

Destiny 1971

Chapter 1971: Using the Trump Cards (Part 5)

.....

Roar!

Boom!

Along with five deafening roars, a huge beam of light suddenly shot from the Mentalism Circle before Shin and flew straight to his opponent.

It seemed to have turned into five divine beasts merging and further increasing the size of the beam of light that devoured everything on its path.

Seeing the incoming attack, Voss, who had now fully become a monstrous entity, roared with all its might and started summoning a much larger number of black roots and evil branches filled with human faces.

Wail!

Eerie cries accompanied them while clashing against the incoming beam of light that was filled with a holy aura.

Boom!

The collision between the two sides was quite intense at first, but the side of the black roots and evil branches started losing ground not long after. The sacred aura that the beam of light carried was able to purify them before annihilating them completely.

The evil auras that they contained started to disappear before the branches and roots turned into dust that dissipated along with the wind.

Roar!

Realizing his predicament, Voss became even more enraged and started fighting back with more ferocity. He released a much stronger evil miasma that started to affect the surrounding environment, trying to fight against the beam of light.

He might have lost his might, but his primal instincts were still present. Under the immense threat coming from his opponent, he forgot about chasing the evil core and prioritized his survival.

Roar!

Bang! Bang! Bang!

With much more intensity, he was able to fight back for a while longer.

Unfortunately, he had underestimated the power that Shin currently possessed, particularly the grand formation that he had summoned with the help of his mother's specialized talisman.

Boom!

The longer Shin remained in his current state and the longer the grand formation remained active, the stronger he became.

It was because of the grand formation's continuous absorption of the surrounding energy to reinforce itself and further strengthen everything that Shin used.

He just realized this after staying in his current state for a longer period. There were no immediate effects at first, but the longer the grand formation remained active, the stronger it became.

It was as if it were continuously and automatically evolving so long as he supplied it with Divinity Grade Mental Energy. It was as if it were an evolving grand formation with endless growth so long as enough energy was poured into it.

It was as if some version of a Battle Genius in the form of a Mentalism Grand Formation.

Shin wondered if his mother had created it just for him.

A Battle Genius, who could continuously grow through battle, along with a Grand Formation, which could similarly evolve the longer the battle progressed – such a combination was truly amazing.

On top of that, he was a Mentalist as well.

His Battle Genius Talent was not supposed to be paired with his Mentalism because neither could fully showcase their fullest potential.

However, with the help of this Grand Formation, things could turn more differently.

Boom!

While Shin was lost in his thoughts, the power that the Grand Formation had gathered had already reached an unprecedented level, making it more powerful than what Voss could currently muster.

Adding the sacred properties of his Five Elemental Lightning that were infused with the beam of light, Shin was finally able to overpower his opponent.

Boom!

Swallowing everything on its path, the beam of light continued to press forward until it devoured even Voss, who was struggling to fight back.

Roar!

This lasted for dozens of seconds before the power of the Mentalism Circle was finally exhausted.

Voss' current appearance was quite terrible. His body, which was now fully transformed into a black wood, was currently burning with white flames.

Both of his arms were gone, while one of his legs was almost burned as well. His tendons, which had now become a bunch of squirming parasites stuck together. They were trying to stick themselves together, but they were constantly being purified by the white flames left behind by the previous attack.

Plop!

Shin, on the other hand, suddenly knelt with a knee right after the attack. His consumption of that attack had drained him quite a lot. He barely had enough energy to even stand.

If not for the help of the Grand Formation, then he would most likely pass out now.

Unfortunately, he did not have any luxury for any of that. Now that he had successfully weakened his opponent, it was the perfect time to subdue him.

Bang!

Forcefully picking himself up with the help of his sword, Shin mustered whatever strength he could gather and propelled himself forward.

Swoosh!

Wielding both of his swords, Shin flew straight to his opponent, who was still in the middle of recovering his body.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

Regardless, the evil core, which was now fully exposed due to Voss' broken body, still moved according to its instinct.

It released an intense amount of evil energy and summoned another swarm of black roots and evil branches to fight back.

Shing!

Unfortunately, their strength was no longer enough to stop Shin.

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

Shin danced along with his swords, which were currently leaving trails of gorgeous flames with their trajectories. These flames burned all the roots and branches that his swords cut, making them unable to recover themselves.

Not long after, Shin reached his target, who was already waiting for him.

Roar!

Voss tried his best to grow his arms, but Shin had already made his move before he could even fully recover.

Shing!

Swoosh! Swoosh!

His arms seemed to have disappeared after swinging his blazing swords multiple times. It was then followed by a series of blazing flashes that cut through everything before, while intertwining with one another.

Roar!

Shin repeatedly cut the black roots that were repeatedly blocking his words while trying to protect the evil core.

The black miasma also tried to extend toward him, but his body burst with intense lightning currents that repeatedly warded them off.

Shing! Shing!

Not long after, his swords finally reached the evil core and sliced through it multiple times, cutting it into multiple pieces.

