You have already recorded most of his usual moves, Little Ann. Do your work and set up the scene."

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The girl addressed as 'Little Ann' nodded her. "You can leave it to me, Sir Boris. This will be a piece of cake."

Boris, the buffed guy, nodded his head before walking toward the veranda adjacent to the room before jumping from it.

Not long after, a huge fireball came falling from the sky before landing in front of the hotel where Shin and the others were staying.

It did not cause any destruction when it hit the ground, but instead turned into a blazing human figure, who calmly walked toward the hotel.

As the flame faded, Nathan's figure was suddenly revealed. He was currently wearing a grave expression on his face as he walked forward.

It did not take long for him to arrive at Shin's room, which was now in a ruined state, signifying that an intense battle had broken out.

Nathan swept his gaze at the surroundings before landing on Shiella, who was currently biting her lower lip.

Sensing his gaze, Shiella slowly raised her head before saying with a whispering and self-blame tone. "Uncle."

He walked toward his niece and asked. "What exactly happened? Give me the full report."

He might also be worried about Shin, but he had to keep his cool and handle it like how he usually did with other cases.

Chapter 1424: Ripples

...

"So, it turns out that simultaneous attacks happened," mumbled Nathan as he listened to the reports of his subordinate while also comparing it to what Shiella had said to him earlier.

"It must be a carefully crafted plan given that everything went too quickly. It did not even take half an hour before everything unfolded and ended," he added as he tapped his index finger on the table before him.

According to the investigation that they had launched, it was highly likely that the assailants were people from certain organizations that were ambushing the chosen participants while exploring the recently discovered cultivator's tomb.

However, Nathan was also slightly doubtful since this case was a little different from the other incidents. Most of the students that were ambushed were attacked when they were about to return to their dormitories outside the premises of the academy or currently doing some business outside.

But none of those cases included attacking the place where the students were staying, particularly as big as this one.

Moreover, the operation was conducted very professionally, indicating a well-orchestrated plan similar to how those big underworld organizations worked.

All the cameras were taken down and the signal of the entire place was tightly sealed, preventing anyone from contacting the outside. More importantly, all of it happened in just a very short time, not giving the outside help any time to respond even after realizing the strange movements within the hotel.

Aside from this, there was also a simultaneous attack that targeted him, Shiella, and even David, indicating that the opposing side was very familiar with them and planned their actions well before making their move.

Even Vincent and Jerimiah were also delayed by unknown assailants from arriving at the hotel before retreating with just a few exchanges that did not even last for ten minutes.

This could only mean that whoever was behind this incident had already planned after considering various conditions.

Even himself, the Dragon King, was occupied by an unknown Venerable Mentalist, preventing him from arriving here after receiving the news.

Nathan then turned to his subordinate and asked. "Have any of our people regained their consciousness?"

The person standing beside him bowed before responding. "I am sorry, Commander. But it seems like they have been poisoned or drugged by an unknown substance. It doesn't put them in any danger, but it was strong enough to put them in a deep slumber."

"But based on our investigation and from the blood samples that we have gotten, it seems like whatever it is, the majority of its materials are made from the unique flowers that can only be found in the Silver Wing Continent."

Nathan squinted his eyes as he heard that. "Are you sure of it?"

"We are 100% sure, Commander. But we still can't come up with a conclusion that this incident was done by those people. They will be not stupid enough to leave such an obvious trace that will lead back to them," replied the subordinate.

Nathan nodded in understanding. "It seems like we can only wait until the two unit leaders wake up."

After that, he dismissed the lieutenant as he pondered on himself.

At the same time, David suddenly entered and greeted him. "Sir Nathan."

Nathan glanced at the latter and nodded. "How is it? Can your special technique locate Shin?"

David smiled bitterly as he shook his head. "I am afraid that even my techniques can't sense his location. It seems like he is branded by a special seal that prevents me from finding him."

Nathan tapped his finger on the wooden table before suddenly remembering something. "Oh! How is Shiella doing? Has she calmed down yet?"

Earlier, after learning that Shin had been abducted by the unknown people, Shiella went berserk and wanted to flip the entire region just to look for him. She was about to mobilize the secret forces of the Flying Dragon Corporation just to turn over the entire city.

Fortunately, David arrived in time and calmed her down, telling her that she could not do anything rash, especially when there were foreign forces within the continent, acting as guests.

If she somehow had provoked those people and created a conflict with them, particularly the representative of the Silver Wing Continent, who were their main suspects, things could lead to an international dispute.

And that exact outcome was what the people, who were watching from the sidelines, wanted to see.

Those sly foxes and cunning wolves were waiting for such an opportunity and took advantage of the chaos to rip some benefits.

Those delegates from different forces from overseas were still manageable since they would not dare to cause too much trouble in the territory of their main rival. But those from the underworld organizations would be a whole different matter since they could use underhanded tricks, and not play by the rules.

"How about the other kids?" asked Nathan remembering Arthur, Leonard, Cloe, and the rest of the group.

Those guys were supposed to be victims of this 'assault' as well since they were all trapped in a sealing formation earlier. But for some unknown reason, the people who were supposed to attack them backed out without raising that much of a conflict.

But when they rushed out of their respective rooms and discovered that the unconscious soldiers filling the entire corridor, they realized that something must have happened.

They also thought that the reason why the assailants retreated was because Nathan and the rest of their reinforcements had arrived, but they had learned that it was not the case after a few minutes.

That was also when they realized that the only one who was not present was Shin, so they quickly rushed toward his room and saw the devastated scene of the place.

That was also when they learned that Shin was currently missing.

Nathan was not sure what had happened, but their current suspicion was Shin had come into an agreement with the opposing party, which was none of them were harmed while he came with them willingly.

But there was also a possibility that it was purposely done to mislead them, so they could not ignore any angles.

David could not help smiling even bitter as he heard that. "It seems like Arthur and Leonard are able to calm down, but Cloe can't do the same. Lorraine is even starting to contact her family for help. It is the same for Alice, who just came back from the academy."

Nathan sighed and nodded. "I understand. You can leave for now and look over them. Make sure that they will not do anything rash."

He then paused before changing his mind. "No, leave them to Vincent and Jerimiah. Just keep Shiella company as I am afraid that she will do something stupid."

"She may not look like it, but she is overprotective when it comes to her brothers," he added.

David nodded his head as he retreated and left the room.

It was at that moment when Nathan turned to the darker corner of the room, where the shadow seemed to dance before spitting out a woman with a flexible and alluring figure. "Have you not seen anything as well, Emily? I reckon that you are around during the entire incident."

The woman was one of Nathan's friends along with Joaquin Geovanni, Elias Stuart, and Eugene White.

Emily shook her head as she also found this case rather strange. "I happen to be passing by when it happens. But someone blocks my path. I don't know who it is, but they are at least as strong as Joaquin in terms of physical strength."

She was commissioned by the local forces to investigate the recent ambushes on the students of the special program of the Magic Ace Academy. She would act as an independent unit that would look into both the foreign forces staying within the Eastern Sea Region, particularly in the Ace City, and the faculty members of the academy, who were also tasked to investigate the same assignment.

This was the reason why she was roaming around the students enrolled in the special program of the academy.

She happened to be on the scene when everything happened. But she was a little too late to notice the strange movements within the hotel.

Moreover, the person, who blocked her, was also a pretty skilled expert with the same level of strength. Even if she had tried to send a distress signal, she was being jammed by the latter, making it impossible for the reinforcements to arrive in time.

"But one thing is for sure. These people are not your average guys. They act a little differently from the cases that I am investigating, but also share a similar trait, which makes it hard for me to come up with a solid conclusion," she added as she recalled everything to the best of her abilities.

"My first guess is the previous incidents are just a distraction to hide their real intentions while abducting your nephew is their real target."

"Or it can also be these guys are from a different group who are trying to pin the blame on the others."

"Either way, I must say that they have done a decent job since they have somewhat achieved their initial goal. It is either creating chaos in this busy time or abducting a target at the perfect opportunity," she added as she tried to assess the situation.

