

Destiny 1431

Chapter 1431: The Beginning (Part 5)

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Bang! Bang! Bang!

Swoosh! Swoosh!

Watching the battle between Westley in the golden combat suit and the Treant, Shin must admit that the former was quite skilled, pretty good in fact.

Westley's fighting skills were quite high, especially his military arts, swordsmanship, and gun fighting techniques. His perfect control over those impressed Shin, especially when he was switching to different modes of battle.

But at the same time, Shin also found that Westley was not as skilled as someone he knew in this style. The combination of military arts, swordsmanship, and gunfighting techniques reminded Shin of a friend inside the game.

Even though the techniques that the two were using had an obvious difference, indicating that they were not from the same forces. But the overall fighting style was so similar that Shin had mistaken Westley at first glance.

Alucard, the one he knew within the game, was a master of creating space between him and his opponent. That Gun-Fu that he had experienced was so good that it was giving Shin enough trouble during their sparring matches.

Then there were the 'Silent Steps' and the 'Sleep Walk' which were foot techniques that enhanced Alucard's swordsmanship.

Both techniques focused on spacing and sneaky attacks.

On the other hand, Westley majored in swordsmanship and set up a solid defense against the approaching vines, cutting them before they could even reach them. As for his gun fighting techniques, they focused on dealing damage to the Treant whenever he got the chance.

His firepower was also strong enough to destroy the surroundings, especially with those techniques that he possessed.

With the suppression that Westley was providing, particularly with the enhanced energies that he received from the rest of the Mech Corps, the Treant was slowly losing its edge in the battle.

Shin's eyes never left the two. His eyes were still glowing with Mental Energy, keeping the True Sight active. They were especially fixed on the body of the Treant, particularly at the jade-green core situated at its chest.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

Roar!

Not long after, Shin saw that Treant released a deafening roar after it got hit by a series of modified bullets, which were also infused with a large quantity of Natural Force. It was gravely injured, making the core within it get agitated.

He could see that the flow of energy within the Treant's body was getting more violent and rapid. They converged into a single spot, forming a spiral storm within its chest.

"It is going berserk and exploding!" Shin instantly realized what was going to happen next.

With a gentle tap in the smartwatch, he sent a signal to the rest of the agents and the young executioner, telling them that they were about to make their move.

He did not care whether these guys would follow his instructions or not. Instead, he took a stance and focused his mind while regulating his breathing.

Using the Solar Breathing Technique and the unique circulation method of the Jade Kirin Scripture, Shin focused his Mental Energy on his sheathed sword, accumulating a lot of power.

At the same time, he also visualized the word 'Sword' inside his mind. He drew the word stroke by stroke while also infusing a variety of sword intent in it. He still had not mastered this technique and could not actively use it in battle. But he could at least achieve a similar result if he focused his mind enough and was not disturbed by his surroundings.

Aside from this, he was also doing his best to confine everything within him. He could not let even a hint of energy leak outside so that the others would not be able to notice him.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

In the distance, Westley also noticed that there was something strange going on the Treant's body, especially when it suddenly attacked more aggressively and did not care about its defense.

Since he was too focused on his battle, he did not notice the subtle fluctuation in the distance.

His subordinates were also in a similar state as they were getting anxious about the actions of the Treant. Moreover, the formation was already on the verge of collapse due to the lack of energy, which indicated that they were already at the end of their ropes.

Due to all of these factors, they were unable to sense the silent shadows slowly and quietly moving closer to them.

Roar!

With another roar, the Treant was finally unable to suppress the uncomfortable feeling within its body and released everything!

The body of the Treant, which was filled with leaves, vines, and tree roots, convulsed a little before showing some signs of mutation.

Through the lenses of his helmet, Westley instantly realized that a large energy within the Treant's body was about to explode.

His face contorted as he quickly issued an order. "Retreat! Retreat!"

Ding

At the same time, he issued a retreat, the signal from Shin finally arrived, telling the agents that it was now the time to make their move.

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

Without any hesitation, the agents jumped out of their hiding place and pounced at the nearest soldiers. They stabbed their daggers at the back, throat, or head of their respective target, killing them in a single blow.

"Ahh!"

"Urgh!"

The Mech Corps, who were more skilled and aided by their combat suits, quickly realized that they were being ambushed. They adjusted themselves and responded within an instant.

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Bang! Bang!

Swoosh!

A chaotic battle quickly broke out between the two sides, making the soldiers unable to retreat.

Westley became enraged when he realized that they had been plotted by someone. He quickly aimed his guns at the agents of the Black Serpent Mafia while skillfully dodging the attacks of the Treant.

Swoosh!

But before he could even fire his gun, he sensed the presence of someone approaching him at an imaginable speed.

Without any hesitation, he turned and pointed his gun at the incoming assailant, ready to fire.

Puchi!

But before he could even pull the trigger, a thick and sharp vine sneakily shot out from the ground and pierced through his waist. It did not penetrate that deep given the toughness of his combat suit, but it still left a huge hole in the armor along with a shallow stab wound in the process.

Swoosh!

At the same time, a sword flash suddenly cut through the air and chopped off his arm by accurately targeting the joint of his combat suit, where the defenses were the weakest.

"Argh!"

Westley cried in pain as he let go of his gun while pressing on the wound of his chopped arm. He also glared at the person who attacked him, particularly at the shortsword in their hand, which was also releasing a dense dark and evil aura.

"An evil cultivator? No, their energy is similar but also carries a striking difference. It is more like an artificial energy," Westley quickly assessed the abilities of his ambusher while swiftly retreating.

The person who ambushed him was naturally the young executioner, who had been eyeing him since the very beginning. He had also accumulated a lot of energy since he started watching the battle and focused everything on that strike just now.

He originally wanted to end Westley in a single strike, but he did not expect that the latter was that fast to respond despite the perfect assassination attempt that he just launched. Due to that, he could only take the arm of the latter inside of killing them.

The two were about to break out in an intense battle when they sensed a strange fluctuation coming from the Treant.

Turning their heads at the same time, they saw that the body of the Treant suddenly ballooned. Then they instantly sensed the danger and were about to retreat.

But it was already too late...

Boom!

The Treant 'exploded', sending sharp vines and tree roots in every direction. They covered a huge area, catching everyone within the range.

The soldiers and agents, who were busy fighting each other, got their bodies pierced by those vines while the rest had their bodies chucked by the tree roots.

The Mech Corps and elite agents were able to respond and protect themselves for a period. But given the power of the earlier explosion and the violent vines and roots that attacked them, they still got swept by everything and got critically wounded in the process.

Both Westley and the young executioner were able to protect themselves, but they got swept by the strong explosion afterward since they were the nearest to the Treant.

The bodies of everyone littered around while the intertwining vines filled the surroundings and sealed off the area.

Swoosh!

It was at that moment that an ember of fire burned bright in the distance.

Swoosh!

While everyone was down and the Treant was trying to recover itself by recovering the life force of those critically injured, a blazing trail flew forward.

It cut through the vines blocking its path and burning everything behind.

'Jade Kirin Scripture: Quick Draw – (Blazing) Flash Final'

Swoosh!

Leaving a flame trail behind him, Shin appeared behind the Treant while thrusting his blazing sword forward.

This strike carried everything Shin had. He had accumulated all his power and focused it at one point before releasing it with a single strike.

Roar!

The Treant cried in pain as Shin's sword pierced through its body and hit the core inside its body accurately.

All the energy that it was trying to accumulate scattered, making it unable to move. It could not retaliate, especially when the flames from Shin's sword spread within its body, burning everything within it.

Shin also did not stop there. "I will kill you while you are weakened!"

As he mumbled to himself, he quickly pulled the sword from the back of the Treant before holding it with both of his hands.

Focusing his mind, he infused the rest of Mental Energy into the sword while also bringing out all the sword principles that he had learned while striking and cutting the body of the Treant.

Blazing flashes repeatedly appeared with each swing of the sword.

Shin danced around the Treant while swinging the sword without rest. He repeatedly strikes the limbs of the monster, cutting and burning it. He was preventing it from recovering itself while also keeping an eye on the raging energies within its body.

He was particularly paying close attention to the corpse of the agent within its body, who was hugging the inheritance tome.

He knew from that start that this Treant was nothing but an outer shell. The real main puppet was that dead agent within its body.

Peeling off the outer shell would lead to the appearance of the main puppet later.

He knew that the core within the Treant was meant for the main puppet, promoting it into a zombie-like monster rivaling an expert of Domain Realm. It would no longer be a monster with nothing but physical strength like the treat, but a monstrous beast that far surpassed those with eight stars or even more.

"Six Stars is the highest category a Monstrous Beast can have, which is the same as Ethereal Opening Stage Experts and Peak of Grandmaster Realm."

"Surpassing it will make them a Disaster Beast, a Seven Star monster, those rival those Void Manifestation Stage or Rulers Realm."

"If they even evolved further, they would become a Calamity Beast or even a Terror Beast, which are as strong as Domain Realm and Transcendent Realm Experts respectively. Or Venerable Realm and Exalted Realm in terms of Mentalism."

Shin was recalling the category of the monsters in the real world as he continued to peel the outer shell of the monsters.

Fortunately, he had destroyed the core of the Treant, or else he would be in deep through if it was swallowed by the main puppet inside its body.

While he was attacking, a splitting headache suddenly assaulted him, making his movements a little sluggish.

'Sh*t! I have stayed in my Natural State for an extended period already,' Shin could not help but curse under his breath as forgotten that he was in the real world and not inside the game since he was too immersed in the battle.

Inside the game, where he was using nothing but an avatar, he could perform more freely since the drawbacks would be limited to his mind. His willpower was strong enough to carry such a burden.

But in the real world, where his body was not as developed and had yet to reach its peak potential, he would suffer a more serious drawback if he was not careful.

He had entered his Natural State, the Perfect Zenith, to make sure that he would be able to land a serious blow on the Treant earlier and prevent it from evolving further.

But he did not expect that the 'outer shell' would be this tough.

Seeing that Shin paused momentarily, the Treant, which was on the verge of collapse seized that opportunity and launched a counterattack.

But since it was not in a position to launch a deadly attack, all it could do was open its body and swallow Shin whole before he could even respond.

Swoosh!

Shin was devoured by Treant without putting up any resistance.

Chapter 1432: The Beginning (Part 6)

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Swoosh!

The expression on Shin's face turned serious when he saw that he was about to be pulled inside the body of the Treant. He quickly urged his Mental Energy to surround his body and even ignited his Fire Innate Attribute to ward off the approaching vines.

Unfortunately, those vines did not care about the flames covering Shin's body and wrapped themselves around his arms, legs, and torso before pulling him inside.

Swoosh!

Getting ready for what was about to come, Shin squinted his eyes while keeping the True Sight active.

He was expecting a mental attack that would suddenly launch at him, trying to invade his mind. It would most likely be the 'consciousness' of the inheritance tome that would try to take over his body.

But to his surprise, nothing had happened even if he waited for a long time. Aside from feeling that his body submerged into a deep abyss filled with darkness, he could not feel anything.

It was as if he was left floating into nothingness.

Or transported into another dimension rather than being pulled into the body of the Treant.

However, he naturally did not let his guard down as this could also be a part of the 'possession' of the inheritance tome.

Swoosh!

But what happened next surprised him. "What!? Where is this place?"

What Shin saw was a dense forest filled with a healthy environment. Trees that were bearing fruit plants of different types, and a variety of vegetables were filling the entire place.

He could also see a variety of animals everywhere, whether they were tame or wild. Moreover, these animals were living in harmony despite their differences. Even the predators that were supposed to hunt these weaker animals slept soundly and let those little ones play with their ears and fluffy furs.

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Walking around, Shin found a variety of things. Aside from the ordinary and regular fruits and edible plants around, he also found some that he could not recognize. Even with all the knowledge that he had accumulated about these things, he could not find any of them in his memory.

Given his background during the Training Camp and the time he had spent in the library of the Springfield Family since young, he had never seen or read most of the strange fruits and plants that he had seen along the way.

Some of them were heavenly treasures found in various places around the world, but most could only be seen in the virtual and fantasy world just like the game he was playing, «Destiny's Fate» Online.

