

## **Destiny 1821**

Chapter 1821: A Whale and a Dragon (Part 3)

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Bang!

Boom! Boom! Boom!

A series of strong collisions erupted as Arthur and Cetus clashed against one another. The former looked like a majestic and honorable knight of the dragon tribe, while the latter was a knight who seemed to be worshiped by the worldly elemental powers.

Bang!

Right after blocking yet another attack from his opponent, Arthur perfectly timed a quick step back to lessen the force that he had gotten from the impact while absorbing the residual from it.

His left arm, which was wielding his shield, suddenly turned and slightly twisted the broadsword of his opponent and pushed it away.

Swoosh!

At the same time, his upper body was following the turn along with a skillful twist of his waist. His right arm was also following his actions, suddenly thrusting his dragon spear forward and perfectly launching a seamless counterattack.

Shing!

Seeing the incoming tip of the spear, the expression on Cetus' face suddenly contorted due to the insane speed and perfect timing that it had.

Adding that he was currently in an awkward position due to Arthur suddenly disturbing his stance, this counterattack was almost guaranteed to land.

Fortunately, his 'class' was not an ordinary class. On top of being a knight, he was also a magician, so he had a lot of means to defend against this attack.

Whoosh!

A transparent barrier suddenly appeared before his face, blocking the path of the incoming spear.

Bang!

In the next instant, Cetus was suddenly sent flying by a sudden stab.

However, he did not suffer any damage from that attack since the barrier had protected him well. What sent him flying was the strong air current that came alongside the stab that Arthur had thrown.

"Hu~! That one is a close call," mumbled Cetus as he tried to regain his footing.

Swoosh!

However, before he could even regulate his breathing once again and stabilize his form, a mocking voice suddenly rang beside him.

"Heh! Trying to play a 'knight' class line before this Excellency? Are you mad? No one is more familiar with this class than I!" sneered Arthur as he swung his spear horizontally.

Cetus quickly responded. He held his broadsword with both his hands and raised it beside him, holding it in an upside-down manner to guard against the incoming strike.

Bang!

The spear then pushed him to the side, leaving a deep trail on the ground.

"Tsk! This class line is not supposed to be for you!" he refuted. This Magic Knight class theme was supposed to be a counter against the other main forces of the Empyrean Talons. The same could be said for most of the tools that he had brought into this match.

But who would have thought that this showoff of a person would suddenly come back with such impeccable timing and take on the stage instead?

All the preparations had gone to waste this time.

Moreover, the preparations that they had done had suddenly worked against their favor due to the appearance of this guy, who was very familiar with all kinds of knight-related classes.

After all, Arthur always played this class in every game that he played.

Cursing under his breath, Cetus forced himself to stop before summoning an array of magic circles behind him and firing a series of spells at Arthur, who was charging toward him.

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

Thinking about it carefully, Cetus disregarded the thought of using the magic scrolls and special tools that he had brought for this game, planning to save them for other occasions.

But that did not mean that he would be giving up in this match. Instead, his fighting spirit burned even more, and he stared at the charging opponent.

He was planning to fight Arthur with his skills and abilities alone.

Sensing the sudden change in the air surrounding Cetus, Arthur could not help but smile as he knew that the opposing side was determined to fight him square.

Regardless, he still continued with his trash-talking. "Not bad. To honor your courage, let this 'Excellency' teach you how to play the knight class."

With that, the golden draconic energy covering his spear suddenly became more violent before taking the form of a dragon.

Arthur then stabbed with the spear, transforming it into golden silhouettes that annihilated all the incoming spells.

Immediately after, he appeared before Cetus, who was already swinging his broadsword down after anticipating his actions.

Bang!

But Arthur had also placed his shield perfectly to block the attack while saying. "Offensive knights, who wield broad and heavy weapons, are known for their powerful attacks and great strength. You are supposed to be more aggressive when playing this class line."

After that, he pushed Cetus back with a strong blow with his shield right after blocking the previous attack.

"Adding that you also possess the magic powers to make it a Magic Knight, your style should be more versatile and a lot of variations," he added before suddenly thrusting the spear forward, transforming it into a golden dragon along with his draconic powers.

Shing!

Raising his broadsword, Cetus guarded himself against the sudden thrust while also protecting his body with a thick mana aura.

He then swiftly stepped sideways and suddenly stepped forward. He slightly ducked forward and diagonally tilted his broadsword, letting the golden spear grind against its blade.

Twisting his waist and rotating his body, Cetus suddenly threw a powerful slash toward Arthur.

Shing!

The mana surrounding the broadsword suddenly contracted and hardened, creating a layer over it and making the blade much thicker and broader.

Along with the mana flame covering Cetus' entire body and a series of magic formations suddenly appeared in the air and fused with the sword, producing a massive reaction.

'Magic Knight Skill (Tier 2): (Modified) Supreme Sword Formation'

Swoosh!

The timing of this attack was impeccable, seemingly trying to prove to Arthur that he, Cetus, was not that simple. He also knew how to play this class.

Arthur's eyes contracted a little after seeing the sudden counterattack from his opponent, but he remained calm and determined.

Eating such an advanced skill up close would truly hurt, especially with such perfect timing that made it hard for most of the players to respond.

But Arthur was not like any other player. He was not an ordinary player. He was one of the gods of the game.

Bang!

With a sudden stomp into the ground, he abruptly stopped his forward charge while pressing downward with his right arm and making the dragon spear flip upwards, retracting it in such a flashy and fancy way.

His shoulder then caught the spear shaft before suddenly retracting that shoulder back and swiftly turning his body alongside it.

On the other hand, his other arm that wielded the shield suddenly pressed forward while also fixing his stance at the same time.

Swoosh!

Alongside his actions, the golden draconic powers around him suddenly gathered toward the shield and formed a golden, transparent wall filled with tough and powerful scales.

Roar!

'Dragon Knight Skill (Tier 2): (Modified) Golden Dragon Scale'

The entire process might sound quite long and a little complicated, but Arthur had done everything in almost an instant.

He had managed to set up all his defenses right before the incoming attack arrived.

Boom!

The collision between the two opposing forces produced an intense reaction and a powerful series of repeated and coinciding shockwaves that spread in every direction.

A huge crater also appeared under their feet, creating a massive pit at this humongous Gladiator's Arena.

The huge cloud of smoke and dust produced by the powerful collisions had yet to settle, but the two sides had already resumed the battle.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

The two turned into a pair of streaks of lights that swiftly swarmed through the cloud and repeatedly collided against one another, producing a series of thunderous sounds.

The cloud was also being repeatedly spread and cleared with every collision, slowly revealing the figures of the two.

With this, the live audience and online viewers watching the match saw that Cetus was at a serious disadvantage in every clash between the two combatants.

But even though he was struggling, there was still the bright and lively light within his eyes, showing his stubbornness and determination.

He might be in a quite miserable situation, particularly with the current state of his Health Bar, which was steadily being chipped down by Arthur.

However, he was still holding his ground, giving his best in the battle.

Given the current state and flow of the match, it was not hard to judge that this would be a quite easy win for the Dragon God.

It was not because Cetus was bad or unskilled when compared to other Godlike Players. It was the matchup between the classes that made it more favorable to Arthur, who knew the knight-related class lines better than most of the players of the game.

Cetus, who had 'designed' this class to counter the other main forces of the Empyrean Talons, was not as familiar as Arthur when it came to understanding this Magic Knight Class.

This led to the current situation.

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Arthur was not in a hurry to end the match despite having an overwhelming advantage that he had over his opponent.

It was not because he wanted to torture Cetus more or teach the other party how to properly play this Magic Knight Class, but it was due to his curiosity about something.

"Hey, why are you those guys? Have you truly joined their adventurer team or something? Or do you just team up with them to join the fun of the United Cup?" he asked with genuine curiosity.

He understood the character of this person quite well, as they had also dealt with each other in other games that they played before.

From his understanding of Cetus, this guy was most likely here just to join the fun or made some sort of deal with the God's Paradise.

Arthur suspected that this guy was up to something.

"What is it to you?" sneered Cetus. Just like how Arthur knew his character, he was also quite familiar with the latter.

He could at least tell that the other party was also up to something.

"Nah~! I am just curious why you suddenly joined a team when you hated being in one the most. Did they offer you something?" said Arthur while continuing with his pressure over the opposing party.

"What? Do you want me to jump over your ship or something?" sneered Cetus while doing his best to protect himself.

"With your current class? Nah~! That choosy guy will not approve your 'application' even if I recommend you. He has such a strict standard when recruiting people, and the current you are far from it," said Arthur before quickly adding. "But it will be a little different if you use the advantages of your special race and spend your money wisely."

Bang!

After being sent flying once again, Cetus swiftly tried to regain his footing while also frowning deeply.

"What do you mean? Are you going to tell me to use my money to fund some guild or create my own force once again, right? You know me, I don't like such things," he said while attempting to fight back a little harder.

"Idiot," sneered Arthur after hearing that before answering. "I am talking about your special race."

He paused for a moment as a rare seriousness appeared in his eyes before continuing. "Rather than doing random things and learning those useless skills to create such a trash class, why not find the correct way to utilize the unique features of your race?"

"You can also spend your money in a more meaningful way," he added while continuing his barrage of attacks.

"What do you mean?" asked Cetus with suspicion.