"So, what is your plan?" she asked as she could tell from Nathan's expression that this was going to be a serious matter.

"This matter will be kept secret from outsiders for the time being. Shin is undergoing special training under Sir Henry and Senior Ryong anyway, so his classmates will not notice if he disappears or not," said Nathan with a serious tone.

He paused for a moment before continuing. "Sir Henry has already ordered all his students to form a team to look into this matter. All of them are as strong as the top talents of the same generation, so they will be fine."

"Moreover, Joaquin and Eugene volunteered to help, so they will be leading this operation."

"Senior Ryong can't move that much due to his recent fight against Jan Mateo, but Senior Lin Huang said that he will be looking into this matter as well."

"Due to the recent attacks on the students, the higher-ups of the academy can no longer sit still and started making their move. Each head of the department is assigned to keep an eye on the people from different forces staying in the region."

"Since those guys are provoking us a little too much, we will show them why the Soaring Continent is known for our military forces."

Hearing those words, Emily could not help but shiver as she pictured the main forces of the Springfield Family and Magic Ace Academy inside her head.

She could not believe that there were people, who would dare provoke these powerhouses. Both factions had old monsters that could not be provoked.

It seemed like those monsters had stayed too dormant for such people to forget about them.

"Do you want me to lend a hand?" she offered.

Nathan thought for a moment before shaking his head. "It is fine. You can just stay here and keep an eye on everything. That is more than enough."

Emily shrugged her shoulders before leaning on the walk, waiting for any update.

...

While everyone was panicking due to Shin's disappearance, the news somehow reached the ears of a certain Demonic Practitioner staying in the mountains.

Jan Mateo just received the news about Shin's disappearance from his subordinates.

Knitting his brow deeply, he suddenly crushed the nearby boulders and took down the surrounding trees with his pressure alone. "Someone dared to lay their hands on my prey?"

He then opened a special channel on his advanced watch and issued an order. "Investigate what happened and make sure to find the kid as soon as possible. I need him for my 'meal' at the end of this month."

Chapter 1425: Reason of Abduction

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While the people were looking for Shin's whereabouts, the person himself was currently confined within a secret base that the Black Serpent Mafia had set up within the Eastern Sea Region.

He could not even do that much given that he was on a constant watch of a Domain Realm Expert such as Belladonna, the Poisonous Beauty.

Even if he tried to take out the talisman that would bring him back to the Springfield Household, such an expert would be fast enough to stop him and snatch it from his hands. It was the same for the protection talisman as the outcome would be the same – she would have plenty of time to snatch talismans from his hands before he could activate them at such a distance.

The organization had already learned its lessons and did not dare to underestimate someone like him.

Sometimes, the most insignificant factor was enough to change the tides of any situation.

Laughing bitterly, Shin sat on the ground while leaning his back on the room wall and ignoring the flirtatious look that Belladonna was giving him.

He felt an intense shiver running through his spine every time he saw those looks. He felt that he would be eaten by this woman alive if not because of the operation at hand.

Aside from being bothered by her gazes, Shin somewhat discovered quite a lot of things by observing everything from the sidelines.

Aside from this woman, there were two more Domain Realm Martial Artists and one Venerable Realm Mentalist staying within this base.

One of the two Domain Realm Experts was that buffed guy that he had seen earlier, who seemed to be called Boris. Shin felt that this guy was the most mysterious of them all as he was able to disguise his martial attainments as a regular Core Formation Stage Expert. He could even make himself look like an ordinary person if he wanted.

This kind of disguise was quite normal to people of such level, but what made it so special was its ability to make his body weaker than that at a certain level. It was more like a sealing technique rather than a disguising technique.

This was the reason why Shin did not feel threatened by this person despite having such a sturdy and strong build.

In his perspective, such a person was more threatening than anyone else who was constantly emitting a dangerous aura from their bodies.

The remaining Domain Realm Expert was someone quite 'familiar' with Shin. That guy was Butcher, whom he had met once during the most recent mission that he had along with Leonard. It was also the same person, who had captured him at that time.

As for the Venerable Mentalist, Shin also found they were somewhat mysterious. But the air of mystery around them was not as dense as the one that he felt from Boris.

This mentalist seemed to be called 'V'. He was not sure if it was the actual name of the person, or it was some sort of alias. But from what he had overheard from the passing young agents, this person was an expert when it came to Mentalism Arrays, particularly in sealing and illusion formations.

It was most likely the person who had set up the entire formation within the hotel earlier. Only a skillful expert of such level could set up such an array without David noticing anything wrong.

For such experts to gather in such a place together, Shin came to realize that the Black Serpent Mafia was plotting something big.

He was not sure what exactly it was but seemed to concern the Magic Ace Academy, or more specifically, the World Research Center that was situated within it.

Shin could not help but feel anxious for Professor Henry, who was always conducting his research in that place.

From what he had gathered from the pieces of information that he had overheard; someone had infiltrated the academy and was already in the middle of conducting the operation.

Moreover, they have already stolen quite a few important researchers, which included some projected all 'Black Heart'. It was some research concerning something about an artificial energy source that could be implanted in the body without causing any drawbacks.

There was a huge history of this project as it was first started by an ancient evil cultivator of ancient times. The product of that project was excavated by some expert archaeologists led by Professor Herny's friend.

The said 'product' was entrusted to Professor Henry for thorough research as he was the best choice for such a project since he was very familiar with the field of Ancient Cultivation and researchers regarding the unification of Martial Arts and Mentalism.

The so-called 'Black Heart' was something made from countless sacrifices through immortal acts in ancient times. The evil cultivator even said that he had sacrificed the life worth of an entire nation just to create it.

Unfortunately, they were struck down by one of the 'Lords' at that time while his research materials were lost and never been found. Aside from scattered records that were written about it, no one had recovered the entire research study.

As for the 'Black Heart' itself, it was left sealed within his tomb after the said 'Lord' had sealed it.

It then later fell into the hands of the World Research Center and was now being studied by Professor Herny and his team.

Since such a long time had already passed, the power that this said artificial source of energy had already been exhausted, but the container survived and remained.

Naturally, Professor Herny and his team did not intend to follow the methods of the evil cultivator. All they wanted to know was how the Black Heart was formed and how to take advantage of it to benefit the current era.

Shin had heard that the Black Serpent Mafia wanted to steal all the research materials that Professor Henry had about the said project. It was even better if they were able to steal the Black Heart itself so that they could study it themselves.

Shin had suspected that they were planning to use this 'Black Heart' to reinforce their Artificial Mutants by implanting them in their bodies.

It was just his suspicion, but he was quite confident that it was their purpose given the current clues that he had.

After reviewing all the clues that they had, he also figured out the identity of the person who had sneaked inside the academy unnoticed. – "It was Coffin Maker without a doubt." –

Shin then recalled all the events that had happened and realized that everything seemed to be a 'smokescreen' to cover their tracks and hide their true intention.

From the abduction incidents during the time that the top clubs of the academy were investigating, to the capture of the elite students, to the discovery of the secret project that the Black Serpent Mafia was conducting as well as their secret base in that mountain range, then the discovery of the inheritance of the 'Thunder Lord', up to the rescue operation lead by David and the others, which also included him and Leonard.

All of these were nothing but a cover to let Coffin Maker disguise as one of the rescued students and infiltrate their ranks.

"D*mn! These guys have plotted that far," mumbled Shin as he bumped the back of his head into the wall behind him.

He came to realize that they had been played by the opposing side.

"Then what role do I have to play on this plot of theirs?" he frowned deeply as he started to suspect that he was most likely another distraction to throw Nathan and the others off their trail.

Shin felt a sudden sense of urgency as he realized this fact. He felt that he had to inform the others about this as soon as possible. He also felt that Professor Henry was in trouble given that most of the targets that the Black Serpent Mafia had concerned the researchers that the professor was leading.

It would not be strange if they tried abducting Professor Henry as well.

Click!

