

Destiny 1911

Chapter 1911: The Adversary versus the Monster Trio (Part 3)

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ROAR!

When the roars of the three monsters reverberated with one another and the attacks were about to reach Ashura, the latter had already stabilized his stance and swiftly responded to the moves of the opposing side.

He stabbed the divine spear on the ground and let it go before holding the ruler sword with both of his hands upside-down.

He then kneeled while plunging the ruler sword into the ground.

Bang!

Swoosh!

Immediately after, a huge apparition of an angelic knight suddenly appeared behind him before slowly merging with his body while its six wings slowly folded and wrapped around him to form a seeming feather ball.

Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh!

'Golden Immortal Skill: The Angelic Embrace'

It was only at that moment that the three attacks arrived, barely getting blocked.

BOOM!

Leonard, who was the closest, could not help but frown deeply after seeing that their attacks were easily blocked despite them carrying immense power.

But despite his confusion, he swiftly retreated right after seeing that their attacks were ineffective.

Staying close to his current health bar was too dangerous for him.

Whoosh!

In the meantime, Arthur could not help but click his tongue in response. "This guy does have quite a lot of powerful skills and abilities."

"Obviously!" said Shin with a mocking tone. "That guy's stats are way ahead of us. He is equivalent to a Level 200 Lord Rank Monster at the very least."

"And it is freaking at Awakening Continent's standards!" added Arthur.

Swoosh! Swoosh!

They might look like they were casually chatting, but they never stopped moving and continued with their assault.

Bang! Bang!

Ashura was immediately bombarded with a series of assaults from the trio right after the duration of his earlier barrier ended.

He engaged them with intense exchanges. Even if the three were coordinating well with their series of attacks and attacking him with insane ferocity, he was still able to keep up with them and match their pace.

He was taking advantage of the massive difference in stats and overwhelming gap when it came to their respective abilities and skills.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

The exchanges might look a bit short, but they were so intense that the people watching the match could not help but hold their breath and be on the edge of their seats.

Moreover, most of these exchanges were extremely fast. Even if there were only a couple of minutes since the two sides started clashing against one another, the number of exchanges that they made had already surpassed most of the audience's expectations.

Explosions were everywhere while different forms of power flew in every direction, displaying a stunning sight for everyone's eyes to feast on.

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

The four flew across the battlefield, sometimes transforming into streaks of light while other times appearing before everyone's eyes to enjoy their intense exchanges.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

Swoosh!

Ashura swiftly retreated after dodging a powerful attack from Arthur.

Whoosh!

He was about to launch a counterattack when a zooming sound came from his side. "Tsk!"

He did not have to guess to know who it was since there was only a single person who would move in such a crude and barbaric way.

Whoosh!

Turning his head, he saw Leonard charging at him like a bullet train with his arms crossed before his face, while a massive crimson aura covered his body, which swiftly turned into a huge apparition of a ferocious lion.

Roar!

Ashura tightened his grip over the ruler sword in his right hand, holding it diagonally before him and using its surface to block the incoming attack.

Boom!

An energy wall was erected and collided against the lion, forcing him to stay in place, just holding his ground.

Whoosh!

Shin then appeared on the other side and swung his sword while charging forward.

Ashura then raised the divine spear in his left hand and pointed it at the incoming opponent while channeling a massive amount of power on its tip, which swiftly turned into a sphere of light.

Boom!

Immediately after, a beam of light suddenly shot out from the tip of the spear, flying straight to Shin.

Shing!

Shin cut through the beam of light, but he was immediately greeted by a pointed spear thrusting straight to his face.

Clang!

However, before that spear could even pierce the center of his head, Arthur suddenly appeared between them and used his shield to block the sudden stab.

Shin, who was behind Arthur and about to collide with him, suddenly turned translucent and illusory before passing through the latter's body and continuing to fly forward.

'Slayer Skill: (Modified) Moonlight Steps'

Whoosh!

Right after, he threw a series of slashes at Ashura, who was still trying to recover from the previous deflection of his spear.

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

However, Shin had hit was nothing but an afterimage left behind by Ashura while the latter's real body appeared in the distance.

But Leonard seemed to have already expected it, appearing above Ashura almost at the same time.

Swoosh!

He widened his body, joining his hands together before hammering them down with all his might.

Crackle!

Crimson lightning appeared in the sky and struck down alongside Leonard's actions, striking at Ashura.

Boom!

Unfortunately, Ashura was still able to escape from that attack and continued his retreat while preparing a powerful move.

Whoosh! Whoosh!

However, Shin and Arthur were constantly chasing after him, preventing him from gathering more energy. They repeatedly interrupted him at the most crucial moments while Leonard continued with his relentless and continuous assaults.

Sometimes, it was either Shin or Arthur who took the initiative to take on the role of the assaulter, while Leonard and the remaining one would be taking the supporting role and providing assistance.

The three shifted their roles quite skillfully without even communicating with one another. They just continued their assaults, coordinating with one another in absolute perfection.

Even though the Ashura were supposed to have an absolute advantage in terms of stats and abilities, these three managed to bridge the gap with their teamwork, which also amplified their respective abilities to a certain degree.

Ashura understood him well and knew that he had to do something about it, especially when he had already spent almost half the duration that he could last with this overwhelming power he currently had.

"I have to separate at least one of them to break this link they have," mumbling these words, he locked gaze with Leonard.

"I have to break free from this battle on the ground," he said to himself while looking for a way from the continuous and relentless attacks from the three.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

A few moments later, he finally found a breakpoint that he could use to escape the continuous cycle of assaults from the opposing side and swiftly flew toward the sky.

Whoosh!

Understanding the plan that Ashura had, the three quickly responded.

Whoosh!

Shin immediately gave chase, preventing Ashura from flying high enough.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

They were entangled in a series of intense exchanges in the air, clashing with one another in the form of lights.

In the meantime, Leonard ran straight to Arthur, who was already taking a defensive stance to welcome him.

Arthur raised his shield before him and inclined it slightly upwards while squatting his hips, getting ready to receive Leonard.

Whoosh!

Leonard then leaped forward and stepped into the shield, using it as some sort of platform.

"Hah!"

Arthur then put all his strength into his arms before swinging the shield upwards, while Leonard used that force to amplify his jumping power.

Boom!

Leonard flew in the air like a rocket, chasing after Shin and Ashura, who were still clashing against one another.

Swoosh!

Ashura immediately sensed the incoming opponent and swiftly adjusted his flight route to avoid the trajectory of Leonard.

Their plan seemed to be good, but it would hurt Leonard's mobility by a great margin. His impact in aerial battle should not be as strong when they were fighting on the ground.

Boom!

Ashura managed to dodge Leonard's attack with simple movements, letting the latter fly past him and continue flying upwards.

Whoosh!

But at the same time, Shin appeared on Leonard's path and received the latter's extended arm. He then spun midair to follow the path that Leonard was taking and avoid losing the momentum that the latter had.

With this spin, he generated a much stronger momentum before 'throwing' Leonard straight to Ashura once again.

Whoosh!

Ashura had just turned when he saw Leonard flying straight to him once again, making the corner of his mouth twitch. "These guys sure are creative."

Bang!

Blocking Leonard's drop kick with the surface of his ruler sword, Ashura sent the latter back higher in the air before preparing to finish him with a powerful move.

Swoosh! Swoosh!

However, Shin and Arthur came at the right time, interrupting him once again.

Bang! Bang!

However, unlike on the ground, Ashura had more mobility in the air and had better choices for his moves since he knew that Leonard would not be able to instantly follow up with these two.

Whoosh!

With a wave of his divine spear, a bunch of energy spears fanned out behind him and sent them toward Leonard while he entangled with Shin and Arthur in another round of intense exchanges.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

Sensing the incoming spears, Leonard swiftly adjusted himself in the air. He then raised both his arms high while making his muscles bulge as he put his strength into them.

He then suddenly swung them downwards, producing a strong shockwave that suddenly spread in every direction and delayed the incoming spears. It also sent him upwards, dodging away from the spears' trajectory.

Boom!

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

Shin's 'Mondi's Jump' had inspired him to do this thing, but it was not enough to fully escape his current situation.

However, it was also quite enough to put more pressure on Ashura, especially when Shin and Arthur took turns to 'juggle' him in the air to participate in the aerial battle.

As for the spectators of the match, they could not help but stare blankly at the scene, agape and unable to explain how they were feeling.

"You can also do that?"

"D*mn! That's crazy!"

"Is it not enough for them to be more powerful than us? They are even doing all sorts of impossible things!"

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Chapter 1912: The Adversary versus the Monster Trio (Part 4)

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As the battle progressed, Shin and Arthur stopped 'juggling' Leonard in the air. Instead, they used their respective controls over the Ice Elemental Mana to conjure blocks of ice in the air, which the latter used as platforms to jump from one place to another.

With these ice platforms, he was able to move around much more easily, gaining a lot more options when attacking Ashura and dodging the latter's attacks.

Even if Shin and Arthur needed to split some of their focus to maintain these ice blocks in the air, it was not much of a problem for them since they could just randomly leave them wherever they wanted.

It was much easier than constantly catching and tossing Leonard around.

On the flip side, this action made it harder for Ashura to keep the three in check, especially when Leonard had gained some more freedom in the air and a variety of options for attacks.

Even if it was not as bad when fighting the three on the ground, the pressure that he was getting was almost on the same level.

Adding the fact that the clock was ticking down against him, his situation would only get worse.

Their exchanges might be brief, but all of them were so intense and explosive. Only a few minutes had fast since the two sides had started clashing against each other, but it already felt like hours for the people watching them due to how intense the fight was.

The trio was not that at ease either. After all, the stats and power of the opposing side far surpassed them. Even a single misstep could cause serious consequences for them. It could even kill them in the process once they had committed such mistakes, especially when both sides were starting to use bigger moves and more powerful attacks.

Understanding his deteriorating predicament, Ashura had no choice but to let go a bit more of his control and focus more on the strength and range of his attacks, attempting to catch even one of the three to salvage the situation.

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Whoosh!

Raising the ruler sword, he released a towering pillar of light that pierced through the sky while releasing a series of pulsing lights.

Swoosh!

Immediately after, he suddenly swung the sword down, slashing through everything on its path.

‘Golden Immortal Skill: Splitting the Heavens’

Even the sky seemed to have been split by the strike when the pillar of light fell.

Whoosh!

Leonard, who was on the direct opposite end of this strike, swiftly jumped from one ice platform to another to get away from its range.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

Every ice platform exploded as he strongly stomped on it whenever he jumped.

Whoosh!

In the meantime, the pillar of light landed on the ground, splitting it wide while also continuing to move toward the horizon.

Boom!

Leonard was sweating profusely after seeing the aftermath of that powerful strike. He would surely get one-shotted by that strike if he failed to respond in time. Even a fraction of a second was dangerous for him, especially when he purposely kept his Health Bar at a critical state to keep the berserk buffs.

Roar!