Aside from those, he also found some monstrous beasts along the way. But they did not have the wild and aggressive nature that he knew. Most of them were completely tamed, not showing any ferociousness at all.

There were also some strange creatures that he had never seen or read before.

Despite their differences, all these creatures and monsters lived in harmony and not fighting one another.

Not long after, he reached the edge of a cliff and saw a stunning sight that he had never seen before.

The sight in front of him was so beautiful. A bountiful forest, a tall mountain, and a healthy plain – all of these were together while a variety of animals ran around and played with one another.

The clear sky was also filled with different types of birds, both giant and small.

At this moment, there was a single word that struck Shin's head. "Is this what they call a paradise?"

Thinking that it might be an illusion that the inheritance tome had created while trying to take over his body, Shin quickly put his guard up while enhancing his senses.

What was stranger was he could not find 'Uno', who was 'living' inside his Sea of Consciousness.

If the inheritance tome was trying to invade his consciousnesses, then it should be facing the two of them instead of him alone.

Moreover, there was also the horrifying seed within him. Even if he had yet to see what its form looked like inside his consciousness, he could at least guess the warning that Uno was giving him every time they 'met'.

He watched everything for a while until he noticed that something changed.

The sky slowly turned dark, indicating the storm that was about to arrive.

When Shin lowered his gaze once again, the scene in front of him took a hundred-and-eighty-degree turn. The paradise that he was seeing earlier, turned into hell in an instant.

The gentle and tamed animals were now running for their lives as the wild beasts were now running after them. The monstrous beasts showed their violent side and started slaughtering everyone while the rest of the strange creatures were also joining the prey.

Chaos enveloped the originally peaceful place, destroying everything.

Shin was not sure what was happening, but he could at least tell that the inheritance tome was trying to convey something to him.

He watched everything crumble until he came back to the abyss.

That was when he heard a fading voice. "The Heaven has always been unfair."

Swoosh!

It was at that moment when Shin returned to a 'place' that was familiar to him. "This..."

He was trying to organize his thoughts when he saw the familiar figure sitting cross-legged in the stance.

Uno slowly opened his eyes and looked at him with a smirk. "Almost got caught in an illusionary world, huh?"

Before Shin could even respond, Uno waved his hand and pointed behind Shin. "I am not the one who has the business with you this time."

Shin slightly frowned before turning his head. That was when he saw an ancient tablet floating behind while releasing a deep green and jade-like glow in a rhythmic pattern. "Eh!? Isn't this..."

Swoosh!

He was in the middle of talking when the tablet shrunk and turned into a speck of light before penetrating his forehead.

"What the...!?" Shin was taken aback and did not know how to respond.

He was still trying to understand what was happening when he felt that his consciousness was being kicked out of this place once again.

Before he was fully out of the Sea of Consciousness, he heard Uno's voice once again. "You will be lacking a single piece now. I hope you find it sooner so that we can deal with the 'guy' as soon as possible."

Uno watched Shin disappear until the expression on his face suddenly turned serious. "I just hope that you will not lose yourself 'later'."

He had a bad premonission that something bad was going to happen, and he did not have the power to stop it.

He inhaled deeply as he mumbled to himself. "The Heaven has always been unfair, huh? It seems like it."

He then lowered his eyes and looked beneath him while asking. "Don't you agree as well?"

Boom!

Not long after, a violent response followed along with a deafening roar that shook the entire place.

Roar!

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Outside, Shin regained his consciousness and found himself curling inside the body of the Treant. There was also a foul stench that assaulted his nose, making him frown deeply. He could instantly tell that it was coming from the heads of the victims of the Treant.

Moving his body, he released his Mental Energy and ignited his Fire Innate Attribute, burning everything.

The Treant roared wildly as it could feel that its 'innards' were being burned, giving it unbearable pain.

Boom!

Not long after, it exploded into pieces before turning into ashes.

Shin calmly fell to his feet before stretching his body. It was at that moment that he noticed a stone tablet falling from above and caught it with one hand.

Glancing at it, Shin knew that it was genuine. But he could also feel that it was somewhat different from how he first saw it inside the body of the Treant. It felt like it had lost most of the energy that it had accumulated on the surface, but Shin knew that the true essence of this tablet had already been lost.

The true inheritance tome was now inside his head.

Touching his forehead, Shin knew that it had something to do with his 'Gift of Devouring'. That Mentalism Gift had most likely acted on its own when he was inside that mind realm and devoured the essence of the inheritance tome.

"If that is the case, then it most likely is related to one of my innate attributes," he mumbled and felt quite excited.

He did not expect that he would be receiving such an unexpected benefit. He was originally planning to do a similar feat later to trick the Black Serpent Mafia, but it looked like he no longer needed to go through such a troublesome path.

With this stone tablet, he could do a few more things.

He wanted to check on what kind of inheritance it was or what change it gave him. But he knew that this was not the time for it since there were still a few things that he had to deal with.

Looking around and seeing the scene that the previous battle had left, Shin could only sigh. He did not care about the lives of the others, particularly the agents from the Black Serpent Mafia, but he could not help but feel a little guilty about the soldiers who got killed during the process.

Even if there were some conflicts between the Springfield Family and Green Family due to their rivalries, they were still not deep enough to cause each other to die like this.

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

While he was lost in thought, Shin suddenly heard a series of sounds coming from the distance. When he cast his gaze in that direction, he could already see a few people in military uniform heading his way.

"Come on! This is the location where that strange fluctuation is coming from! This must be the place where the young master has sent us."

"Hurry! Something must have happened for them to ask for reinforcements."

"Prepare to engage in battle! We may be greeted by something unexpected when we arrive!"

Hearing the shouts of the team leaders of the incoming units, Shin knew that it was now time to pull out. "It seems like their reinforcements are finally here."

At the same time, he also heard a voice coming from a distance. "That's quite a nice try to eliminate everyone and come out cleanly. As expected from someone who graduates as a 'Joker'. You sure are ruthless."

Turning his head toward the direction of the voice, Shin saw someone leaning on the nearby tree that he had never seen before.

But at the same time, he knew that this person belonged to the Black Serpent Mafia given the noticeable tattoo on their shoulder.

"I came here right after I noticed that the barrier and the strange powers surrounding the entire region disappeared. I guessed that someone had taken the inheritance too, so I rushed here to see what was going on."

"Who would have thought that everyone died or was in a critical condition aside from the person who is supposedly the one to die," said that person while staring at Shin.

Shin was not surprised by this person's appearance since he knew that the organization always had a contingency plan whenever they were doing special missions.

Regardless, he still looked at the other party with full caution while keeping the stone tablet inside his dimensional ring. Even if this person tried to steal that ring from him, they would not be able to get their hands on the tablet since the ring had a self-destruct feature.

This agent slightly raised his brows before chuckling. "Quite cautious, huh?"

"Don't worry, we have done enough research for it before coming to this place. We know that aside from the person who is recognized by the inheritance tome, no one can touch it... that is unless you surrender it to use 'willingly'," he added with a ridiculing tone.

It was Shin's turn to raise his brows when he heard that. He now understood that these people had another purpose for keeping Bernard captive aside from being a hostage that would force Shin to work for them.

They wanted to force him to hand the inheritance tome to them once he succeeded in retrieving it.

Unfortunately for them, their assessment was slightly off the mark.

"Heh," he sneered at the agent before saying. "Let's go. We must get out of this place before those guys catch up to us."

The agent watched Shin leave without turning back before glancing at the agents lying on the ground and groaning in pain.

His eyes lingered on the young executioner for a couple of seconds before shaking his head. "What a pity."

After that, he snapped with his fingers, igniting the entire place with the flames produced by his Natural Force. He turned everything into ashes along with the soldiers and agents littered on the ground.

He only left when he made sure that everyone died before turning around and following Shin.

Chapter 1433: The Beginning (Part 7)

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Ace City

The battle between the Black Serpent Mafia and Magic Ace Academy was not only confined within the premises of the campus as it slowly spread throughout the city, throwing the entire city into a state of chaos.

Given the unseen circumstances the underworld organization had overlooked, the situation worsened for them. The tides of the battle were slowly going in their favor, making them come up with this contingency plan.

Since the huge isolation formation already sealed the entire city, they better spread the chaos everywhere, making it hard for the faculty members and the police forces of the city to prioritize the safety of the citizens over anything else.

Then the Black Serpent Mafia would take advantage of the chaos to create more openings for themselves.

Fortunately, the academy and military had already prepared something like this and started evacuating the citizens to safe places in an organized manner.

Regardless, the Black Serpent Mafia's damage to the city was already devastating enough. They had taken down a series of buildings and destroyed multiple business establishments, spreading further chaos everywhere.

Due to this, the entire city had become a warzone, making the people of the academy, the police forces, and the military forces unable to focus on the main task that needed to be done.

This had become a real war between organizations, and the forces within Ace City could only trust the top experts to deal with the powerful people that the opposing side had brought.

Of course, some of them also noticed that the barrier sealing the entire city had its core at the center of the city.

They naturally tried to destroy it, but they all realized that it was impossible with their powers as the one in control of it was a Mentalist at the Venerable Realm.

Even if the movements of that person were currently restricted due to maintaining the barrier, there was still no one among them who could force him to move away from the formation core, much less threaten him in any way.

Unless they found someone on the same level of strength, they would not be able to take down the barrier trapping everyone and let their reinforcements from the outside enter the city.

They could also hope that someone from the outside was powerful enough to destroy the barrier by attacking. But given that the barrier sealing off the entire city was meticulously set up by the Black Serpent Mafia, it would be impossible to destroy it with a single.

It would require a lot of time and effort before a crack appears on it, much less destroying it completely.

Given the power that was continuously flowing through the barrier, it would require at least five or more Domain Realm Experts to destroy it.

This was one of the terrors a Venerable Realm Mentalist could have. So long they had enough time to prepare and set up their formation, it would be hard even for a peak Domain Realm Martial Artist to break through their defenses.

Fortunately, it was just a sealing and isolation formation reinforced with a series of defensive arrays. If it was a slaughtering formation meant for destruction, then there would be no hope for this city once it was activated.

Old Ryong, who was resting at the residence of one of his old comrades in war, received the news quite late.

He was trying to recover from the wound that he had suffered from his battle against Jan Mateo. He also learned that Shin had gone missing due to some plot that the underworld organization had done, so he asked his old comrades to help him look out for his recently acquired disciple.

Due to all of these, he was quite late to receive the news. He arrived a little late outside Ace City as there were already a lot of military forces surrounding the entire place, sealing off all the possible retreat routes.

In the distance, Nathan noticed the arrival of the old man, so he walked over to greet this senior. "Elder Ryong."

Old Ryong turned at Nathan before slightly nodding his head. He had been meeting Nathan these last few days since both of them were looking for traces of Shin.

Moreover, Nathan had also learned that Old Ryong was the sword instructor of Shin, which made him less on guard despite the notorious reputation of the old man.

"How is it? Have you learned who are these guys?" asked Old Ryong while casting his gaze at the Ace City, paying close attention to the barrier sealing it.

"That barrier, it is oddly similar to what those 'people' are using during that war," commented the old man as he squinted his eyes.

Nathan was not surprised when he heard that comment as he was aware that Old Ryong was one of those veterans, who fought on the frontlines during the war in the 'General Pass' at the Dark Continent.

Nathan nodded his head and confirmed. "That is what we thought as well, sir. Whoever these people are, there is a high chance that they are related to those 'people'."

Old Ryong was silent for a moment before shaking his head. "There is also a chance that they have progressed that far in researching their techniques."

"So, you have yet to confirm their identity yet?" he asked for another time.

Nathan shook his head as he answered. "Due to the jamming of the signal, we are unable to receive any reports from our people inside."

"But we suspected that they are either of the three underworld organizations that were active in the Soaring Continent recently – the Shadow Alliance, Hextech Laboratory, and Black Serpent Mafia."

Hearing that, Old Ryong raised his brows. "They have become so bold this time, huh?"

Rumble!

While they were discussing, the sky suddenly turned dark. The clouds gathered above the city and formed a dark cluster along with a series of thunderstorms that roared in every direction.

The expression of the two instantly turned dark as they could sense an immense aura coming from behind the dark clouds. Moreover, they were also quite familiar with that aura as they had encountered its owner before, especially Old Ryong who clashed against that person just recently.