But he did not instantly dismiss what Arthur had just said because of his understanding of the other party. He knew that this individual had a specific idea in mind when discussing his race and its unique characteristics.

Arthur might look like an idiot and knew nothing but how to show off. But Cetus knew that this guy knew what he was doing when it came to games. Arthur's experiences in all the games that he had played were not for nothing.

Cetus suspected that Arthur might have realized something after all the exchanges that they had had since the start of the match.

Unfortunately, Arthur did not want to disclose anything more and just said. "You mean to fix your race and class? Nah~! I will not help you get stronger for free."

"If you suddenly changed your mind and want to change sides, you know how to contact me," he continued to smirk before suddenly increasing his pace and putting more pressure on his opponent.

"If you come over, then I will not only teach you how to play with those advantages, but I will also introduce you to someone interesting."

#### Chapter 1822: An Element of Surprise

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The next events of the fight did not last that long, as Arthur took it more seriously, finally ending the match.

Cetus did put up a good fight and managed to prolong it as much as he could. Unfortunately, the battle still looked a little too one-sided, leaning toward Arthur's favor. He still lost in the end.

Due to the factor brought by Arthur, all the preparations that God's Paradise had made went to waste, making it a little regretful.

However, Ashura and the others did not put the loss that much as they somewhat expected this to happen after seeing Arthur stepping up on the stage, particularly when Cetus had chosen to arrange his class into a Magic Knight class line.

Upon appearing in the private lounge, the other members of God's Paradise came to Cetus and consoled him, saying that it was all due to the bad matchup that he had lost in such a way.

They believed that Cetus had gone with a class line that Arthur was less familiar with, and Cetus would be able to put up a very good fight and even win the match.

Unfortunately, there were no 'what ifs' in this stage, so there was no need to think about them. What was important was to learn their lessons in each loss and stand up stronger.

"Hah! I am fine, guys. You don't have to comport yourself this much. I know how to handle a loss, and this is not my first time getting bested by that guy," said Cetus after seeing the others around him.

However, he was only fine on the outside, but he was somewhat disturbed on the inside.

It was not because of the loss, but due to the previous words that Arthur had said right before the match ended. He had to admit that he was somewhat curious about what that guy was trying to say about his race and special abilities that came with it.

If he wanted to know more about styles and understanding within the game, then Arthur could be one of those guys who had a lot of tricks and odd insights when it came to playing the game.

He was truly tempted to take this olive branch that was being offered to him.

But he still had to consider it for a while. He did not want to fall for the tricks that this annoying guy, who was both a friend and an enemy of his.

After thinking about it for a moment, Cetus turned to Ashura and said. "I may not continue playing with you guys after this tournament. I want to explore other plays for now."

Ashura was able to guess what Cetus was planning to do, but he did not think too much about it and just smiled. "Alright. But if you ever want to play with the team again, then you can find us any time."

"Surely!" said Cetus with a smile.

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In the meantime, on the side of the Empyrean Talons, Arthur was quite smug about his victory. He gave Leonard and the others a provoking look, seemingly telling them to come and fight in the next match.

The rest of the team just rolled their eyes before ignoring him completely. They then turned to Shin, seemingly waiting for him to tell them who would be representing the team for the next match.

Shin gave them a mystifying smile before saying. "None of you will be fighting for this."

Based on his estimate, the opposing side would most likely use one of their strongest members to win the next match.

Since tricks could not work on Empyrean Talons, the God's Paradise would most likely rely on absolute strength to win back their honor and force a tie-breaker match.

Shin knew that God's Paradise was quite familiar with most of the members of the Empyrean Talons, so they would most likely send their strongest member for this match.

On the side of the Empyrean Talons, there were still Shin, Leonard, Diablo, and Alucard, who could match the best players of the opposing side. Any of them could take on this important role and represent the team in the next match.

The most ideal ones should be Shin and Leonard, since either of them could fight Ashura, who would most likely represent the other side on stage for the next match.

Those guys were no fools. They would most likely want to secure the next round, forcing the Empyrean Talons to use either Shin or Leonard for the tie-breaker match later.

Ashura was the best choice that they had since he had the highest chance of winning the match over the rest of the team. Kallavan and Susanoo were also a good choice, but those two had a slightly lower win rate against Leonard.

It was better to choose someone who could guarantee their victory. Ashura was the only answer at this point, and Shin was sure of it.

Knowing this, Shin could also match the choice of their opponents.

He could take on this role and have an early rematch against Ashura, 'finishing' their previous match that had ended in a draw.

Shin was confident that he could win this time.

Leonard could also take on Ashura.

If this War God won the match, then the Empyrean Talons would be directly promoted to the Grand Finals. But if he lost, then Shin could only fight for the tie-breaker match, which was the most ideal choice.

The same could be said if Shin took on the stage first while Leonard represented them in the tie-breaker match.

Either choice was a good one, so it could only be decided in a coin flip, deciding who would be fighting first.

This was also what most of the people were thinking right now, since it was the most obvious choice.

However, Shin had other plans. He prepared to have a third choice for the element of surprise.

The one who would be representing them on this match had already been decided even before Arthur took on the role to be the 'vanguard' for the team.

Shin then turned to Arthur, Leonard, and Cloe before saying. "You guys look after the team for now. Let me fetch the guy representing us for the next match."

The group was stunned at first while the trio looked at Shin quite confusedly, not understanding what he was talking about.

But something suddenly occurred in their minds, realizing what Shin meant with those words.

"Eh!? Don't tell me?"

"No way! Are you serious!?"

"Is it that guy!?"

The three could not help but look at Shin with stunned gazes, seemingly trying to see if Shin was joking or something.

But after seeing the smirking expression that the latter was giving them, they could only accept it and let him do what he wanted.

It was not like 'that guy' was too different from Shin, anyway.

They were not sure what Shin wanted, but they knew that he was up to no good. No good at all.

But whatever scheme he was plotting this time, they knew that it was all it was directed at their opponents, so they did not care at all.

Shin then wore his mask once again before saying goodbye to the team and disappearing from the room.

The others, on the other hand, could not help but stare blankly at the spot where he disappeared before turning to the trio.

Seeing the inquiring look that the team was giving them, the three could only give them an awkward smile before answering.

"Who knows what that crazy guy is planning?"

"He is also up to no good, but he always has a reason for everything."

"Let's forget about him for now and focus on the match. I am sure that he knows what he is doing."

The rest of the team then looked at the trio with suspicious eyes, not believing their random BS. They all knew that these guys were 'plotting' something.

The three could only smile awkwardly and dodge the eyes of everyone, not wanting to disclose anything. After all, they did not know how to explain the situation that Shin had.

Seeing the three refuse to tell them anything, the rest of the team could only give up and return their gaze to the upcoming match.

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Meanwhile, Shin appeared in an independent space.

He then smiled before saying. "Have you decided? It is just for fun anyway."

But no one was within this place other than himself.

No one answered him as well, making him look like a fool and a crazy person talking to himself.

He did not say anything for a while as well, seemingly waiting for someone to answer.

[Sigh!]

It was at that moment that a voice suddenly rang inside his head.

Shin then smiled as he said. "I know that you have been quite awake for a while now. You don't have that many restrictions in this 'world' anyway, so come out and play for a bit."

"I want to see how good you are in this game," he added alongside a smirk.

Uno did not answer for quite a while before heaving another sigh. [Tsk! I know what you are trying to do, but I will play along time.]

Chapter 1823: The Terror of the Evil God

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The live audience and online viewers just learned that both the Empyrean Talons and the God's Paradise had come to an agreement to go for the Champion's Battle for their matches.

This made everyone think that there was something more hidden underneath the surface, which led them to become more suspicious. Even more so when everyone learned that both matches would be held on the same day due to having nothing but 1-vs-1 battles.

But everyone almost forgot about it when Miss Bunny and David from the broadcast started to give everyone some insights about the possible combatants who would be representing each team.

People even started voicing out their respective guesses, which sparked the start of a series of arguments and discussions.

But after some serious considerations, the people came up with two matchups that had the highest chance of happening.

The first choice was a match between War God Simba and Martial God Ashura, which would most likely going to be a banger, especially with the former having a huge momentum from his previous match against the Earners Mercenary Group, where he had almost won a 1-versus-4 battle.

Then there was a rematch between Battle God Sickarius and Martial God Ashura, which was also a highly anticipated battle. After all, the previous match between these two was so stunning that it was still vividly engraved in the minds of everyone.

Who would refuse such a cinematic match?

Either of these possible matches would be a big treat for everyone, so they did not care which one would be chosen.

However, in the poll that the moderators had put on the live chat of the online broadcast, the rematch between Shin and Ashura had a slightly higher number of votes.

It seemed like more people were anticipating a rematch between these two powerful gods of the game.

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Not long after, the system notification finally arrived and told everyone the start of the next match.

\*Ding\*

System: United Cup Upper Bracket Finals – Empyrean Talons (Home) versus God's Paradise (Away)!

"Whoo!"

"There it is!"

"Finally!"

"A rematch between the Battle God and Martial God!"

"No! War God versus Martial God this time! Please!"

The audience immediately went crazy after seeing the notification on the system. They started shouting crazily, further hyping up the atmosphere.

System: Evil God (Maverick God) versus Martial God Ashura (Godlike Player)

When they saw that Ashura stepped on the field, the people were not that surprised because they were somewhat expecting him to take the stage. After all, this was a very crucial match, so they had to use the strongest member, who also had the highest chance of winning the match.