Bang!

It then exploded after the gorgeous flames swallowed it, burning it into nothingness.

BOOM!

A pillar of flame erupted toward the sky right after Shin struck with his final slash. It then thoroughly burned everything before him, not leaving any trace of his opponent behind.

Thud!

Shin was about to fall on the ground when something fell in front of him.

Taken aback, he swiftly lowered his head and looked at him with extreme wariness. It was only at that moment that he saw a blackened object, which seemed to be a burned heart.

"What's that?" mumbled Shin before raising his sword and about to strike it down. "It does not matter."

His sword was about to fall when Uno's voice rang inside his head, halting his actions.

[Wait! Don't destroy it yet!]

"What!? What is it this time?" asked Shin with a somewhat annoyed tone. "Didn't you say that I can't devour anything related to that guy since it is tainted with dense evil powers?"

He did not have the time for anything at the moment since he felt like he would pass out at any given moment.

Even though he knew that Uno could take cover for his body at that time, it was still better to prevent the guy from coming out, given that the entire place was still filled with evil influence.

Once Uno came out, there was a high chance that his Seed of Hatred would suddenly react with these powers, creating another troublesome situation.

[I now take that back.] Uno replied with a calm tone.

He then continued, not waiting for Shin to respond. [Everything else from that abomination is indeed useless to you or us. But it is different for this thing.]

[From what I can see, it must be the container that hosts the so-called artificial talent that they have robbed from some poor guy.]

[It may be worse than your Devouring Talent, but it is still somewhat related. It can be helpful to you. Who knows?]

[Just seal it for now and keep it. You can bring it back and show it to Madam later. You can let her have a look at it and decide what to do.] he added.

Shin slightly furrowed his brows before slowly nodding his head. He then took out a few more sealing talismans from his dimensional bag, along with a random container.

There was no harm in listening to his guy after all. Whatever he said would always have merit with them.

He then used a bit of his remaining Mental Energy to lift that object and put it into the container before casting a seal on it along with those talismans.

After keeping it, Shin finally lost most of his strength and knelt on the ground. He still somewhat supported himself with the sword, preventing his body from falling further.

He might have won on this side, but that did not mean that everything was over.

He then turned toward the side of the battlefield, checking on how his two brothers were doing.

He had somehow forgotten about the evil core that he had sent flying earlier, which was the collection of the other Unforgiven Ones.

Walking on that spot, a person suddenly picked up the evil core with his mechanical arm and sealed it with a special container.

"Not a bad harvest, I must say," he mumbled before turning toward the battlefield. "It is almost time for the hunt. I should prepare as well."

.....

Chapter 1972: Using the Trump Cards (Part 6)

.....

A few moments before Shin took down his opponent, Leonard was going for the final push against his opponent.

Boom!

Bang! Bang! Bang!

Swinging his battleaxe with all his might, Leonard was producing sonic booms with each strike he threw. Sanguine lights also flashed all around him, dominating the space and trapping his opponent inside it.

Under such an intense barrage of attack, Edmund had no choice but to engage in intense close combat against Leonard, which started to get him.

He might have powerful defense and insane regenerative abilities, but it was slowly becoming useless in front of the absolute strength that Leonard was showcasing.

Leonard's bloodline, which was from a royal line of the Asad Tribe, was fully awakened at this moment. Alongside it, the inheritance of the Thunder Lord that he had gotten previously was also currently in full effect.

Not only this, but the two were also resonating with one another.

Both came from the lineage of the said God of War of the prehistoric era or even longer than that.

This then led to the creation of an unimaginable product that even in the history of all the warrior tribes had not seen.

Both powers were brewing within Leonard's body, which was slowly creating a whole different bloodline that was unique to Leonard and far surpassed his predecessors.

Roar!

With a pair of eyes filled with ferociousness and sanguine pupils, Leonard increased the pace of his attacks and started swinging his battleaxe with all his might. He had even let go of any form of defensive move and solely focused on offense.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

In every exchange, Edmund was starting to sense an immense pressure coming from his opponent. He could not imagine that he would be facing such a serious threat coming from the younger generation.

It was unimaginable that someone like him, who had undergone a series of hellish experiments to modify his body and an insane amount of training, would be facing such a situation.

The opposing side might be using some external help to squeeze all his strength and awaken all the potential within his body. But all of these were also from what Leonard was supposed to have.

He was just squeezing everything out and borrowing what he could do in the future.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

Boom!

After exchanging a few more times, Edmund knew that the armor he was wearing was starting to collapse bit by bit. Cracks were already appearing on it, signifying that he was unable to fully defend against them now.

Each attack was getting heavier the more exchanges passed. Aside from the external damage, his body was also suffering from the strong impacts of those clashes, which threw his innards into a mess.

Right now, he was receiving both external and internal injuries from these clashes, making his expression much grimmer.

"What the heck is Voss doing?" he cursed before creating some space for himself to look at what was happening to the others.