While Ashura was still in the middle of ending his previous strike, a huge golden dragon suddenly appeared beside him.

Swoosh!

It swiftly dived at him while opening its mouth wide, seemingly trying to devour him in a single gulp.

‘True Nine Dragon Arts: Imperial Tactics – Divine Dragon Devouring Everything’

A suction force also accompanied the opening of its mouth, pulling everything into it. This force had also prevented Ashura from moving anywhere, forcing him to face the incoming attack head-on.

But he did not think that much of it as he swiftly responded.

Whoosh!

A giant apparition of the four-armed golden immortal appeared behind him, facing the incoming dragon. It raised its humongous shield to block the massive dragon approaching him while also nullifying the suction force accompanying it.

‘Golden Immortal Skill: The Heavenly Shield’

Boom!

After the two sides collided, both apparitions immediately shattered and turned into specks of light that slowly dissipated into the air.

At the same time, it also revealed the figures of Arthur, who was stabbing with his spear, and Ashura, who was using the surface of his ruler sword to block it.

Whoosh!

Arthur did not linger for long and swiftly retreated.

Ashura naturally did not want to let Arthur get away from him, so he swiftly gave chase and pressured Arthur with a series of slashes that carried an overwhelming power.

Each sword flash that his ruler sword made was strong enough to destroy a city, making it dangerous for Arthur to constantly block them.

One or two was still fine, but enduring such a bombardment was quite burdensome even for him. Moreover, he had to keep using high-level techniques and skills just to block one of the attacks since they carried a much powerful force than he could usually endure, making it more dangerous for him.

A single sword strike required him to use one highly advanced defensive skill or technique, burning quite a lot of his concentration. Even then, he was only barely able to ward off each of the attacks.

Fortunately, he was not alone, or else he was bound to lose sooner or later due to the massive difference in stats and power.

Swoosh!

While Ashura was chasing after Arthur, Shin had suddenly appeared behind, assuming his signature sword-drawing stance.

There were no signs of him appearing there since he utilized quite a lot of techniques to enhance his cloaking ability by combining the Void Powers and Psychic Shadow provided by Hanzo and Grimrace, respectively.

Click!

Ashura only noticed his presence at the final moments when he heard the subtle sound produced by the separation of the sword from its sheath.

Shing!

‘Jade Kirin Scripture: Quickly Draw (Lightning) – Flash Requiem’

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

Flashes of light dominated the space as Shin swung his sword multiple times. They intertwined and crisscrossed with one another before concentrating at a single point, which was where Ashura was located.

Boom!

When the sword flashes landed at a single spot at the same time, they seemed to have collided with something solid and sturdy that could not be broken by simple attacks.

Whoosh!

When the veil of violent ripples settled, it was revealed that the sword flashes were blocked by an invisible wall of energy.

Crack! Crack!

Massive cracks appeared on its surfaces before finally collapsing.

Fortunately, they had already served their purpose and saved Ashura from the deadly sneak attack.

The damage from that attack might not be enough to kill him, given that his life force could rival a Level 200 Lord Rank Monster of Awakened Continent. But he would not get out unscathed as well if it managed to land on his back.

He might even lose a wing or two in the process.

Arthur took advantage of Ashura's brief pause to launch another attack, transforming his spear with a series of afterimages while repeatedly stabbing it forward.

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

Holes appeared on Ashura's body, but Arthur did not look well since he knew that he had hit nothing but a mere image that the opposing party had left behind.

Whoosh!

A moment later, Shin and Arthur were surrounded by multiple images of Ashura. They then pouched at the two, throwing a variety of attacks that seemed to be only a bit weaker than the previous heaven-defying slash when combined.

'Golden Immortal Skill: Angelic Projection'

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

Seeing that, Shin swiftly opened a dimensional rift and jumped into it to escape.

He did not have the time to grab Arthur to escape together since the attacks came a bit too fast. However, he was not that concerned about the latter since he was confident that Arthur could deal with the situation without any help.

Boom!

Arthur stomped one of his feet in the air, producing a violent ripple that spread outwards. He then swung his spear and shield one after another while releasing a powerful wave of Dragon Power that swiftly merged with the surrounding ripples.

Roar! Roar! Roar!

Not long after, multiple serpent dragons appeared around Arthur, dancing in the air while also coiling around him.

They used their bodies to block one of the incoming attacks each before slowly dissipating in the air.

‘True Nine Dragon Arts: Imperial Tactics – Dance of the Divine Dragons’

Boom! Boom! Boom!

When everything was entered, Arthur had only a single dragon dancing around him. But he was still able to survive such a bombardment, albeit sacrificing over half of his total Health Bar that his current state had greatly enhanced.

At the same time, Ashura had also revealed his body right after launching such an intense series of attacks.

Whoosh!

Right on cue, he was immediately surrounded by multiple images of Shin, who seemed to be planning to return the favor.

Click!

A moment later, all these copies of Shin simultaneously launched an attack. They all unsheathed their swords and swung them forward while charging right after transforming into streaks of light.

‘Jade Kirin Scripture: Quick Draw (Void) – World Splitter’

Shing!

Flashes of light appeared once again. But this time, these lights pierced and cut through the space itself.

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

They shattered the space while charging forward like broken pieces of glass.

(-20,552), (-21, 911), (-23, 776), ...

“Tsk!”

Ashura managed to defend against of the attacks, but there were still a few that managed to sneak through his defenses and were able to cut through his body.

Even if the damage was small and quite negligible compared to his massive Health Bar, it was still a huge problem that they were able to reach him. This only proved that his mind was already slipping despite the overwhelming powers that he possessed.

He was already running out of time.

The trio could just wait for Ashura to explode on himself, avoiding a direct confrontation as much as they could. However, given their respective personality, they would rather fight against such a powerful opponent and face such a challenge head-on.

They would always welcome such a challenging battle at any time of the day since it could help them grow much faster despite all the struggles.

Whoosh!

Ashura was about to counterattack, taking advantage of Shin's current position, when a zooming sound rapidly approached him from behind.

Swiftly turning his body, he swung the ruler sword with all his might without knowing who was coming from behind.

He tried his best to gather as much energy as he could toward his ruler sword, but he immediately noticed that his mind was slowly slipping from his grasp, making it harder for him to control these powerful energies.

At the same time, he finally saw the face of the incoming attacker. Leonard, who was currently covered with intense and violent crimson energy, was clenching his fist and ready to throw it at any time.

Awoo~!

During the process, the manifestation of Lycan Steel appeared behind him, howling toward the dark sky.

‘Supreme Blood Sutra: Asad Tribe – The Sanguine Fire’

Grr!

The huge image of the wolf then fused with the aura covering his fist as he punched it forward.

Boom!

The fist and the ruler sword came into contact with one another, producing a massive explosion immediately after.

Ashura was able to hold his stance after the collision. Aside from taking a couple of steps back midair and suffering a bit of damage from the exchange, nothing serious had happened.

Swoosh!

On the other hand, Leonard was sent flying toward the opposite direction right after receiving a fatal blow.

(-XXX, XXX)

Huge numbers appeared over his head, signifying that he had also received a series of damage from the exchange.

Undying Rage!

Fortunately, he managed to defy death by activating the most powerful lifesaving skill in his arsenal, which would automatically keep his Health Bar at 1 point right after receiving a fatal blow that could kill him.

This state would only be maintained for at most three minutes.

At the same time, he would also be receiving all the maximum enhancements from his Berserk State during the entire duration, empowering all his abilities.

In this state, he might even be much stronger than Shin and Arthur, even if the two were currently in their racial berserk skill and strongest battle state, respectively.

Roar!

Kicking the air behind him, Leonard propelled himself straight back to Ashura, planning to launch his strongest attack.

Whoosh!

Shin and Arthur were not idle either and swiftly coordinated with Leonard, flanking Ashura from different directions while also preparing for their strongest attack.

Swoosh! Swoosh!

Realizing his current predicament, Ashura understood that this would most likely be the deciding factor of the match.

This would be their final exchange, so he had no intention of backing out.

“Come!”

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Whoosh!

Seeing that the three were already going with everything they had for this one final push, Ashura swiftly responded.

He took a stance, widening his arms while holding his weapons. The ruler sword in his right hand was held tightly and pointed away from his body diagonally, while the divine spear was being held straight as if it were some sort of pole, pointing directly to the sky.

Whoosh!

Behind him, the colossal figure of the Four-Armed Golden Immortal appeared once again, along with the bright pillar of light that pierced through the sky.

His initial plan was not to directly confront the trio with the final exchange. Instead, he was planning to focus on defense first and block the incoming attacks from the trio.

Given the current circumstances, the three would most likely use everything they have for these final exchanges. They would pour all their remaining powers into their final move, hoping to defeat Ashura with their combined forces.

If Ashura insisted on facing their attacks head-on, fighting fire with fire, then gaps were bound to appear during the final exchange. This would then give either of the three the perfect window to strike once again, taking advantage of those openings.

However, if he focused solely on defense and wasted all the energy that the three had for the final exchange, then there was a moment of weakness for those three, which would present him the perfect opportunity to finish them off.

Forcing them into a weakened state before counterattacking was the ideal solution for his current situation.

Moreover, he still had the advantage in terms of stats and the level of their abilities. There was a higher chance of him surviving their combined attacks if he solely focused on defense before launching a counterattack.

‘Golden Immortal Skill: Ultimate – Bulwark of the Divine Immortal’

Boom!

Raising its shield, the Four-Armed Golden Immortal faced all three attacks by summoning a powerful barrier that seemed to be composed of multiple layers.

Swoosh!

It was at that moment that Leonard arrived while dragging a long trail of crimson light behind him.

His body was covered with fierce and violent flames that grew as huge as the shield that the four-armed colossus was wielding.

Roar!

This gigantic flame seemed to have formed into the head of a Primordial Beast that released a deafening roar before suddenly collapsing and swiftly gathering toward his right arm, especially his fist.

His fist glowed brightly, resembling a miniature star, before he thrust it forward for a powerful punch.

Whoosh!

This strike might look a bit ‘weak’ compared to the massive size of the opposing party. This punch looked more like a poke from a needle if it were just about the difference in sizes alone.

But this particular ‘needle’ was not something to scoff at. It was a deadly needle that could kill someone so long as it hit the right vital spot of its target.

Given all the buffs that Leonard was getting from his absolute berserk state and the accumulated powers that were not focused at one point, this strike was bound to hurt.

‘Supreme Blood Sutra: Killing Move – El Bestia Primordial’

Roar!

Boom!

The punch immediately connected, hitting that tiny spot of the barrier that was protecting the Four-Armed Golden Immortal.

It might be ‘tiny’. But with all the force focused on this particular spot, the damage that it could deal was not hard to imagine.

Snap!

There seemed to be a sharp snapping sound, similar to when a glass was suddenly cracked.

Snap! Snap!

The spiderweb cracks suddenly appeared from the point of impact before spreading in every direction.

However, these little cracks barely damaged the entirety of the barrier, much less break it.

Boom!