"Great Demon!"

"Jan Mateo!"

Their faces instantly turned grave as they quickly made their moves.

Nathan shouted to all the people surrounding the city, telling them to retreat, while he transformed into a blazing thunderbolt that flew straight to the sky.

Old Ryong, on the other hand, suppressed his injuries as he disappeared from his current position before appearing to fight above the city.

Boom!

A flash of lightning fell from the sky and hit the barrier, shaking it violently.

The barrier was greatly shaken, but it did not show any signs of collapse, signifying how tough it was.

But that was only the start as more and more purple lighting fell from the sky and bombarded the barrier repeatedly.

If it was only meant to destroy the barrier, then Nathan and Old Ryong would have no issue with that. But given the destructive power and overwhelming might of these purple lighting, they would destroy the entire city along the barrier itself.

The other Domain Realm Experts that just arrived to assist the Ace City also responded when they witnessed what was happening. They gave their orders to their people, before jumping toward the sky.

Crackle! Crackle!

A golden flash of lighting suddenly appeared in the air before colliding against an invisible wall in the sky.

Boom!

A huge explosion instantly erupted right after the collision, sending violent ripples in the air that spread in every direction.

There was also a huge hole at the center of the dark clouds that formed in the sky, making the sunlight penetrate through it and illuminate the city underneath.

Not long after, Nathan's figure slowly materialized at the center of the golden lightning.

"That's the Dragon King!"

Seeing him, the Domain Experts that were flying toward the sky quickly rushed toward his direction and gathered around him.

At the same time, a huge fracture in the space suddenly appeared, cutting through the remaining dark clouds in the sky and scattering them away.

Then Old Ryong suddenly appeared beside Nathan while coughing violently. He then raised his head and glared at the empty sky, seemingly able to see something that others could not.

"Hoh~! Are you sure that you are not forcing yourself, old man? Or are you offering yourself to me?"

An eerie and chilly voice suddenly reverberated in every direction, seemingly freezing the blood of everyone who heard it.

Not long after, a group of people suddenly appeared in the sky led by a person that no one wanted to meet.

"The Great Demon!"

"Jan Mateo? What is he doing here?"

"D*mn! Quick! Inform the elders! This is an emergency!"

The news about Jan Mateo's reappearance quickly spread in every channel and the Elder Council that was waiting for him to appear immediately acted.

They sent their people while he was being delayed by Nathan and the rest.

They were expecting him to target the Ruins as well since he was showing great interest in anything related to ancient cultivation, which was why they had stationed most of their people in the ruins and tombs within the region.

Who would have thought that he would appear in the Ace City?

Fortunately, Nathan and Old Ryong were in the era and acted accordingly to stop him from destroying the entire city.

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Jan Mateo ignored everyone else as his eyes remained fixed on Nathan and Old Ryong, who were leading the group of Domain Realm Experts.

He wanted to take care of the current issue that they had and capture one of the core members of the Black Serpent Mafia before leaving.

Even if he had mostly recovered from the injuries that Old Ryong had given him, he was still far from his peak form, which greatly limited his abilities.

He raised his brows a little and looked at what was happening down in the city before turning back to Nathan. "Are you sure you want to stop me, Nathan? A lot of people are dying over there right now. If you don't act right away, then more will lose their lives."

"We can deal with that ourselves. There is no need for you to get involved in our matters and destroy the city," responded Nathan while keeping his Natural Force active.

He was ready to take action any time.

Jan Mateo smirked when he heard that before saying. "Heh! It looks like you are mistaken. I am not here to get involved, but it is because those snakes from the Black Serpent Mafia have taken something from me."

"Black Serpent Mafia?" Nathan raised his brows when he heard those words as he also learned who was behind the recent events.

More importantly, the abduction of Shin.

Coming to realize this, Nathan's face suddenly turned cold as the pressure that he was releasing immediately erupted. "Something taken from you!? Are you not talking about my nephew, don't you?"

Boom!

Even those around Nathan could not help but distance himself away from him due to the suffocating pressure that he was releasing.

Just being near him felt like they were being crushed by an invisible force.

From their perspective, Nathan seemed to have become a giant dragon – towering over everyone and covering the entire sky with its massive wings.

"Hoh~! You indeed become powerful since the last time we have met. But unfortunately, it is not enough to deal with all of us," said Jan Mateo as the people that were accompanying him suddenly stepped forward.

These people were his subordinates who followed him after he found them. They were somewhat of a replacement for the previous people who were working under him before since all those people were killed by his archnemesis.

Regardless, these people belonged to the highest rank Demons of the current time, excluding those old Demonic Practitioners like Old Ryong.

Nathan did not back down as he further released a stronger pressure that spread in every direction.

Jan Mateo was quite in a hurry since he knew that the other old monsters had already locked their attention on him right after he made his appearance.

"It is rare for me to do this, but I can offer you a deal that you will never be able to refuse," started Jan Mateo while looking at Nathan calmly.

The Dragon King was about to attack as he had already enough of Jan Mateo's nonsense. But before he could even make his move, he suddenly heard something ridiculous.

"I know what happened to your brother."

Chapter 1434: The Beginning (Part 8)

...

"I know what happened to your brother."

Nathan could not help but halt his actions when he heard those words, stunned. Then the expression on his face suddenly turned dark as he glared fiercely at Jan Mataeo.

Bernard suddenly disappeared after completing a special mission in the borders between the Soaring Continent and Deep Blue Continent and his entire unit.

They were already on their way back to the continent when the headquarters had suddenly lost contact with them. Later completely disappeared and no one knew where they were or what happened to them.

Nathan, who was the main commander of the headquarters, and their father, Samuel Springfield, had decided to suppress the news and hide it from their family to prevent them from being worried too much.

This information was only known to a minimal number of people, which included their closest and most trusted aides. No one could know about it unless they were directly involved.

Thinking about this, Nathan glared even fiercer to Jan Mateo as he suspected that Bernard's disappearance had something to do with them.

Seeing that, Jan Mateo shook his head and clarified. "Before you think that I am the culprit of his disappearance, you better remember that I am not interested in you people. The ones that I am interested in are those who can provide me enough nutrients that will supplement my growth."

"But I do know the perpetrator of that incident," he added cunningly.

Crackle!

"Enough with your bullshit and tell me where my brother is," Nathan's finger suddenly flinched as golden lightning flowed through them.

Bang!

Not long after, a bolt of lightning suddenly fell from the sky in the form of a golden dragon that opened its jaws wide and tried to devour Jan Mateo and the people around him.

BOOM!

But it could only bite on an invisible barrier that was protecting the ground, preventing it from approaching them. Its sharp teeth made of lightning sank deeper into the barrier, trying to crush it, but it was unable to move further after the barrier hardened itself.

That was just the start as the battle in the sky quickly broke out right after Nathan charged at them.

Crackle! Crackle!

Golden lightning danced around Nathan as he charged toward the opposing group while throwing his fist forward.

Boom!

A beam of lightning shot out from his fist and flew straight to the group. It even carried the trait of a dragon aura that was unique to the Springfield Family.

Roar!

That beam of lightning spiraled in the air before turning into a huge dragon that opened its mouth wide and headed at the opposing group.

Jan Mateo did not bother to move as his people took the initiative to step forward to face the incoming lightning dragon.

They released their respective auras, which were in deep purple and hints of black hue on its surface. This indicated that their Demonic Aura was so dense, which also started to affect the surrounding atmosphere, corrupting it.

Boom!

Right after they blocked the attack, they quickly scattered in every direction, targeting the other Domain Realm Experts, and leaving Nathan to their leader.

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

Naturally, they would not forget Old Ryong, this old demon. None of them could take on that old man, so they could only leave it to one of the direct subordinates of Jan Mateo – one of his Demon Generals.

Swoosh!

Seeing the incoming opponent, Old Ryong slightly shook his head a little. "Youngsters these days sure are confident."

Cough!

With a cough, the old man suddenly unsheathed the sword hidden on his cane and swung it horizontally.

His actions were too slow and barely contained any power. It was as if he was waving that sword around like a conductor in an orchestra rather than slashing his opponent.

But what happened next was something no one understood.

Time seemed to have stopped from the perspective of the Demon General and no one could move freely aside from Old Ryong, who was swinging his sword at him.

He then saw the sword slowly moving toward him in a gentle and calm manner. It was so slow that it was even creating a series of overlapping afterimages on its path.

But that was nothing, but a mere illusion created by Old Ryong's actions.

The eyes of the Demon General contracted as he saw this. He knew about this phenomenon. It was not because the time had stopped, but because the opposing side was moving way too fast that even his perception of time was being distorted.

Old Ryong was so fast that the time seemed to have stopped!

This was the pinnacle of speed!

Even the time itself seemed to have been affected due to how fast this sword was.

Urging his body to move faster, the Demon General released a bestial roar. He was the fastest among the Demon Generals, but even with his boasted speed, he was still nothing in front of this old demon that he was facing.

Without a choice, he could only focus on defending himself. He summoned his Demonic Powers and surrounded his body with them while adjusting the position of his demonic core within him.

Swoosh!

It was at that moment when a flash of light passed through his body sliced his shoulder and severed more than half of his body diagonally.

Fortunately, he was able to change the location of his core in the final moments, giving him the chance to save himself. Before his body could be separated by that slash, his Demonic Powers quickly responded and reattached the parts that were sliced by that strike and healed instantly.

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Despite that being the chase, the Demon General quickly halted his charge and swiftly retreated, especially when he saw that Old Ryong was preparing for another attack.

He now had been slapped by reality and had to respect this old demon.

Cough! Cough!

On the other hand, Old Ryong stopped suppressing the uncomfortable feeling stuck inside his chest and started coughing. His previous injury was triggered because he overworked himself a little with his previous attack.

Regardless, he was able to quickly recover himself by using a special technique. Even if this would risk worsening his injuries later, he did not have a choice since they had to stop Jan Mateo and his people no matter what.

The Ace City under them might be being destroyed by the Black Serpent Mafia, but something worse could happen when these people took over of that 'work'.

Swoosh! Swoosh!

Boom! Boom!

The battle both inside the Ace City and in the sky above it reached a whole other level, attracting the attention of many experts.

Those representatives from different countries and organizations also got the wind of this battle. They even became more interested when they heard that Jan Mateo also appeared in this country when he was supposedly hiding from the eyes of the World Government.

As one of the 'great villains' of the world, it was natural for him to be labeled as one of the most wanted criminals around the world.

They became curious about what forced this 'Great Demon' to come out from his hiding place. They wanted to know what he wanted from this continent, where most of his enemies gathered.

Due to this, they sent some of their people to see what was going on in the Ace City while they were waiting for the participants within the cultivator's tomb to be done with their exploration.

They came here to get a slice of the pie when they heard the appearance of an ancient tomb, but they did not expect that they would come to find some entertainment to watch.

...

While situation in the Ace City was growing more and more chaotic and Shin was about to head back to the temporary base of the Black Serpent Mafia along with the Domain Realm Executioner, Bernard finally found an opportunity to move.

He had been bidding his time since the time he was captured and brought into this place. His unit had already been disposed of by the organization after not getting any information from them even after torturing everyone.

He was the only one left in his entire unit, so his eyes were filled with vengeance.

But he had to adjust his plan when he saw that Shin was also captured by the Black Serpent Mafia. He did not know what those guys had eaten to dare to provoke the Springfield Family this much, but he was sure that they were plotting something big.

They were supposedly working in the shadows up until now. But since they had decided to step into the light, Bernard was sure that these people had discovered something.

He was not sure what Shin was planning to do, but he could tell from their last meeting that the organization was planning to use him for something. He might not be aware of what it was, but Bernard was confident that Shin was forced to do it due to him being captive.

Whatever it was, he could not let this little nephew of his be wronged by the others due to some misunderstanding that this plot would bring.

Shin's background was already complicated enough, making it somewhat sensitive.

If his involvement with the Black Serpent Mafia got revealed to the public, much less with his history with them, things could spiral out of control. They would be powerless to stop it when that happened even with the power and influence that their family possessed.

"I must save that kid at the very least," Bernard knew that the Black Serpent Mafia had some plans to mess with Shin or even with their family, so he had to do something to prevent that from happening.