"What!?" and when he did, he saw Shin seemed to be overwhelming his opponent, who was clearly losing his mind from the influence of the evil core.

Seeing this, Edmund realized that the situation was quite terrible. It seemed like they had underestimated these kids a bit too much.

Having that in mind, Edmund knew that he had to do something before an accident could happen.

Unfortunately, he had to also consider another factor. It was Arthur, who was still in the middle of accumulating more powers and channeling them toward his spear, which now seemed to be on the verge of exploding due to how overwhelming the energy it contained.

"Tsk!" clicking his tongue, he knew that the situation had already gone way beyond his control.

The situation could no longer be saved even if he tried to pull a miracle.

"I guess it is time to retreat," he mumbled to himself, understanding that he could no longer salvage this situation.

He might hate to admit it, but he knew that these three were way too talented. They had also committed a grave mistake since the very beginning, underestimating and giving them way too much time to pull out their cards.

Despite having these thoughts, he still held his ground and fought Leonard with equal ferocity.

Bang!

A moment later, when Edmund was finding a window to disengage in battle, Leonard had finally reached the peak of the strength that he could pull out.

Roar!

Manifesting a huge apparition of a crimson lion covered with sanguine flame and scarlet lightning dancing around its body, Leonard took a heavy step forward, which destroyed the ground and sent rock fragments flying everywhere.

His body seemed to have grown larger as well, along with his muscles bulging quite tightly. He then held the battleaxe with both of his hands, which had its dual heads to grow larger as well, and almost surpassed his height.

Boom!

At the same time, a heavy pressure suddenly fell on, who were looking for a way to either end this battle as soon as possible or at least deal a series of injuries to Leonard before escaping.

"Argh!"

The sudden appearance of the pressure was so heavy that Edmund felt like he was standing in front of the Chief Researcher of the Hextech Laboratory.

This pressure was so powerful that it even affected the influence of his evil core, which he was trying to ignite and go berserk.

"What is this pressure?" he mumbled while staring at Leonard with a heavy expression on his face.

He was also wondering if he was still facing someone from the younger generation.

"Damn it!" gritting his teeth, he could muster all the powers that he could muster and summoned a stronger evil energy coming from his core.

He ignited his evil core, trying to fight Leonard head-on.

He did not have a choice since he knew that he would most likely get killed if he did not take the incoming attack seriously.

He could also tell that this would be the final attack coming from Leonard, who was clearly on his last bit of strength as well.

Boom!

The surrounding ground exploded and sent more rock fragments into the air. They swiftly gathered toward his body as he raised his arm.

Boom!

Not long after, his arm turned into a humongous boulder. It had the shape of a humanoid arm with a tightly clenched fist at the end.

Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh!

At the same time, the entire boulder was corrupted by an immense amount of evil energy, releasing crazy and eerie cries that reverberated throughout the battlefield.

"Haaa!" releasing a terrifying war cry, Edmund swung his fist down along with this massive boulder.

Swoosh!

At the same time, Leonard swung his massive battleaxe, clashing against the incoming evil boulder.

BOOM!

The collision produced a massive explosion that made the ground sink and sent a storm of debris everywhere.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

These rock fragments even collided with the bodies of the two.

Injuries continued to appear on Leonard's body, which was continuously being hit by the sharp rocks and strongly pounded by the strong impact from the clash.

Roar!

However, he remained standing and continued to press forward, striking down with his massive battleaxe.

Crack! Crack!

On the other hand, the black earthen armor that was covering Edmund's body was repeatedly cracked, signifying he was equally on the same situation.

Cough!

The external part of his body might not be showing it, but his injuries were slowly getting worse under the strong force pressing on him.

Boom!

It did not take long before another explosion erupted and sent the two parties flying away from each other.

Thud!

Leonard, exhausted, was sent crashing into the nearby pile of debris and was almost being buried alive.

If not for the massive impact that sent most of that debris flying away, then he would have most likely been under them already.

The effects of the Berserk Pill had also been lost, putting his body in a more terrible condition.

Fortunately, he had successfully survived the ordeal, signifying that the awakening ritual had been successful as well.

But, on the other hand, he was no longer in a position to continue fighting.

Cough! Cough!

Kneeling on the ground, he had leaned on his battleaxe, preventing himself from falling.

In the meantime, Edmund was somewhat in a better position. His armor was thoroughly destroyed, while his body had suffered a series of injuries. Even though his powerful regeneration was trying to recover from them, the rate of their healing was far worse than it was supposed to be.

Regardless, he still survived the exchange, giving himself more leeway for his next move.

Boom!

Unfortunately, it was also the time when he saw Shin defeating Voss, who was now being burned alive.

"No!" he shouted after seeing this scene.

He knew how important Voss was to the organization, particularly his Devouring Talent. They could not afford to lose him now, especially when they sacrificed quite a lot of Unforgiven Ones during this operation.

He was still in the middle of such thoughts when Arthur finally made his move.

Bang!

Kicking the ground, Arthur propelled himself forward while thrusting his spear upfront.