But that was just the start. Everything had not ended yet.

Swoosh! Swoosh!

Seeing that Ashura had taken such an approach to deal with their three-way attack, Shin and Arthur had swiftly responded by changing the angle of their attack.

Arthur swiftly arrived a few distances behind Leonard while taking his stance. He held his dragon spear tightly while also pouring all his Dragon Powers into it.

Roar!

Not long after, a massive storm of energy suddenly gathered around Arthur before swiftly turning into a massive dragon.

It was a golden dragon with golden scales.

However, it was different from regular golden dragons since the color of its scales possessed a multi-colored luster that seemed to come from different elements.

This massive dragon was still a bit inferior to the four-armed colossus in terms of size alone, but its presence and might would not lose even the slightest.

The divine dragon opened its mouth wide and released a majestic and defeating roar that shook the entire world before suddenly diving down.

‘True Nine Dragon Arts: Imperial Tactics – Divine Dragon Descending from the Nine Heavens’

Roar!

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This attack was indeed mighty, but what made the spectators react to it violently was the direction in which the divine dragon was heading.

“Ah!”

“What!?”

“Is he insane!?”

“Is it a mistake perhaps?”

“A mistake at this moment? Moreover, for someone like the Dragon God Siegfried?”

The spot that Arthur was targeting was not just Ashura, but the spot where Leonard was still maintaining his stance and continuing to press his punch forward.

With such a powerful attack coming from behind, Leonard would most likely die the moment that the divine dragon reached him and collided against the barrier.

He would most likely get swept by the energy current and have his body crushed from the combined pressure coming from the two sides.

That was what everyone was thinking, almost forgetting the fact that Leonard was currently in the state of full invulnerability due to the ‘Undying Rage’ Skill.

But that did not mean that he would not feel the pain of being crushed between the two sides.

BOOM!

A massive explosion immediately erupted right after the divine dragon clashed against the four-armed colossus.

Leonard endured the crushing force from behind and worked alongside it to further press his fist forward, riding the momentum for an even stronger push.

Snap! Snap!

Crack! Crack! Crack!

In response, the cracks that the barrier had further expanded and spread in every direction.

Whoosh!

While the storm of energy was still taking place, Shin was also ready for his move.

Holding a pair of black and white katana, Shin moved his arms in circles, having the two swords always pointing in opposite directions.

Clang! Clang!

When his arms stopped, the two swords were pointing toward the sky and the ground, respectively.

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

Not long after, the violent storm of elemental energies swiftly gathered around him.

‘Ultimate Elemental Skill: Armageddon’

Boom!

The storm of elemental energies swiftly turned even more violent, sweeping through everything around Shin.

They violently and fiercely ripped everything while bombarding the four-armed colossus with elemental forces, including Leonard, who was also right in the middle of all.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

Under the pressure from all these bombardments, the barrier that was covering the immortal giant was finally unable to withstand all the forces and started crumbling.

It started at the spot where Leonard was still trying to pierce through before finally shattering into pieces like broken fragments of a fragile glass.

However, despite all of these, the trio had just managed to break the outer shells that were protecting Ashura.

The Four-Armed Golden Immortal remained standing strong while Ashura himself was currently situated right in the middle of its chest.

“Hu~!”

Even though Ashura had expended quite a lot of energy and burned the majority of his concentration, he felt that it was all worth it since these final moves from the trio had most likely exhausted them.

Unfortunately, it was still far from the end.

Roar!

Leonard, who had endured all the storms, seemed to have exploded with power once again.

“What!?”

Even Ashura was taken aback after seeing the overwhelming power that was coming from the latter. He could instantly tell that whatever the latter was planning, he would surely take a hit, especially when he was also barely holding on.

Boom!

All the accumulated damage that Leonard had suffered from the previous attacks was suddenly converted into his strength while he unleashed a flurry of powerful punches toward the four-armed giant.

‘Destroyer Special Skill: Bestial Vengeance’

Bang! Bang! Bang!

Each punch was packed with a powerful force that constantly bombarded the body of the four-armed golden immortal, forcing Ashura to repeatedly block them.

Cough!

However, Ashura was also already at the end of his rope. The earlier attacks from the trio had already exhausted him quite seriously, so he was too drained to properly control the energies circulating through the four-armed giant.

Crack! Crack! Crack!

Series after series of cracks appeared on the surface of its body under the bombardment of such powerful punches.

Leonard had brought Shin and Arthur enough time to at least recover some of their strength to use another high-end skill.

‘Inheritance Technique: Secrets of the Twin Dragon’

A mysterious energy suddenly awoke from Arthur’s body, which he swiftly gathered toward his dragon spear before throwing it with all his might.

The spear transformed into a streak of light that swiftly pierced through the body of the four-armed giant that was already full of cracks in every part of its body due to Leonard's flurry of punches.

In the meantime, Shin fused the two swords in his hands once again, returning them to the original form of the [Yamato] while also letting Blackie and Whitie possess it.

Crackle! Crackle!

The black-and-white lightning danced around him and the surface of the sword while he gathered more of his energy into it.

Shing!

His arms seemed to have disappeared as he swung the sword with all his might, releasing a huge arc of lightning that cut through the body of the four-armed giant that was already on the verge of collapse.

'Jade Kirin Scripture: Sevnt Movement – Thunder Eclipse'

BOOM!

Under the might of these attacks, the body of the Four-Armed Immortal finally collapsed.

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

But it was not the end, since that was just another layer of Ashura's defense.

Now that his true body was already exposed, it was the trio's chance to directly land an attack on Ashura, especially when he was already at his limits.

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

The trio swiftly advanced while launching a series of attacks.

These attacks did not carry any powerful might or were executed with any skill. Instead, they were just a flurry of basic attacks that were empowered with their respective mana manipulation techniques and special application of their unique arts.

Leonard's arms left a series of afterimages while throwing a flurry of punches packed with Crimson Power.

‘Supreme Blood Sutra: Killing Move – Asura Massacre’

Bang! Bang! Bang!

Arthur stabbed and swung his spear, along with a series of strikes with his shield, hitting Ashura's body with rounds of attacks enhanced with Dragon Power.

‘True Nine Dragon Arts: Imperial Tactics – Dragon Dance’

Bang! Bang! Bang!

Shin wields the [Yamato] with his right hand and the [Durendal] with the other, swinging them multiple times. The trajectory of his swords seemed to have formed a series of intertwining lights that cut through Ashura's body repeatedly.

‘Myriad Transformation Swordsmanship: Infinity Edge’

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

Each strike the three made, a glaring red number appeared above Ashura's head, signifying the amount of damage that he was suffering.

Ashura was unable to fight back due to the backlash of the earlier attacks, making him very weak.

He was powerless under the barrage of attacks that the trio was throwing at him, especially when they were somehow able to connect each of their attacks despite how chaotic they looked.

He tried his best to fend off their attacks, trying to find a way to turn the situation around.

Unfortunately, due to his overly exhausted mind, he was unable to properly move his body and fight back. Other than his absurdly high Health Bar provided by his overwhelming stats, he no longer had any advantage against the trio.

He could only powerlessly watch as his Health Bar continued to drop under the bombardment of their attacks.

It did not take long before they managed to empty his remaining Health Bar, which was supposed to be comparable to the Level 200 Lord Rank Monsters of the Awakened Continent.

Bang!

His body fell hard on the ground while the trio descended immediately after.

Shin and Arthur were each supporting Leonard, who barely had any health at this moment aside from that 1 health point.

They then stood quite exhaustedly while catching their breath.

As if taking this as a cue, the system finally announced the result of the match.

DING

System: Victory – Empyrean Talons!

DING

System: Congratulations to this season's United Cup Grand Champions – The Empyrean Talons!

.....

Chapter 1914: Champions!

...

DING

System: Victory – Empyrean Talons!

DING

System: Congratulations to this season's United Cup Grand Champions – The Empyrean Talons!

...

There was a slight pause as the audience saw the announcement from the system. They were unable to respond to it due to they were still processing the final moments of the battle.

What the Monster Trio had shown everyone was a bit too stunning, making them unable to fully comprehend the entire events, especially when it came a little too fast.

It took them a while to finally regain themselves and start going crazy.

“WHOA! What a wonderful fight!”

“That was a good match!”

“Crazy! Those three are crazy!”

“This is going to be one of the legendary moments of the United Cup’s history!”

...

...

...

Right on cue, the rest of the Empyrean Talons had also appeared one after another, standing beside the Monster Trio.

While they were appearing one by one, their faces were being close-up by the camera and projected in the sky above them. Their respective performances during the entire tournament were also projected in the air, showing everyone what they had achieved.

It was quite awkward for Samuel since he did not have the time to step onto the stage, but it was immediately overlooked since the stunning performances of the rest of the team were a bit too stunning.

What confused some people was the absence of Uno, who was supposed to be the one with the greatest highlight of the game. His fanatics, in particular, were even shouting that their ‘god’ was not on the stage.

The second stunning performance was the final moments of the most recent battle, where the Monster Trio had worked together to finish off Ashura. It was then followed by Leonard's amazing performance when he fought against multiple gods of Earner's Mercenary Group.

In the meantime, the hosts of the event, Miss Bunny and Khing (David), were currently introducing each member of the Empyrean Talons to everyone along with their respective titles.

It was for everyone to have a better understanding of these legendary figures, who had become the champions of this season's United Cup.

The rookies, who had this tournament as their debut, would also go to be recognized by everyone after this event.

Chaotic Luck, Samael, and Huahua could not hide their mixed feelings, especially when the system had cancelled the isolation barrier that was separating the battlefield from the live audience.

BOOM!

The cheers and uproars almost shattered their eardrums due to how loud the audience was shouting.

These three rookies felt like their blood was boiling in excitement and nervousness. After all, this was their first time experiencing such an event.

"Not bad, isn't it?" chuckled Arthur as he patted Shin's shoulder.

As a veteran of this field and a famous Godlike Player, Arthur and the others were quite familiar with such a response from the crowd.

Shin might have experienced a bit of it when he won the Shadow Ranking Cup. But such an event was inferior when compared to big tournaments such as the United Cup and others.

The crowd was much bigger, and the fans were much more fanatic in comparison.

Shin did not respond for a couple of moments as he was sweeping his eyes through the audience stand. He had to admit this was a strange feeling that he had never felt before. It was different from the excitement that he was feeling whenever he encountered a powerful opponent or when something good happened to them.

The atmosphere, the crazy audience, and the stage where the final victor was decided – these were the places where the peak of the tournament was meant to be.

This was what it meant to have glory.

“Within the professional circle, there was a famous saying-...” Arthur continued as he also looked at the massive audience. “The moment when you have tasted victory, you will never want to taste defeat once again.”

“This sweet glory is what everyone is chasing for within the tournament, aside from trying to prove their strength to everyone,” he added before turning to Shin once again and asking for another time. “What do you think? Not bad, doesn’t it?”

He had always liked to play a game with Shin, which was why he was constantly pestering his brother to play some games.