And the only solution that he had was somewhat obvious to his eyes.

Filling his eyes with resolve, Bernard calmed his mind before gathering his focus on his lower abdomen.

He might not be as powerful as his father or as famous as his brother, but he at the very least had some special methods that could help him with his current situation.

The cylindrical objects that were restraining his limbs might had the ability to restrain him from circulating the energies within his body and sealing off his martial attainment. But that would only apply to conventional methods. It would be a whole different matter if he ignited his 'Dragon Core' and forced his blood to flow in berserk.

(*A term for the Golden Core that was unique to Springfield Family)

Supplementing it with his life force, the effects would be powerful enough to free himself from these restraints.

"Argh!"

With a berserk roar, Bernard urged his blood to circulate in reverse while igniting his life force to arouse the powers of his 'Dragon Core'.

He was originally planning to use this technique to self-destruct and drag those top experts of the Black Serpent Mafia along with him. But with Shin's involvement, he had to change the plan and wanted to use it to save the young man instead.

Boom!

With a crimson aura covering his entire body, he found an immense strength that gave him the ability to free himself from the cylindrical restraints.

Bang! Bang!

He first freed his arms by pulling them out before destroying the ones that were wrapped around his legs.

Bang! Bang!

When his feet landed on the ground, his eyes were already bloodshot and a crimson glow was flashing at their corners.

Wearing nothing but a pair of boxer briefs, he made his way toward the door of the prison room, leaving a series of deep marks on the ground.

His current appearance was more of a demon rather than a person.

In the military, his name might not be as resounding and mighty as the Dragon King or as intimidating as Demon Fist General. But his title struck fear in everyone who heard it.

In that circle, he was known as the Brutal Demon!

...

"Hey! It is time to change shifts."

"Finally, I am getting tired of standing here all day!"

"The leaders are not here, so we can't lower our guard at any moment."

The room behind them was heavily guarded as the prisoner inside was someone that even their leaders would have a hard time facing.

All their security measures were on high alert since no one with absolute strength was currently present within the base. They had to send all their Domain Realm Experts along with the others to make sure that their operation would go smoothly.

They were chatting among themselves when the iron wall behind them, which was supposedly reinforced with a special defensive array, exploded all of a sudden.

Boom!

Caught in the explosion, all the agents guarding the room were killed in an instant.

Crack! Crack!

Not long after, a naked person walked out from behind the collapsed wall and stepped on the broken debris on the ground.

Roar!

Chapter 1435: The Beginning (Part 9)

...

Pablo, the Arsonist – that was his name. He was a famous mercenary who was active within the Dark Continent. He was well-known for being a powerful Martial Artist who possessed the Ignition Superpowers, which also made him one of the top experts on the continent.

As a young mercenary at that time, he was quite hot-headed and too impulsive whenever he was doing something. Due to that, he offended quite a lot of people with trivial or influential backgrounds.

Since the Dark Continent was way too huge and known as the biggest continent, Pablo was not afraid and continued living with such a temperament. Even if he offended someone powerful from a city or region, he could just migrate to another, where no one knew him.

But aside from being the largest continent, the Dark Continent was also a home for underground organizations.

Pablo had provoked one of the largest organizations within the continent, making him live a life of a 'fugitive'.

Given his talent, he believed that he would be able to make a comeback once he reached a certain realm in his Martial Arts. At that time, vengeance would be served.

Not long after, Pablo had awakened more abilities of his Superpowers after developing them through continuous battle. He also almost lost his mind during that time, making him commit multiple arsons in different regions that he went through.

He might have offended more people and organizations during the process, but he had already become powerful at that point, reaching the ranks of peak Void Manifestation Stage Experts.

All the people that provoked him would always have the same outcome. They would be burned to death along with their family, organizations, or properties.

That was how he had earned his title as the 'Arsonist'.

Time passed and he became a famous criminal not only in the Dark Continent but also in the neighboring continents as well, especially when he reached the Domain Realm.

Along with his Ignition Superpowers that evolved to another level, he became one of the most notorious criminals along with Butcher, Coffin Maker, and others.

But later, he suddenly disappeared out of nowhere.

Rumors said that he had offended a powerful expert and got killed in the process. Some said that he got injured during the battle and barely escaped with his life, but still died in the end, unable to recuperate.

Just like everyone else, he was forgotten as if he never existed.

But who would have thought that he would be invited by the Black Serpent Mafia and become one of their core forces?

...

Right now, Pablo was one of the Domain Realm Experts that were sent to the Soaring Continent for their operation.

He was originally responsible for watching over Bernard while the rest were doing their jobs. However, due to certain circumstances, he was tasked with observing Shin while also looking over the mission concerning the inheritance tome that they had discovered.

On the other hand, Butcher, Coffin Maker, Boris, and Belladonna would be leading the operation concerning the World Research Center and the abduction of Professor Henry if possible.

They put a lot of importance on that operation as they had also sent all their Artificial Mutants and other lesser Domain Realm Experts that were yet to create their respective domains.

But acquiring the inheritance tome that Shin had just gotten was equally important, so they could not just overlook that matter. That was why they had sent Pablo, the Arsonist, to the location to be their 'Plan B' if something went wrong.

He was also responsible for bringing Shin back to their base, making sure that the young man would not be able to escape. Even if Bernard was in their hands, they still could not be sure that Shin would not do anything funny.

Speaking of Bernard, they had left him locked in the prison room with walls reinforced by powerful formations. Even if they risked not guarding that man, they would still at least take Shin as their hostage against that man if things went wrong.

They also believe that even if Bernard somehow managed to break free from his restraints the walls of the prison room would be strong enough to buy them enough time for Pablo to rush back to the base if something happened.

Unfortunately for them, they had miscalculated a little too much.

They would have not expected that Bernard practiced a forbidden berserk method that ignited his life force in exchange for immense power.

...

While making their way back to the base, the expression on Pablo's face suddenly turned grim as he received a report through a telepathic message from their Venerable Realm Mentalist.

That person, who had set up the defenses within the base, told him that all the defensive formations that he had set up were destroyed.

He was not sure what had happened since he was currently focusing on keeping on maintaining the barrier surrounding Ace City. It was already being attacked by multiple experts and he was barely holding on, so he could not look at what was happening in their base.

They were already reaching the critical point of their operation within Ace City and about to pull out, so he asked Pablo to handle the matters in the base until they came back.

Receiving the message, Pablo did not even hesitate as he swiftly grabbed Shin and held the young man with an arm before suddenly disappearing.

He might also have no idea what exactly had happened, but he could at least guess that it had something to do with Bernard, who was being held captive in that place.

He did know how Bernard managed to break free from those restraints and even destroyed the defensive formations, and this was giving him a terrible premonition given their current situation.

His experience throughout the years was telling that something ominous was about to descend.

Swoosh!

Shin was not sure what was happening, but he could at least tell that an emergency had occurred in the base, making his expert rush over there.

Then an idea flashed through his mind as he felt that could take advantage of this.

But reality was not always in his favor. Not everything could go according to his plan.

When they arrived at the base, it already turned into a ruin. The walls collapsed while all the equipment and apparatuses were littered around, destroyed.

The lifeless bodies of the agents guarding the place and the researchers working there were also scattered everywhere as all of them were slaughtered.

"F*ck!" cursed Pablo as he saw the scene. He did not care about these people or the things that were destroyed. What he was concerned about was the data of the research that they were doing here.

They had the backup data, but the test subjects and such had already been destroyed beyond salvation.

Their losses might not be that big, but it was not small either.

Scanning the surroundings with his sharp eyes, Pablo suddenly swung his free arm to the side and sprayed a fierce flame in the process.

Bang!

At the same time, he quickly retreated while carrying Shin with him.

"You came quite later than I expected. I have been waiting for you to come back."

Raising his head, Shin saw Bernard currently standing a few distance away from him and Pablo. This uncle of his was barely wearing anything, showcasing his properly trained muscles and the power hidden behind them.

At the same time, he could also see the crimson aura that was surrounding Bernard, which resembled a violent flame that was dancing along the wind.

There was nothing strange in Bernard's outer appearance, but Shin could feel a strange energy shrouding the body of his uncle.

From his perspective, he was seeing nothing but a violent demonic beast standing in front of him with a cold and eerie pair of eyes.

Bernard was without a doubt more powerful than Nathan at this moment from Shin's perspective. He had witnessed the two had sparred before and he had seen how powerful they were. But at this very moment, he believed that Bernard far surpassed Nathan in terms of strength and momentum.

At least not until Nathan used his special method, particularly his 'Imperial Tactics', to increase his powers.

But even then, Bernard was still on par with Nathan in that state.

Upon closer inspection, Shin could not help but frown deeply. Given his powerful Spiritual Sense empowered by his Divinity Grade Mental Energy along with his True Sight Technique, Shin was able to perceive the life force that was being ignited from Bernard's body at an imaginable speed.

"Uncle Bernard! You-...!" Shin was unable to complete his words as the latter turned to him and smiled.

"Don't worry, kiddo. It is nothing," he said, reassuring Shin. "And I can't let anything happen to you in my presence."

"Heh! Boastful words coming from someone who has a foot stepping on his grave!" mocked Pablo as he tossed Shin to the side and restrained him with special tools while also locking him with his flames.

"Don't worry. The kid possessed something that our organization needs, so he can't die yet," he added while rolling his shoulders and glaring at Bernard. "But as for you... you can die for all I care!"

Bang!

Activating his Ignition Superpower to the fullest, violent flames surrounded his body before turning into a set of armor.

This was a special technique that he had created by combining his Superpowers and Qi Armor. It had a much tougher and more powerful defense compared to the regular Qi Armor Technique while also reinforcing his other abilities and enhancing his martial prowess by a great margin.

Seeing that, Bernard also aroused the powers within his body, summoning his special Qi Armor made from the Draconic Natural Force produced by his bloodline.

A layer of Qi that resembled the scales of the dragon appeared on the surface of his skin, covering his entire body while his eyes changed. His irises turned into vertical slits while his pupils turned crimson.

At the same time, his canine teeth also grew slightly longer and sharper.

Boom!

The momentum that Bernard was carrying became even stronger and made his body heavier. The ground underneath his feet suddenly sank, crushing the debris into dust while spreading huge cracks in every direction.

"Trying to show off your Flame Force in front of a direct member of the Springfield Family? You are overestimating yourself a little too much!" said Bernard as his blazing aura became even more violent, increasing the temperature of the place and even melting the nearby rocks and collapsing walls around him.

Bang!

In an instant, he suddenly disappeared, leaving a sonic boom that exploded in the air.

He instantly appeared in front of Pablo, who was already prepared for this attack. Benard pulled his arm back before launching it forward with a punch, resembling a javelin that could pierce through any defense.

Swoosh!

Pablo did not hesitate and dared to face the opposing force with raw power. He accepted the challenge and welcomed the incoming attack with a powerful punch of his own.

Swoosh!

Boom!

The two fists did not even touch each other when an explosion erupted.

Space seemed to have collapsed due to their overwhelming powers. Their fists stopped exactly a foot away from each other, trying to press forward.

Their powerful Natural Forces were clashing in the space between the two fists, creating blazing sparks in the air.

The flames surrounding their fists clashed against each other, sending a blazing storm into their surroundings. The crimson and orange flames intertwined with one another and formed a spinning tornado before exploding.

Boom!

Swoosh! Swoosh!

The two fighters were sent flying in opposite directions before landing on their feet hundreds of meters away from each other.

Such a distance was nothing to them as they quickly leaped in the air and launched themselves toward each other once again.

But this time, their battle took place in the sky, producing a series of explosions in every collision. Find adventures at [mvl](#)

Shin watched the battle from the cage that Pablo had created before sitting cross-legged while taking out the talismans that he had gotten from David and Grandmaster Benn. "I am a burden here. Uncle Bernard will have no problem escaping this place if I manage to get out of here."

He tried to channel his energy on two talismans but failed to activate them. "As expected, the energies that this cage is releasing his interfering with my pitiful Mental Energy."

"As someone at the Peak of the Core Formation Stage and a Grandmaster Realm Mentalist, my strength is nothing in front of a Domain Realm Expert."