Roar!

Along with the massive apparition of a golden dragon surrounding his body, Arthur dove forward and released all the accumulated powers that he had gathered earlier.

"Shit!" Seeing this, Edmund could not help but curse out loud and fully ignite his evil core.

He no longer cared about any else and just wanted to save himself from this predicament.

Roar!

With an equally powerful roar, a demonic apparition appeared behind him and stared at the incoming golden dragon.

Not long after, the two sides clashed, producing an equally powerful explosion.

BOOM!

If it were earlier, then Edmund might have had the chance to withstand this attack. Unfortunately, given all his current state and serious injuries, there was no way for him to fight against the accumulated powers that Arthur had prepared for this one final strike.

"Damn it!" cursing under his breath, Edmund could only stare at the incoming dragon and watch it swallow him whole.

Roar!

A few moments later, the golden dragon slowly dissipated, revealing Arthur, who was still maintaining the final posture of his previous attack.

Extending the spear forward, he stabbed at the evil core, shattering it into millions of pieces before a multicolored flame and golden lightning purified it.

"Huu~!"

Exhaling deeply, Arthur finally retracted his spear and stance, trying to act as cool as possible. He had even raised his head and faced the sky, making the scene as dramatic as possible.

Seeing his actions, Shin and Leonard rolled their eyes and shook their heads in bitterness.

"This guy is hopeless," they mumbled at the same time while also sighing in full helplessness.

...

Chapter 1973: They just keep on coming

.....

Despite killing their respective opponents, the trio knew that this was far from over. They were not in the clear yet. They had to leave this place as soon as possible before that Domain Realm Expert, who brought them here, noticed something wrong.

Shin and Leonard dragged their already exhausted bodies toward Arthur, who was still immersed in his dramatic scene.

Snap!

With a snap of his fingers, Shin summoned a gorgeous flame that swallowed everyone. But instead of cooking them alive, the flame was healing the injuries that the three had, especially Leonard, who had suffered from the previous exchanges quite seriously.

However, these flames could only help them recover from the physical injuries that they had sustained. Shin could not do anything about the mental exhaustion. At least for now, it was beyond his current abilities.

Thud!

While he was trying his best to heal them, a soft yet heavy sound rang in his ears. Turning his head toward that direction, he saw Leonard lying on the ground, unconscious.

"Leo!" shouted Shin while swiftly reaching the side of his brother and checking on him.

Fortunately, it was only because Leonard was thoroughly exhausted from the previous battle, while also being affected by the side effects of consuming the Berserk Pill and the awakening ritual that came alongside it.

Huu~!

Heaving a sigh of relief, Shin turned to Arthur and said. "Oh! That's enough of your dramatic ending or whatever. Pick Leo up, we have to get away from this place as soon as possible."

"Tsk! Do you think that I have not exhausted myself? I am also pretty much at the verge of collapsing as well!" complained Arthur, but still picked Leonard up.

"Yeah~! Yeah~! Very convincing!" said Shin with full of sarcasm, before refuting. "If you can say that much bullshit, then it only means that you are pretty much in good condition."

Shin was trying his best to look well on the outside was well, but he knew that he would only be able to last that long given the already exhausted energy within him.

"Let's go!" signaled Shin, urging Arthur to move.

They were about to leave when they suddenly sensed another presence approaching them.

Shudder!

Their bodies could not help but tremble due to the overwhelming threat coming from this presence. Even the bloodlust was so strong that Shin and Arthur were having illusions of being killed multiple times, just feeling such an intense killing intent.

Swiftly turning around and facing the direction from which the bloodlust was coming, Shin and Arthur wore solemn expressions on their faces while glaring at the certain silhouette walking toward them.

Not long after, Shin, who was still in the middle of recovering his mental energy, used his True Sight to have a clearer look at the other party and saw who it was.

"That's-...! That's one of those mercenaries before!" said Shin with a much grimmer expression.

He remembered it clearly. That time was, after all, one of the incidents that put them in extreme risk.

Among those mercenaries that they had faced, and aside from that guy, from whom he had gotten his flame innate attribute, there was one person who had given him the strongest impression.

He had also remembered that this mercenary had also lost his arm, sacrificing it to escape at that time.

(Reference Chapters 1024-1041)

Looking at the other party, particularly their mechanical arm, Shin knew that this must be the same mercenary at that time.

"What is his codename again? Mad Dog?" he mumbled while squinting his eyes.

He could tell that this person not only prevented his strength from deteriorating after suffering those injuries but also managed to become stronger as well.

"This is going to be very troublesome," he mumbled.

He then turned to Arthur and said. "You should retreat now. Get away from this place as far as possible and find an opportunity to use those teleportation talismans to go back home."

"What about you?" asked Arthur with a grim expression.

"You don't have to worry about me. I still have the final trump card that my mother has given to me," said Shin, trying to reassure Arthur, before adding. "The only problem with this one is that it requires me to only have me within the vicinity."