Not long after, the metal door of the room suddenly opened followed by the entrance of Boris. He exchanged a glance with Belladonna for a moment before he turned his attention to Shin.

Boris observed Shin for a moment before tossing a small box to Shin. "These are the things that you need to do. Everything is inside the flash drive. Read it thoroughly and prepare yourself. You will be sent to do your mission the day after tomorrow."

"Day after tomorrow? Isn't it the same time when our class is going to be sent to the cultivator's tomb for exploration?" mumbled Shin as he found another crucial piece of information.

Boris did not care what Shin was thinking and quickly left the room, without bothering what Shin was going to do.

Shin opened the small box and saw two objects inside. One of them was a smartwatch that was specially distributed to the agents of the organization. It was an indestructible tool for someone like Shin. He would also not be able to take it off once he put it on his wrist unless he chopped off his hand or possessed a special key for it.

At the same time, it also possessed a special tracking system that would constantly monitor his location every second. It was another feature that would prevent the agents from running away.

It was a very advanced watch, which could rival those that were developed by the Sun-Moon Continent, the capital of advanced technology in the world.

Another faction of this particular watch was its one-way signal feature. The agents could only receive orders from this watch, but they could not send any messages to any other channel aside from the main source.

It was a special feature to prevent Shin from contacting anyone when he was doing the special mission.

The other object inside the box was the flash drive that Boris was talking about earlier.

Without further ado, Shin put on the smartwatch unwillingly. He did not have a choice since Belladonna was watching him from the side.

At the same time, he was also interested in the flash drive and skimmed through its contents to see what kind of mission these guys had wanted him to do.

To his surprise, it was the same mission that Old Man Lin had prepared for him. It was the same case, which would require him to investigate a certain place where strange phenomena were taking place.

However, the information on this mission was more detailed and specific. They even knew what the source of the strange phenomena was.

"An inheritance from ancient times?" mumbled Shin with a frown as he thoroughly read the details.

From the contents of the mission, there seemed to be an inheritance in the said place, and someone had accidentally stumbled upon it – this was what the military had discovered, and also what he had read before.

But from what the Black Serpent Mafia was saying, they seemed to be the ones who had discovered that inheritance.

As for the person, who had accidentally 'discovered' it, they were one of their agents.

It was supposedly one of their secret operations, and the agent was tasked to retrieve the inheritance tome and bring it back to the base.

Unfortunately, an accident occurred, and the agent was consumed by the inheritance and turned him into a puppet.

If not for the special seal that was containing the puppet from leaving the place, then it most likely had left the region and had already wreaked havoc in the nearby cities.

It was not that big of an inheritance. It was not even close to the one that Leonard had received, which concerned the 'Thunder Lord' of that era. It could be counted as one of the less important inheritances that could be found out there.

However, this inheritance focused on nurturing a strong 'vitality' or similar force after the investigation that the organization had conducted. And it was something that they crucially needed for the next step of their plans.

After a series of trial and error, the organization discovered that only someone from the Grandmaster Realm on the path of mentalism could enter the region and try retrieving the inheritance.

Anyone stronger than that limit would turn into a tree puppet just like what had happened to the agent.

The organization had a lot of martial artists of different stages and realms, but they only had a limited number of mentalists. If ever they had one, those mentalists were already at the Rulers Realm or above, so they did not find anyone, who fitted the criteria.

As for the special agents that they had sent to be a spy within the Soaring Continent, their numbers were somewhat limited. They could not afford to lose any of them any longer after all the incidents that occurred recently.

It was not hard to nurture one, but it would be difficult to climb in the ranks of the organization that they had infiltrated, so they could not recklessly send these people.

The only thing that they could try was to find someone, who would fit the criteria and was also skilled enough to survive that place.

After all, there were already a lot of puppets here after all the tests that they had conducted.

Someone skilled, familiar with their system, and they could afford to lose – they happened to find someone, and that person was Shin.

Of course, they also had to find something they could use against Shin to ensure he would not stab them back.

Capturing him was one thing, but the plan on how they would force him to comply with them was a whole other matter.

They had already captured Shin, now all they had to do was to find someone or something that they could use as a 'hostage'.

The Black Serpent Mafia had already found someone. As for who it was, Shin's eyes instantly turned cold when he saw that person's image at the bottom of the mission information displayed on the virtual screen.

Chapter 1426: Captive

.....

"I like those eyes that you are making, kid," commented Belladonna after seeing the current expression that Shin was making.

Shin turned to her and coldly said. "I am going to say this. If something happens to him, I will swear upon my soul that I will make you regret it."

Belladonna smirked when he heard that. "Come to again once you have the strength to back those words up."

The person who was captured by the Black Serpent Mafia was someone he knew. In fact, it was someone who he had a special relationship with.

That person was Arthur's father, Bernard Springfield, who was supposedly in a special operation with his unit. From Shin had remembered, Bernard was sent by the federation to a certain place to conduct a secret operation.

It was a highly classified mission, so even Nathan and the rest of the Springfield Family did not know about its details aside from Samuel Springfield, who was the current head of the house.

They had not received any news from him since then. But since Samuel reassured everyone that the operation had successful results, so they did not mind it that much.

Moreover, it was pretty much a normal occurrence within the family, particularly a Military Family such as the Springfields. It was normal for someone from the family to be out of contact for a couple of months or even a year when they were on a special mission.

This was the reason why Shin was quite surprised to find Bernard in this place. What's more, he was also a captive of the Black Serpent Mafia.

Given his current appearance with a haggard face and messy hair, Shin could tell that he had gone through a lot already.

In the photo, Bernard was hanging in the air with his limbs sealed inside cylindrical objects, which also prevented him from moving.

Shin could not help but clench his fists tightly as he stared at the photo. He might not be that close to Bernard, but he still had special respect for this guy, especially when he was the one who had found him, invited him to the Springfield Household, and treated him as one of their own.

He was not sure how he would end up if not for this person. His life took a special turn when he met Bernard after his unit had launched a raid on the training camp of the Black Serpent Mafia at that time.

He had also treated Bernard as his real uncle just like how he treated Nathan.

Shin stared at the virtual screen very closely to make sure that he had not seen wrong. A deadly aura was started to enfold his body. He could sense that something was getting agitated within him, but he ignored it and let himself lost in it for a moment.

Fortunately, he was practicing the Jade Kirin Scripture, which also helped him keep that energy under control. Another force within him was strongly suppressing this dark energy and preventing it from going berserk.

A few moments later, he forcefully calmed himself down before turning to Belladonna. "I want to see him."

Seeing the expressionless, but cold face that Shin was making, Belladonna felt a shiver down her spine. It might be brief, but she felt a genuine fear coming from this kid, which shocked even someone like her.

It took her a couple of seconds to recover her composure before nodding. "That shouldn't be a problem."

She then walked to the door and opened it, leaving. She would be leading Shin to the place where Bernard was being held captive.

Shin did not care about anything right now. He just wanted to make sure that the person in the photo was indeed Bernard.

There was a special method within the Springfield Family that could let them sense each other when they were nearby. It had something to do with their bloodlines.

Even if Shin was not from the Springfield Family, he had a special method of his own that would help him recognize if this Bernard was the real one.

...

A few moments later, they arrived in a cell.

Shin stood silently as he stared at the completely exhausted and savagely beaten man hanging at the center of the room. He tightly clenched his fist before calling the man. "Uncle Bernard."

Bernard, who seemed to be barely hanging on his life, flinched when he heard a familiar voice. He opened his eyes with great difficulty while also struggling to raise his head to look at Shin.

He was silent for a couple of moments before smiling mockingly. "Heh! Are you guys already out of ideas to torture me and you come up with such a ridiculous idea? You will not get anything from me idiots. Just kill me if you dare."

No one responded to him while Shin quietly watched Bernard. He did not ask the latter what had happened and why he was here. He could vaguely guess how Bernard had ended up in this place given how he remembered the Black Serpent Mafia operated.

He then stepped forward and raised his hand in the air before drawing a series of mentalism runes, using his finger as a brush.