At the same time, he had also wanted to show Shin this stage and enjoy the glory of being the one to stand on its peak after going through all the struggles and stepping on their powerful opponents.

“I must admit. It is not that bad at all,” smiled Shin while nodding.

Looking at the countless audience in the distance, Shin could not help but think of the other big events that were coming after this one.

“I guess the Hegemon Cup will be as interesting as this one,” he asked out of curiosity.

Hearing that, Arthur and Leonard could not help but turn to Shin, staring at him for quite a while before exchanging glances with one another.

They grinned widely before Leonard said. "That is an individual competition, and the biggest one at that!"

"At that time, we will most likely be competing against each other! We will be opponents!" he added while maintaining his grin.

"And Big Sis and the other as well!" warned Arthur before pausing to remember something. He then chuckled and continued. "And some older experts as well, due to the upcoming patch."

After that, he suddenly summoned his dragon pet, which had already recovered after the match.

The others were quite confused why he did that, but Shin, Leonard, and Cloe could not help but shake their heads and smile bitterly because they could read what was on his mind.

This guy most likely wanted to show off once again.

Boom!

Right after mounting on the back of the dragon, Arthur urged it to fly into the sky and circled in the air while spitting out fire. He then raised his spear while shouting heroically. "CHAMPIONS!"

...

There was a 'brief' program right after the match concluded, such as the crowning of the champions and the announcement of the MVP.

Shin found it annoying to attend, but he did not have a choice since the presence of everyone was required in attendance.

The boring program lasted for quite a while, making Shin quite bored, but he could not do anything about it.

On the other hand, Arthur liked such events very much, making him quite active. He engaged in everything that the hosts were asking the team, which made the tournament organizers like him very much.

Arthur was quite well known within the gaming community for being a showoff and a chatterbox when it came to these kinds of events. He never refused such an opportunity to show off in front of everyone, which was why every organizer loved to invite him to their events.

During the on-stage interview, he was the one who always.s

When it came to the announcement of Most Valuable Player (MVP), everyone had become even more excited.

The so-called MVP was the most important title throughout the tournament aside from being the champions, especially when it came to team competitions.

The United Cup had three different MVPs.

The first one was the person who had impacted the entire grand finals the most, particularly the most impactful person throughout the rounds. This one was the most common MVP title, which everyone was most familiar with.

The other MVP title was the person who had performed the best during the entire tournament. Not only did it concern the impact of that person in the matches that the team had, but also the statistics that they had provided in every match, such as tanking ability, healing ability, or damage dealt.

These factors would be combined before the committee decides which individual would receive it.

This title was also labeled as the Season's MVP.

Both MVP titles would be analyzed and discussed by specialists and experts in the field, while also inviting some famous individuals known for their analyses and criticisms.

Both Miss Bunny and Khing were invited to join the committee as well. Given their abilities and reputation, they were more than qualified to join the discussion of such matters.

Meanwhile, the final MVP title was nothing but a popularity title. It was a title that was voted on by the live audience and online viewers. The voting period was quite short, and it only started right after the end of the grand finals to make it fair for everyone.

The results were as follows.

Grand Finals MVP: War God Simba

Season's MVP: Battle God Sickarius

Popularity MVP: The mysterious Evil God

The results made Arthur complain a lot, grumbling why he was not chosen. He could not do anything about the Season's MVP since he had arrived at the tournament quite late, but to even lose at the Popularity MVP made him quite mad.

"D*MN! How can that guy be more famous than me? Hate that guy! I hate him very much!"

The program continued regardless of his complaints.

What made it quite awkward for Shin was the Popularity MVP. Since Uno could not reveal himself, no one was to receive the title.

This made everyone quite curious, but Shin and the others skillfully avoided any questions regarding this matter, leaving the interviewer quite helpless.

In the end, it was Arthur, who had received the title on Uno's behalf, making him grumble even more.

There was another team interview after the on-stage program, which Shin found troublesome, so he refused to attend and left everything to Arthur and the others.

Since this guy loved to always be in the spotlight, why not let him handle all the most troublesome jobs?

Arthur had become the team's public relations manager.

As for Shin, he quickly slipped out right after the on-stage program, disappearing from everyone's sight.

With all these, this season's United Cup had finally come to an end.

The curtain of this tournament might have fallen, but another chapter was just right around the corner, signifying a new beginning.

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Chapter 1915: The Curtain Falls

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The final curtain of the United Cup had officially fallen right after the post-match conference had ended, which Arthur had attended along with Chaotic Luck and Owen, who he had practically dragged, as the United Cup had yet to die down when the World Gaming Organization reminded everyone about the upcoming patch.

This major update would require all the servers of the game to undergo a whole month of maintenance, just like when the 'World Metamorphosis' patch was released.

The upcoming patch, the 'Descent of the Thousand Worlds', would undoubtedly be another world-changing update, so everyone was also looking forward to it.

The players were all looking at the flying and aquatic mounts that would most likely change the exploration methods of every player, particularly those from huge organizations and top guilds of the game.

Many were excited for these strategic mounts, while others wanted to explore the other dimensions to seek opportunities.

The ones who were the most excited among them all were those from the Evil Faction. Even if most of them had already settled in the tribes and other organizations under the Evil Faction, having another place to explore without worrying about being hunted by other players and NPCs was something that they could get excited about.

Aside from that, they could also explore those dimensions, which were clearly meant for them.

Aside from these, forums of the beta testers were also announced to be unlocked right after the next update was launched.

However, these official forums could now be accessed by the mainstream players unless the respective dimensions had become available for everyone by opening the portal and establishing a stable dimension tunnel.

It was to prevent the other players from using the information from these forums to find the corresponding questline for every dimension.

The mainstream players needed to work hard and fairly before they could gain access to this information.

The beta testers who were 'trapped' in their respective dimensions could also use other means to leak some information to other people, but it was not without serious consequences.

Since they had signed an NDA contract both inside the game and the real world, the authorities would punish them more seriously than they could expect.

Adding that they had also taken a special oath during the process, getting kicked out and banned from the game would be the least of their worries.

It was because of this that no information about the progress of the game had leaked to the public.

At least, that was what showed on the surface.

Who knew what those ruthless and cunning people from the huge organizations in the real world were doing?

With these two topics circulating online, a lot of people became more aware of the game and its importance.

More people had also started to understand that the influence of the game was not as simple as it seemed, especially after learning that even the Void Manifestation Stage Experts, Rulers Realm Mentalists, Swordmasters, and others with similar strength from other disciplines could not freely join the game without worry about the heavy restrictions after the upcoming patch.

The game company was not as ruthless as everyone had originally thought. They did not immediately drop the next update right after the matters of the United Cup had settled.

They had instead given everyone an entire week to fully prepare themselves before they started the maintenance.

The players could finish their current ongoing quests or other tasks during this period. Given the time difference between the game and the reality, an entire week was already long. It was more than enough to finish those difficult tasks and high-end quests during this period so that they would not worry about the upcoming patch.

Even though the game company had announced that the timeline within the game would be frozen during the entire maintenance, the players were still quite worried about their respective progress in their quests and such.

After all, a month was not that short. A lot could have happened during this time, and most of the players would most likely forget some matters within the game, along with some details and clues of their quests and other tasks.

This would lead them to overlook some of the most crucial quests and even forget about them altogether. Such things would make it hard for them to progress later when they returned to the game.

Understanding the concerns of the players, the game company answered their concerns, giving them more time to prepare for the upcoming patch.

...

During this period, more players started to arrive at the Awakened Continent one after another, while the big guilds and powerful organizations started expanding their exploration to prepare for the upcoming patch.

They had started arriving at the other major regions of the Awakened Continent, trying to establish their footing as much as they could before the patch arrived.

Most of the players from the other races had started leaving the regions of the Divine Empire and seeking opportunities in the other Major Lands meant for their respective races.

After all, the Divine Empire was dominated and ruled by Humans.

The races with the largest population among the players, aside from Humans, were the Elves, Beastmen, and Undead due to them having larger varieties of subraces under them.

Elven Players headed to the Alfheim Kingdom, the home of elves.

Meanwhile, the Beastmen Players arrived at the Bestia Mountains, Bellua Jungle, and Tristique Islands, the ancestral lands of all beast tribes.

Most of the Undead Players had already been transported to the Forsaken Islets right after arriving on the Awakened Continent, so they were somewhat ahead of the others.

The Draven and Gnome Players, which were quite few in numbers due to them being recently released as a Major Race after the events in the Dwarf Kingdom, had also found the Nidavellir Kingdom, the underground kingdom.

There were also the other special races, but since most of them were counted as the subraces of the Major Races, they just arrived at the regions meant for those races.

In the meantime, those from Aquatic Races, particularly the Ocean Naga, were put in a somewhat peculiar situation. It was because the Atlantis Kingdom, the sacred land of fishmen and other aquatic races, could still not be found.

It seemed like the Atlantis Kingdom was quite special and connected to a major questline, which was why it was not found by the players.

This disappointed quite a lot of players with races related to it. They complained to the gaming company, telling them that it was unfair to them.

The players from the other Major Races were already at their respective sacred lands to prepare for the huge update, yet they were still stuck at the coastal regions of the Divine Empire and unable to find any clues about the Atlantis Kingdom.

Unfortunately, the game company remained quiet, ignoring their complaints completely.

Meanwhile, those players related to Evil Faction, particularly those from Corrupted Cult and Demonic Churches, had started to gather in the Dark Cloud Kingdom.

The war in this kingdom was still as fierce as always, making it the main battlefield for the two major factions of the game.

These players of the Evil Faction fully understood that the clue of the Nether Realm and Infernal Realm was most likely related to the Demonic Portal in this kingdom, so they were rushing to it as a form of their preparations for the upcoming update.

Everyone was getting busier the more the 'deadline' approached, making a lot of movements within the game.

...

During his entire time, the members of the Empyrean Talons did not do anything major and were free to do whatever they wanted.

They could do their quest if they wanted or grind for more levels while waiting for the major update to drop.

Shin did not dare to start any major quest since he knew that he would only be interrupted in the middle once the patch arrived.

He originally wanted to look for more clues about the [Ring of Abyssal Moon] by delivering the message to the Fifth Envoy Altus's sister. But he quickly dropped it after hearing from Alice and Ithilien, who were at the Alfheim Kingdom, that her status was quite within the Elven Council, so getting near her was quite impossible for him for now.

He could only wait until he had the opportunity or find a way to deal with this quest.

During these moments, Shin found himself quite idle, so he started researching his secondary combat class, the Phantom Swordsman Class, to learn more about it and its hidden abilities while grinding some levels at the Forgotten Sea.

At the same time, he was also looking for some clues on where he could find the sea creatures that he needed to hunt for his Divine Armor Quest.

He had already hunted the 'Trinity Apes' under the 'Heavenly Dominator' and the 'Four Mountains' under the 'Forest Guardian'.