"It seems to be unable to distinguish friends and foes, so it is safer if you don't stay here," he added before turning his gaze toward the other party.

Arthur hesitated for a moment before nodding his head. He knew very well that this was not the time to be stubborn. He understood that their current conditions were not ideal for the current predicament, so it was best to leave the rest to Shin.

Among the three, he was the only one who was still in a relatively decent condition.

It was best if he could fight against this newcomer, but he also understood that he could not buy that much time even if he used any more the cards within him.

Shin was not in a good condition to bring Leonard away from this place, who was currently unconscious and in a weakened state.

Taking out a golden scale from his dimensional bag, Arthur tossed it to Shin and said. "Crush it if you find your situation gets a bit more dangerous, even after using what Auntie has given you."

"This is something that I have gotten from our family ancestor, so it would be able to help you as well," he added before retreating while carrying Leonard on his back.

Shin, on the other hand, remained standing on his spot and kept an eye on Mad Dog.

He kept the golden scale before staring intently at his opponent.

Mad Dog did not even care about Arthur, who was carrying Leonard to leave this place. He kept his eyes on Shin, who was staring back at him with a heavy expression.

After reaching a dozen meters or so away from Shin, Mad Dog gave the latter a savage smile before greeting. "It has been a while, Shin Kinghad."

Shin slightly raised his brows when he heard those words, but did not reply. He was aware that the other party must be keeping an eye on him after that incident, especially when Mad Dog literally said that he would remember him.

Seeing that Shin was not replying to him, Mad Dog further smirked and asked. "Are you not curious why I am not chasing after your two friends?"

Shin's eyes remained cold while staring at the opposing party. At the same time, he was also secretly channeling the remaining mental energy that he could muster toward the forbidden talisman that his mother had given him.

He could not instantly activate this talisman since it was quite special. It required quite a lot of energy before it was fully activated. With the little bit of mental energy that he currently had, it would take quite some time before he could summon his powers.

He needed to buy time for it, but it was pretty much obvious that the other party would not give him the luxury for that.

He could also forcefully activate the Forbidden Talisman when the situation became even more dangerous, but it could also bring him serious consequences in return.

He would most likely be in a much worse condition than Leonard, who was in a completely weakened state after that 'ritual.'

For now, he could only gamble and see how things would work out.

Moreover, he also needed to buy as much time as possible for Arthur and Leonard to leave this place and escape the dimensional lock set up around the area.

Fortunately, Mad Dog seemed to be more interested in him compared to capturing those two brothers of his.

He could also feel that there was something strange going on. It felt like Mad Dog was targeting him from the very beginning. However, it was not just about his personal vendetta, but also due to some other reason as well.

Mad Dog, who was observing Shin, was naturally aware of the little trick that Shin was trying to pull. But he was not that concerned about it since he was confident with his own preparation.

Aside from that, the organization behind him had given him quite a few things that could help him escape any dangerous situations.

Based on his experience, he was confident that he could escape even if he was faced against the old monsters of the Elder's Council, specifically when one of the tools he had in him came from someone who had already stepped into transcendence.

'I don't know what the Great Leader is thinking, but I have to follow the orders,' he thought while recalling the details of the mission that was given to him for this operation.

He then stared at Shin quite intently before thinking to himself. 'He wants to test this kid, but what does he want me to test about a brat?'

He did have some suspicions, but he could not do anything about it since he had already signed a spiritual contract with them and even bowed an oath in the process, further augmenting the effects of the two.

Starting at Shin for a way, Mad Dog just followed his instincts and did what he did best. "Let's see what this brat is hiding."

...

Chapter 1974: Dangerous Situation

.....

Staring warily at his opponent, Shin tightly pinched the talismans between his index and middle fingers while channeling all the mental energy that he could muster as fast as he could.

Mad Dog did not dare to underestimate Shin despite having a massive between their strength. The earlier incident was proof of that. Given that the trio was able to survive that predicament and even wipe out their enemies, he fully understood that he could not be careless.

What happened to Edmund and Voss was more than enough reason for him to be careful with his actions.

He did not want a similar incident to occur when he lost his arm to happen again, much less end up with the same outcome as that pair of poor Void Manifestation Stage Unforgiven Ones.

Buzz!

While Shin was staring at the opposing party and Mad Dog was about to make his move, an intense fluctuation of the space around them suddenly interrupted the two.

Swoosh!

Both somewhat halted their actions after sensing the fluctuations. The two of them already had the idea who it was, making them move almost at the same time.

Shin swiftly retreated, creating as much space as possible away from Mad Dog. The latter, on the other hand, tried to catch Shin by activating his mutated superpowers.

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

The surrounding shadows moved and tried to catch Shin, who was doing his best to run away as fast as he could.

Boom!

Those shadow tentacles were about to catch him when the space suddenly exploded, followed by the appearance of the mysterious Domain Realm Expert, who had brought Shin and the others to this place.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

Right after he appeared, he casually waved his hand, summoning an array of sharp flashes that sliced through the space and cut the swarm of shadow tentacles.