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

His actions were fast and accurate as the rune sequence was instantly drawn in front of him before merging and turning into a complex singular rune.

The people in the surroundings went on full alert when they saw Shin's actions. They got ready to prevent him from doing anything that would possibly help Bernard.

But since Belladonna remained calm and did not show any hint of acting, they slightly relaxed their bodies but also remained alert at the same time.

Shin placed his hand in front of him with fingers kept aside from his index finger. The rune floated on its tip and released a subtle and pulsing light. It released a certain aura that resonated with Bernard's bloodline.

With this, Shin was able to confirm that this person was indeed Bernard.

At the same time, Bernard also sensed the resonance. He instantly realized that the Shin standing a couple of distance away from him was indeed the real Shin.

"Brat! What are you doing here!?" he was surprised, shocked, and full of disbelief when he realized this. He then stared at Shin insentiently until he realized something.

He then directed his gaze toward Belladonna with a fierce glare. "Mark my words. I will kill you despite anything else if something happens to him."

Belladonna smirked when she heard that but did not reply.

Bernard was not sure how they had captured Shin, but he knew that they were plotting something. He also became afraid that Arthur and the others had also been in the same situation.

Seemingly reading his concerns, Shin reassured Bernard. "Don't worry, uncle. The others are fine."

Bernard quickly turned to Shin and stared at the young man for a moment. He then realized that Shin must have let himself get captured in exchange for the safety of the others.

He understood the temperament of this young man pretty well and knew how he handled things.

At the same time, he also saw the resolute expression that Shin was making, seemingly telling him something.

Bernard did not have to hear what the young man wanted to say, but he was sure that Shin must have decided about something.

He could not help but feel a little scared of what Shin was planning to do, so he said. "Brat. Don't do anything impulsive."

Shin smiled gently at him before turning to Belladonna. "I confirmed it. That should be enough."

He understood that the more he talked to Bernard, the more that organization would be able to take advantage of this situation. It was better to limit their exchange of words to prevent the opposing side from fishing out more valuable information from their conversation.

Bernard also understood this, so he did not say that much either. But he still could not help but feel worried about Shin.

Given the way Shin talked to Belladonna, it seemed like the Black Serpent Mafia needed something from Shin. More specifically, they seemed to need him to do something.

Shin turned to Bernard once again and reassured him. "Don't worry, Uncle Bernard. It is not something that you think."

Bernard clenched his teeth as he could feel that Shin was planning to do something that might risk his life.

...

Back in the room where Shin was first brought.

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Shin was currently reviewing all the details of the mission that the organization wanted him to do. He wanted to cover everything and made sure that would not overlook any detail.

Based on the information that the Black Serpent Mafia had provided, the people who turned into puppets by the said inheritance had all become plant monsters.

The images that were provided also showed that these people seemed to have fused with the surrounding trees or plants. Their bodies were either wrapped with vines or roots of the trees, which seemed to be an extension of their limbs.

The good news was that these only had the strength of an Ethereal Opening Stage Expert. As for those stronger ones, most of their strength was sucked toward the center of the region, where the said inheritance was located.

Whatever that inheritance was, it could absorb all the life force within the vicinity and turn the whole region into a ruined land or a dead forest.

The surrounding lifeforms were sucked dry, particularly the plants and trees, and turned the place into a withered land.

It seemed like a curse or something similar, but it also had a limited range as it could not leave the area where the inheritance was originally located.

The main problem in this mission was the first person who became the puppet of the inheritance. Based on the information, that person had become a peak Void Manifestation Stage Expert after turning into a corpse puppet.

It was impossible for Shin to face someone at that level.

He could use the talisman that he had to block its attacks after stealing the inheritance tome before using the teleportation talisman to escape.

But he was reluctant to use them since they were his means of escape from this place.

All he could do was ask for extra tools from the organization that would let him survive an onslaught against such a monster. He doubted that they would not provide him with anything given that this inheritance seemed to be important to them.

For now, he had to wait and see what was the plans that the organization had as well as figuring out about the other operations that they were preparing.

Time of the special operation.

Shin was standing outside the forest where the said phenomenon was happening. It was on the opposite side where the military was stationed. This entrance was pretty remote and hidden, which was also the same place that the Black Serpent Mafia had been using since the time they had discovered the inheritance inside this place.

Looking around him, Shin saw the agents that the organization was going to send alongside him. Or in other terms, they would be the cannon fodders who would be distracting the main puppet during the battle and covering Shin's retreat once he acquired the inheritance tome.

It might be ruthless, but these people did not mind as the organization had already brainwashed them to follow their cause. In a sense, these agents were nothing but empty vessels, which were no different from puppets.

They would blindly follow the orders given to them.

As for the person acting as their leader, it was someone from the batch of executioners they had dispatched in this country.

Shin exchanged glances at the young executioner before turning back to the entrance of the forest.

"All the preparations have already been made. You guys can now enter," said the person standing at the entrance after receiving the news from their scouts who were monitoring the movements of the military.

All of them only moved when Shin initiated to step forward and enter the forest.

Chapter 1427: The Beginning (Part 1)

.....

Right after entering the region, Shin instantly noticed that the flow of energies in the air was flowing toward a certain direction. It would not be hard to find the location of the inheritance tome due to this. The energies within the surroundings were moving toward the center of the region, which was most likely the location of their target.

Shin also noticed that the surrounding plants and trees were withering. The life forces that they contained were being sucked by something at the center of the forest.

As they approached the deeper parts of the forest, the surroundings were also starting to change. Dead trees and completely dried vegetation were everywhere.

There were also some dead animals lying around. Their bodies were already in the middle of decomposition, but there was no foul smell coming from their corpses. Instead, the fungi that were forming from those corpses were releasing a pleasant smell that could even calm the mind.

But despite that being the case, Shin quickly summoned his Mental Energy to protect his body from those fungi and even formed a layer on the hole of his nose to filter the air that he was breathing.

From the information that the organization had provided, these fungi could be one of the reasons why the agents that they had sent earlier turned into monsters after being exposed too much in them.

The people that came along with Shin also wore a special gas mask to cover their noses along with a set of leather suits that fully covered their bodies. They also had a special feature that would constantly release subtle energy that warded off the fungi.

As Shin and the others approached the center of the forest, the more gruesome the scene became. Even the ground seemed to be in a dead state as well – it was completely dried as if it was in a barren land.

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

As they walked further ahead, Shin could sense some subtle movements in the area. His sharp Spiritual Sense was sensed by the vines moving both on the surface and under the ground, slowly and quietly approaching them.

Shin glanced at the agents that were accompanying him before returning his gaze upfront. He did not inform them about the impending. They might be helping him in this mission, but they also served another purpose – they were here to be the eyes of the organization that would be watching over his actions and preventing him from escaping.

If could lessen their numbers to a manageable level, then that would be enough for him to find an opportunity to do whatever he wanted later.

As for the main puppet that they would be facing later, Shin was not worried due to the tools that the organization had provided him. Those were more than enough to preserve his life even if he could not get that inheritance tome.

Because of those tools, Shin became even surer that these guys were desperate to get their hands on this particular inheritance.

He was already drawing a plan that he could use to negotiate with the Black Serpent Mafia. After all, he was not foolish enough to believe that those guys would let him get his hands on the inheritance tome without taking more precautions.

Of course, these agents could also not be underestimated. They were also quite skilled and had their respective methods to sense their surroundings.

Even if their sensory field was inferior to Shin, who commanded such a large area of Spiritual Sense, they could still sense the small movements in the surroundings once those vines stepped into their territory.

But once it happened, it was already too late.

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

The vines already made their moves and flew toward the agents, wrapping themselves on their targets or piercing the bodies of those agents.

The majority of the group was able to respond in time and dodge while the rest that got caught showed no emotion. They just stood in their respective spots while the others cut the vines for them.

Shin kept an eye on the surroundings while cutting the vines that tried to approach him. He was using the sword that the organization had provided. It was not good enough for what he needed, but it was more than enough to handle these things.