Ashura was just an obvious choice.

But when everyone saw the name of his opponent, they felt that their brains had suddenly short-circuited.

Their brains froze for a moment, unable to process what was happening.

But when everything had finally sunk into their minds, they suddenly started going crazy and immediately showed a variety of reactions.

Some were focused, others were shocked, while the rest were unable to identify how they would react to this situation.

"Evil God? Which Evil?"

"Don't tell me, it is THAT Evil God!"

"The heck! It seems like THAT Evil God!"

"Since when that monster-... No-... that God of Slaughter has joined the Empyrean Talons!?"

"This is crazy! This is crazy! This is crazy!"

The first series of reactions was just from the regular players, who were paying attention to the news of the game.

The Evil God's reputation was quite big, after all. What he had done during the war at the Dark Cloud Kingdom, slaughtering armies all by himself, was not a small feat.

Even the top guilds and huge organizations, who were paying attention to any news about this Evil God, could not help but take this news quite seriously.

The usual lineup of the Empyrean Talons was already very troublesome to deal with, which was why a lot of powerhouses and top forces within the game were wary of them.

If this Evil God was added to the list, then there was going to be an even larger headache that they needed to think about.

The addition of the Evil God was not that much of a problem since the Empyrean Talons were already filled with a bunch of monsters, so an additional evil monster was not much of an issue.

But it was a completely different case when another huge force was added to the equation.

Evil God, despite being known before as a Solo Player, had a massive following. The Cult of the Evil God was not a joking matter, especially when this force was filled with lunatics who were not afraid of anything.

In a sense, he was the second coming of Immortal of this game, as the Lich God had founded the Undying Guild in a somewhat similar situation.

The Cult of the Evil God was founded by a bunch of crazy people, so there was not much of a force that wanted to mess with them.

If such a force was mentioned along with the Empyrean Talons, following the Evil God, then there was another massive force within the game.

To further prove these thoughts, a bunch of hooded individuals suddenly appeared among the live audience without anyone noticing.

These people in crimson and bloody cloaks looked like a bunch of heretics, almost scaring those beside them.

But that was just the start.

Not long after they appeared, these people suddenly started shouting at the same time, looking like a group of crazy people.

"All hail the Evil God!"

"Evil God! Evil God! Evil God! Evil God!"

"Show us your greatness, Oh Evil God!"

"Evil God! Evil God! Evil God! Evil God!"

"Paint the battlefield with the blood of your enemies, Oh Evil God!"

"Evil God! Evil God! Evil God! Evil God!"

The cheering of this group of lunatics truly sounded like a cultist's session, sending shivers down the spines of those in the live audience.

They were truly crazy.

To make the matter even worse, some of the people from the live chat, watching the live broadcast, were also joining the chats.

Aside from spamming some emoticons of hooded figures, they were flooding the live chat with the chants of the Cult of the Evil God.

But this was not even the end of everything.

What made the situation even more astonishing was the 'move' that this Evil God had done. The battle arena that he had chosen seemed to be a regular Gladiator's Arena that could be seen from medieval times, which was also the most common battlefield in the online PvP arenas.

But what made this particular arena different from the previous one and the regular PvP Arenas was the special feature that came along with it.

Uno, the Evil God, had chosen to remove the isolation barrier that the battlefield had to separate the space between the arena and the live audience.

Boom!

The chants of the Evil God Cult's heretics and the intense cheering of the audience immediately bombarded the ears of the two combatants on the field, almost making them deaf.

Even the entire arena itself seemed to be shaking intensely due to them.

After all, the number of the audience was in millions. Having them surround the entire arena, along with their loud voices coming from every direction, was so intense that it was no different from an explosion of thunder in the sky.

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Ashura, who had just stepped into the field, could not help but frown deeply after his ears got assaulted by such a loud noise.

This was kind of a 'home advantage' that was not only meant to distract the opponent, but also a double-edged sword that could work against them.

Looking ahead and seeing a person covered with a crimson cloak that looked like it was soaked and dyed with blood, Ashura could not help but be a little surprised before smiling. "Evil God!? This is going to be even more interesting than I have expected."

In the meantime, Uno slightly shook his head before saying. "I think you will be disappointed this time."

"I don't have the plan to play around this time, so I don't think it is going to be that interesting," he added coldly, sending sudden tremors in those who had heard him.

Due to the loud noise around them, it was quite hard to hear each other. But given the abilities of these two, it was not that hard to isolate themselves from the noise and focus on those that they only wanted to hear.

Ashura, who heard those words clearly along with the cold tone, could not help but squint his eyes a little.

There was only a battle that 'fully' showcased the 'true' strength of this Evil God, which was his most recent battle against Dragon God Siegfried.

But even at that time, a lot of people knew that it was nothing but a mere glimpse of the true power of this Evil God.

That last strike that he had shown in that match was the true glimpse of his real power.

Ashura would not dare to underestimate this person, especially when his instincts were repeatedly telling him to run away from this place as far as possible.

Raising his [Heavenly Meteor] and pointing it at Uno, Ashura issued his challenge. "Evil God, huh? Show me what you've got."

Uno, on the other hand, just shook his head for another time before saying. "Three strikes – that's all you have. Give your everything and show me what you can do."

"If you manage to pique my interest, then I may play with you for a little longer," he smirked before flashing his intense killing intent.

Boom!

This killing intent was so strong that it spread throughout the entire arena and even affected the clear sky.

The world seemed to have turned red with his sudden burst of killing intent, which also shut the mouths of everyone subconsciously.

Even those lunatics from the Cult of the Evil God could not help but go silent after sensing such an overwhelming killing intent.

Those with a slightly weaker mind even started seeing things. They felt that they had been thrown into purgatory filled with skulls and skeletons.

The rest, with an even lesser ability, directly collapsed and lost their consciousness. The ones that were in an even more serious situation were even kicked out of the game by the system after 'sensing' their unusual minds.

The expression on Ashura's face suddenly turned dark after sensing the dense killing intent that even affected his mind and suppressed him greatly.

"You-... Just who are you?" he asked with a hoarse voice, glaring at Uno.

Hearing that, Uno slightly raised his head and sneered. "Me? I'm just second to none."

Chapter 1824: Three Strikes Rule (Part 1)

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Not only was the audience surprised at the appearance of the Evil God on the battlefield. Even the members of the Empyrean Talons were not expecting him to appear there.

The group could not help but turn at the trio of Arthur, Leonard, and Cloe, who were now looking at the battlefield with full seriousness.

It could also be because they were purposely avoiding the rest of the team, refusing to entertain any questions.

The rest of the Empyrean Talons were aware of Uno's strange relationship with the team due to their previous encounter with him. But they did not expect him to represent the team in this tournament, especially after that incident where this guy suddenly jumped off the airship and disappeared for quite some time.

Seemingly recalling something, Diablo could not help but ask. "The Vice Commander said earlier that he is going to fetch our representative for this match, right?"

Looking at Uno, who was standing haughtily on the battlefield, he suddenly asked. "What is his relationship with this monstrous guy? Given what he said earlier and the tone he had, it looks like they are quite close."

Arthur and Leonard had weird expressions on their faces, unable to answer. They were not that sure about the real relationship between Shin and Uno.

Aside from knowing that Uno was Shin's other personality – an alter ego – they did not know much about anything else.

Even Cloe did not know how to explain this situation, as Shin had only told them about it quite briefly and roughly.

The three kept their silence and just stared at the battlefield, focusing their gazes on Uno.

They were quite curious about this guy that Shin called brother.

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With the suppression of the overwhelming killing intent that Uno was emitting, Ashura did not dare to lower his guard even for an instant.

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

He immediately summoned all his Elemental Spirits, fully activating his possession. He instantly entered his strongest state, preparing for an intense battle.

He knew more than anyone how scary this person was before him, especially when he was the one who was directly being assaulted by the strongest might of the killing intent.

He was even feeling a huge pressure pressing on him just by seeing the opposing party standing in the distance.

From his perspective, Uno looked like an ancient monster that could only be seen in the legends. A beast that lived in the void and abyss, which did not have a specific form.

Facing such a monster, Ashura subconsciously tightened his grip over the [Heavenly Meteor], feeling tense and anxious for the very first time.

Fear – it would not be an exaggeration to say that his body was feeling intense fear right now.

However, he was able to immediately suppress that feeling inside his chest and swiftly gathered his thoughts.

After regaining his composure, a firm expression immediately appeared on his face, staring solemnly at Uno.

He now understood that the three strikes that the latter had said earlier were not a joke.

"Three strikes, huh? Let's see if I can keep you entertained," he said as he prepared himself for his attack.

Holding the [Heavenly Meteor] with both of his hands, a starlight ray suddenly fell from the sky, cutting through the curtain that the dense killing intent had created.

A huge hole suddenly appeared in the bloody sky, letting the starlight energy fall on Ashura's body and creating a pillar of light at the center of the crimson world.

Gathering the starlight and channeling it into the ruler sword, making it blaze with intense stellar fire.

This fire continued to grow until it swallowed the entire pillar that was connected to the crimson sky, making it even wider.

Not waiting for anything, Ashura swung the ruler sword down, almost splitting the crimson sky and annihilating everything on its path.