"Tsk!" Mad Dog could not help but click his tongue when he saw this, realizing that he was a bit late.

Fortunately for him, this Domain Realm Expert was not willing to let Shin go either.

"Urgh!"

Shin groaned in pain after some of those sharp flashes cut through his thighs, immobilizing him and rendering his escape impossible.

"You have to behave there for a moment. I'll deal with you later," said the Domain Realm Expert before turning to Mad Dog.

"Is it you? Are you the one who has wiped out my people?" he asked in a cold tone.

He did not believe that a bunch of kids would be able to defeat the group that he had left here, much less believing that Shin and the others had wiped out all those Unforgiven Ones.

The three might be talented, but they were still far from being powerful enough to wipe out his people, especially when Edmund and Voss were present.

That was, unless some accidents happened.

Seeing that there was a third party who had invaded the sealed place that he had created, the first thought that entered his mind was that this person was ambushing his people, particularly Edmund and Voss, before wiping out the rest.

After all, he could sense that Mad Dog was not an ordinary person, particularly when he saw that he possessed a superpower related to shadow elements. Aside from this, he could also tell that this superpower had undergone not just one but two mutations as well.

Putting all these together, he became more convinced that this was due to Mad Dog.

He was in the middle of setting a diversion for the forces of the Sun-Moon Government so that Edmund and Voss could use it to escape from another channel that they had sent up.

But when he was in the middle of getting rid of his tails, he suddenly sensed that Edmund and Voss died one after another, which forced him to come back here as fast as he could.

There were some problems on his side earlier, which delayed his return. It then led to the current situation where he saw Mad Dog was trying to catch Shin with his shadow superpowers.

Mad Dog, on the other hand, was having difficulty fighting against the suppression that the other party was passively emitting.

"So strong!"

The expression on Mad Dog's face grew grimmer the more he got exposed to the powers of the opposing party.

Not long after, the appearance of the Domain Realm Expert was finally revealed.

"You-...! You're Marc Lincoln, the Chimera Creator of the Hextech Laboratory!" blurted Mad Dog out after figuring out the identity of the other party.

"Oh~! It seems like you have heard of me. I wonder which organization you belong to for you two to mess up with our operation this much," said the Chimera Creator.

He looked at the mechanical arm that Mad Dog was holding and squinted his eyes. "Are you from the Sun-Moon Government? No-... it can't be."

He was very familiar with the technology of the Sun-Moon Continent, particularly their local government. Based on what he could see, it was clear that this implant that Mad Dog had was nothing but a cheap imitation of what the Sun-Moon Technology could provide.

It was also mixed with quite a few modifications that were usually used by the technological experts of the Dark Continent.

"Someone from the Dark Continent? Which underground organization is it?" he mumbled, trying to figure out the power behind Mad Dog.

But after realizing that there were too many organizations tapping into modern technology, he just gave up on thinking about it. "Why do I have to think hard, trying to figure out your background when I can just capture you and interrogate you later?"

After saying those words, he slowly raised his hand and suddenly gestured forward, manipulating the surrounding space.

Swoosh!

Immediately after, shining threads of silver light suddenly appeared out of nowhere and surrounded Mad Dog, who was trying to distance himself from Marc Lincoln as fast as he could.

Sensing immense danger coming from these spatial threads, Mad Dog took out his huge military knife and started swinging it.

Shing!

With a swing of his military knife, shadow flashes suddenly dominated the space around him and clashed against the spatial threads heading his direction.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

With the clash between the two sides, a series of explosions immediately erupted, blasting everything around them.

Because of these collisions, the surrounding space was also starting to get affected, creating a chaotic spatial storm that swept everything around it.

Due to these explosions, repeated cracks suddenly appeared in the space, which later summoned a void that was trying to devour anything around it while trying to recover itself.

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

Shin, who was quite near these explosions, was sent flying by the strong currents that were pushing outwards.

Fortunately, he was not swept in the spatial storm, which could shred him into pieces even with the tiniest contact.

"Hoh! So, you have already reached the threshold of the Domain Creation Stage," commented Marc Lincoln after seeing the power that Mad Dog possessed.

"You have even included your mutated superpowers to imitate a real Domain Realm Abilities, which is quite interesting," he added before shaking his head. "Unfortunately, a threshold is just a threshold and nothing more."

With that, he made a snap with his fingers, which suddenly reverberated in the entire place.

Snap!

At the same time, an invisible power suddenly swept through everything, which later stopped the spatial storm and made it contract by force.

"This is bad!" mumbled Mad Dog after realizing that Marc Lincoln was much stronger than the rumors said.

When these thoughts crossed his mind, he suddenly took out the scroll that he had gotten from the Great Leader of his organization and opened it without hesitation.

Right after injecting his power into the scroll and ripping it, a domineering aura suddenly erupted and spread in every direction.

BOOM!

"This presence!"

Marc Lincoln could not help wearing a solemn expression when he sensed the immense aura after Mad Dog ripped the scroll in his hands.