Moreover, the fire innate attribute of his Mental Energy was a bane for these vines, which could instantly burn them to ashes after being sliced by his sword.

He saw that the wounded agents just injected a serum into their bodies that swiftly healed their wounds and cleaned their bloodstreams from the fungi that tried invading their bodies.

"It seems like they come prepared this time. I guess their agents suffered a lot due to these fungi," he mumbled as he continued moving ahead while cutting the vines pouncing at him and not caring whether those agents would follow him or not.

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Given how the Black Serpent Mafia trained their agents, he knew that these guys would not care about anything aside from completing the mission given to them.

They proceeded to move forward until they encountered the first wave of agents that turned into plant monsters.

With their appearance, Shin could not help but compare them to the plant and tree monsters that he had encountered in the game.

However, their characteristics and abilities were slightly different despite the similarities that they shared.

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

Shin was able to easily ward off the attacks of these humanoid monsters, cutting their vines and burning them into ashes.

The other agents were also doing quite well under the leadership of the young executioner who was accompanying them.

"Not bad," Shin commented as he saw how good the young executioner was. He also felt that the guy was hiding his skills quite well from him.

"I guess I have to keep my eye on that guy," he mumbled as he twirled his sword and charged at the center of the monsters, planning to end this as soon as possible.

Meanwhile, on the side where the exploration of the tomb of the cultivator, a huge number of people were currently gathered.

The representatives of the different nations, the people from the Federation (the main force of the World Government), the soldiers of the military, the members of the Magic Ace Academy, and the Top Military School were currently gathered in this place.

All the people who would represent them for the exploration were also standing at the forefront of the group along with their leaders.

The number of people at the Magic Ace Academy, Top Military School, and the Federation was noticeably lower than what they were supposed to have. It was because of the recent incidents where the students and young cadets were being ambushed by unknown forces.

Naturally, they had suspected that it was those representatives from the other nations. However, since they did not have any solid evidence that would support their suspicions and due to the underworld organizations joining the chaos, they could not demand anything from them.

Of course, there was one force that could not join this exploration. It was the representatives of the Silver Wing Continent, who became the main culprits of Shin's abduction.

Nathan and his people did not have any solid evidence either aside from the statements of the two lieutenants, who were leading the team that was supposedly protecting Shin.

But since they became the main suspect, the military force under the Springfields Family and the people from Flying Dragon Corporation put a lot of pressure on the representatives of the Silver Wing Continent.

Naturally, those representatives were depending on themselves and saying that it was an unfair treatment to them.

But with the prestige of Nathan, the Dragon King, along with his friends with similar levels of reputation such as Joaquin 'Thousand Beasts' Geovanni, Elias 'Warrior Sage' Stuart, and Eugene 'Sword Immortal' White, those people did not dare to raise any strong objection.

Nathan was also aware that what they knew might also be a setup left behind by the real culprits to frame the Silver Wing Continent. This was the reason why he did not do anything rash and slaughter their people.

But as long as they could not find the real culprits, the representatives of the Silver Wing Continent would remain the main suspects.

If they wanted to clear their names, then they had to help Nathan and the others find the real perpetrator of the incident.

Because of this, Nathan had lessened the number of their competitors in exploring the tomb while also gaining extra people looking for Shin.

...

The person leading the people of the Magic Ace Academy was Martial King Lin Huang while the person in charge of students that would be exploring the tomb was Shiella and Mariel. Aside from them, there were also a few seniors from the elite clubs.

Since the situation was a little different than before, the Academy had made some adjustments accordingly.

As for the Top Military School, they did the same approach as the Magic Ace Academy, sending a mix of their special program students and a few seniors who would lead them.

The air surrounding the group of students representing the Magic Ace Academy was so heavy that even the top experts who were accompanying the other forces found it strange.

Shiella, who was standing at the forefront of the group, even more serious expression she focused her gaze on the entrance of the tomb. The air that she had seemed to be telling everyone not to mess with her or they would face an unforgettable consequence.

Even the laidback and mischievousness of Arthur was not present as he was also looking very serious right now. It had almost been two days since the incident, yet they still had no clear clue of Shin's whereabouts, so he could not help but be worried.

According to his uncle, some of the people of the organization that abducted Shin must be among the ones that were exploring the tomb, so he could not help but sweep his gaze sharply any everyone.

He would not be trusting anyone aside from his circle of friends and Shiella. Even the guys in their class would not be trustworthy, so he better be careful.

Leonard was also in a similar situation. This was not the first time that something like this had happened, but he could tell that this time it was something different. Moreover, he could also feel that Shin must be in grave danger given the serious look that Nathan had whenever he talked to them.

Lorraine was also quite quiet these past couple of days as she also understood the situation. She was also quite troubled when she heard from her family that this incident might be more serious than they originally thought since powerhouse experts were also involved in the incident.

Alice was also somewhat affected by the incident. She might not be that close to Shin, but she felt an uncomfortable feeling in her chest when she heard the news after she came back to the hotel at that time.

Cloe was the one who was most affected by this given her relationship and feelings for Shin. She was very troubled by the incident. She was too worried about Shin and could not focus her mind these days.

Fortunately, her master had talked to her and even calmed her down. She also realized her weakness, which made her work harder in her training under Old Man Lin these past couple of days.

Her temperament took a noticeable change because of this, which surprised her friends, especially Lorraine, who was closest to her. Her innocent and carefree attitude seemed to disappear in a short time and changed by something that they could not explain.

Even the twins of the Potter Clan – Jilian and Molton – were also affected by the mood of the group, especially when they learned what had happened.

This particular group was emitting a different air compared to the rest of the participants of the exploration. The people who saw them knew that they could carelessly provoke these guys once they entered the tomb.

Bang!

Not long after, the entrance of the tomb was finally opened.

Old Man Lin stood in front of it along with a few powerhouses present. He observed the entrance for a few moments before signaling to the young people behind them. "You little fledglings can enter now."

Chapter 1428: The Beginning (Part 2)

...

The entire Eastern Sea Region of the Soaring Continent was currently a busy state due to the multiple events. But at the same time, there was also a high tension lingering in the air, seemingly hinting at the impending doom that was about to descend.

Ace City, Magic Ace Academy

At the gates, the guards that were on duty were diligently standing on their respective posts while sharply sweeping their gazes in the surroundings. They had just gotten instructions from their superiors to keep their guard up, especially when most of the powerhouses of the academy were conducting a special assignment.

Most of the faculty members were accompanying the students who would represent the academy in the exploration of the cultivator's tomb while some of them were investigating the recent incidents that harmed their students.

At this moment, the academy was at its weakest state. But there were still experts left to guard it. In fact, the strongest people were stationed in the academy.

One of the reasons was the current state of the entire region, where a lot of activities from the underground organization were taking place. The other reason was because of the World Research Center. They had to guard that place from the greedy people eyeing it, particularly the research materials that they had.

One of the guards at the front gate of the academy yawned lazily while stretching his body. He did not believe that anyone would dare to attack the academy given the background it had.

"Hey! What are you doing? Lazing around? Don't let the supervisor see you, or else you will be fired in a heartbeat," said one of his colleagues before adding. "The tension surrounding the whole place is at its peak, so you better not let your guard down before something happens."

"Hah! What can happen?" laughed the guard before waving his hand. "Don't worry. I am not slacking off. I am just trying to stretch my body a little bit because it is getting too stiff for standing here too long."

Rumble!

While the two of them were chatting, they noticed that the sky suddenly turned dark. When they cast their heads toward it, they saw a huge cluster of clouds gathering above the entire city.

Boom!

Not long after, a thunderous explosion erupted followed by a descent of a huge column of light that fell at the center of the city.

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

Immediately after that, they saw a gigantic net forming above the city and a transparent barrier forming a dome alongside side it.

"What is that!?"

The two were too stunned to react when they noticed people in black cloaks walking toward the gate of the academy.