He only needed to find the three 'Legendary Birds' under the 'Sky Monarch' and the four 'Sea Kings' under the 'Ocean Overlord'.

He was already in the sea anyway, so he might as well look for the four Sea Kings of possibility.

As for the four major monsters that needed to be hunted, Shin set them aside for now since he knew that he would not be able to hunt them yet with his current strength.

Their respective names alone were more than enough to warn about the dangers of hunting them.

Based on his estimate, he needed to have at least reached the level of an Enlightened Being before he could start hunting them.

...

While he was busying himself, he found it strange that Arthur rarely went online in the game, which was very unlike him.

When he went to others and inquired about the situation, he could not help but smack his forehead after learning what was going on.

Arthur, this showoff, had accepted a series of invites from different entertainment programs related to games to be their guest.

The Empyrean Talons had just won one of the most prestigious tournaments, so it was natural for them to have such invites. Arthur truly loved being treated as a celebrity.

Shin also heard that even Miss Bunny had invited them for an interview and to join her in the entertainment program that she had just started under the sponsorship of the Flying Dragon Corporation.

Shin could only sigh helplessly at Arthur, who enthusiastically accepted such invites yet also always complained about his level being behind the others.

...

Pssh!

Getting out of the Gaming Cabin, Shin was preparing to do his daily routine when he heard someone knocking on the door.

Raising his brows, he could not help but look at the time and found that it was still very early.

“Who could it be?” he mumbled and walked to the door to open it.

Immediately after, he found David standing outside his room and smiled at him.

“Master is back,” David went straight to the point, not bothering to beat around the bush. He immediately stated his purpose for this visit.

Shin immediately understood and quickly nodded. “I understand. Let me prepare first. I’ll follow you in a bit.”

After that, he turned around and headed to the bathroom, planning to take a quick shower first before going.

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Chapter 1916: Meeting

...

Shin stood before a simple yet beautiful cottage in the depths of the forest within the Springfield Household.

He had never gone to this part of the household since he first arrived and lived here. Mostly because it was a restricted area within the household, while the other reason was that there was no reason for him to come here.

He just stood there for a while, seemingly struggling with whether to enter or not. He had already decided to meet his mother, whom he had never seen for a very long time.

He stood there silently, unable to describe how he was feeling. He was disappointed with his parents for leaving for such a long time, but he also knew that it was for his own good.

Moreover, he was the one who had run away from home during that time. Even if his parents could chase him and bring him back home, he knew that they had let him go since the current state of his mind at that time was quite unstable.

At the same time, he could also guess that it was his parents who had sealed a portion of his memory. It was for his sake, forcing him to forget the incident about Odin and his Spiritual Beasts friends, who had been killed during his berserk state.

They had sealed those parts of his memory until his mind was firm enough to handle the truth.

Shin had already remembered quite a few details during his most recent breakthrough and pieced them together to know the truth.

Aside from that, there was also the part of his memory about his life in the Black Serpent Mafia Training Camp. A part of it was sealed by himself when his younger self wanted to run away from the incident, while the other part had been manipulated to a certain extent.

He could guess that it was his father who had done the mind manipulation.

Shin had a lot of questions that he wanted to ask, but he also knew that he had already gotten most of the answers from his restored memory.

As of now, the only question that was not clear was the 'death' of Alyssa. He did not know if what he remembered was real or not.

He could tell that some of it was real, just like how everyone saw Alyssa get executed. After all, it was to warn everyone about having thoughts of betraying the training camp or running away.

But Shin could also tell that there were some parts of it that had been manipulated. He was not strong enough to break the seal of this manipulated memory, so he wanted to ask his mother about this.

Alyssa was a Big Sister figure to him within that hellish place. He wanted to know the truth about this.

Then there was also the truth about «Destiny's Fate» Online. He knew that this game was not that simple, especially when a lot of powers in the real world were paying serious attention to it.

David had told Shin that he would naturally know about it so long as he continued playing the game. He had also been told that he could just ask his mother about this secret since she was somewhat related to it.

While Shin was organizing his thoughts, David, who was silently standing beside him, could not help but sigh helplessly.

He had misunderstood that Shin was still not ready to face his mother yet. After all, who would not feel disappointed with such a situation?

Moreover, Shin was but a little toddler at that time. It was indeed cruel to a certain extent.

But it was not without specific arrangements. From what David knew, Adam had arranged quite a lot during the entire plan.

It was not only a plan that would let Shin overcome the corruption of the Seed of Hatred that he had inherited from his father, but there was also a series of arrangements for his protection in secret.

Although most of it was not used, Adam had indeed prepared very meticulously for everyone.

After all, how could Evangeline let her dear son alone without any proper arrangements? Adam would suffer greatly if he did not prepare thoroughly enough.

After a while, David could not help but smack his forehead with his palm while sighing in full helplessness. "I am sure that I am going crazy because of this family! They are driving me crazy!"

"You talk as if you are not part of the family," said Shin, who seemed to have already reorganized his thoughts.

"They are your uncle and auntie. And I am your cousin," he added while looking at David with contempt.

He paused for a moment before chuckling. "I wonder what punishment you will get later."

David could not help but shiver after hearing those words. At the same time, he seemed to have gotten a glimpse of Shin's younger self. That little kid who liked to play around with him.

"You will help me, right? Right, cousin?" he asked while trying his best to smile.

"That depends on you," laughed Shin before turning his head back to the cottage.

He then took a deep breath before stepping forward. "I'll be heading in. See you in a bit, Senior Brother."

Seeing the serious look on Shin's face, David just shrugged his shoulders while saying. "I'll wait for you in our usual spot. See you later."

Swoosh!

He then disappeared after using a foot technique.

"Heh! Look at how scared he is. He sure runs fast," sneered Shin after seeing all that.

The expression on his face then suddenly turned serious as he knocked on the wooden door before reaching toward its knob.

Click!

Right after he opened the door and stepped inside, Shin was suddenly assaulted by a powerful pressure.

Swoosh!

"Urgh!"

He was caught unprepared since he was not expecting something like that to happen. He first thought that his mother was testing him right off the bat, but he immediately noticed that the pressure was not coming from anyone.

Instead, it seemed to be coming from the surroundings themselves.

Standing firmly, Shin struggled to open his eyes and saw that he was currently in a dark space. But that darkness only lasted for a moment when a blinding golden light suddenly assaulted his eyes.

Roar!

Then a deafening roar almost shattered his eardrums, which also further strengthened the pressure that he was currently suffering from.

"This... the ancestral dragon spirit of the Springfields?" he mumbled, seemingly understanding what was going on.

This must be the guardian spirit of the protective formation that was guarding the entire household.

Shin could also tell that the ancestral dragon spirit did not mean any harm and seemed to be only testing him. "Then I have to respond to it."

Swoosh!

Shin then swiftly circulated his Mental Energy according to the perfected version of the Four Symbol Scripture while also reinforcing it with the five elemental breathing techniques.

Swoosh!

ROAR!

The apparition of the five divine beasts swiftly manifested behind him, supporting his spirit and fighting back against the pressure of the ancestral dragon spirit.

Roar!

Seemingly provoked, the ancestral dragon spirit increased its pressure, forcing the five divine beasts to retreat despite their combined strength.

Seeing this, Shin swiftly adjusted his breathing, utilizing the Jade Kirin Scripture on top of the other methods that he was already using. He had also added his Divinity Grade Mental Energy to summon his unique Spiritual Force.

Crackle! Crackle!

The Five Elemental Lightning swiftly appeared and danced around his body while a tall apparition of himself suddenly appeared behind.

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

The five divine beasts had also transformed into specks of light that fused with one another before turning into a huge spirit diagram behind that apparition.

The eyes of Shin and his apparition glowed brightly while the spirit diagram of the five divine beasts spun slightly.

Boom!

A powerful pressure then came out of his body and clashed against the opposing side, producing a destructive collision that seemed to be capable of destroying the world.

Shatter!

Not long after, the illusion was destroyed by the collision.

Shin then found himself standing at the doorway of the cottage, barely having his right foot inside.

It took him quite a while before he could see a bit clearer and compose himself.

Finally regaining himself, he could now look around. Contrary to what was seen on the outside, the interior of the cottage was way too different from what he was expecting.

The inside seemed to be a bit too luxurious, especially with that high-class furniture and antiques.

It was also way bigger than what was seen from the outside. The interior seemed to be as big and luxurious as the main hall of the Springfield Mansion.

Not long after, his gaze suddenly landed on someone. She was a woman with an otherworldly beauty. Calling beautiful seemed to be an understatement.

She seemed to be the embodiment of beauty herself.

Looking at her, Shin could not help but feel a bit stunned, especially after seeing the gentle smile, which also seemed to be full of pride for him.

Her eyes seemed to carry a lot of emotions. She seemed to be feeling a mixture of emotions after seeing him, but the clearest of them all was her motherly love.

She also seemed to be a bit anxious while looking at him, seemingly afraid that he would suddenly turn around and run away from her.

She was afraid that he would hate her.

Shin stared at her a bit absentmindedly since he did not have to guess her identity. He tried to open his mouth, but it seemed to refuse to spit out any word.

A flood of memories suddenly surfaced in his mind immediately after, as if most of his sealed memories were coming back to him.

There were a lot of things that he wanted to say and ask, but none of them seemed to be coming out of his mouth. He forgot everything that he had just organized earlier.

He could only open and close his mouth without a sound, while his throat seemed to be choking with the words stuck in it.

He struggled hard to say something, but he seemed to have forgotten how to speak.

In the end, only a single word managed to escape from it with extreme difficulty. "M-mom..."

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Chapter 1917: Truth behind Her Death

...

"M-mom..."

Swoosh!

Shin was barely able to say those words when he suddenly found himself in Evangeline's arms. She embraced him hard, seemingly afraid that he would suddenly take that word back.

"Mom... I..." he was trying to say something when she immediately interrupted him.

"That's right, Son. It is Mom!"

"You don't hate Mom, right? It is all your Dad's fault! How can he leave my dear son suffer much!?"

"All of it is because of him! Let's beat him up once he returns, alright? I'll let you hit him for as much as you want to reprimand him."

Evangeline was unable to hold her emotions back and started talking, afraid that Shin would be mad at her for leaving him for such a long time.

It took her quite a while to regain her composure.

It was also at that moment that she heard Shin's words. "Mom, I can't breathe!"

"Ah!" Evangeline finally snapped out of it and let go of her son. She distanced herself for a moment while placing her palms on his cheeks while smiling. "Since when has my son become so handsome? You clearly took after your Mom and not your useless Dad!"

Shin could only look at her helplessly and seemed to have forgotten everything else.

"That's right! You come here to chat with Mom, right? Let's go inside. Let's chat. Mom will tell you everything that you want to know," said Evangeline while dragging Shin inside.

Shin was still unable to organize what he wanted to ask when they reached the sofa, so Evangeline immediately said. "It's fine, Son. You can take your time. Mom will make some tea for you!"

Under her enthusiasm, Shin found himself helpless. He felt like he had returned to that little home they have in the village. He felt like he had become that little child once again.