"The only way for me to activate these is when this prison is destroyed," he mumbled before turning his gaze toward the sky.

"Then there is no other way," a determined look appeared on his face while clutching the talismans with his hands.

Chapter 1436: The Beginning (Part 10)

...

Boom! Boom! Boom!

A series of huge explosions erupted in the sky as if there was a fireworks display. The collisions between Bernard and Pablo sent violent shockwaves in every direction and created strong ripples in the air that were affecting the clouds in the sky.

As the battle escalated higher, the two were forced to release their respective domains, isolating the entire place from reality.

Bernard was trying to escalate this battle even further so that he could attract more attention from the nearby experts. But Pablo was able to see through it, so he released his domain to nullify the intent of the opposing side and separate their battle from the outside world with the Dimension Isolation.

Pablo's Domain was like a world filled with violent flames, making it resemble a blazing world. Within this domain, his control over fire reached another level, making his skills and techniques more powerful and much more destructive than before.

But all of these barely affected Bernard, who was from the Springfield Family. Their family was said to be the 'descendants' of the Solar Dragon, which governed the element of fire, so his control over this element was no weaker than Pablo, who possessed the Ignition Superpowers.

Moreover, the Domain that Bernard had summoned was something similar as well. It was a blazing world with a different flame. A blazing sphere hovered at the center of the sky, creating a miniature sun.

Bernard's bloodline power was able to suppress most of Pablo's abilities, and what's more the domain itself. This forced the latter to use another one of his trump cards.

Igniting the hidden power within him, a black aura mixed in his flames. As if it was being corrupted, the orange flames gradually turned black with little hints of their original color.

Bernard could not help but pause when he saw the changes not only with the superpowers of his opponent but also the domain as well.

Aside from that, he could also feel that feeling that he usually sensed from Evil Practitioners yet also a little different.

Using his Dragon Senses, he was able to pick up multiple scents coming from the opposing party like the scent of death, the scent of stars, and the scent of the world. These came together and created a whole new scent that was unique to everyone else.

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"What kind of power is this?" Bernard wore a grim expression as he knew that he had to be more careful this time.

...

The battle between these two experts might sound like a long process, but it only lasted for a couple of minutes at most.

Within such a short period, Bernard and Pablo had already exchanged hundreds of blows. Their movements were so fast that their clashes seemed to be only limited to a couple of exchanges.

Shin was unable to keep up with their movements even after utilizing all his abilities. But he was able to sense their major location at the very least.

He was waiting for the right opportunity to send a message to Bernard.

He could also feel that Bernard was overstaining himself by using his technique, so he had to do something fast if he did not want Bernard to exhaust his life force.

The Springfield Family might have an abundant life force compared to most of the people since they were blessed by their bloodline. The blood that was running in their veins was from the legendary dragon, so it was quite hard to exhaust it.

And even if Bernard burned a huge quantity of them, he would be able to recover most of them with the help of some heavenly treasures from their ancestral land.

Regardless, overstaining himself with his secret technique could cause some permanent damage to his soul, which would greatly affect his foundation.

...

Boom!

A moment later, an explosion erupted near him due to the stray fireball that Bernard had deflected. Fortunately, the barrier that Pablo had created to trap Shin was sturdy enough to block the strong flames and powerful gusts of wind that the explosion had created.

The barrier shook a little, making the energies supporting it shake a little and become somewhat unstable.

This was the opportunity that Shin was waiting for. He compressed his Mental Energy before forcing it out to send a telepathic message outside.

A thin thread of Mental Energy flew through the gaps that the barrier had made before slowly making its way to the sky.

But due to the powers of the two domains and the chaotic energies lingering in the air, Shin was unable to maintain the telepathic thoughts. But that was more than enough since all he needed to do was to project his thoughts outside this barrier before detonating the Mental Energy.

"Uncle Bernard, destroy this prison barrier!"

Right after that, his voice resounded on the outside.

Even if it was brief and almost got buried by the series of explosions that were occurring everywhere, Bernard was still able to perceive it given the senses of a Domain Realm Expert, which was further enhanced by the Dragon Senses.

Bernard glanced at the direction of the voice, looking at Shin who was trapped inside the blazing barrier.

He slightly knitted his brow as he was quite confused about what Shin was trying to do. But when he saw the determined look on the young man's face, he quickly knew that the latter had something up under his sleeve.

He was not sure what it was, but he could only trust this little nephew of his.

Swoosh!

Adjusting his aim, he started focusing on the blazing barrier on the ground.

Swoosh!

But Pablo was quite fast to respond and quickly obstructed him. If Bernard was able to hear that message, then Pablo could as well. After all, he was a Domain Realm Expert himself and more powerful than the average one at that.

He did not know what Shin was plotting, but given that Bernard did not show any hesitation, he had to do his best to prevent that from happening.

Pablo attacked more aggressively and threw a stronger attack one after another.

Bernard understood that Pablo was not foolish enough to let him destroy that barrier and free Shin from it. But he had to be mindful of his attacks to make sure that he would not kill Shin in the process.

But while he was hesitating, he heard another message.

"Trust me, Uncle Bernard!"

Hearing that message, Bernard felt a sudden 'thump' within his chest. It was as if someone had hit him, but it did not hurt. It was a familiar feeling that he usually heard in the past.

– "Hey, Bernard! What are you afraid about? All you need to do is trust me and I will handle the rest!" –

– "Bernard, you will never lose anything if you trust me!" –

– "Bernard, just trust me."

– "We must do this. Just trust me and everything will be back to how it used to be." –

Being reminded of the distant past, Bernard could not help but smile bitterly and mumbled. "You are a son of that arrogant bastard."

With that, he gathered his resolve and distanced himself away from Pablo.

Swoosh!

The latter was slightly caught off-guard after seeing that, especially when he sensed the sudden change in the atmosphere. The air surrounding Benard was way different from earlier.

Then he saw Bernard take a stance, pulling his right fist back and placing it right beside his waist while his left hand was hovering above it.

Bang!

The surrounding air seemed to have exploded as the flames suddenly gathered around Benard and formed a glowing sphere around his fist.

Roar!

There was also a crimson dragon coiling around him, manifested by his Natural Force and the collective powers within the domain.

Seeing that, Pablo did not even hesitate as he quickly gathered his hands together before slowly separating them, conjuring a flaming spear in front of him.

Grabbing that spear made of fire, Pablo took a throwing stance while summoning all the powers that he could muster and infusing them toward that spear.

The blazing spear slowly grew while the black flames surrounding it became larger and more violent.

When the length of the blazing spear reached at least dozens of meters and flames surrounding it made it look like a gigantic torch rather than a spear, Pablo inhaled deeply before throwing the spear forward.

Swoosh!

'Personal Secret Technique: Spear of Destruction'

Right at the same time, Benard took a step forward while throwing his fist in the direction of the spear.

Swoosh!

The glowing sphere around his fist compressed and was absorbed toward his fist. There was a momentary pause in his movements when he struck out, but the time seemed to have stopped in that instant.

Boom!

Then the air seemed to have exploded followed by a strong gust of wind that spread in every direction.

After that, a crimson beam of light shot out from his fist before flying straight to the incoming spear that his opponent had sent.

'True Nine Dragon Arts: Flames of Domination'

Swoosh!

When the two sides were about to collide against each other, the crimson beam of light that came from Bernard's fist suddenly split into multiple parts, turning into blazing serpent dragons that intertwined in the air.

Roar!

They flew in different directions before converging once again and forming a huge dragon that clashed against the incoming spear.

Boom!

It only took an instant to know which side was stronger.

The blazing spear instantly collapsed in front of the might of the crimson dragon. Then the crimson dragon continued to charge forward despite the great loss in momentum after the collision.

Pablo was preparing to block the attack when he noticed something strange.

Bernard's target was supposedly the barrier trapping Shin, so this attack was a little too forceful if that was his goal. If Pablo chose to dodge it and let this powerful attack fly straight to his barrier, then Shin would be in danger.

But if Pablo did it, Benard could just disperse most of his powers and adjust them according to the strength of the barrier.

While Pablo was distracted by those thoughts, the blazing dragon in front of him suddenly split into multiple smaller dragons and drew an arc in the air, flying past him.

"Not so fast!" seeing that, Pablo suddenly stretched out his arms and fired a series of flame arrows that flew to the blazing dragons and destroyed them in the process.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

Under the cover of the explosions, Bernard suddenly appeared in front of Pablo while swinging his fist forward.

Pablo instinctively dodged it by leaning to the side and putting up a guard with his left hand. But he instantly regretted it when he saw Benard send a fireball toward Shin's direction.

Pablo quickly pushed Bernard back while firing a powerful blast with both of his hands, sending him back flying toward the ground.

Bang!

He swiftly caught up with the fireball in an instant and destroyed it.

Swoosh!

But immediately, when he raised his head above, he saw Bernard descending from the sky with an unstoppable momently.

Bernard pulled his fist back while it was enfolded by a raging flame which left a long, blazing trail in the air behind him.

Not long after, the blazing trail seemed to come alive, linking itself to Bernard and the blazing aura that was surrounding his body.

A moment later, a giant dragon was formed and fell from the sky along with Bernard.

'True Nine Dragon Arts: Crimson Dragon Decent'

Roar!

Seeing that, Pablo's face suddenly contorted while cursing under his breath. "Is he not worried about this kid anymore? Is he trying to kill both of us with that?"

Not hesitating even for a second, Pablo quickly took a stance while gathering all his powers. He spread his feet and squatted his hips while placing both of his fists behind his waist, covering each of them with blazing spheres.

Bernard might not care about Shin dying, but the organization was not. They still needed the kid and the inheritance that he currently possessed.

Bang!

The ground exploded as his weight seemed to have increased while a towering flame shrouded his body.

Spiderweb cracks spread in every direction before turning into deep fissures. Rock fragments flew in the air before turning into ashes due to the high temperature.

Bang!

Kicking the ground, Pablo suddenly flew upwards and headed straight to Bernard, who was in the middle of throwing his fist along with the blazing dragon surrounding him.

Boom!

Chapter 1437: The Beginning (Part 11)

...

Boom!

A massive explosion erupted when Bernard and Pablo clashed in the air. Their collision was so strong that it even created a towering and blazing mushroom cloud while also destroying the entire surroundings.

At the same time, there was also a strong earthquake that shook the ground, making Shin somewhat lose his footing.

The raging flames violently slammed the barrier, making it shake intensely. Cracks were also starting to appear on its surface, signifying that it was about to collapse.

Seeing that, Shin clutched the talisman tightly while also releasing his Divinity Grade Mental Energy. Due to the barrier becoming unstable, its suppression over Shin was gradually getting weaker, making him able to wield his Mental Energy once again and somewhat use his techniques.

He then summoned a group of hexagonal shields in front of him before arranging them and forming a dome barrier around him.

After that, he raised his free hand and wrote a series of Mentalism Runes. They then merged into a singular rune that multiplied itself before situating themselves at the center of the hexagonal shields, reinforcing their defensive capabilities and enhancing their toughness.

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

Bang!

Not long after, the barrier finally collapsed in front of the might of the raging flames.

Shin only had less than a second before he could activate the talisman on his hand. His barrier was nothing in front of these flames. After all, they were produced by the collision between the two Domain Realm Experts.

But at the very least, his barrier could buy at least that much time for himself. He quickly seized that opportunity and infused his Mental Energy with that talisman.

Swoosh!

Right after his Divinity Grade Mental Energy activated the talisman, a surge of even stronger and much purer Mental Energy was released.

Shin could not only see the flow of Mental Energy gushing out from the talisman in an almost liquified form. It surrounded Shin's body, preventing the raging flames from approaching him, much less touching him.

It then solidified and formed a sturdy wall that could withstand any attacks from a Peak Domain Realm Expert or even give a Peak Venerable Realm Mentalist serious trouble.

This was the talisman given to him by David. It was a powerful defense created and refined by his master, which could only be used once.

Shin had chosen this talisman over the one that could directly teleport him back to the Springfield Household since that one needed a couple of seconds before it could fully activate. He would be toasted by the raging flames around him before he could even activate it.

This defensive talisman, on the other hand, would only require an instant to fully activate.

But little did he know, this talisman had functions other than being able to defend against Domain Realm Experts and Venerable Realm Mentalists and save himself in such predicaments.