The two guards reacted quickly as per their training. One of them leaped forward and pulled out his weapon while the other fished out a device from his pocket and pressed it without hesitation.

"Who are you guys!? What is your business here?" asked one of the guards as infused his sword with his energy and swiftly summoned his Qi Armor in the process.

It was clear that he was a Void Manifestation Stage Expert, who could solidify his Natural Force and turn it into full body armor.

His partner was also on the same level as he quickly formed his version of Qi Armor right after sending the emergency signal to the higher-ups of the academy.

They knew that thing that they the elders were expecting finally arrived.

Unfortunately for these two Void Manifestation Stage Experts, the leading figure from the opposing side belonged to the peak of the Domain Realm.

"Tsk! They are too fast to respond. We don't even have the time to stop them from sending the signal," said Boris as he massaged the muscle between his shoulder and neck.

He then turned his head and looked over his shoulder while instructing the people behind him. "You guys know your assignments. Proceed as planned and leave the rest to us."

"Yes, Sir!" shouted the group in unison.

After that, Boris suddenly disappeared from his current position before appearing in between the two guards blocking their path. "As for you too. I must apologize as I don't have the time to play with you."

Right after those words left his mouth, his hands grabbed the faces of the guards before slamming them down on the ground.

Bang! Bang!

The poor guards were unable to resist due to the absolute difference in strength. Their heads were crushed by Boris within an instant before they could even showcase their abilities.

Boris licked his lips and wiped the blood splattered on his cheeks with the back of his hand before mumbling. "It is time for slaughter!"

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

At the same time, the group behind him turned into blurs and flew over him, charging through the gates of the academy, and started attacking anyone that they came across.

Boom! Boom! Boom!

Chaos enveloped the entire academy due to the sudden attack that the Black Serpent Mafia had launched. Explosions erupted in different facilities of the academy, destroying everything. Students were also taking casualties, which was quickly rising in every passing minute.

Fortunately, the elite students from the top Clubs were able to respond accordingly and in a very systematic manner. Even if some of their most elite members were currently not present as they were accompanying the participants in the special mission, they still had a lot of skilled members left.

These elite students started rescuing their fellow students, particularly their juniors who could not fight the agents and assassins from the Black Serpent Mafia.

With the lead of these students and the faculty members who were left behind in the academy, the situation took another turn. They were able to somewhat control the situation and prevent more casualties from escalating even further.

But the battle between the two forces threw the entire place into chaos.

The Black Serpent Mafia seemed to be not planning to hide their actions this time as they were going all-out from the very beginning. They started attacking without restraint and even dispatched quite a few high-level agents and top assassins for this operation.

It was clear that they were putting a lot of importance in this operation.

But the Magic Ace Academy could not be underestimated either. Even if the elders and the powerful teachers and instructors were not present, the alumni who stayed in the academy and set up their businesses there were not to be trifled with either.

One of them was the Heavenly Taste Restaurant. The manager, waiters, and other personnel of the restaurant, who were mostly amiable and gentle when greeting the customers, turned into fighters and warriors of justice who did not back down in front of evil.

The other establishments that were built by the alumni of the academy were also starting to move, pushing the members of the Black Serpent Mafia a little. Read new chapters at m_v-l'e|NovelBin.net

But that did not concern the most elite members of the organization any longer since this chaos was nothing but a distraction anyway.

...

Headmaster's Office.

"Tsk! Tsk! What bad luck we have. To think that you will be the one left here. This sure is getting out of hand," commented Boris as he looked at the old person leisurely sitting at the stairs of the personal building of the School Principal.

That old man was Manuel Morales, who was one of the elders of the academy and known as the Undefeatable General in the martial arts circle.

Boris and Butcher were the ones to come to this place while they were leaving the rest of the operation to Belladonna and the mysterious mentalist that their boss had recommended.

The Mentalist would be responsible for keeping the multiple-layered barrier active, which would simultaneously jam the incoming and outgoing signals and prevent anyone from entering and escaping the whole city.

Belladonna, on the other hand, would be leading the operation of stealing the researcher materials and information from the World Research Center along with the test subjects.

As for the two of them, they were responsible for robbing some treasures from the Headmaster's Office, particularly the ones that they had been keeping their eyes on for quite a while now.

Of course, they had also brought quite a few weaker Domain Realm Experts along with some Artificial Mutants with physical strength comparable to that level. These guys were responsible for keeping the faculty members and alumni of the academy busy.

Manuel looked at the pair and the Artificial Mutants that they had brought. He seemed to have remembered something before shaking his head. "So, you are the ones that messed with our people recently."

"And now, you are plotting something against the academy," he added as he slowly leaned forward and rested his arms on his knees.

"It seems like we are far too silent these days that you guys dared to mess with us repeatedly. It seems like people have forgotten us the moment we decided to settle down and retire in peace."

Bang!

A heavy and suffocating pressure was suddenly released from his body as he glared at the two under the shade of his general's hat.

Boris and Butcher, who were both peak Body Practitioners in the Domain Realm, had encountered someone who had a stronger physique than them and by no margin at that.

"So, this is the level old monsters have reached," mumbled Boris with a confident grin before adding. "Fortunately, we don't come here alone."

With a simple gesture from his hand, the Artificial Mutants quickly went into a battle formation while Butcher took out his signature weapon, a huge butcher knife, and stepped forward.

Boris equipped his steel gauntlets and bumped his fists, producing a loud 'bang'.

Seeing the opposing side had no intention of backing down, Manuel pressed his hands on his knees and slowly stood up.

Bang!

Boris and Butcher felt like a giant suddenly woke up from its deep slumber and stood up. It was as if it was staring at them from high above, looking at them as if they were some sort of bug.

...

World Research Center

Belladonna and her people were standing outside the tall tower in front of them while looking at the group blocking their path.

She slightly tilted her head to the side as she looked at the person leading the opposing side. "This is unexpected. We are not expecting the Warrior Sage to greet us right after we arrive at this place."

"On the contrary, you guys have made us wait for quite a while," said Elias Stuart as he glared at Belladonna and her people.

He did not care why an independent assassin like her joined the Black Serpent Mafia. All he knew was that everyone from the opposing side was enemies that he had to slaughter.

"You people from the Black Serpent Mafia have owed my family, especially me, who have been waiting for this opportunity to come," he continued as a storm of Spiritual Force formed around him, which instantly turned into a huge tornado taller than the researcher center behind him.

He was trying his best to suppress his rage, but whenever he recalled the incident that happened to his family years ago, particularly the suffering that his eldest daughter had suffered at the hands of the Black Serpent Mafia, he could not help but lose himself in madness.

Fortunately, as someone who was in the Venerable Realm, he was able to suppress the strongest urgers of his negative state to an absolute degree. But this did not mean that he was already free from losing himself. If he let his guard down even for a moment, he might lose himself and start slaughtering everyone regardless of whether they were friends or foes.

This was the consequence that he had to face due to his guilt of what happened to his eldest daughter.

Even though he also felt that there was a chance that she was still alive, he could still not shake off the guilt in his heart due to what had happened during that time.

Clenching his fists, he glared at Belladonna and her group with full ferocity. "This time, I will make sure that you will pay for what you have done."

Chapter 1429: The Beginning (Part 3)

.....

David was running toward a certain town along with Jerimiah, Vincent, and Laurent after getting some instructions from Nathan. Based on the intel that Nathan had gotten, it seemed like this town would be their main lead on finding Shin's whereabouts.

Given that he had a special technique that could sense Shin's location, it was natural for him to lead this operation.

They were rushing toward that place when David and Laurent both sensed something. They suddenly halted their tracks before turning toward the direction of the Ace City.

Jerimiah and Vincent slightly knitted their brow when they saw the two paused.

But before they could even ask, David was already answering. "Something happened to the Ace City."

"My connection with the Heavenly Taste has also been cut," added Laurent as he frowned deeply.

"What are we going to do? Should we head back to know what is happening?" he asked as he turned to David.