He could only smile helplessly, seemingly forgetting everything else, and wanted to feel her motherly love once again.

He might have grown up in a warm and big family with the Springfields, but it still felt different under the love and care of his real mother.

Shin watched Evangeline busy herself while he was organizing his thoughts and thinking of the questions that he wanted to ask and clarify from her.

In a while, Evangeline finally returned to his side, smiling full of love. "Come on. I know that you have a lot to ask. Mom will answer everything for you and clear your doubts. Then we can chat later."

Shin opened his mouth, trying to start, but found himself unable to say anything once again.

Evangeline waited patiently on the side until Shin finally found his courage to start speaking. "Mom, I'm sorry."

He felt guilty as he recalled all the memories that returned to him.

Evangeline smiled at him as she patted his head. "What are you sorry for, my dear? As I have told you, it is us – Mom and Dad's fault. We made you suffer."

Since there was already in the topic, Shin took this chance to ask about the Black Serpent Mafia Training Camp. "Mom, what really happened in the camp?"

Evangeline stared at him for a couple of moments before asking. "Did that child not say anything?"

Shin knew who she was talking about since that was how she usually addressed Uno before. He nodded while smiling bitterly. "Uno refuses to say anything since I have purposely erased those memories from my mind."

"Although I also have discovered that a part of those memories was manipulated after they came back to me," he added.

He looked at his mother while having a rare anxiousness in his eyes. "What really transpired there. Did Big Sister Alyssa really die?"

Looking at the expression that her son was making, Evangeline could not help but tease him a little. "Son, what is your relationship with that girl?"

"She is a Big Sister who takes good care of me," answered Shin instantaneously.

"Is that all into it?" asked Evangeline with a smile.

Even if Shin was dense, it was not that bad to the point that he could not tell what his mother was trying to say.

"It is really not like that, Mom," he said, denying whatever his mother was thinking.

Evangline continued to smile as she added. "Is that so? But I hear that my son is quite popular wherever he goes. I wonder when you will introduce those girls to Mom?"

"T-that-..." Shin found himself unable to respond.

Due to her teasing, the atmosphere within the room eased up a little, making Shin feel more comfortable with his mother despite not being together for a very long time.

Evangline continued to tease Shin for a while before finally moving on to the main topic that he had just asked. "You want to know what truly happened in that trash place?"

She paused for a moment as she looked at Shin's eyes before continuing. "Everything that you have experienced in that place is real. All of it and what you remember are real."

"Then-... is Big Sister Alyssa-..." Shin could not help but ask.

Evangline nodded as she answered somewhat coldly. "Yes. That girl did die at that time."

"Ah!?" Shin paused for a moment, trying to process the information inside his head before suddenly denying it. "But someone has seen her alive. There is even proof of it."

Evangline somewhat guessed what had just happened since it was also the time when her female disciple had left the village.

She tried considering what to tell her son, whether telling him the truth or avoiding it for now. But after thinking about all the trauma that Shin had gone through during those times, she could only sigh and give in.

Which mother would like their child to suffer and continue suffering more?

"That's right as well," she added before continuing. "She did die during that incident, but she was also alive at the same time."

"As I have said, everything that you have experienced in that damned place is real," she emphasized before adding. "But you must have no idea about the truth behind her death."

"That girl has a complicated story of her own," she sighed as she recalled the time her husband brought Alyssa into the place and told her that girl's background.

"All you know is her running away from home due to the pressure that the elders of her family are giving her. But that is just one side of her story."

"In truth, she was already suffering a serious trauma when she was captured by the people from the Black Serpent Mafia. This trauma has already formed a dark seed within her, which can turn into the vilest seed of hatred just like yours and your father's."

"Fortunately, at that time, it was still in its embryonic form, which made it hard for those people to notice her specialness and use her as their tool for a certain project."

She then hesitated for a moment as she looked at her son before continuing. "Your presence to her has become both a medicine and a poison."

"You have become her anchor in that damned place. You have saved her from losing herself completely."

"However, you, staying on her side, had also become the most dangerous thing for her."

Shin immediately realized what she was trying to imply since it was the same thing that made his parents decide to leave for such a long time. "The seed of hatred within me has accelerated the growth of that seed, forcing her into a dangerous situation."

He could already imagine what had transpired next with this piece of information.

"Unfortunately," nodded Evangline before suddenly asking. "Do you remember the head guard at that time?"

Shin tried to recall the faces of the people he was familiar with within the camp, particularly those he regularly saw during that time.

Even if it had already happened for a long time, he was still able to recall most of those people, whether he hated them or not.

He then nodded, confirming it to his mother.

"Don't you feel he is quite familiar?" she asked with a smile.

Shin first thought that it might be his father in disguise, monitoring everything in secret, but he quickly rejected the idea since just being near one another would cause his Seed of Hatred and Alyssa's embryonic seed to bloom fully.

The faces of the people from the village then suddenly flashed across his eyes before stopping on a certain someone, who then coincided with the face of that head guard in the mafia training camp.

"Uncle Troy!" he blurted out immediately after.

Evangline smiled as she nodded. "It looks like you still remember him."

"That's right. It is your Uncle Troy in disguise during that time. Your uncle has manipulated a part of your memory to make you forget him, or at least overlook his presence during your time in that training camp. This is the reason why you are constantly doubting your memory when it returns to you," she explained.

"Did he help Big Sister Alyssa to escape during that time then? Fooling everyone?" asked Shin, seemingly having a rough idea of what truly happened during that time.

Evangline paused for a moment before nodding. "You can say that."

"But as I have said, that girl truly died at that time," she emphasized, making Shin confused once again.

Evangline hesitated once again before continuing. "There are two purposes for that."

"The first reason is to get rid of that evil embryo, preventing it from fully blooming. She needs to 'die' to get rid of it completely since it has already started to stick into her soul."

"That is the only solution at that time, or else she will truly become someone unsavable. Snake Head and the rest will also take notice of her when it happens."

"The situation is quite urgent at the time, so they can only come up with such a solution."

Shin was able to pick up some clues from her words. "Did she agree with the plan herself?"

Evangline nodded, making Shin sigh.

He then suddenly recalled something and immediately asked. "Mom, did you say that there are two purposes for them to take such drastic measures? What is the other one?"

Evangeline could not help but pause once again, hesitating for another time, before finally answering. "It is a good opportunity for you to fully awaken another Seed of Hatred."

Boom!

Shin was immediately stunned after hearing those words, having mixed feelings. He was stunned at first, before being disappointed, and then confusion kicked in immediately after.

He could not help but clench his fists while struggling to contain such feelings. His mother watched him with full anxiousness, afraid that he would hate her.

Shin forcefully controlled his emotions, understanding that it could also arouse some reaction from the seed of hatred within him.

"Hu~!"

Inhaling deeply, Shin calmed himself and asked. "Why?"

Evangeline heaved a sigh of relief after seeing that her son did not lose control and reason before explaining. "It is the plan that your father has drawn before fully sending you away."

"Since Uno is an existence that has been born through a series of factors within you, mainly your talents, state of mind, and the seed of hatred that you have inherited from him, he guesses that this child will grow stronger even faster once he consumes a larger amount of demonic energy."

"It is best if Uno can form a 'core' of his own, which will become an independent source from your inherited Seed of Hatred. This will help him fight the corruption of the inherited 'seed' and become more independent from it."

Shin then understood. "So, he needs a separate seed of hatred that can become 'his own'?"

Evangeline nodded as she continued. "Since you already have an inherited one, the only choice is getting a planted one or form your own... Or even both."

Shin nodded as he had somewhat gotten a full picture of things. "The original plan is to leave in the 'care' of the Black Serpent Mafia and let them plant a 'Seed of Hatred' to me or use the trauma that I will experience there to form one on my own."

"But Big Sister Alyssa has become an unexpected 'bonus' during the process," he added with a sigh.

Evangeline nodded somewhat anxiously while closely observing his expression. She seemed to be trying to see if his attitude toward her would change because of this.

Shin noticed this as well before sighing. He then asked. "This is all part of Dad's plans?"

Evangeline seemed to have realized something before repeatedly nodding her head. "Yes! Yes! It is all your father's fault!"

"Let's beat him up together when he returns!" she added, seemingly reassuring him.

'Why is she so obsessed with beating Dad for some reason?' he thought.

He could not bring himself to hate them after learning the truth since he understood that they only did it for his sake. However, it also did not mean that he was not disappointed, which was why he had been constantly avoiding meeting her until now.

Just like what he had said to David before, it was his way of throwing 'tantrums'.

With a sigh, he could only forgive his mother while also dumping all the blame on his father.

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Chapter 1918: The Secrets of the Game

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"Just like what I have said earlier – that girl truly died during that time, but not completely. It is a trick that not only fools everyone but her body as well."

"Her body truly died for a couple of seconds during that time, but Troy immediately cast a mystic spell on her to let her body remain in suspended animation until the embryonic form of her Seed of Hatred fully disappeared before reviving her once again."

"After that, your father sealed all her memories, preventing any shock caused by the conflict that they could bring to her."

"If they are just those memories return right after all the trouble, then that Seed of Hatred will only return in an even stronger form, wasting all their efforts."

Evangeline continued to narrate the next course of events.

At this point, Shin finally could not hold himself back and asked. "Where is she now, Mom?"

Evangeline stared at him for a while before answering. "She has been staying under Mom's care since that time. She has also become my disciple."

Shin opened his mouth, wanting to say something, but he was immediately interrupted by his mother before he could even say a word. "No, you can't meet her right now."

"She is still far from having a firm will to face her past. We must avoid any form of accidents that can put her at serious risk."

"She was also aware of her condition since we have never hidden it from her. But she also chooses not to face her past self yet since she understands all the risks that come along with it," she added, denying any form of plea from her son.

"You can meet her when the time is right," she assured her son.

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The mother and son duo chatted for a bit longer before Shin finally went with another topic. "Mom, there is this game that is causing sensation around the world and even attracting the attention of a lot of organizations."

"They say that there is a secret hidden within it," he added before turning toward his mother. "They also said that I can learn the truth once I have broken through and reached the Peak of the Grandmaster Realm."

"I've tried asking Senior Brother, but he said that it is better to hear the truth from you since you are directly related to it to some extent."

Evangeline went silent for a moment before sighing. She then nodded while answering. "That's right."

Pausing for a moment, she smiled at Shin before continuing. "But this is going to be quite a long story. How about we have your brunch for now?"

"Let your Mom experience your cooking skills. I've heard from your Senior Brother that you are quite a good cook."

"Ah!" Shin finally realized the time, not knowing that quite a few hours had already passed. He had even missed his morning training.

He then nodded and stood. "Okay. I'll let Mom taste my cooking then."

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"It seems like my son has grown quite well. Not only have you grown so handsome, but also quite good at cooking as well," commented Evangeline with satisfaction after tasting the food that Shin had prepared for her. "How about cooking for mom starting today? I will not mind getting fat for your cooking."