It would also send a signal to some people related to it.

David, who was rushing to the location that Nathan had given him along with Vincent, Jeremiah, and Laurent, suddenly halted his steps when he felt the 'fluctuation' of Mental Energy within him.

He knew what this meant. It signified that Shin had used the defensive talisman that he had given to him. He swiftly turned his head toward the direction where he felt the 'signal' was coming as his pupils suddenly contracted.

The only reason Shin would use that talisman was when he was facing someone way beyond his level, particularly those with great martial or mentalism attainment.

Seeing him stop, the three also paused in their tracks and turned at him. They looked at him confusedly as they could see the grim expression that he was wearing.

"What's wrong? Have you sensed something unusual?" asked Jerimiah with a deep frown.

David did not answer as he quickly took a turn and headed toward the direction where he sensed the signal was from. He even released the second stage of 'Meridian Lock: Limit Break' and enfolded his body with dense Mental Energy while running.

Seeing that, the three exchanged glances with confused looks on their faces before following David while activating their respective movement techniques.

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

...

Inside a hotel at the Corner Stone City, Alyssa was currently meditating when she sensed an intense ripple in her 'Lake Heart'. This disturbed her mediation, forcing her out of her current state.

She slowly opened her eyes before turning in a certain direction. She stared in the air for a couple of moments before picking up the sheathed katana beside her and standing up.

She fixed herself out of habit before taking out a teleportation talisman from a pocket dimension. She then squeezed it tightly while infusing her Mental Energy into it.

Swoosh!

A moment later, she suddenly disappeared into a flash of light that slowly dissipated in the air.

...

Swoosh! Swoosh!

Above the sea neighboring the Soaring Continent, a pair of silhouettes were flying over it at an unimaginable speed when one of them sensed something all of a sudden and stopped right in that instant.

Bang!

The air seemed to have exploded due to the sudden halt, sending violent gusts of wind in the surroundings.

Swoosh! Swoosh!

Even the seawater underneath them sank and formed an inverted dome along with the tall walls made of water due to the powerful impact.

In the middle of the rain produced by their action, that person stared ahead of them seemingly able to pierce through the distance and see what was happening in a certain place.

"What's wrong, Eve?" said the man, who was traveling along with her.

That woman was stunningly beautiful, making people mistake her for some goddess that descended from heaven. She carried the noble and scared air around her that could make people who see her unconsciously bow their heads in her presence.

This was the greatest genius that shocked the world before due to her talent in Mentalism. She became one of the legendary figures in the Path of Mentalism even if the World Government tried its best to erase any written history about her.

She was Evangeline Rose.

She slightly knitted her brows before answering the question her husband asked. "He used the defensive talisman."

Hearing that, the man beside her, who had an equally handsome appearance but carried an evil air around him, came to realize what she meant.

This was both the most notorious 'criminal' around the world and the greatest genius in the Path of Martial Arts.

He also happened to be a Demonic Cultivator and one of the few people who managed to fully conquer their 'Seed of Hatred' and seize its powers for themselves.

In this current generation, he was known as the Heavenly Demon.

He was called Adam in the past, but he decided to name himself Adamson Kinghad while his previous name became a nickname or an alias.

"Oh! That brat of ours? That means he is still fine," he said nonchalantly as if this matter did not concern him at all.

Hearing those words, Evangeline snapped at him with a fierce glare, seemingly wanting to murder this 'unreliable' husband of hers. The purest and densest Mental Energy was suddenly released from her body, blazing like a violent flame dancing along with the wind.

Seeing that, Adam rolled his eyes and slumped his shoulders with a helpless sigh. He then smiled brightly and tried to calm his wife down. "Come on, Eve. You should know better than enough that I can't meet him yet."

"A disaster will surely befall when our 'seeds' suddenly resonate. I was barely able to get close to him at that time when I helped him form his dual cores. And even that caused me a series drawback," he added trying to appease her.

Evangeline turned her head to the side when she heard that. "It is not that I don't understand. But can you please stop addressing your son that way?"

"I want to smack your face sometimes because of it," she added with an 'angry' tone.

"Smack!" Adam's face seemed to turn bright as he leaned forward, offered his cheeks, and pointed at it while saying. "You can smack a kiss all you want! I will not stop you from doing something like that!"

Bang!

Unfortunately, what he got was a 'kiss of love' from her fist.

Swoosh!

It sent Adam flying at a great distance and sending him deep under the sea.

Boom!

But he was able to come back to his previous location within an instant, leaving a huge torrent of water behind him, which also lifted a giant whale riding it.

He seemed to be completely fine and still wore his laidback expression when he appeared in front of Evangeline. "Your love is still overflowing as our first meeting."

He just finished talking when he saw Evangeline raise her fist once again and prepare a much stronger attack. He quickly shrunk back and waved his hands. "Alright, alright. I will stop joking around."

He paused for a moment as if he was trying to weigh something before continuing. "Since you have already fully recovered, I think you can now meet him. You can even stay with him and watch him grow if you want. You no longer require my protection anyway."

Hearing that, Evangeline slowly retracted her fist. She then stared at her husband for a couple of moments before frowning. "What are you planning this time."

Seeing the worried look hidden behind her fierce expression, he could not help but smile at her lovingly and shook his head. "Don't worry. I will not do anything 'stupid'."

Swoosh!

Evangeline suddenly stretched her hand and grabbed his collar, seemingly afraid of something. "You will come back safe, right?"

Chuckling, Adam patted her hand and reassured her. "Just trust me."

"Can't we just leave it to them?" she asked, unwilling to let go.

Adam smiled bitterly and shook his head. "You should know better. No one can block that entrance aside from me."

He did not wait for her to reply as he quickly added. "Moreover, this can be considered as a 'payment' or 'compensation' for our 'sins'."

"If not for us stepping into that place, stealing that 'fruit', letting the brat bathe in that 'lake', then 'it' will not be retaliating this way."

"We have been defying our destiny and keep on fighting our fate, so it is natural for us to face the consequences."

"We are barely able to prevent those greedy old foxes from repeating the same mistakes, but everyone keeps on insisting on attaining it without knowing the consequences. They want to find the 'Paradise' without knowing what that place exactly is – without knowing about the calamity that it will bring to the world."

"They keep on pursuing it without realizing that they have already become its puppet. This can be a human nature or just the inevitable."

He paused for a moment before smiling bitterly. "All of these started because of me; because I am 'born' into this world, so it is natural for me to carry this burden. But you, you have other roles to play in the future."

Evangeline was unable to say anything and kept on staring at her husband with lonely eyes.

"The Heaven has never been fair. It favors the few but opposes the many; supplies the few and harms the many. It has always been that way unless you wake up and start to do something for yourself and fight for your life," he added as smiled.

"Alright, we can stop this now. This is not like us," he tried to brush off the seriousness with a laugh before changing to another topic.

"You can meet him if you want, but it is better to disguise yourself and prevent anyone from discovering you for as long as possible. We will never know when will 'it' come biting us again."

He then paused and turned toward the direction of the Soaring Continent. "But before all of that, let me first help our friends chase away that annoying 'stalker'."

His gaze seemed to transcend the space and looked directly at the ongoing battle in the Ace City.

"And clean up a little trash along the way," he added while wearing an evil grin.

Chapter 1438: The Beginning (Part 12)

.....

Boom!

Due to the storm of flames that was produced by the collision between the Domain Realm Experts – one with a powerful bloodline and the other honed his superpowers to its highest level – the surrounding isolation barrier finally collapsed as it was unable to withstand their powers.

But the raging firestorm only lasted for a couple of moments as they also receded along with the collapse of the two clashing domains from these experts.

Shin, who was about to use the teleportation talisman, suddenly stopped himself when he witnessed this scene. He also realized that the two combatants were not weakened, especially with the powerful collision that just occurred.

Swoosh!

Bang! Bang!

Not long after, Shin saw a pair of shadows fell from the sky and landed on the ground with a loud sound. There was also a cloud of dust that was formed due to how strong the fall was.

Shin could no longer use the teleportation talisman as he suddenly became worried about Bernard.

Bang! Bang!

That was when he saw the cloud of dust settle down due to a strong gust of wind that the two had produced when they stood up.

Shin could instantly tell who 'won' that earlier clash just by looking at the current appearance of the two.

Pablo was currently in a terrible state compared to how he looked before the battle started. His Qi Armor made by his Ignition Superpowers, was destroyed. There were still some somewhat intact parts, but they were already full of cracks and on the verge of collapse.

Shin could also see the scorched wounds that were caused by Bernard's flames. Pablo's entire arm was also blackened like charcoal, signifying how powerful the previous attack that Benard had thrown earlier.

But Shin could also tell that Pablo still possessed enough strength to fight given the overwhelming power that the latter was emitting.

On the other hand, Bernard, who kept using the secret technique to turn his life force, was currently in the opposite situation.

There was no visible wound on Bernard's body, but Shin could instantly tell how weak he had become.

This originally imposing and full-of-vigor warrior now looked weak and powerless. His blonde hair, one of the common features of the Springfield Family, now had become grey. There were also wrinkles on the corner of his eyes, signifying that he had burned too much of his life force.

Bernard, who was supposedly to be a man at his peak, had now become an 'old man'.

He might have won the earlier exchange, but he now had reached his limit.

Cough! Cough!

Benard could not even remain standing due to his strength leaving his body. He even coughed out some blood, signifying that his innards were in a mess.

Regardless of his miserable state, a proud smile remained as he looked past Pablo and stared at Shin inside the defensive barrier. He knew that Shin was now completely safe given that he could sense a familiar aura coming from that barrier.

He was also giving Shin a meaningful look, seeming to tell the latter that he would not need to worry about him and could now leave.

Shin clenched his teeth and gripped the talisman in his hand tightly while staring at Bernard. He knew that he could not help in this situation and was aware that the members of the Springfield Family could now sense Bernard's presence given that whatever barrier was locking the entire place had collapsed due to the previous battle.

Regardless, he was still hesitating since he knew that Bernard would die before any of the members of the Springfield Family arrived.

He was glaring at Pablo fiercely, seemingly engraving the figure of this person in his memory.

Pablo ignored the glare directed at him since he knew that Shin would not be able to do anything. He slowly made his way toward Benard, planning to end this battle once and for all.

As Shin watched this scene, he felt a loud 'thump' within his heart as if something was trying to break free.

Thump! Thump! Thump!

The 'loud' sound within his body was getting 'louder' while also matching the beating of his heart.

At the same time, his eyes were also turning bloodshot while his pupils were shifting between three colors: grey, purple, and crimson.

While all this was happening, and before Pablo could even plunge the blazing spear that he just conjured into Benard, who was kneeling in front of him, sharp sounds could be heard cutting through the air.

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

Pablo did not even hesitate to retreat as he could feel that wherever those sounds were coming from, they were all directed at him. With a quick calculation inside his head, he knew that he would be dead before he could even strike Bernard down.

Swoosh!

But that did not mean he would just give up on killing Bernard, who was just a step away from death.

As he jumped backward, Pablo gathered all his strength in his arm while infusing his remaining powers into the blazing spear in his hand.

Swoosh!

He then threw the spear forward, targeting Bernard, who was unable to dodge or block it given his current state.

Swoosh!

But before he could even reach Bernard, someone suddenly appeared in front of it, blocking its path while opening something that looked like a round shield that could be folded.

Pablo caught a glimpse of that object and raised his brows in confusion before the blazing spear that carried a powerful energy collided with it.

Boom!

A violent storm of raging flames wreaked havoc and exploded right after the collision, creating a blazing tornado that danced along with the wind.

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

This lasted for a few seconds before the blazing tornado subsided, returning everything to calmness.

That was when Pablo and Shin saw the round 'shield' facing their direction. It remained in its position and unharmed despite the powerful attack that it withstood just now.

Shin could not help but snap out of his current state when he saw that 'shield'. It was as if there was some sort of calming technique written on its surface that was able to chase all his negative emotions away.

He squinted his eyes and focused his vision to look closely at that 'shield'. A moment later, he realized that it was in fact not a shield, but an umbrella filled with mentalism runes that even he, who majored in using runes, could not recognize.

Swoosh!