David put his hand on his chin, thinking deeply, before shaking his head. "There is no need for that. There are already a lot of powerhouses stationed in that place. Even if we don't know what exactly is happening there, we can still guess that it has something to do with the Magic Ace Academy and World Research Center."

"Given our preparation, there is no need for us to head over there. We just have to focus on the task at hand and leave the rest to the seniors and the elders," he added before heading back toward the town.

...

At the same time, Nathan, who was leading the forces of the Springfield Family at the tomb of the ancient cultivator, also received the news.

He smirked as he was somewhat expecting this to happen. He then skimmed through the report and learned that the organization that was taking the move was still unknown, but their people were sure that they were from an underworld organization.

"Who is it? Shadow Alliance, Hextech Laboratory, or Black Serpent Mafia?" he mumbled as he tried to recall all the underworld organizations that were active in the Soaring Continent recently.

But his hunch was telling him that it was most likely the Black Serpent Mafia since those guys were getting greedier recently. It seemed like they were trying to rush something for some reason.

He then turned toward the representatives of the Magic Ace Academy and saw Old Man Lin nod at him.

The old man was telling him to leave everything here to him and do what he must.

Nathan slightly nodded before turning to his people and saying. "Let's go! It is time to teach those guys that they can't mess with the Soaring Continent."

...

Back in the World Research Center, Coffin Maker, who was still under his disguise as one of the students of the academy, was currently leading the people of the Black Serpent Mafia inside the building.

After being here for quite a while, Coffin Maker had become familiar with the structure of the place and even memorized all the routes toward Professor Henry's laboratory, where all the most important research and materials were located.

They rushed inside the laboratory right after they arrived and planned to surround all the scientists and researchers inside. Aside from stealing the materials, they also planned to capture these people so that they could work under them.

But unexpectedly, they were greeted by an empty laboratory. No experimental experiment, no researchers, no assistants, no materials, nor the test subjects, not even a speck of dust present.

Coffin Maker and his people were stunned for a moment before snapping out of their daze due to the slamming of the metal doors behind them, trapping them inside.

Coffin Maker slightly frowned and he realized that they had fallen into a trap. But what confused him was how Professor Henry had cleared the room unnoticed when he had always been keeping an eye on this place.

He even remembered that this place was still filled with activities last night. How could the entire laboratory be empty now?

"Tsk! I am expecting to catch some big fish for this, but it seems like all we can get is the spy and some small fries," commented Professor Henry as he watched the trapped people through the screen.

"I can't believe that Oscar is a spy. We have been nurturing him for almost 9 years now, yet he is a spy of an underworld organization," said one of the researchers after seeing the familiar student along with the agents of the Black Serpent Mafia.

The researchers who were directly working under Professor Henry started discussing among themselves while also cursing the student named 'Oscar' without knowing that it was Coffin Maker in disguise.

Professor Henry squinted his eyes as he watched closely how the student spy acted before mumbling. "It may also be possible that this kid is not Oscar at all."

His voice might be a little soft and quiet, but the people around him were able to hear them and quickly quiet down.

Then they turned toward the professor with inquiring gaze.

Professor Henry paused for a moment and thought before sighing. "The real Oscar has most likely died during the previous abduction incident and this person that we are seeing is someone who has stolen his identity without our notice."

"But how can we not notice it, professor? How come he is so familiar with everyone and doesn't even show any sign when he has just stolen the identity of someone?" asked one of the researchers.

"It is not that hard to steal someone's memories through special means," he said, implying that someone was able to do it. "Have you forgotten that there is someone, who specialized in infiltration and espionage, active in our region recently?"

Hearing those words, the researchers seemed to get enlightenment as their eyes turned wide. They turned to each other before simultaneously voicing out their thoughts. "Coffin Maker!"

...

As the chaos enfolded the entire Ace City, Shin was currently busy on his head.

After exploring the forest where the inheritance tome was located, he arrived at the deeper parts of the region along with the agents of the Black Serpent Mafia.

As they advanced, the human-turned-plant monsters that they encountered along the way were slowly becoming stronger.

Even if their attack patterns and abilities were the same as one another, the power that they had was much stronger than the previous ones that they had met. Moreover, the range and scale of their attacks were also growing larger, making them harder to avoid.

But with the preparations that the Black Serpent Mafia had prepared and the fire innate attribute that Shin possessed, the effects of these humanoid plant monsters were greatly restricted.

Unless they encountered the main puppet at the center of the forest, the group would not be facing any trouble along the way.

It was not until one of the scouts reported to the young executioner. "Sir, I think we have some problems. The people from the military seem to be engaging in a battle with the main puppet."

The young executioner knitted his brow deeply before turning to Shin with suspicion. But after observing the latter for a couple of moments, he shook his head, rejecting the idea.

Shin couldn't contact anyone given that had taken his advanced watch and even destroyed it. Then they gave him the special smartwatch that the organization was using, which only had a single channel.

Understanding what the other side was thinking, Shin commented. "It must be the group that is supposed to explore the place with me."

"This mission is supposed to be given to me by the Academy and the Military. And its schedule also happens to coincide with your operation."

"I am guessing that they have entrusted it to someone else given that I am currently 'missing'," he added after a simple analysis.

The young executioner fell into deep thought before asking the scout. "How many are they? And how strong are their forces?"

The scout did not need to recall the forces of the opposing side as he instantly reported. "It seems like they have also realized the requirements for getting near the main puppet. They did not send anyone stronger than Ethereal Opening Stage Expert."

"But there is a powerful group that is wearing an advanced Combat Suit. According to the information we have in our database, they are most likely the 'Mech Corps' of the Military Forces under the Green Family."

Hearing those words, Shin raised his brows slightly.

As someone from the Springfield Family, he was naturally familiar with the Military Forces of the Soaring Continent.

The military circle within the Soaring Continent was the strongest in the world and they were divided into multiple factions.

Aside from the Springfield Family, who mostly ruled over the Central Region, there were also powerful military families in the other major regions of the continent.

Among them, the one that could rival the authority of the Springfield Family within the circle was the Green Family, who were the rulers of the Northern Blue Region.

The Springfield Family had a long history. They were also a top Martial Arts Family with great inheritance aside from being a military family. Their Martial Arts could even rank at the top even when compared to the world.

All the members of the family were elite martial artists while the soldiers that they trained focused on body refinement and trained themselves to the absolute peak of martial arts.

They were true warriors who would not back down in front of any challenges.

With their iron-forged wills and steel-like bodies, they far surpassed most of the forces within the circle. They even developed their version of Military Arts and Gun Fighting Techniques that complimented their styles.

On the other, the Green Family was a major force that focused on advanced gadgets and technological weapons. They even partnered with most of the companies that majored in manufacturing such technological tools.

One of their major partners was the companies from the Sun-Moon Continent, which was the center of technological and advanced knowledge.

Compared to the special forces of the Springfield Family, which were elite warriors, the Mech Corps of the Green Family was known for their advanced Combat Suits and Battle Mechas by highly trained pilots.

These experts had certain attainment in terms of Martial Arts or Mentalism, but they were not as strong as the elite soldiers or skilled experts. But when they were in their respective Combat Suits or Battle Mechas, they could face even those experts with a stage higher than their martial or mentalism attainments.

'The Green Family? Did they take over the mission since Uncle Nathan and the rest are busy with the tomb exploration and looking for me?' thought Shin as he frowned deeply.

If it was just some other military force who took over this mission, then he would not have any issue. But since it was the Green Family, who was the main rival of the Springfield Family, they could take advantage of this situation and even frame Shin for being a spy once they had seen him with the agents of the Black Serpent Mafia.

Given his background, which was he was recused in the training camp of the Black Serpent Mafia, it would be hard to defend himself, especially when he had gotten the 'evidence'.

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Thinking about this, he took out the mask that the organization provided him to hide his face.

"We will be advancing carefully and avoid any contact with the other party. Let's let them deal with the main puppet while we lay an ambush behind them," said Shin, voicing out a suggestion for the first time since the start of the mission.