'Mystic Cosmic Method: Star Fantasy Formation – Call of the Stellar Fire'

Not long after, a group of stars suddenly appeared in the crimson sky one after another, aligning themselves with one another and coinciding with the blazing pillar that connected the [Heavenly Meteor] and the heavens.

Swoosh!

While the giant sword pillar fell from the sky, the stars that it contained started falling one after another like a meteor shower.

Seeing the huge starlight pillar and the meteor shower that was coming alongside it, Uno smirked. "You do have some tricks."

"Unfortunately, it is not enough," he added as he watched the stars fall from the sky, forming a sword formation and threatening to annihilate the world.

Not long after, the surroundings suddenly changed.

A huge amount of his killing intent seemed to have gathered around him and formed a pair of wings of death.

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

Such a manipulation of killing intent was a highly advanced technique that made the godly experts watching the match wear serious expressions on their faces, particularly those with high attainments in Martial Arts and Mentalism in the real world.

To be able to manipulate the killing intent and materialize a pair of crimson wings visible to the naked eye was more than enough to tell everyone how high the attainments of this person were in the real world.

Even some top assassins might not be able to match him in this area.

If only there were people at the Void Manifestation Stage, Rulers Realm, and Swordmasters in the game right now, then they would be able to explain it to everyone more clearly. They would be able to tell everyone what such a manipulation of killing intent stood for.

Uno stared at the falling stellar sword for quite a while, seemingly waiting for it to descend further.

Not long after, his cloak suddenly flapped alongside the wind.

The spectators could not see it that clearly, especially when the overwhelming killing intent filling the entire arena somewhat obstructed their minds. But they could still feel some gentle breeze coming from Uno.

Those with slightly keener senses and sharper eyes could somewhat get a glimpse of Uno's arm 'disappearing' for a moment, which produced that breeze.

Ashura, on the other hand, could not believe what he had just seen. Given that he was directly on the field alongside Uno, he could at least see what had just happened more clearly than anyone else.

Adding that his eyes never left Uno even for a second, along with his fully active ocular skill, what he just saw truly shocked him.

He did not know how many times it was exactly, but he felt that Uno had unleashed at least over a hundred strikes in a mere second.

Moreover, each strike should be so powerful that it sends shivers down his spine.

Such speed and power were more than enough to tell him about the gap between this person and any other Godlike Players and Maverick Gods out there.

Seeing that Uno had even accurately sheathed his swords despite how fast and powerful his strikes were, Ashura understood that simple tricks were not enough for this match.

The sword technique that he used for this first strike was one of the strongest in his arsenal, yet he felt that it was nothing but fancy tricks before this person.

BOOM!

While he was lost in his thoughts, the space around Uno seemed to have finally 'realized' the strikes that this guy had thrown just now.

The thunderous sound had woken up everyone, signifying how powerful the accumulated force was that had just been released by the overlapping strikes just now.

Crack! Crack!

Even the space seemed to have collapsed, forming a series of spatial fractures that spread in every direction.

Boom!

In the sky, the descending starlight sword had also collapsed in an instant when the spatial fractures came into contact with it.

"That's one!" said Uno with an indifferent tone, seemingly provoking the other party.

Ashura then gritted his teeth as he immediately enhanced his current state further.

'Racial Battle Physique (Seraphim): God's Servant'

'Racial Berserk Skill (Seraphim): Divine Awakening – Immortal Divinity'

Despite activating his most powerful buffs, Ashura felt that it was still not enough, so he immediately followed it with his domain skill.

'Sacred Keeper Skill (Tier 2): (Enhanced) God's Territory'

But this still did not reassure him, so he immediately summoned a giant golden immortal from the heavens and fused with it immediately after.

'Sacred Keeper Special Skill: (Exclusive) Immoral Calling'

Right after fusing, Ashra immediately proceeded with his next attack, which was composed of three powerful strikes.

The Golden Immortal seemed to have merged with the world when it threw its massive glaives. Each of these strikes was stronger than the other, seemingly carrying the momentum of the previous one to further enhance itself.

'Sacred Keeper Skill (Tier 3): (Modified) World Domination – First Destruction'

'Sacred Keeper Skill (Tier 3): (Modified) World Domination – Second Annihilation'

'Sacred Keeper Skill (Tier 3): (Modified) World Domination – Third Cataclysm'

Not long after, each of the strikes overlapped with one another. It then formed a much stronger strike that seemed to be capable of annihilating the entire world.

'Imperial Family Secret Art: Killing Move – Worldly Apocalypse'

It transformed it into a whole different skill – a very advanced Martial Arts Skill from the real world.

Boom!

Given the power of this strike, Ashura most likely was not planning to let this little 'game' arrive at the third strike, as he seemed to be already giving his all with this particular strike.

### Chapter 1825: Three Strikes Rule (Part 2)

.....

'Imperial Family Secret Art: Killing Move – Worldly Apocalypse'

Boom!

Seeing the destructive force hidden behind this strike, the audience could not help but feel a sudden sense of crisis. After all, the barrier that was supposed to isolate them from the battle area was currently not present since it was a special feature of the map that Uno had chosen.

Fortunately, there was still an invisible barrier protecting them from stray attacks to avoid any unnecessary accidents.

Regardless, the people could still not help from feel the immense pressure coming from this powerful strike of the Martial God.

Adding that most of them were already being affected by the overwhelming killing intent that Uno was constantly releasing, a lot of the people from the live audience were unable to hold it any longer and started collapsing one after another.

Boom!

In the meantime, Uno watched the descending glaive of the golden immortal with calm eyes, completely unfazed by the incoming attack.

He then smirked behind his mask a little later. "Pretty decent, but still far from enough."

After that, he suddenly flicked his arms back, whipping back his crimson cloak and revealing his crimson armor and the pair of sheathed short swords hanging on the back of his waist.

At the same time, the aura surrounding him suddenly changed along with the flow of energy in the surroundings.

The pair of crimson wings made by killing intent on his back spread even wider, sending powerful and violent ripples in the air.

Putting his hands on the hilt of the sheathed swords, as the black and white auras swapped around his body and intertwined with one another.

A moment later, Uno's arms flickered for an instant before steadyng once again.

Most of the people missed his actions due to how insanely fast it was. But those who were capable of seeing what had just happened were unable to close their jaws due to what they had just witnessed.

Those with somewhat keener senses could at least count the number of strikes Uno had just thrown in an instant.

Moreover, each of those strikes was powerful enough to be hailed as an advanced skill for most of the people within the game.

Meanwhile, the top experts, who were capable of clearly seeing the exact movements of Uno and somewhat understanding the essence of this move, were unable to believe what they had just seen.

The essence of this move was not that complicated. It was just a combination of extreme speed, absolute strength, and ultimate precision.

It might sound a little too simple, but it was much harder to achieve than it was told.

There was also the level of mastery that Uno had reached, which made it all look so simple in the eyes of everyone who had seen his movements.

BOOM!

Not long after, a massive explosion erupted in the air.

The Golden Immortal that fused with Ashura stumbled back a little as its huge glaive, which was descending earlier, rebounded back due to the impact.

Ashura, who had seen everything from a closer perspective of being on the receiving end of that attack.

From what he had just seen, that series of strikes was no different from the previous one that Uno had used to destroy his previous attack.

If there was any difference between the two attacks, then it could only be the speed and power behind each strike. They were much faster and heavier than the previous one, which produced the current result.

At least, that was what Ashura had seen on the surface. But if he went a little deeper into it, then the only reason that he could think of was the sudden response of the killing intent and energy surrounding Uno.

If his guess was right, then it was most likely the difference between those two factors being involved with regular strikes and the ones enhanced by the killing intent and unique energy.

"But how did he do it?" Ashura was confused. He understood the logic behind the difference between the two strikes, but he still felt that Uno's attacks were much stronger than high-ranked Godlike Players like him.

From a regular perspective, Uno had just reinforced his attack with his mana manipulation method, but the effects that he had gotten far surpassed what everyone could achieve in the same situation.

Moreover, there was also that ridiculous series of strikes in the earlier exchange. Just by using 'simple' attacks stacked together, Uno had annihilated his advanced skill in an instant.

Then, with the simple application of the mana manipulation method, this person had instantly repelled his current strongest card. On top of that, this highly advanced skill was used on top of his most powerful state.

"That's two. You only have one chance left."

It was also at this moment that he heard Uno remind him about the 'three strikes rule' that they had 'agreed' upon.

Gritting his teeth, Ashura could only give his all now. "I guess I don't have a choice but to use that incomplete skill."

Stabilizing himself and the footing of the Golden Immortal, Ashura pointed his [Heavenly Meteor] toward the sky.

The Golden Immortal then followed his actions and did the same with his divine glaive.

Swoosh!

Not long after, a pillar of light suddenly came out from the tip of the divine glaive at pierced through the crimson sky, revealing the starry universe behind it.

Whoosh!

Not long after, starlight suddenly started falling and connected with the Golden Immortal, filling its body with sparkling and glittering lights.

At the same time, the armor that it was wearing also became more solid. It had also undergone a series of transformations as it absorbed more starlight from the sky.

Not long after, an array of stars suddenly appeared in the sky while the Golden Immortal maintained its stance.

Along with the blazing pillar that was coming out from its divine glaive, the entire surroundings were suddenly illuminated by a golden light.

When everyone managed to regain their sight once again, the accumulation of powers of the Golden Giant had already reached its peak.

It stood proudly while holding its divine glaive, assuming a battle stance.