He was able to recognize it as well since it belonged to the few people who could strike fear into his organization.

While Marc Lincoln was recollecting himself, a humanoid figure suddenly manifested before Mad Dog.

It was not a real person, but just a projection made by an immense amount of aura and dense energy.

When his entire body was fully formed, this person turned to Mad Dog and mumbled. "Already using the scroll? I feel somewhat disappointed."

Mad Dog trembled when he heard those words. He wanted to refute at first, but he quickly swallowed the words back to his throat after recalling what happened during that time when his mechanical arm was being fixed.

That incident struck fear into his deepest consciousness, which was something that he would never forget.

This person then raised his brows as if he had sensed something before turning to Marc Lincoln.

Seemingly realizing something, he suddenly nodded in understanding. "Oh! Isn't this Frankenstein's student? No wonder."

Marc Lincoln, on the other hand, wore a grim expression as he named the person behind the apparition. "The First Head."

...

Chapter 1975: The First Head

.....

Shin raised his head and stared intently at the man, who was being projected by an aura alone. The presence of this man was so strong that he was having an illusion of a massive figure that could cover the entire sky.

His presence was so overwhelming that even the space itself seemed to be unable to endure it. Cracks even started to appear in the surrounding space along with black lightning, which signified that the space was about to collapse.

Looking at the appearance of this mysterious person, Shin could see that they were wearing a blank mask that only had a pair of holes meant for the eyes.

His long hair hung loosely on his back, amplifying the mysterious and majestic air that he was passively emitting.

He was also wearing a majestic ancient robe, which had a series of complicated designs on its edges.

Since this person was facing him with their back, Shin was able to see that both of their hands with bandages.

For some reason, Shin could also feel a bit of familiarity coming from this person, particularly the aura that they possessed.

When Shin heard Marc Lincoln address this person, the 'First Head', a silhouette suddenly flashed through his mind.

"Snake Head," he mumbled.

From what he heard, 'Snake Head' was not a name or even a moniker. It was something addressed to a certain group of people behind the Black Serpent Mafia.

They were the true leaders of this underworld organization and were said to be very strong on their own right.

David and his mother refused to elaborate more about them, telling him that he was not strong enough to carry that truth.

But from what he could tell, it must be related to the Voidwalkers and those so-called remnants of the past, which his parents were fighting in the dark.

"If he is the First Head, then he must be the strongest member of the Snake Head and the so-called Great Leader or something," he mumbled.

Shin felt that this must be the best time to escape from this place, especially when Marc Lincoln and the First Head were too focused on one another.

Unfortunately, he was still yet to recover from the wounds that Marc Lincoln had given him earlier. For some reason, he was unable to fully heal those wounds despite using his healing flames. It was as if there were some sort of foreign energy that was preventing him from fully recovering from those wounds.

His only hope right now was the forbidden talisman that he had gotten from his mother.

Continuing to secretly channel all his energy toward the talisman, hoping that he would be able to ignite it before the situation became even more dangerous for him.

...

In the meantime, the First Head and the Chimera Creator had a staredown for a whole minute before the latter suddenly started smirking.

"Heh! It is quite a nice bluff," said Marc Lincoln before pointing out. "You can't actually use this much power, can you?"

"This is nothing but a mere projection of your consciousness, so it can't wield that much power since it will be unable to maintain its form," he added while fixing his glasses.

He then looked at the commotions that were happening all around them, particularly the slowly collapsing space.

With a wave of his hand, he manipulated the surrounding space, which quickly repaired itself.

"That sudden burst of power upon your appearance must have exhausted quite a lot of power stored in that scroll. I wonder if you have enough to deal with me," he continued while releasing a powerful aura of his own.

Boom!

Bang! Bang! Bang!

Right after releasing his aura, an overwhelming pressure suddenly appeared and started clashing against the opposing party.

Regardless of all these, the First Head remained calm and just stared at Marc Lincoln.

He only nodded his head after staring for dozens of seconds. "Not that bad. I guess it is what you expect from that guy's student."

"You are right about this projection, unable to fight someone like you," he nodded for another time before casually giving Mad Dog a sidelong glance. "That's why I have brought a somewhat passable vessel for this operation."

Right after hearing those words, Mad Dog could not help but shudder, having a bad premonition about it.

However, before he could even say anything else, he suddenly realized that he was unable to move his body.

He was completely immobilized and had lost all control over his body.

It was then that he heard the cold and indifferent words coming from the projection of First Head. "Don't worry, child. I will only be borrowing your body for a little bit."

Before Mad Dog could even respond, he found himself losing his consciousness as if someone was putting him to sleep.

A moment later, Shin and Marc Lincoln saw the projection of the First Head entering Mad Dog's body in an instant.

Before Marc Lincoln could even spot it happening, the entire process was already completed, not giving him any time to respond.

Boom!

Not long after, his already overwhelming presence had become even more distinct, making it harder to breathe.