Then the person holding that umbrella closed it and placed it on his shoulders.

When Shin saw that person, his eyes could not help but turn wide, recognizing the other party. "Senior Brother!"

At this moment, David's current appearance was somewhat different from what he usually had.

His eyes were glowing and his pupils had mandala patterns in them. His body was emitting a violent storm of Mental Energy that was at Divinity Grade. His hair was in a mess while dancing along with violent energies surrounding him.

His laidback or lazy appearance could not be found as he stared at Pablo with cold eyes.

What was even surprising was the aura that he was currently emitting. It was comparable to someone at the Peak of the Rulers Realm in Mentalism Discipline, even rivaling some of the Domain Realm Experts at the early stages of that realm.

Shin did not need to ask David how he attained this strength as he was aware of the Merdian Locking of his Senior Brother.

At this moment, he could tell that David had released the highest number of locks that he could reach this level.

"Wanderer! You again? You have been appearing in the most crucial timing time and time again," growled Pablo as he conjured another blazing spear and prepared to attack.

He could tell that David must have used a special technique to reach this level, which would cost him a serious drawback later.

Regardless, he could not afford to waste more time here since he knew that the barrier sealing the entire area had collapsed due to his previous battle against Bernard.

He had to either kill both David and Bernard together and deal with Shin or leave this place as soon as he could before the experts of the Springfield Family could reach this place.

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

But before he could even make his move, three more people surrounded him while wielding their respective weapons.

Vincent appeared behind Pablo without making any sound while holding a pair of daggers that seemed to be made from the fangs of a monster.

His body was emitting a black and green aura, carrying an intense scent of death. He was currently in a special state where he could unleash a power that was no weaker than an Expert of the Peak Void Manifestation Stage.

Using the secret method of the Valentine Family, he wielded the 'Aura of Death' which was comparable to the Master Assassins, surfacing his current attainment in the path of Assassination. Holding the ancient artifact of his family, even a Domain Realm Expert would have to be wary of his current strength.

(A type of Energy comparable to Natural Force wielded by Assassins.)

(Rank of assassins which was a counterpart of Void Manifestation Stage and Rulers Realm)

On the right side of Pablo, Jeremiah appeared as an aggressive demon while wielding a battle axe. This weapon was the same cursed artifact that they had 'discovered' when they were in that cursed temple.

What happened in that cursed temple turned out to be a good thing for him. Not only he had acquired an ancient artifact that suited his style and an inheritance about his 'Killing Star', but he had also acquired a method that let him release the 'Killing Star' to the fullest without clouding his judgment and losing himself in madness.

The battle axe itself was absorbing most of the murderous intent that he had, making him unleash the full potential of his 'Killing Star'.

His current state could rival either David or Vincent even with the current powers that they possessed.

On the side opposite to Jerimiah, Laurent wielded his spear while unleashing all his powers. Unlike the three that came with him, he did not have any special method or ancient artifact in him to enhance his strength.

Instead, he possessed pure talent and hard work.

His current state while holding the sword reached the level of 'Unification', signifying that he was a Spearmaster in the 'Path of Swordsmanship'.

(Weapon Master: Swordmaster, Spearmaster, and such were counterparts of Void Manifestation Stage, Rulers Realm, and Master Assassin)

He might be far from conjuring his 'Mind Sword (Spear)', but his strength was at least comparable to the three friends that he had.

(Comparable to 'Qi Armor and Weapon' of Martial Arts and 'Magic Arms or Spiritual Equip' of Mentalism')

These three pincerred Pablo in different directions, sealing off his path of retreat, while unleashing a coordinated attack.

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

The talent of these young men might be at the peak of their generation. They might be able to defeat some of the weaker Domain Realm Experts in a one-on-one battle with their current states.

But the one that they were facing was someone beyond that level. Even if Pablo was currently in his weakened state, he was still someone who had survived multiple life-and-death circumstances.

He had already faced predicaments that were far more dangerous than this one.

Camly wielding his blazing spear, Pablo quickly retaliated and blocked all attempts of the three at taking his life.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

The exchanges only lasted for a couple of seconds, but the three had already been suppressed to a certain degree.

Regardless, they had already done their jobs.

David had already rescued Bernard and brought him beside the barrier where Shin was located while they were distracting Pablo.

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

They then regrouped again after David applied first aid to Bernard, stabilizing his condition.

David exchanged looks with Shin for a moment and did not exchange many words since he knew that they were quite in a predicament currently. He then turned back to Pablo, who was preparing to launch an attack on them.

David, Jeremiah, Vincent, and Laurent quickly went in position when they saw that.

Individually, they were not a match for this peak expert even with his current condition, but they knew that they at least stood a chance of warding off his advances until some reinforcements arrived together.

A Domain Realm Expert? We will welcome all challenges!

Chapter 1439: The Beginning (Part 13)

.....

Bang! Bang! Bang!

Pablo, despite being a peak Domain Realm Expert, did not dare to underestimate these young me that he was currently facing, especially with the current state that he was currently in.

Moreover, the current state of his young opponents was also something that he could not underestimate, particularly David and Jerimiah who unleashed their 'Limit Break' and 'Killing Star' respectively.

On top of that, these two also possessed artifacts that enhanced their respective abilities greatly. One was a sacred relic of a long-forgotten civilization with an ancient history while the other was a cursed artifact of a Demon Sects from the ancient era, spanning even during the time when cultivators were still alive.

Vincent and Laurent could not be underestimated either as they have their respective advantages as well, particularly the former who possessed a treasure of his family, which was also greatly enhancing his assassination abilities.

To make sure that he would not exhaust himself too much and burn all his remaining energy during the battle, Pablo did not dare to release his Domain, even if it could ensure his victory.

It was because he was afraid that he would lose his remaining strength right after he summoned it and become vulnerable to anything later. Even if he killed these guys with it, they would drag him to his grave immediately after or someone would deal him the killing blow later.

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

Bang! Bang!

What troubled Pablo greatly when fighting the group was their perfect coordination. Their seamless teamwork was so flawless that he thought that he was fighting an expert who majored in clone techniques and battle formation.

They also somehow looked like a group of highly experienced bounty hunters who had been working together for a very long time and cultivated such perfect teamwork.

The other thing that bothered Pablo was the fact that David was a highly skilled and very talented Mentalist. If he let this young man set up a series of arrays during the battle, then even someone like him would find themselves in a dangerous predicament.

Even if he wanted to prevent that from happening, the remaining three would work together to obstruct him with Jerimiah acting as the center of their formation.

Realizing this fact, Pablo changed his approach and constantly targeted Laurent, who was somewhat weaker compared to the three. He neither used a special method nor wielded a powerful artifact unlike the other three, so his defensive capabilities were somewhat at the weaker end.

Due to the constant pressure that he was applying to Pablo, Laurent had to repeatedly retreat to relieve some of them while Vincent and Jerimiah covered him.

But during that time, Pablo would also shift his offense toward the two, putting them in the same position.

However, both of those instances were just a distraction as his real target was still Bernard, who was trying to recover himself beside the barrier protecting Shin. This barrier might be tough and powerful, but it could not let anyone inside once it had been activated and deployed.

Since David disengaged from the battle to set up a Mentalism Array, Pablo found some holes in their battle formation that he could take advantage of.

Bang!

With a powerful stomp on the ground, a blazing wall was erected from below and formed the trio surrounding him to retreat.

In that brief moment and small space that he had created, Pablo suddenly conjured multiple blazing spears around him, pointing in different directions. He had used most of his remaining Natural Force when conjuring them, so they could not be overlooked.

Snap!

Then, by rubbing his thumb and middle finger, he sent the blazing spears. They targeted everyone while the majority were heading toward David and Bernard.

The formation of these blazing spears and their trajectory were quite tricky. Jeremiah was suppressed by most of the remaining spears, suppressing his movements, while Laurent had to focus on defending himself as all his retreat paths were sealed by the skillfully arranged blazing spears.

Vincent was somewhat free since his speed was the fastest among all of them. He was able to avoid the blazing spears while running straight to Bernard, planning to block the incoming attacks for him.

He left David on his own since he knew that the guy would be able to handle the situation well. He fully trusted David that he would be fine on his own.

David, who was busy setting up a Slaughtering Array, kept calm while continuing his work. He did not even bother to open his eyes as the blazing spears rapidly flew at him.

He even wore a smirk as the temperature sharply rose due to the fast-approaching spears made of fire.

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

Whoosh!

As the blazing spheres were about to reach David, something incredibly fast was cutting through the air and heading straight to them.

Upon closer look, one could see an invisible sword wave that drew a line on the ground a meter away from David, seemingly marking the path of the blazing spears. It was as if it was telling those spears that they would not be able to advance.

Swoosh!

Immediately after that, a formless Mental Energy appeared and erected a transparent wall in front of David, blocking the blazing spears.

Boom! Boom! Boom!

The Mental Energy wall looked thin and fragile when it was formed, but it was able to block all the blazing spears and made them explode right after the collision. Moreover, the raging flames formed by the explosions were unable to proceed forward as they were being blown by the upward current created by that wall.

Pablo frowned deeply as he watched all of these happen. Jerimiah was able to fend off all the blazing spears, Laurent held his ground quite well under the bombardment, Vincent was able to save Bernard with special chains that blocked the attacks of the opposing side, and David was uninterrupted due to the sudden appearance of another person.

He quickly swept his eyes on the surroundings to look for the traces of the newcomer, who just joined the battle.

Swoosh!

But as he was doing that, an intense killing intent was suddenly directed at him from a great distance.

Turning his gaze toward that direction, his eyes seemed to traverse a great distance, and saw someone flying toward this direction with an unimaginable speed. That person was completely covered by a golden flame.

"Demon Fist General, Samuel Springfield!" Pablo was scared when he saw this old monster coming after him.

Even if he was also at the peak of the Domain Realm, he would never dream of facing such an old monster even in his peak form.

Samuel was someone from the Elder Council, which was composed of old experts who were half-step from reaching the Transcendent Realm, the Exalted Realm, the Sword Saint, or someone with the same level and power.

Even the World Government had to think thrice when facing these old monsters. They were unwilling to provoke such a group of old fossils that came from different parts of the world.

At this point, Pablo only had a single choice in front of him. Killing Bernard or catching Shin was no longer possible, so he could only retreat before Samuel arrived.

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

Jerimiah, Vincent, and Laurent seemed to have a tacit understanding as they moved at the same time and charged at Pablo fearlessly. It was as if they simultaneously flipped their switches to offensive without any hesitation.

At the same time, David was also about to finish setting up the array.

Pablo was not foolish enough to stay in this place when all the odds were against him. The three would still need some time to reach him, so he still had a lot of space to maneuver himself.

Moreover, he also conjured a couple of blazing spears and sent them to Bernard, trying to force them to protect him and buying himself more time. He even manipulated them with his thought to dodge Jerimiah and Laurent, who tried to block it, forcing Vincent to slow down and face them.

Now that he had dealt with the fastest member of the group, Pablo became confident in his retreat.

But at the same time, he also felt that he had forgotten something. He was sure that there was something earlier, but he seemed to have instantly forgotten it the moment when his mind slipped away from it a little.

It might be brief as he quickly remembered what it was. But that tiny timeframe was more than enough for the hidden assailant to seize the opportunity.

Swoosh!

Taking advantage of the opening, Alyssa, who was still in her disguise, sprinted from a blind spot while holding a sheathed katana with her left hand and placing it right beside her waist.

She raised her other hand and placed it on the hilt of the katana, grabbing it. She paused for an instant before her body flickered and transformed into a flash of light.

Shing!

She cut through the air while unsheathing the katana and swinging it forward as she reached Pablo within an instant.

Her entire body was covered in transparent Mental Energy, which converged into her katana and formed a 'thin' layer over its blade while slicing through the air.

Given his senses, Pablo was able to sense the incoming ambush. But given his current state, his movements were quite dull and sluggish.

He had spent most of his remaining energy through the continuous battle and even squeezed the last drop of it in an earlier attempt to delay the three, so he was quite in a predicament when facing this sudden ambush.

Regardless, he was still able to squeeze tiny drops of his Natural Force and Superpowers and gathered them in his right arm before throwing a powerful punch to confront Alyssa.