Ashura, who fused with it, was also in this stance. He looked at Uno, who was watching the entire process indifferently as if all of it had nothing to do with him.

Ashura gritted his teeth as this was the very first time that he felt humiliated by his opponent. This was his first time encountering such an overwhelming opponent that stood before him like a towering wall.

Even the seniors from the Central Institute in the real world could not emit such a suppressive aura that made him look so powerless.

Since nothing had worked up until now, Ashura decided to use this powerful trump card that he had despite not fully mastering it yet.

It was a special movement that he had realized while trying to combine his two special martial arts.

Raising his weapon higher, Ashura swung down with all his might while the Golden Immortal mirrored all his actions.

Not long after, the giant divine glaive suddenly came crashing down along with the blazing pillar of light that connected it to the starry sky, creating an illusion of splitting the heavens.

'Imperial Family Secret Art: Killing Move – Divine Retribution'

At the same time, the array of stars that were hovering in the sky started falling, creating a storm of meteor shower.

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

They came crashing with unstoppable momentum, seemingly threatening to destroy the entire world.

'Mystic Cosmic Method: Star Fantasy Formation – Call of the Starry Skies'

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

On the receiving end of this combination technique, Uno maintained his indifference and watched the incoming attacks with haughty eyes.

His eyes were currently glowing with purple light as he activated his version of 'Pinnacle Omnicience'. He watched the entire process of Ashura's technique, seemingly peering through its true essence.

He had originally agreed to Shin's 'request' as he was also quite curious about the techniques of this person.

Uno had created the 'Yin-Yang Cultivation Arts' by combining the essence of the modern martial arts and the cultivation methods of the ancient era.

Uno had also seen that Ashura seemed to have achieved similar results as his technique through Shin's eyes. Or to be more precise, the technique that Ashura was using was following a similar path to his 'Yin-Yang Cultivation Arts'.

He wanted to see through his eyes what kind of technique it was while also trying to experience it.

But now that he had gotten a closer look, he suddenly became a little disappointed as he knew that this discipline had diverged from the original path, leading it into an incomplete and knockoff copy of what it was supposed to be.

By applying modern methods, this martial discipline still managed to reach a decent level, matching the path it was supposed to take.

Unfortunately, it was all worthless in Uno's eyes.

Although some interesting elements and tricks conveyed its essence, the final product was still a huge disappointment in his eyes.

Regardless, he still learned quite a few things, which he unexpectedly did not know despite his origin.

"This is the third strike, unfortunately, it is still far from enough," he sighed as he stared at the descending attacks from the sky.

"But since you let me see something quite amusing, let me show you something interesting in return," he added as he slowly unsheathed one of his shortswords.

Tremble!

Not long after, everyone felt a horrifying shiver washing over their body.

It was that kind of feeling that seemed to strike their soul, arousing their deepest fears.

"What the heck is this?"

Chapter 1826: Three Strikes Rule (Part 3)

.....

Shudder!

Everyone present in this place could not help but feel their bodies intensely trembling subconsciously after seeing Uno hold his sword on his side.

They were not sure what it was, but there was a subconscious fear coming out of their hearts after seeing this person wield his sword.

From their perspective, Uno seemed to have become a God of Slaughter, standing on a mountain of corpses and walking on the sea of blood.

At the same time, the world seemed to have turned dark as the crimson and bloody color that was filling the world became deeper.

Watching from the live broadcast, David squinted his eyes as he could tell what kind of state Uno was in. It was a unique state where multiple states fused together – the state of being one with the sword, the state of absolute killing, and the natural state of martial arts.

Each of these states was what most of the people pursued, particularly the state of being one with the sword and the state of absolute killing. Both of these states were the goal of the swordsmen and assassins around the world.

As for the natural state of martial arts, only a very few people could achieve it. At most, the people with special and absolute talents had easier access compared to most people.

Geniuses like Shin, Arthur, Dylan (Zero), David, Shiella, and others had Natural States unique to their respective combat talents. However, it was slightly different from the natural state of martial arts because the two had different essences, but a similar purpose.

Regardless, neither of these three states was easy to achieve, yet Uno had entered it as easily as breathing.

"This guy is truly a demon," he mumbled as he watched Uno with solemn eyes.

...

In the meantime, the shortsword that Uno was holding was suddenly covered with a pair of flowing energies – the powers of the Brilliant Sun and Abyssal Moon.

The two flows of energy swarm around the surface of the sword, acting as if they were a pair of black and white dragons.

At the same time, the killing intent that Uno had manifested suddenly covered the entire blade with a crimson aura, filling it with a dangerous and murderous air.

These three things harmonized with one another, forming a unique energy, which was much higher than any other form of mana within the game.

Shin, who was observing everything within his inner world of consciousness, could tell that this power far surpassed even the Mana Essence of Ancient Creatures that he had seen from the Trial of Primordial Waters.

Meanwhile, Hanzo and Solus, who were also capable of seeing what was happening around the body of their contractor despite being in a different dimension, could not help but look at this 'other version' of their master with fear.

From their perspective, this power that Uno was trying to control carried the hint of origin. The origin of all things and the zenith of all powers.

This was the reason why the energies flowing through the sword fused seamlessly.

[Just who is this guy?]

[Is he a God?]

The two could not help but question the identity of this 'person'.

In the meantime, the world seemed to have trembled as a layer of sword aura solidified over the blade of the sword, seemingly trying to reject something.

No one noticed the rejection of the physical realm, thinking that the trembling of the world was just because of how powerful the skill and technique Uno was using.

Seeing such a reaction to the world, Uno could not help but grin. "This so-called virtual world is truly interesting. To think that it is also aware of these 'rules'."

"Fortunately, the restraints are not that strong, making it easier for me to avoid its 'punishment'," he mumbled before continuing to look at his opponent.

Ashura could not see the grin that Uno had due to the battle helmet he was wearing, but could at least sense the ridiculing and teasing smile from the latter.

This technique that he was currently using might still be incomplete, but it was still much powerful than any of the players had shown so far within this tournament.

However, despite all of that and his confidence, Ashura felt that it was still far from being enough to threaten this monster before him.

Moreover, he could also tell that the other party seemed to be purposely telling him something.

The first strike was one of his strongest trump cards, yet it was only destroyed by the simple stacking of multiple strikes.

The second strike was also one of his strongest aces in the hole, yet it was also repelled by the same series of strikes, which was only augmented by the simple application of mana manipulation technique.

As for this third strike, which was also his current strongest move, Uno seemed to be showing him an advanced application of the mana manipulation method.

A moment later, everyone saw Uno slowly raise the sword in his hand before casually drawing a simple diagonal stroke in the air.

Swoosh!

From everyone's perspective, it was just a simple sword stroke. But when they watched Uno's movement, they suddenly felt somewhat suffocated while the world instantly turned still.

Time seemed to have stopped while the world started to crumble.

'Yin-Yang Cultivation Arts: True Unification of the Yin and Yang – Returning to Origin'

Boom!

A silent explosion erupted in everyone's ears as the world turned black and white for an instant before returning to the crimson world filled with Uno's killing intent.

In the meantime, the giant Golden Immortal and the descending stars suddenly stood still as if someone had pressed the pause button.

Snap!

Crack! Crack!

Not long after, glass-like shattering sounds suddenly rang in the world, followed by a series of cracks appearing in the crimson sky.

Crack! Crack!

At the same time, the body of the Golden Immortal was suddenly filled with cracks as well, spreading throughout its body before collapsing all of a sudden.

Boom!

Bang! Bang! Bang!

The stars also started exploding one after another.

Whoosh!

The crimson world also disappeared while the shattered fragments fell along with the disappearance of the killing intent that Uno was emitting earlier.

The crimson and bloody sky disappeared, the air became a little more breathable, and the pressure that was pressing on everyone earlier disappeared. This returned the world to how it used to be.

However, everyone was unable to respond in time due to how devastating the earlier sight was.

That 'simple' move from Uno was too unbelievable and too hard to process.

Everyone could only stare blankly at the current scene before them, unable to say anything. The entire live stand was silent as they watched Uno stand in the field while sheathing his shortsword.

Meanwhile, Ashura remained suspended in the air as the giant figure of the Golden Immortal shattered like pieces of broken glass and scattered in the air.

He stared at Uno for quite a while before wearing a bitter smile on his face.

He had suffered quite a few losses in his career as a professional gamer, but none of them had ever been this one-sided.

It was not even a fight, and he was totally crushed by the opposing side.

He did not even know what to say or even feel at this current moment.

Not long after, his body also suddenly started cracking and slowly crumbled, turning into specks of light.

\*Ding\*

It was only at this moment that the system responded and announced the result of the match.

System: Victory – Evil God (Empyrean Talons)!

Swoosh!

Right after, Uno disappeared from everyone's eyes, seemingly directly logging out of the game right after the system's announcement.

It was only then that the audience woke up from their stupor and regained their senses.

Immediately after, they exploded in uproar, going crazy!

"What the heck was that!?"

"What did I just witness!?"

"Too overpowered!"

"Is that even a battle? It is too one-sided! It is not even a fight."

"The Martial God just got swept like that! Is this for real?"

"That is too scary! Just how strong is this Evil God!"

The live audience shook the entire stand due to their reactions. They almost made everyone deaf due to their almost simultaneous uproar.