She paused for a moment as she watched Shin busied himself cleaning the dining table and washing the dishes afterward. She could not help but tease a bit more. "Good a chores, what a perfect husband material at such a young age."

"I heard that you are also good at music and singing. No wonder that my son is so popular," she smiled while pointing at the piano that suddenly came out of nowhere.

'Why do I feel that she has been anticipating it for a long time?' thought Shin before sighing. "May next time, Mom."

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Not long after, the pair of mother and son went back to the living room and continued chatting.

"You want to know the secrets about that game?" smiled Evangeline as she started. "It is quite a long story."

"Where should I start?" she mumbled before turning back at her son. "All everyone knows is that your father has put the secrets of the world that those greedy old people in that game."

"But that is only a part of it."

"All they know is he transformed these secrets into data and mixed them into the inputs of that game that everyone is crazy for."

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"Starting from the locations of the inheritances and legacies of the ancient era, the era before that, and even further that, your father and I have found them all along with some of our friends."

"This is one of the reasons why we are being chased by those guys."

She then paused briefly before smiling bitterly. "But that is all they know and what they care for. They don't care about the consequences of learning those records and the truths behind them."

"All they are after are the inheritances and legacies of the powerful figures of the past, along with the relics, treasures, and anything that they have left behind."

"Little did they know that the consequences that come after it is something much horrifying than what they are expecting."

She then sneered while continuing. "They will only be ending this world much faster the moment they learned about the truth."

She turned to her son as she continued. "Son, this world is cursed and dying, and it is hiding the truth from everyone. And whoever learns the truth even further beyond that will be cursed."

"Your father and I, along with our group of friends, have learned the so-called 'Truth of the Beyond' during a certain expedition."

"We have learned what is truly happening in the world and the conspiracies that the 'Heaven' has. But in return, we are cursed for learning this forbidden knowledge."

"Your father and I are special, making us able to withstand the curse and even fight against it. However, our friends are not so lucky. They all have been cursed and slowly dying in exchange for that forbidden knowledge."

"We have tried everything we can to stop the curse, but it is too powerful. It was a curse from Heaven after all."

She then paused briefly, recalling those desperate times. "It is also at that moment that your father has thought something."

"He said-... since the curse is caused by learning the forbidden knowledge, why not erase that knowledge from their memories?"

"We then formulate a plan before proceeding to erase the forbidden knowledge from their memories."

With a sigh, she continued. "But despite all the trouble and everything that we have gone through, all those greedy foxes only care about what we have learned from the expedition when we come back to report."

"And when they learned that your father and I had erased the memories, the first thing that they thought was that we are hiding something from them and refuse to share the 'benefits' that we have gotten from that place."

"They all believe that whatever we have learned from that place is a powerful legacy from a very powerful being of the ancient era or prehistoric era."

"They refuse to believe everything we say, so your father has no choice but to play the role of the villain to save our friends."

"Starting that day, another reason was added why the World Government is chasing after us, specifically your father," she added with a bitter smile.

Shin listened attentively, especially when this was his first time hearing the stories about his parents.

He also waited patiently until his mother finished reminiscing about the past.

Evangeline turned her son and continued. "Your father and I have spent years trying to find a way to get rid of the curse."

"Your father then later got his answer from a very ancient ruin. In that ruin, he has seen the words of a great sage – 'The Heaven is greedy and jealous, but it still has to follow the order, or it will perish'. That is why it must maintain the balance and be fair to everyone."

"The rules that it has established have become its flaw and weakness."

"He said that since Heaven is also restricted by the rules, why not use it against itself?" She smiled before continuing. "Your father then started formulating a grand plan."

"Since Heaven wants to hide the forbidden knowledge from everyone by cursing anyone who learns about it, why not let everyone learn about the truth itself?"

"At that time, Heaven will also be powerless since it can't interfere directly, since it will also perish once it has cursed the entire humanity just to hide this truth."

"But we also have to be meticulous with everything, only letting everyone learn about this 'truth' without them knowing that it is forbidden knowledge. We have to impart the knowledge to everyone naturally while following the rules of Heaven."

Shin immediately figured out where it was heading. "Then Mom and Dad come up with the plan of putting this forbidden knowledge into the game!"

Evangeline nodded. "That's right. That is our plan."

"But we also must be careful of it, which is why we have divided this knowledge into smaller parts before mixing them with other information. We then transform the data, planning to mix them with the quests within a game."

"It also has to be not just an ordinary game, but the most famous one at that," she emphasized before adding. "But our first attempt is not with the current famous game, but with the one that was released almost three years ago."

Shin seemed to have realized something and blurted out with wide-open eyes. "The «True Era» Online!"

Evangeline nodded. "That's right. It seems to be the name of that game."

Shin then suddenly recalled something about the incidents that happened in that game, making him frown deeply. "But something happened during that time. They said that it even affected the real world, throwing the game into chaos and leading to its end."

He was immediately enlightened and realized the truth that had transpired in that game and why it had affected the real world too much.

Evangeline smiled helplessly and bitterly as she answered. "That's right. We failed at that time as well."

"It is because two of our friends have betrayed us and leaked the information to other organizations." A flash of sadness appeared in her eyes, clearly showing that the betrayal had hurt her.

She then moved on and continued. "We have done our second attempt with the current game that the World Gaming Organization has launched."

"We made a deal with the chairman of the gaming company. They want to use some data from us to model a few NPCs within the game while we input the data in our hands into their game."

"Learning from our past mistakes, we have also done everything more meticulously."

"Since everyone is hell bent in believing that the 'truth' that we are hiding is about the legacies and inheritances, treasures and relics, and forbidden and sacred lands in the real world, we have taken the initiative to mix the broken parts of the forbidden knowledge with all the information that we have about all these things before inputting them into the game."

"We have mixed the truth with another truth to trick everyone while also avoiding the gaze of Heaven."

"Even if the people learn about them, they will only think about these legacies and inheritances, overlooking the pieces of forbidden knowledge that they have learned."

"This 'truth' will then spread by being treated as some sort of background lore of the game, saving them from the curse of Heaven despite learning about it."

She then sneered and continued. "We then purposely leaked the information to the higher-ups of all the organizations around the world, preventing them from causing the same trouble from our previous attempt."

"These powerful organizations were not fools either. They knew that they must take it a bit slower and more patiently to prevent the disaster from two years ago from happening once again."

"Moreover, the chairman of the World Gaming Organization, which is behind the development of the game, is not a simple person either."

"Along with his Super AI, Chronos, he has absolute control over the fate of the game. If something happens to him, then Chronos will shut down all the servers of the game and destroy all the data, preventing anyone from benefiting from it."

"This is the reason why no one dares to trouble the World Gaming Organization despite learning about all these, and even protects it against other organizations with evil intentions."

"Even the World Government and the Shadow Alliance, which are the biggest powers of the world, don't dare to carelessly touch this gaming company," she added with a smile, seemingly proud of her husband's wits, who orchestrated everything.

Then her expression suddenly turned a bit more serious as she added. "But things are always changing."

"There are still some people who are too greedy and want to take everything for themselves. They have started taking more drastic measures to claim the information that we have hidden within the game."

"Fortunately, the Elder's Council is also starting to make their moves under our warnings."

She then turned to her son and said with a serious tone. "Son, do you want to learn what this forbidden knowledge is? Then continue playing the game, and you will know the truth at the right time."

"I can tell you about this, but isn't it more fun to learn it yourself?"

"Don't worry about being cursed. Even if you learn about the truth, nothing will happen to you."

"You are the son of the Heavenly Demon and the Celestial Phoenix after all. Even the Heavens can't do anything against us, much less you, who have inherited everything from the two of us."

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Chapter 1919: The Secrets of the Game (Part 2)

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Hearing her words, Shin felt that his mother was implying something. He wanted to ask about it at first, but after seeing the current expression that she was making, he knew that she would not tell him more than what she had already said.

Instead, he shifted the topic toward another matter. “They have said that only those at the Ethereal Opening Realm, a peak Grandmaster Realm, or someone with similar strength are qualified to know about this matter.”

“If what they know is limited only to what you and Dad want them to see, and your goal is for everyone to learn about it, then why does it have any restrictions in terms of our realms?”

“What about the ordinary people?”

Evangeline smiled when she heard that before answering. “About that? It is because people of those realms are more sensitive to changes.”

She paused for a moment to wave her hand and summon a projection of four objects: a majestic and luxurious crown, a mighty gauntlet, a sharp and divine-looking sword, and a book that seemed to contain a lot of knowledge.

“Those people on those realms are either already pursuing the path of being an integral part of nature or achieving the ultimate unification of mind, body, and objects,” she continued while letting those projected objects spin rapidly before fusing.

“The Modern Paths may be walking differently compared to the Ancient Methods, but they are all pursuing the same thing. To pursue the absolute truth and return to the primal origin.”

“No matter which era it is, everyone is instinctively pursuing these two things.”

She then turned to Shin as she continued. “They may have different paths, but they all have the same destination.”

“Those people with the attainments of their respective disciplines that you have mentioned are people who have started walking on the path of pursuing those two things.”

“As I have said, they are more sensitive to changes, which is why they are more suitable for looking for the truths within the game. They will instinctively realize that the quests that they are doing within the game are different from the others, which will most likely be a clue for the things that your father has input into the game.”

Shin nodded, understanding what his mother was implying.

The mother and son chatted for a while longer before Evangeline finally let go of Shin. “That’s all for today. I will let you digest all the information that you have just gotten first before we can move on to the other things that you want to learn and clear your doubts.”

Shin then nodded and was about to stand up when he saw his mother looking at him with a meaningful smile.

He could not help but pause and did not know what to do. He could tell from her gaze that she wanted him to do something before going.

Hesitating for a moment, Shin was finally unable to hold back and asked. “Is there something else you need, Mom?”

Evangeline continued to smile while saying. “Are you going to leave just like that? Where’s Mom’s kiss?”

Shin could not help but pause and was unable to respond for a couple of moments before saying. “Mom, aren’t I a bit old for that?”

"I don't care. You are still my son, no matter what," responded Evangeline almost instantly.

"But..." Shin tried to say something more, but he immediately shut his mouth right after seeing the expression that his mother was giving him.

She was still smiling brightly, but Shin could feel an immense threat coming from it. He gulped hard as he could sense the danger, which his instincts were telling him to run away as far as possible.

He could only sigh before leaning forward to give her a peck on her cheek, which made her smile even brighter.

She then gently patted his head and said. "Go. You can train with your Senior Brother now."

Shin immediately nodded and swiftly ran away.

While he was stepping out of the cottage, he suddenly heard her voice inside his head. "Don't forget to visit Mom every day. You also must cook for me at least in the morning after your training routine."

"And I am waiting for you to introduce those girls to Mom, understand?" she added to tease him a bit more.

Shin did not reply as he executed his foot technique to run away as fast as he could, even utilizing his Spiritual Force to further increase his speed.