The young executioner looked at Shin with full suspicion, but still nodded his head in agreement when he recalled that Bernard was still in their hands.

Moreover, the plan that Shin had suggested was the most basic and the most common tactic that they could use in this situation.

After a few signals with his hand, the young executioner was done giving out his orders. He then turned to Shin and gestured that it was now his turn.

Shin turned his head in front before moving forward discretely. He knew that this was no different from selling the military force under the Green Family, but he did not have a choice but to 'sell' them out since he had to save Bernard no matter what.

Chapter 1430: The Beginning (Part 4)

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Bang! Bang!

Boom!

Gunfire and explosions could be heard reverberating at the center of the forest as the military force under the Green Family fought against a huge plant monster that looked like a Treant and a group of humanoid plant monsters.

"This is bad, Captain Green. It seems like this monster is more powerful than we have expected. Its realm should be as strong as Void Manifestation Stage Expert. That person that got absorbed by this tree monster should be an expert of that level," reported one of the soldiers in a combat suit.

He paused to cut the thick vines that were trying to catch him before continuing. "But aside from that, its physical strength and raw power can rival someone at the Domain Realm due to its resonance with the surroundings."

"This mission is doomed to fail if not for us bringing the 'Mech Corps' along as a reassurance," he added as he continued to dodge and cut the thick vines that kept on appearing out of nowhere.

Among the people in combat suits, a person was wearing a more advanced and fancier combat suit. His golden combat suit reflected the power that it had and the tough armor that it possessed.

He was carrying a modified rifle in hand and had a specialized longsword hanging on his back. The air surrounding this person gave off a feeling that he was a veteran from a warzone.

He was Westley Green, the captain of this unit and one of the young prospects that would represent the younger generation of the Green Family.

He was twenty-two this year. He was a couple of years older than the top prospects of the younger generation within the Soaring Continent, but his achievements were much more amazing compared to the rest since he was one of the odd talents who chose to join the military at a very young age.

His talent in martial arts could have been better when compared to top geniuses while he was completely untalented when it came to mentalism, which was why he was not chosen to be one of the junior monsters of the Soaring Continent.

Within the military circle, he was quite well known since he was already a part of the special units at a very young age and even became a captain of a unit when he reached the age of twenty.

One of the major reasons was his talent for being a Mech Pilot. His strength was greatly enhanced when he donned his combat suit, which also showcased his combat prowess.

His current martial attainment was only at the early phases of the Ethereal Opening Stage, but his strength could rival someone on the Void Manifestation Stage when he was wearing his combat suit and equipped with his specialized weapons.

"Don't tell me the Springfield Family has purposely given us the wrong information to mess with us?" he mumbled as he observed the state of the battle from the backline.

The Mech Corps accompanying him was among the most elite units within the military forces of his family.

If not for their battle formation that enhanced their coordination and fighting capabilities, then they would have most likely been slaughtered by this Treant.

There was a total of ten soldiers in this Mech Corps, excluding Westley, and each of them was on a similar level of strength. They were also Ethereal Opening Stage Experts that could rival Void Manifestation Experts with the help of their respective combat suits.

Aside from them, there was also another group of soldiers wearing gas masks, who were providing range support from a safe distance and also dealing with the other humanoid plant monsters that were trying to approach the main assault force.

Westley was trying to figure out how they would be able to take down this Treant with their current strengths.

Based on the information that they had gotten from the Springfield Family and local forces stationed in the Eastern Sea Region, only people at the Core Formation Stage and Grandmaster Realm could enter this place.

A few Ethereal Opening Stage Experts and Peak Grandmaster Realm Mentalists could also enter so long they followed certain rules of the sealed region, which was why their forces were able to step into this place.

But if they had broken the said rules of the place, then they would most likely become a plant monster just like the other soldiers that accidentally entered this place during the earlier exploration.

"No. It is impossible for those guys to sabotage us just for this little rift between our families. They most likely have no idea that there is a monster like this at the center of the region," Westley quickly rejected the idea that Nathan would stoop so low to give them such a low-level scheme given his reputation.

"What are we going to do, Captain? At this rate, we will run out of ammo and exhaust our energy engines before we can take this guy down," said the lieutenant as he continued to battle the Treant alongside the rest of the unit.

Westley wore a solemn expression under his advanced helmet as he finally decided. "Get in position. We are using that formation."

"Let me handle this guy," he added as he stepped forward and walked toward the Treant.

The lieutenant was slightly taken aback when he heard those words. The formation that his captain was talking about was the special formation that would require them to stand in a circular formation according to what they had been taught in the family.

After that, they would discharge their energies before the one who was at the center of the formation absorbed them, enhancing their powers greatly, albeit temporarily.

Seeing that Westley was already preparing to attack, the lieutenant quickly made a series of hand gestures, signaling to soldiers what to do.

The Mech Corps quickly disengage in battle and swiftly form a circular formation, surrounding the Treant and letting Westley take over the battle.

At the same time, the other soldiers who were not wearing combat suits quickly retreated to a safer distance while providing ranged support and covering the formation of the Mech Corp. They were also suppressing the humanoid plant monsters with their gunfire.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

At the same time, they were reorganizing their formation, where they could cover for the Mech Corps that would be left unguarded during the special formation that they would be forming.

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In the distance, Shin, the young executioner, and the agents of the Black Serpent Mafia just appeared at the scene.

Shin's eyes shone with a pale golden glow under his mask while observing the actions of Westley and his people.

At the same time, he was also marking the position of everyone inside his head. The soldiers, the Mech Corps, the Treant at the center, the people that turned into plant monsters approaching those people, and the agents on his side.

He was formulating a plan inside his head while considering all the factors in the surroundings. Once he was done, he raised his hand and made a series of gestures unique to the Black Serpent Mafia.

He was instructing them not to engage yet and wait for the right opportunity to strike. He was also telling them to move to certain locations to lay an ambush when the signal was given.

Just like what he originally planned, they would be leaving the main 'assault' to the people of Green Family. But he would have to make some adjustments after seeing the strange actions of the other party.

It seemed like they were planning to let the man in a golden combat suit fight the Treant alone. He was not sure how they were going to do that, but he could see that they had a plan.

Given the confident look that they were making, Shin felt that this was most likely one of the trump cards of the Green Family.

The young executioner was quite cautious of Shin's orders. But after reviewing them and seeing the positions that he had assigned to each agent and the instructions that he had given them, he realized that it was the most effective and efficient way to launch a perfect ambush on the opposing side.

After a slight hesitation, he signaled to the agents under him to follow the instructions. That was only when the agents moved and went to their respective positions.

Meanwhile, the young executioner went to sneak closer to the Mech Corps, planning to launch an attack on Westley directly once the opportunity arose.

Of course, he would not be sneaking inside their formation since it was impossible given the solid defense net that they had set up. He could only position himself at the nearest spot outside their formation, which was also the 'closest' to his target.

As for Shin, he went to the side behind the Treant as that was his real target. Through his 'True Sight' skill that he had developed in the real world, he was able to see through the body of this monster. .net

He could not help but frown a little when he saw what was inside the body of that Treant.

Within that Treant were corpses of multiple people, both agents and soldiers alike. At the center of everything was an intact corpse of a man holding a stone tablet.

If he guessed it right, then that person was most likely to be the first person to discover the inheritance tome, who was also the agent that the Black Serpent Mafia had sent.

As for that stone tablet, it was without a doubt the inheritance tome itself.

This was the main puppet without question.

What surprised Shin was he could see the weakness of this monster. Despite its powerful strength that could rival the Domain Realm Experts, its weakness was quite simple and very obvious. However, it was not noticeable from the outside unless they had an ocular skill like the one that he was using.

"I can use this to my advantage," he mumbled as he watched everyone move according to his arrangement.

As he was preparing, the Westley was finally done absorbing the energies from the Mech Corps in the formation. He was now prepared for the battle.

Bang!

With his signal, the remaining people who were keeping the Treant busy simultaneously disengaged from the battle as he took over the battle right at the same time.

Boom!