Even the live chat from the broadcast almost broke down due to the flood of reactions from the online viewers. They almost crashed the broadcast, which had never happened before since the advancement of modern technology.

Well, no one could blame them either. After all, the might that Uno just showed was too powerful and too overwhelming.

It even reached the point that the people suspected him of hacking the game. But when they considered the out-of-the-world powers of other godly experts of the game, they could only accept that it was the reality.

Regardless, this kind of power seemed to be too strong for the current stage of the game. People believed that there was some sort of trick behind it, but they had to admit that Uno was too powerful compared to any other god of the game.

At the same time, the other top experts of the game and higher-ups of huge organizations and powerful guilds could not help but wear grim expressions on their faces due to what they had just witnessed.

The power and abilities that Uno had just shown every were too advanced for this stage of the game, especially when it was also far beyond the information that they had on their hands.

Wearing such dark expressions, they started issuing a series of orders, wanting to know everything about this so-called Evil God.

Based on their guess, this person would most likely be a huge variable that would affect the future progress of the game, especially the upcoming update.

Chapter 1827: Advance Preparations

.....

Swoosh!

When Shin returned to their team's lounge, he swept his eyes over the room before turning toward the big screen projected before the group. He then became 'surprised' after seeing that the match had already ended.

"Oh!? It has already ended!?" he said while trying his best to sound as shocked as possible.

Hearing those words, a certain trio could not help but roll their eyes at him while cursing him inwardly.  
"Continue with the act!"

In the meantime, the rest of the team looked at him with solemn expressions, seemingly trying to organize their thoughts.

It was only after a while that Diablo suddenly asked. "Evil God-... What is your relationship with that guy, Vice Commander Sickarius? And where such a demon popped out from?"

From the team's perspective, these monsters within their team were already powerful enough to overwhelm most of the godly experts within the game. They were a bunch of monstrous gods, even among the other gods of the game.

However, this mysterious Evil God was even more of an evildoer compared to these monstrous guys. It was not an exaggeration to call him a demon among these monstrous gods.

After seeing that final exchange between Ashura and Uno, Diablo and the rest of the team could not help but become even more curious about this so-called Evil God.

Particularly Diablo since he always felt that Shin's group 'knew' this person quite 'well'.

Unfortunately, Shin and the others just shrugged at his curiosity, seemingly saying that it was not that important.

To avoid getting deeper into this topic, Arthur took the initiative to change the topic. "Tsk! Tsk! This guy has become even more of a monster since our last match."

"More like he now shows his true battle prowess," corrected Leonard with a solemn expression.  
"Remember that final strike that he has used to take you down? Even that is just a mere glimpse of his true powers."

There was an ugly look on Arthur's face, but he did not refute those words since he was also fully aware that what Leonard had just said was true.

"That final strike just now... I feel like it has touched a depth that we are barely able to reach," added Leonard while wearing a solemn expression.

He had been training under Scar's supervision, so he had realized quite a few things throughout the training sessions.

Adding the insights that he had gotten from the hereditary memories engraved into his bloodline along with the depths of inheritance of the Thunder Lord, Leonard was aware of the word 'Origin' even though he was still very far from touching it.

The two then turned to Shin, seemingly trying to seek answers from him.

The two were very familiar with Shin and knew his capabilities. Even if it was about the Martial Arts that was recently sealed.

But from what they could remember, Shin was far from reaching such a level of power even after the most recent breakthrough.

From what these two could see, Uno seemed to be living in a completely different dimension, where he could harness such a power.

Shin, on the other hand, could not help but smile bitterly since he knew that what Uno had just shown was a result of multiple factors.

If it were in the real world, then Uno would not be able to unleash such a world-defying attack despite how powerful and talented he was.

If not for the 'weak' restrictions within the game compared to the real world, then Uno would have a much harder time unleashing such a power.

From what he had suspected, the power that Uno had shown was not even in this plane of the game. Instead, it was supposed to be something that only those at the higher plane resided in, the Divine Realm.

Even if he was not in control of his avatar at that time, he could still feel what Uno was feeling at that time.

He could feel the 'rejection' of the lower plane when Uno had unleashed such a power earlier.

Seeing the two giving such an inquiring look, Shin just shrugged his shoulders before saying. "I don't know that much either, but it indeed taps something that we are barely able to understand the surface."

The group discussed the matches for quite a while before Shin dismissed everyone. "That's all for now. We will watch the match between the Hand of Midas and God's Paradise together the day after tomorrow before discussing our next plans."

"But we will most likely be facing God's Paradise at the Grand Finals anyway, so we will be making arrangements against them in the following week."

"We will be having an entire week of preparations after the lower bracket finals anyway, so we have plenty of time to train."

He then paused for a moment, thinking about something, before continuing. "I will try to arrange some teams to scrimmage with us in the upcoming week."

"We never have a proper one since the kick-off of the playoff rounds. This is a good chance to have one," he added before dismissing everyone.

...

Since the match had ended quite quickly, it was still very early, allowing everyone to play the game for the rest of the night.

The rest of the Empyrean Talons went to do their respective businesses once again. Some went to do some training, others continued with the progress of their quests, while the rest did some grinding.

As the guy who just came back, Arthur was the most unsatisfied after seeing that his Level lagged too far behind compared to the rest of the team. All his advantages over the other members disappeared, making him dead last in terms of level.

He swiftly went to the Forgotten Temple and headed to the Forgotten Sea to hunt monsters and grind some levels.

At the same time, he had also heard quite a lot of achievements that Shin had done during the time of his absence, particularly when it came to the number of additional titles that Shin had gotten.

He kept complaining why Shin always earned himself a title whenever he did something.

Leonard just laughed it off before dragging Arthur into hunting. Since he was also somewhat free, it was better to do something more productive and try to improve himself.

He was also following a certain clue that he had gotten from the library of the Divine Empire. It was the clue of another Elemental Beast that he could form a contract with.

Based on the records, the spiritual and elemental creature could be found in the regions around the Forgotten Sea, so he wanted to try looking for it.

He was also looking for the clues of the Leviathan Beast, which was the target of one of his most important quests in progress – the quest meant for the creation of his Divine Armor.

Arthur was also meant to follow some clues for his Divine Armor Quest. However, whenever he thought about himself being at the bottom of the team in terms of level, his ego did not let him continue with his quest and instead chose to grind levels.

Given the current stage of the game, it was more efficient to stay at the Forgotten Sea to hunt monsters since there were no competitors in this place.

Instead of going to the Divine Empire and dealing with those guys, who kept on annoying them from time to time, it was better to grind levels in such a peaceful environment.

Fortunately, one of his Elemental Dragons could showcase its power better in water, further increasing the efficiency of his hunt.

Cloe, on the other hand, continued to look for the perfect secondary combat class for her. She had found some clues at the archive of the Church of Light, making decent progress. Once she was successful, her strength would be further enhanced by a great margin.

The rest of the team went about their business as usual.

Shin, on the other hand, did not immediately go to hunt or do his quest right after logging in the game. Instead, he went straight to the Imperial Library of the Divine Empire as well as the archives of the Church of the Sun and Moon to gather intel.

He had some idea about the upcoming update, given the current state of the game and the clues that he had gotten from Benedict previously.

If his guess was right, then somewhere during the entirety of the patch update, there would be a huge expansion that would involve the Beta Testers who were 'trapped' in different dimensions.

Since the timeline would accelerate a little, there was a high chance that the army of the Bug Tribe would descend fully into the Dark Cloud Kingdom.

Alongside it, the portal toward the other realms would also open throughout the update.

What Shin wanted to do now was to do some research about these realms to get ahead of the other players.

Moreover, he also felt that he would get some clues about the other legendary swords if he followed these records, as well as some leads about the other creatures related to his Divine Armor Quest.

### Chapter 1828: The Sky Is Changing

.....

While the younger generation was busy with all the matters within the game, those in the older generations were currently dealing with serious matters as well.

"How is it?" asked Samuel right after Nathan entered his room.

"Everything is going well. We can proceed according to the plan, Father," replied Nathan.

"As for your investigations about those matters?" asked Samuel once again while maintaining his solemn expression.

Nathan paused for a moment, seemingly trying to suppress the rage within him, before replying. "We have discovered that Big Brother has found something from his last mission, but we don't know what exactly it is."

"It is one of the reasons why those guys from the Black Serpent Mafia have chosen to make a move at us aside from fully launching that attempt to attack the World Research Center and Magic Ace Academy."

"Their attempt to abduct and steal the data from the research center is also something they did out of convince."

"They have launched multiple operations at once to confuse everyone, but their main target is still Professor Henry and his research projects, particularly the Black Heart Project."

He paused for a moment before continuing. "We suspect that whatever Big Brother has found during his last mission, it is quite related to one of those projects."

"Whatever they are planning, there is a high chance that it concerns that 'place'," added Nathan solemnly, almost making an ugly expression.

He then took another pause, waiting for Samuel to nod, before continuing. "As for the upcoming operations, we have identified what the Black Serpent Mafia is trying to do during the so-called trade."

"According to the moles that we have planted inside, the Black Serpent Mafia seemed to have gotten their hands on an unusual body that is neither artificial nor naturally formed. It is a strange body made of demonic aura and such."

"They have also taken Jan Mateo during that time."

"Based on the materials that they have, there is a high chance that what Adam has told us before leaving is true."

"Those lunatics are most likely trying to do 'that' ritual once again. Moreover, they have most likely found a way to increase the chances of success, giving them enough confidence."