He did not believe that she would be able to contend against him in terms of strength. Even if he was still in his weakened state, his physical strength still far surpassed her level.

If she forced herself to continue, then she would have to face the full brunt of a Domain Realm Expert's raw power.

But what happened next surprised even Pablo.

Alyssa suddenly 'disappeared' as a sword light 'replaced' her. This sword light divided itself as multiple glowing lines appeared in the air, intertwining with one another while passing through Pablo.

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

A series of sword flashes went past Pablo leaving a series of cuts on his body before Alyssa 'materialized' behind him while putting the katana back to its sheath.

The wounds left behind by her attack were shallow and superficial, given the difference in their strength.

Moreover, Pablo was also able to avoid his vitals from getting hit, so he was able to survive the storm of sword flashes earlier.

But wounding him was not Alyssa's goal. What she wanted was to force Pablo to stay standing on his spot and prevent him from escaping.

Clank!

It was at that moment when David finally finished setting up the Mentalism Array.

He slammed his strange umbrella on the ground, infusing his Mental Energy into it, and channeled everything on the ground.

Bang!

The array was instantly activated, making the mentalism runes and circles drawn on the ground shine brightly.

It was already too late for Pablo to escape at that time.

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

A dome-like barrier was starting to form as David continued to channel his Mental Energy into the array.

Seeing that, Pablo understood that he only had two choices in front of him.

One was to stop David from completing the array and prevent himself from being trapped along with this group. But that would be impossible given that the other four would stop him at all costs.

That left him with the obvious choice. That was to commit suicide by detonating his core along with his Superpowers, dragging everyone into hell with him.

If he used the special method that the Black Serpent Mafia had, he could even apply the scale of the explosion and destroy everything within a one or two-kilometer radius.

Before these little cubs could even do anything about it and before the Demon Fist General arrived, Pablo compressed all his powers at his dantian, focusing everything on his core.

His face was calm and determined as he looked at the group.

Seeing that expressionless face, the group realized what this guy was trying to do.

"Crap!"

They quickly went into action using their respective methods to save everyone.

No one dared to stop Pablo as they knew that it was already too late. If they tried to do anything to him in his current state, then they would only hasten the process and throw themselves in the pit.

"Come join me in hell!" shouted Pablo maniacally as he let the raging energy within his dantian loose and detonated his core.

Swoosh!

Against everyone's expectations, someone suddenly made his move and jumped straight to Pablo while covering himself with crimson flames.

Bernard, who was supposedly on the verge of death himself, found strength to stand up and activated his forbidden technique once again.

Shin could only see his back from inside the barrier protecting him when Bernard said to him. "Brat! Say to my little rascal and that stubborn lass that I am sorry."

Shin's eyes turned wide as he watched Bernard charge straight to Pablo, who was releasing a blinding light and about to explode.

"Uncle Bernard!"

Boom!

Chapter 1440: The Beginning (Part 14): Fall of a Dragon and Birth of the Demon

...

Shin watched Bernard's back as Pablo was about to combust with his suicide technique. His eyes widened as he could see that Bernard ignited his remaining powers along with all of his life force.

Bernard spread his arms and expanded his Natural Force, controlling it skillfully. He formed a sphere that enfolded him and Pablo, who ballooned and was about to explode.

He then closed his arms as if he were about to embrace Pablo, confining the raging energy that the latter was about to ignite.

As he accepted his fate and embraced death, something came back to his memory. It was an event in the distant past when he and his friends were exploring an unknown land at the edge of the world, looking for clues to the said 'Paradise' in the legends.

Memories of that time flooded inside his head. Their joy and excitement during their adventures came back to him one after another.

Then something unexpected happened in the end. It was a terrible event that put their lives at risk as they had committed a taboo.

They had been cursed for barging in the cursed land that they believed to be a promised place.

This curse did not only affect them as it was also starting to spread to the people close to them. Their fates had been affected as the curse was also about to corrupt those who would hear about this cursed land.

As all this was happening, a couple stood before everyone and blocked everything. One used her powers to absorb the curse and transferred it to a sacred object while the other turned to them with a smile.

"We have a fun time journeying together, but it seems like we are the only ones who will remember it and reminisce about our adventure."

Bernard and the others stared at the cool figure in front of them as he joined his palms together and used a special technique in them.

Not long after, everyone had forgotten about that place and all the adventures that they had along the way.

Recalling these events, Benard could not help but smile bitterly as he cursed. "D*mn you, Adam! Why do you always have to act cool at the most crucial times."

Then Bernard experienced his entire life in front of them before turning to the familiar aura that was rushing toward this place.

He smiled as he said. "Father, please forgive this unfilial son."

BOOM!

Then Benard's figure was suddenly devoured by a blinding light as Pablo finally exploded.

But despite all the pain and torment that he was experiencing, he stubbornly stretched his arms and forcefully contained the explosion with the sphere that he had summoned.

Despite being confined inside that sphere of Natural Force, the explosion still produced shockwaves that shook the sphere and somewhat affected the surroundings.

There was even a brief earthquake that shook the entire place, making David and the others almost lose their footing.

In the distance, Samuel Springfield, who had seen everything from the distance, could not suppress his sorrow and shouted. "No! Bernard!"

His shout shook the surrounding place, making the earth tremble and creating deep fissures where lava flew out toward the sky.

...

Evangeline was rushing toward the place where Shin and the others were located to the best of her abilities. She even pierced through the space with her special method to increase her speed and make sure that she would arrive in time.

But despite her efforts, she was still a couple of seconds too late to reach the place. She could already see through her 'Clairvoyance' that she was already too late to prevent the worst-case scenario.

No matter how hard she tried to calculate the future and do her best to prevent it from happening, she was a step too late to change the outcome this time around.

She would not be able to change her destiny this time and the prophecy would still happen.

This only happened when her child was involved. He became a variable that she could not calculate just like his father.

Someone who was able to control his fate.

Someone capable of defying Heaven and becoming the king of his destiny.

Due to them, the strings of fate would always be entangled, and the flow of destiny would be hard to calculate. This made her unable to read the future whenever either of them was involved.

Looking ahead of her, she could not help but feel sorrow as she knew that she could not save this friend of hers.

She and Adam had saved those friends from the curse of that place before and changed their fates. But it seemed like it had come back biting them once again when chaos started to spread and those 'people' were getting involved.

She bit her lower and clenched her fists as she knew that it was already too late. "I'm sorry."

Amidst her sorrow, she suddenly felt an uncomfortable feeling inside her chest as she had sensed something from a great distance.

Thump!

The sound did not come from her, but from someone who was quite far from her. The powers that she had left inside that person's body seemed to be screaming for help, informing her that the 'walls' were about to collapse.

"No! This is bad!" she mumbled as she accelerated her flying speed.

She had to arrive there before everything was too late!

...

Back at the scene, the blinding light illuminating the entire place finally subdued.

Raising their heads, David and the others finally saw Bernard standing in the middle while maintaining his final position. He was like a statue or a pillar that refused to fall despite all the adversity.

The only regretful fact was that he no longer breathing.

His body was scorched black, signifying the burns that he had suffered while maintaining the barrier and containing the earlier explosion.

Everyone looked at him with regret, sorrow, and apologetic gazes.

If only they were only strong enough to eliminate such an opponent, who was already a step away from defeat.

If only they were fast enough to dispose of him before he could even have the chance to commit suicide.

If only-...

Swoosh!

Bang!

As they were lost in their thoughts, a tall and majestic figure fell from the sky and stood in front of Bernard's lifeless body.

Samuel stared at his son with full of emotion before closing his eyes and surpassing his feelings. As someone in their field, death was a common occurrence. As a soldier who would risk their lives for the operation, they had always been playing with death all their lives.

He knew that something like this would arrive sooner or later, especially with the current state that the world was in. But he did not expect that his son would go first when he was nothing but an old fossil himself.

"Parents are supposed to go first, you stupid brat. How come you come before me?" he mumbled as he raised his head, opened his eyes, and looked at the sky.

"How will I face your mother, your wife, and your children now?" he continued to talk to himself before lowering his head.

He then took a step forward, stretched his arms, and hugged his son. "Forgive this pitiful father of yours. You can rest now."

...

As all of this was happening, Shin, who was still within the barrier, felt like his mind went blank. He could not tell what kind of expression he was making, he felt that he had lost his soul.

Thump! Thump! Thump!

Then the familiar beating inside his chest started once again.

He could hear that someone was calling him inside his head and sometimes cursing him, but he could not care about that.

His eyes were fixed on the scorched corpse of Bernard as his pupils were constantly alternating between three colors: grey, purple, and crimson.

Black energy was slowly leaking out from his body and flowing upwards while dissipating in the air.

The flow of this energy was gradually getting stronger as something was banging inside his chest.

Snap!

And as if something had cut the last string that was holding his rationality, he finally lost it.

Boom!

Right at the same time, a silent explosion erupted inside his head as if a 'wall' had collapsed under the bombardment of something.

"D*mn this bastard! Now we are really in trouble!"

Uno's voice reverberated inside his head, but Shin could no longer hear it as his mind was already being seized by the final 'Seed of Hatred' that finally broke free from its restraint.

Like a beast that had been starving for a very long time, it broke free from its cage and devoured its 'meal'.

At that time, David flinched as he sensed something. Directing his gaze toward the source of the unpleasant feeling, he saw Shin undergoing a 'Demonic Possession'.

"Sh*t!" he cursed out loud, attracting the attention of the others.

But as they directed their gazes at him, another explosion erupted behind them.

Boom!

This time, it was not meant to harm anyone, but the shockwave that it produced was so strong that it pushed them away. They almost stumbled on the ground, failing to withstand the sudden repulsive force.

Aside from Samuel, who remained standing while holding the corpse of his son, everyone else was thrown in different directions.

Frowning deeply, Samuel stared at Shin as he saw the young man lost himself.

Roar!

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With a deafening roar that sounded like different beasts howling together, 'Shin' raised his head while releasing an overwhelming power and destroying the barrier around him in the process.

There was also a black pillar of light that surrounded him and pierced through the sky. It was so tall and 'bright' that it could be seen even from thousands of miles away.

Samuel wore a grim expression as he knew that it was already too late to stop the possession as the seed had already seized the most vulnerable state of Shin. If he hastily made his move and forcefully tried to stop it, then he could not guarantee the safety of the young man.

What he needed to do was to beat that 'seed' in submission and restrain it once again.

Boom!

But he had somewhat underestimated the demonic powers of this particular 'Seed of Hatred'.

Aside from it being inherited from someone who was cursed by Heaven and a forbidden existence being rejected by the world itself, it had also been restrained within Shin for a very long time, which made its 'hunger' and 'hatred' reach an unimaginable level.

Boom!

As the possession was completed, Samuel could not help but frown deeply. Even himself, who was half-step to Transcendent Realm, was sensing an immense threat coming from Shin.

When the pillar of light finally receded, Shin stood at the center of a crater produced by it.

Lowering his head, his crimson, and eerie eyes were revealed along with the gentle glow surrounding them.

Out of instinct, this Demon was first to turn to Samuel. Attracted to the strongest person within the area, his first target was without a doubt this old monster.

Swoosh! Swoosh!

A dense Demonic Power was released from his body, forming a flame-like aura that was dancing along with the wind.

At the same time, a transparent black energy roared and revolved around him, forming a violent vortex.

As a Dual Practitioner, this demon had the same access to both the Internal Qi and Mental Energy of Shin, which also reached another level right after he took over the 'vessel'.

Glaring at Samuel, the demon suddenly disappeared and reached the old man in an instant. He raised his fist while instinctively controlling the Demonic Powers and Mental Energy to revolve his entire arm before throwing a punch.

Samuel raised his brows as he saw the smoothness of the two types of energy merging as if it were something natural.

He casually raised his hand and blocked the punch in a relaxed manner.

Bang!

The power of that punch far surpassed anyone in Shin's current level. If anything, it was much stronger than the four geniuses present even in their strongest state.

That was when Samuel realized that this was much more serious than he originally expected, especially when he could sense that this demon was just starting to assimilate with the current vessel that it had.

He squinted his eyes while commenting. "You will be a monster that we can't afford to have in this world."

Roar!

As if it was provoked, the demon went berserk and started its rampage.