Seeing her son disappear from her sight, Evangeline giggled as if she loved teasing her son.

...

Shin then appeared in the spot where he and David usually trained and found his Senior Brother lazing under the shade of the trees as always.

Before Shin could even say anything, the latter immediately spoke without opening his eyes. "It took you quite a while, huh? It seems like you are feeling better now."

Shin clicked his tongue before sitting beside David. "Well, I seem to can't hate Mom."

"Heh! That's natural. She loves and adores you very much. You can't resist her motherly charms, especially when you like to be on her side when you are young," mocked David.

"I feel like it will be a bit different when it comes to Dad, though," said Shin while frowning a bit.

"Naturally! Your father is your natural 'enemy', after all," chuckled David before sitting up.

He then suddenly opened his eyes and sat up before changing the topic. "The Academy is already back to its operations. The students will most likely be summoned again to continue their studies."

"You'd better spend more time with her since you will be separated from her again for a while," he added. "Although I am not sure if she will accompany us to the Eastern Sea Region to spend more time with you."

"However, I highly doubt it since her situation is a bit troublesome. After all, there are still a lot of eyes looking for her," he frowned deeply when he reached this point.

Shin was silent for a while before asking. "Mom and Dad are always being chased by a lot of people for various reasons. Do you know most of those reasons?"

David hesitated for a moment before replying. "There are indeed various reasons for that. But it is mostly because of those greedy old foxes seated on the throne of the World Government."

"Master and Sir Adam carry quite a lot of secrets in them, which those old foxes want for themselves."

“Whether it is because of the identity of Sir Adam, the secrets of the Unification of Mentalism and Martial Arts, the strongest legacies from ancient and prehistoric ruins, or the so-called Truth of the Beyond – all of them are big enough to tempt those old people.”

“Very few people can withstand these temptations. Master and Sir Adam even experienced a betrayal of their friends because of it; what’s more, those greedy people.”

He then paused for a moment, sighing helplessly, before continuing. “But one of the main reasons is because they are fighting against some secret existences hiding in our ranks.”

“Secret existence?” asked Shin with curiosity.

David hesitated for a moment before nodding. “Yeah. Secret existences that manage to infiltrate us, the people of the current era.”

“What are they?” Shin continued to ask.

“Secret existences – they can be called the relics of the past, the lingering resentments, or unyielding wills that refuse to enter the ‘cycle’. There is no point for you to learn about them for now.” David shook his head and refused to explain deeper.

“It is still too early for you to get involved with them,” he added.

“You are only four years older than me. What’s the difference?” said Shin with a frown, refusing to back down.

David smiled bitterly as he replied. “I am different. I have been exposed to them since young. You, on the other hand, are still unaware of their real existence.”

“Once you know more about them, they will also notice your existence once they come near you. Master will not want that to happen. At least, not until you are strong enough to get involved.”

Shin frowned as he asked. "When is the right time?"

David smiled bitterly when he saw the familiar stubborn look on his Junior Brother's face. "You don't have to be too anxious. You don't have to wait that long."

He then pointed at Shin before continuing. "Moreover, Uno is aware of them as well. He will naturally tell you about them when that time comes."

"For now, all you must do is focus on getting stronger and controlling that 'thing' inside you. It will be very troublesome once they have learned about its existence," he added with a solemn tone.

"Master and Sir Adam may have done well at sealing it and hiding its existence. But that seal is already getting weaker due to the recent Demonic Possessions that you have experienced. You guys are also running out of time because of it."

Shin opened his mouth, trying to say something, but immediately closed them again, understanding his Senior Brother's words.

David then patted Shin's shoulders before standing up. "Let's go and train. You must prepare yourself since there will be a huge mission for us once we go back to the academy."

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Chapter 1920: Academy Summon

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In the next few days of the week, Shin had spent his time quite normally. He trained with David in the morning before cooking meals for his mother and spending time with her. Even though he was still not that comfortable with her, he was already getting used to her presence and chatting with her.

Even though she was still teasing him from time to time, he was already getting used to it and became immune to it, which made Evangeline quite upset. She called him boring because of this.

She then repeatedly reprimanded him that boring men with not attract women, which he subconsciously rebutted by pointing at his face.

Evangeline was stunned at first when she saw that, but suddenly burst out laughing.

That was right. Who cared about other matters when he had that kind of face?

Aside from hanging out with his friends during the rest of the day, he was also logging back in the game to continue his research and find more clues for his quests while also waiting for the major update to drop.

After learning about the truth of why the major powers in the real world were paying more attention to the game, Shin was not looking at this game any differently.

However, he still chose to explore it at a steady pace after his mother told him to enjoy it. After all, it was still a game.

Even if Arthur and the others also learned about the so-called ‘truth’ about the game, Shin did not share the whole truth with them. After all, it could put them in danger if they learned about it.

The curse of Heaven could even affect powerful figures like Nathan and the rest, so it was not hard to imagine how the others would end up once they learn about the truth.

They were unlike him, who was ‘immune’ to this curse due to what he had inherited from his parents.

Even though he was curious why Evangeline was so confident about it, he still did not doubt her words. After all, she would never put him in harm’s way.

The other thing that made him curious was how his parents were said to be immune to the influence of Heaven.

He first thought that it was because they had already crossed that line and stepped into the Transcendent and Exalted Realms, respectively.

However, he immediately rejected that idea since he knew that the other experts in that realm would not confidently say something like that.

This made him think that his parents might have reached something that others could not.

...

Not long after, it was finally the time for the major update to drop, closing all the servers of the game and putting them in maintenance.

The month-long maintenance would immediately take place, giving all the players a lot of time in the real world.

Right on cue, Shin and the others had all received a notice from the Academy. All of them were summoned, asking them to return as soon as possible.

“An immediate summons?” mumbled Shin right after receiving the notice.

He and the others were currently gathered, planning to hang out together to relax and enjoy. However, the notice suddenly arrived right before they could even come up with a decision on where to go.

“It sounds quite urgent as well,” commented Cloe after skimming through the contents.

“It seems like it is not about our return for classes,” added Lorraine, who had just returned from her family after finishing her special training there.

Shin thought for a moment, recalling something that his Senior Brother had mentioned. "It must be about the big operation that Senior Brother is talking about."

Right at the same time, the group had also received another pair of notices. This time, they were from the School Administration Committee and Mission Board.

"A Club mission?"

The group could not help but raise their brows after seeing the mission notice.

"I guess this is going to be quite serious. The mission duration seems to be quite long, too!" said Arthur after skimming through the contents.

Leonard then sighed, focusing on another matter. "Laura will surely scold me when she learns about this."

"It is mentioned that it is meant for the One Day Diary Club. This means that all of us are going," pointed Lorraine.

"Ah! This is annoying! I want to have some fun together after such a long time," complained Arthur before suddenly thinking of something. "There is no exact time for the summon, isn't it?"

"They only said to come back to the academy as soon as possible, but don't emphasize the exact time! Can we just sneak out for a moment and have some fun before going?" he added excitedly.

"This guy is hopeless," said Cloe with a sigh while putting her hand on her forehead.

The others also nodded while Shin suddenly mumbled. "If it is the whole club, then it means that the Potter Twins will also be summoned, right?"

Shin was barely able to finish his words when Arthur suddenly jumped up from his seat and shouted. “What are you guys waiting for!? The academy is summoning us! Let’s prepare now and head out as soon as possible! There is a big mission waiting for us!”

Right after his declaration, he swiftly executed his unique foot technique, transforming into a golden streak of light that dashed out of the living room and headed straight to his room.

“He is really hopeless,” commented Lorraine with a sigh.

“It is at least much easier to ‘control’ him now,” laughed Shin before turning to the rest of the team. “Alright, it’s time to move. You can go and make your respective preparations. Let’s meet again in an hour or two.”

He dispersed everyone, telling them to do whatever they needed.

As for himself, he first headed outside, planning to meet his mother. She was most likely aware of this, so all he needed to do was to tell her that he would be going now.

Moreover, he also heard that David would most likely be participating in the upcoming mission. He just did not know what role his Senior Brother was playing in it.

“If it is a big operation, then the other clubs will most likely join in as well, particularly the major ones,” he mumbled as he walked out. “Then Big Sis will most likely be joining us as well.”

“The faculty members will be involved as well if that is the case,” he frowned deeply as he started to sense that there must be a huge battle waiting for them once again. “I wonder what kind of mission it is.”

In the meantime, in the Stuart Manor, Elias Stuart was standing before his daughter.

“Are you sure about this?” he asked after a while.

Alice, with a resolute expression on her face, stared straight into her father’s eyes and nodded. “I am sure about this, Father.”

“I understand the risks of this mission,” she added, filled with determination.

Elias sighed after seeing that he could not stop his daughter from participating in this mission. “This mission is not going to be simple. Even if your job is to do a ‘concert’ under your idol name, the situation there is going to be a bit complicated.”

“I will not be able to protect you as well, given the current circumstances. I will be stationed in another place,” he added with full seriousness.

“Don’t worry, Father. I have been briefed about this already. And they have said that my guards will be Uncle Joaquin in disguise, along with your other friend,” she said.

“Even so-...” Elias tried to convince her again, but he was immediately interrupted by his daughter.

“As you have said before, I will one day grow up and need to be independent. There is no way that you will always be on my side to protect me,” she started before quickly adding. “Moreover, the last incident has woken me up. If not for that guy sacrificing his safety for us, we would most likely be in an even graver danger.”

“I need to grow stronger as well! I don’t want to be a burden to everyone.”

Elias paused and stared at her for a while before sighing. “Alright. Then, before you go, you must see your grandparents first and gain their blessings. Only then will I be at least.”

Potter Clan.

Jilian and Molton were currently standing before a throne-like chair, where an extremely beautiful woman was sitting, while keeping their head low.

The two kept their silence for quite a while, enduring the invisible pressure that this person was passively emitting.

After what seemed to be an entire day, that woman finally sighed. "It seems like you two have already made up your mind."

Unexpectedly, it was the always timid kid who had answered her. "We also need to spread our wings and fly on our own, Mom. Isn't that what the Potter Clan always teaches its descendants?"

That woman was taken aback, staring at her son for quite a while, before smiling bitterly. "I guess you two have really grown up. Then Mom will let you free."

"But before that, you two must go to the Clan's Treasure room and get a few things before heading out. Your Uncle will be waiting for you there to hand you those things."

After that, she dismissed the two before turning toward the shades at the corner of the room. "It seems like our children have already grown their wings and are ready to leave the nest."

A man shrouded by darkness then walked out of those shades before smiling at her. He then turned toward the door, where the pair of twins walked out, before nodding his head. "They have grown quite well, indeed."

"The kids will be going away. Should we spend more time together and catch up?" he said with a somewhat mischievous smile.

The woman then rolled her eyes and shooed him away. "Just go with your mission already. I'm afraid Nathan and the others are already waiting for you."

That man then sighed and complained a little. "I don't want to go with those battle maniacs. This is going to be a drag."

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