"Whatever they are 'trading', it is something of utmost importance to them. It is most likely one of the main 'ingredients' that they required for the ritual."

Samuel kept his silence and only listened to Nathan until the latter finished his report. He was quiet for quite a while, seemingly thinking about something.

He then nodded his head and spoke. "I understand. You can proceed according to the plan."

"Your team will deal with the main force while the little ones look for a way to retrieve whatever that thing is. But if they can't get it, then they can just destroy it instead."

"Make your thorough preparations. We will move according to schedule," he paused for a moment as he tapped his finger on the table before continuing. "You can leave the troublesome side to us, Old People. We will make sure that no one will interfere with your operation."

"I have already talked with the other old guys, and they have agreed with the plan. You don't have to worry about the World Government about this matter. We will make sure that they can't move this time."

"Those at the throne are doing suspicious things recently. I don't know if they have some dealings with the Black Serpent Mafia or other organizations. But if they want to act wantonly, then they have to brace themselves to face the wrath of the council," he sneered before dismissing Nathan.

After watching Nathan live, Samuel leaned his back on the chair somewhat powerlessly before sighing. He looked at the ceiling for quite a while before clenching his fists.

"I will not let your death be in vain. I promise you that those bastards that will accompany you in the underworld will be as many as possible," he mumbled before closing his eyes, suppressing the overwhelming rage within him.

...

Outside, Nathan met with Scar, who was already waiting for him for quite a while.

Nathan looked at the latter before asking. "Are you sure about this? Your tribe has never involved itself in the matters of the outside world. If you get involved in this matter, those annoying sects and such will also get restless."

Hearing that, Scar sneered as if he were not afraid. He then answered with a serious tone. "Our tribe has an iron policy to protect the little cubs as much as possible to ensure the future of the tribe."

"Even if you did not seek our tribe's assistance, we will still make our move, especially when the brat has inherited the greatest legacy of our great ancestors."

"This much is nothing. If not for the international agreement signed by the hundred sects and tribes, then the Matriarch has most likely led an army to destroy those dark organizations right now."

Nathan shook his head while smiling bitterly when he heard those words. Such a personality was truly worthy of a Warrior's Tribe.

He then waved his hand as he said. "Don't worry. Given the preparations that we have, you guys may not even have the chance to show up when that time comes."

Scar wanted to say something, but he swallowed it back after recalling the number of experts that the Springfield Family had invited for this huge operation and the number of families and organizations involved.

He then nodded his head before adding. "What's left right now are those kids."

There was a solemn expression on his face as he continued. "They may have progressed quite well, but I still think that they are far from being enough to get involved in such a huge operation."

"There is no need to question their talent and experience since I know that your family has trained them throughout the years. But they are still too green for an operation of this scale and level."

He was frowning quite deeply as he fully understood the risks of this operation.

For the sake of getting the Black Serpent Mafia, the Springfield Family had never held back in all their assaults.

Given the scale of this operation, the Springfields couldn't neglect anything, especially when their heir and heiress were involved.

There were also the other young masters and young princesses from other aristocratic families. If a single mistake occurred somewhere and led to a serious accident, then the consequences would be great even for the Springfield Family.

Seeing such a concern on the face of such a great warrior, Nathan could not help but smirk. "I think you are underestimating those brats a little too much, particularly Shin."

"That brat is more than what his achievements in mentalism can show. That brat's mind is much sharper than anyone else. Other than my niece and that little wanderer, I have never seen anyone as sharp as him when doing such missions."

"Don't worry about them too much. So long as the other factors are fended off right, then they will be able to handle themselves well."

"Moreover, they are not the only ones who will get involved in this. The Magic Ace Academy will be taking this operation seriously as a payback for those bastards."

Nathan paused for a moment as he smiled mysteriously. "Moreover, my nephew and yours are not that bad as well. Adding their great synergy with one another, their combined strength is nothing you can underestimate."

"You have seen it as well. Their understanding of each other far surpassed that of brothers," he added with full seriousness.

Hearing that, Scar could not help but nod his head. He had seen how those three 'played around' previously. If that understanding was converted into teamwork, then he had to admit the kids could take on even those experts at the half-step Domain Realm.

Adding the individual strength, top legacies, and absurd talents of those three, dealing with those at the initial paces of the Domain Stage Experts could also be possible.

With a sigh, Scar laughed bitterly before looking at the starry sky outside the terrace. "The younger generation is truly to be feared."

Nathan smiled when he heard that. "Are we the same when we are young? Giving such a feeling to our seniors and elders."

"But that doesn't mean that we are about to be overtaken that easily," he added as he also looked at the starry sky, recalling those times when they were also young and impulsive.

Even though he could not say that he also missed those times, he had to admit that he reminisced about the past from time to time, especially when they had nothing to be afraid of and floated like a free spirit.

After falling in silence for quite a while, Scar suddenly said with full solemnness. "The sky is changing."

Nathan, who fully understood what the other party meant, nodded his head with full seriousness.

### Chapter 1829: Training and Preparations

.....

For the entire week of preparations, Shin and the rest of the Empyrean Talons did some intense training in order to prepare for the upcoming Grand Finals of the United Cup.

Shin had also managed to invite Lawless and the rest of the Slayers Adventurer Team to play some scrimmage with them despite the busy schedule that the group had to prepare for the upcoming update.

The battle played quite well, which also propelled the overall performance of the team to a whole other level.

In terms of individual strength, the Empyrean Talons had such an overwhelming advantage since they had more players at the god-level within the game.

However, their scores were not that overwhelming since Lawless, Faker, and Pantheon had a fair share of wins over the key members of the Empyrean Talons. These three truly lived up to their respective reputations.

In the meantime, both of these had a fair share of wins and losses in terms of team competition. Even if the Empyrean Talons used their strongest lineup for the team battle, the Slayers Adventurer Team still had ways to deal with them with their solid and seamless teamwork and synergy.

The members of the Slayers had been together for a much longer time than the Empyrean Talons, so their coordination was more mature in comparison. They had also found some holes in the defenses of the Empyrean Talons, which they repeatedly used as a means to break through.

There was nothing to say about the teamwork of the Monster Trio and Cloe. So long as these four were together on the field, it was almost impossible to defeat the team.

Even if Lawless and the others had also and equally strong players and seamless teamwork, these four would always find a way to deal with them and escape any predicament.

The team battles were quite intense, but the Empyrean Talons had a slight advantage in this area.

On the other hand, if these four were broken and did not play as a group, the rest of the Empyrean Talons would be struggling to hold themselves against Lawless and the others.

This was what Shin wanted to focus on in the training, wanting to fix the weaknesses of the team when the key members were not on the field.

There was no need to question the strength of the team if Shin, Arthur, Leonard, and Cloe were together on the field. Their strength was already obvious to see, while their synergy and understanding of each other had already transcended the simple friendship.

Even if Owen, Diablo, and Alucard were quite powerful in their respective positions, they were still unable to fully showcase their true strengths in team battles. Their teamwork with the rest of the team was quite good, but it still did not reach a transcendent level like Shin and the others.

The team's teamwork was a little better compared to before, which was already reaching quite a high level. They even far surpassed most of the teams within the tournament, even surpassing those that had been together for quite a long time.

However, their confidence crumbled before the Slayers Adventurer Team. All the holes in their formation and the slight gaps they made during the battle were repeatedly being exploited by the latter group, crushing them in the battle.

The battle was too one-sided when Shin and the others were not on the team. This lowered the morale of the team a little, which was bad since the grand finals were just right around the corner.

...

"Are you sure about this? It looks like having an opposite effect rather than what you wanted," asked Lawless during the break.

Shin just chuckled after hearing those concerns before asking. "It's fine. I know what I am doing. What do you think about them?"

Having a team's training was good, but inviting a third party to see their process and help them train would also help them grow stronger, since they could pinpoint the things that they could not see within the team.

Lawless did not immediately respond as he thought seriously for a moment before answering. "I think they do have a lot of potential – both as a team and as an individual expert."

"As individuals... or even as duos, I must admit that all of them were top-notch talents," he paused for a moment to point at Owen, Diablo, and Alucard. "Particularly those three who were already at the level of being a high-ranking god of the game."

"Owen has already become mature as a top-notch tank and could even rival Siegfried and Pantheon in terms of this role. He just falls a little short when we talk about his 'identity' as a tank."

"If we talk about him as an individual player, then there is no need to question his abilities. He can already match most of the top godlike players and maverick gods out there. But as a team's tank, he is still not sure which path to take. He is too confused about how he will proceed further."

"Even if he somewhat has the idea where he is going, he still lacks the right direction on how to get there. He is too focused on trying to synergize with the team rather than letting his style naturally adjust with the others and slowly resonate with them."

"He is trying his best for the team, which makes him unconsciously lead to the current mess that he is in."

"In this area, Hayden in our team is slightly better than him. At least, this Immovable Mountain knows how to place his strength properly in a team battle rather than fixating on the regular 'tank' role that everyone knows."

Shin nodded after hearing the assessment. "His teamwork with Ithilien is actually perfect, rivaling even Brother Ravier and Sister Ember of your team. Those two just don't know how to convert their synergy into the team's strength."

"The duo of the Winter Demon and Flame Witch is no joke. Even those powerful gods in old and new generations will have to think twice before provoking them," said Lawless before continuing. "But I must admit that the teamwork of Owen and Ithilien does have the potential to reach that level."

"Especially when their class composition is much better for team battle – a knight and an archer," he added before continuing. "Putting him under Pantheon is such a good move."

He then gave Shin with full complaint as he continued. "Tsk! Aren't you taking advantage of us a little too much? You even know how to utilize this guy's strength even after just seeing him once!"

"Aren't we paying for these lessons and training sessions? We have paid you enough in exchange for your time," said Shin while rolling his eyes.

"I feel like we are losing so much in this 'deal'," glared Lawless before pointing in another direction. "Look at how our Team's Vice Commander treats your team's assassin/thief!"

"Diablo is already a good player of his role, yet you are so greedy that you want him to learn under Faker! You even insisted on a one-on-one instruction between the two!"

Hearing such complaints, Shin just smirked. "Just as I have said. We are paying you fairly. You are the ones who have agreed and offered such an exchange. It is not my fault that I am smart enough to milk you guys for as much as we can."

Lawless gritted his teeth as he continued. "Smart my \*ss! More like Shameless!"

"Thanks for the compliment, Big Brother," Shin chuckled, ignoring the main point.

They bickered with one another for quite a while before proceeding with the topic.

"There is no need to say anything about Alucard. He is already good as it is. The only issue with him is that so-called 'pride' that he has. He will do his job well so long as it is ordered, but will do whatever if there is no command passed on him," said Lawless with a sigh.

"Take that incident with Sniper God Aiming for example. This guy insisted on competing with the guy in terms of gunfighting techniques rather than utilizing all his cards."

"It is fine to hide as many trump cards as possible, but it is pointless not to use them at all," sighed Lawless, further complaining. "He has such a huge advantage due to his dual style as well as the Vampire Abilities that he possesses, but he rarely uses them at all."

Shin thought for a moment, seemingly thinking of something, before sighing. "I also don't know what's wrong with this guy. But I can at least guess that it has something to do with the 'Gun King' and 'Sword King' issue."

"All we can do is wait patiently for him to open up and willingly tell us his story. Until then, there is not much we can do about him," Shin shook his head.

Lawless nodded as he started commenting about the other members of the team.

Samael and Akailu were training a few tricks from Pantheon and Hayden, learning the ropes about the tank and sub-tank roles.

Archimedes and Daulla were learning how to utilize their overall abilities to synergize well with the team from Morgan, Ravier, and Ember.

There was not much of a problem with Chaotic Luck and Huahua, as what they lacked was tactics and experience to apply them in battle. They could just learn it from Cloe and Shin.

Alice might also have some issues with teamwork, but it was not much of a problem, as all she needed was to play with the team more for more experience.

Chapter 1830: Training and Preparations (Part 2)

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The formation and the synergy of the Empyrean Talons were not the only things that they focused on in the training.

After experiencing the match with the Earners Mercenary Group, Shin wanted to focus on researching a couple of maps with special features, so that the team to familiarize themselves with these features and use them to their advantage.

They did not train on a lot of maps since it was useless to do such a rushed training with the time they had. After all, they would not know which map the opposing team would use against them.

The team only needed to choose a couple of maps from the whole variety of special and unique maps, turning them into their 'home maps'. Such a task would not be that much of a problem for them.

It would not interfere with their other training as well, so it would not be much of a problem for them.

As for dealing with the possible maps that the opposing side, along with their special features, Shin found an interesting way to deal with such unexpected surprises.

The training method that Shin had thought of to prepare for such factors was to let the entire team play a certain game.

To make the team adjust to multiple unfamiliar environments, Shin put the team into a special game called the 'survival' game.

It was a special mode in the PvP features of the arena where the players would be sent to random maps and fight in a royal rumble format.

Each map they played on had a lot of special features and map catastrophes that would make each round challenging.

Adding that they had to constantly put their guards up during the entire round due to the random appearance of players and monsters on the field, the pressure that they had during each round was quite massive.

This was the perfect method to train the members of the team in all kinds of situations and individual skills.

The team training was already focusing on their teamwork and synergy during the team battles, so it was useless to put more training sessions for this area. This survival game focused more on their survival instincts and individual strength, as well as their adaptability.

Adding that the assigned hunters in this survival game, all the top gods in both groups, were included.

Just imagine that you were in a survival game and you were being hunted by Shin, Arthur, Leonard, Diablo, Alucard, Pantheon, Lawless, and Faker, aside from powerful AI-generated monsters with similar strength.

The thought alone was more than enough to scare anyone.

There was no need to tell how much of a torture the weaker members of the Empyrean Talons had to suffer during this training session.

To further add to the fun, both commanders of the teams had suggested that the members of the Slayers Adventurer Team join the game, adding to the ranks of the hunted.

Such a training session was a true horror for everyone... except those who were assigned as the hunter.

These guys seemed to be enjoying themselves, torturing everyone with each of their pursuits.

...

While the Empyrean Talons and the God's Paradise were busy with their respective preparations, the people from different online platforms were currently engaged in a heated debate, particularly those from the online forums.

The fans of each side were having an online war, which spread into a wildfire within the game.

The supporters of the respective teams were in constant war with one another whenever they encountered each other within the game.

The heated atmosphere ignited such a passionate war between the supporters, which became a headache for the top organizations and huge guilds within the game.

Due to the disturbance that these people created, some of the big operations that they had were constantly being jeopardized.

Even the war in the Dark Cloud Kingdom was put in a very strange situation due to the random fighting that broke out all of a sudden.

Even those who were supposed to be on the same faction were picking a fight with one another, arguing which team would be the champion in this season's United Cup.

Such situations were not that new within the virtual world, as they regularly happened from time to time. But it was supposed to happen during the Guild Wars or any other large-scale tournament that concerned huge armies and top organizations.

It rarely happened during team-based and individual tournaments such as the United Cup and Hegemon Cup.

What made the situation even worse was the appearance of a certain group of lunatics, who did not care about anyone – the Cult of the Evil God.

After the showcase of power that Uno had shown during his most recent battle, this bunch of lunatics seemed to have become fully unleashed and started wreaking havoc everywhere.

They were supposed to be on the side of the Empyrean Talons because the Evil God was supposedly a member of the adventure team.

However, they would fight anyone whenever someone questioned the might of the Evil God.

In between the debates and arguments circulating online, this group of lunatics only had a single answer to shut everyone up.

"THE EVIL GOD!"

Everyone was unable to refute such a simple answer since they knew that it was irrefutable.

What Uno had done to Ashura in the previous battle was more than enough to prove their side of the argument.

They did not say anything else. Just that name alone was more than enough for everyone to accept such a 'perfect' counter-argument.

...

The situation at the Dark Cloud Kingdom had become even more chaotic due to this incident.

The chaos that the Cult of the Evil God had already become a huge headache for the top guilds and huge organizations operating in this place, due to their random attacks against both factions.

Now, adding the troubles that these random battles produced, the current state of the war was becoming even more complicated.

However, such a situation was supposed to be more favorable for the Evil Factions since the more chaos there was, the better it was for their overall situation.

But surprisingly enough, the opposite effect was happening.

The side of the Storm Empire and the Righteous Churches was slowly gaining the upper hand despite all the chaos that was happening.

This confused the higher-ups of all the organizations and guilds operating in the area.

They were not sure what was happening exactly, but they could sense that someone was pulling the strings from the shadows, controlling the tides of the war slowly but surely.

This became a new headache for the Demonic Churches and the Corrupted Cult. They were not sure what this mysterious hand was planning, but they could at least tell that they were the main target.

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Shin, who had just finished being a hunter in the survival game, was currently resting when a sudden notification interrupted his thoughts.

"Eh!?" Looking at the message, he saw that it came from Harmony, the Chief Tailor of the Hand of Midas.

"She is contacting me now. Don't tell me they have already done it?" he mumbled with a frown before opening the message.

Not long after, the expression on his face suddenly eased a little. He fell into silence after reading the entire contents of the message, seemingly thinking about something.

From his previous research, some clues about the upcoming update lead to different dimensions.

Since the gates for these dimensions were about to open, Shin suspected that they could also jump into those gates and explore the world on the other side it.

If that was the case, then it could also get on the other side of the demonic gate at the Dark Cloud Kingdom.

One of the fragments that he required for one of his most important quests – the Ancient God Book.

That fragment was supposed to be in Hell, where the Demons live, which was quite impossible to reach with his current strength.

But if he added the clues about the upcoming update and the leads he got from his quest, then it was possible to reach that place once he got promoted to Tier 4.

Of course, it was still quite far to meet all the requirements, but Shin wanted to prepare ahead of time since his instincts were telling him that something big was about to happen after this big update.

He could not make any moves personally to interfere with the situation in the Dark Cloud Kingdom since he was too busy with the ongoing United Cup.

He could only rely on the Hand of Midas and the Deicide to control the situation in that place.

They had to control the controlled territory of the Evil Faction as much as they could before the update came because the timeframe during the entire maintenance would greatly affect the situation within the game.

Since they had such a good opportunity, Shin took advantage of the chaos that was currently happening due to the supporters of the Empyrean Talons and the God's Paradise, as well as the Cult of the Evil God, to control the situation in the Dark Cloud Kingdom.

Tapping his index finger on his thigh, Shin fell into deep thought.

For those who were familiar with him, they could tell that this devil was formulating another scheme inside his head.