"Such a powerful presence!" mumbled Shin after seeing this.

But it was not the end yet, since he saw Mad Dog taking out an evil core and swiftly swallowing it.

"That's-...!?" Shin instantly recognized that evil core since it was the very same core that Voss was trying to consume earlier, which he had also sent flying during their exchange.

Boom!

Right after consuming the evil core, Mad Dog, or rather the First Head, nodded his head with a bit of satisfaction before nodding his head. "This should be enough."

On the other hand, Marc Lincoln started wearing a solemn expression after seeing this scene.

The aura that came from the opposing party not only became more distinct and powerful, but it had also reached a certain level that even he felt extremely threatened.

Realizing that the situation was getting out of hand, Marc Lincoln did not dare to lower his guard and went all-out straight away.

Boom!

With a powerful explosion of power, he underwent some sort of transformation.

A pair of wings suddenly grew out of his back, along with a bunch of tentacle-looking things from his lower back.

Boom!

At the same time, the surrounding space seemed to have started resonating with him, giving the impression that he would be able to manipulate it with a single thought.

Bang!

He did not wait any longer, either, and suddenly flapped his wings strongly, sending himself propelling forward.

He disappeared from Shin's vision for an instant before suddenly reappearing before the First Head, who seemed to be already anticipating this ahead of time.

The Chimera Creator raised his fist, which was swiftly wrapped by the hideous-looking tentacles on his back and creating a massive arm made of flesh.

Along with this transformation, this fleshy arm seemed to have connected itself with the surrounding space, wrapping itself with an overwhelming amount of spatial energy.

Boom!

The space seemed to have collapsed in an instant when he threw his punch.

However, his opponent remained indifferent and just raised his hand in a casual manner.

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

During the process, black threads seemed to have come out from his body before wrapping themselves around his arm. His arm grew larger in the process, matching the size of his opponent.

It was as if he were seemingly mimicking the actions of his opponent.

Boom!

A massive explosion erupted when the two sides collided, sending intense ripples in the air and creating multiple fissures in the void.

Such a collision was more than enough to crush Shin, who was far beneath their powers.

Fortunately, he was quite far from the center of the explosion, escaping a terrible outcome.

But that did not mean that he was safe yet, especially when the strong shockwave blew him further away from the collision.

Bang!

Not long after, his back collided against a huge boulder, further worsening his condition.

"Argh!"

Fortunately, he did not let go of the talismans in his hand. All his efforts would go to waste if he let it go and stopped channeling his energy into it.

But before he could even recover from his condition, both Marc Lincoln and the First Head moved, resulting in multiple clashes that were no weaker than the first one.

Boom! Boom! Boom!

"Sh*t!" Shin could only curse as he dragged his body to take cover.

Boom! Boom! Boom!

Each collision produced a massive explosion, which could destroy him in an instant if he got swept up in them.

While he was trying his best to recover from his current state and focusing on channeling his energy into the forbidden talisman, Uno's voice suddenly rang inside his head.

[Once you activate that talisman, swap places with me.]

"What are you thinking?" asked Shin instinctively.

[You will be thoroughly exhausted once you expend all your remaining energy and activate that talisman. Do you think you will be in a position to escape once it happens?]

Shin thought for a moment before nodding his head. "I guess you are right. But isn't it dangerous for you to come out? Given the current situation and the overwhelming evil energy lingering in the air, I don't think that it is a good idea to let you get exposed to it."

[Do you have a better solution than?]

Hearing Uno snapping at him, Shin just shrugged his shoulders before nodding his head. "I guess we do have no other choice."

He then peeked from behind the pile of rubble where he was hiding and looked at Mad Dog, who was currently being possessed by the First head.

"Just be careful of that guy. I feel like he is targeting us," he warned while squinting his eyes.

[As if I need you to tell me that.]

...

Chapter 1976: Overwhelming Presence

.....

Shin observed the battle between the First Head of the Black Serpent Mafia and the Chimera Creator of the Hextech Laboratory while still channeling all his energy toward the forbidden talisman.

These two people were standing at the peak of their respective fields, so their battle would help him greatly just by observing them.

It might not have the same impact as the battle between Grandmaster Benn, who was his Mentalism Teacher, and Elder Zhi of the Void Tribe. But this experience would still help him with all his future progress.

Moreover, learning their respective methods would also be a great help for him later, which he could use when they faced them or their respective organizations in the future.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

Boom!

During these exchanges, Shin could tell that the First head was much more powerful than Marc Lincoln, despite borrowing the body of someone else.

Moreover, the body that he was possessing was not even on the same level of discipline as his original body.

Shin could tell this because he heard from David all the known powers of the members of the Snake Head.

From the information that he had gotten, the First Head was the most mysterious and with unknown powers. But David had mentioned that his powers were most likely related to ancient techniques and special methods of the ancient cultivation, especially those who were called Evil Cultivators.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

On the other hand, Marc Lincoln was indeed worthy of his reputation as one of the most notorious individuals throughout the world. He was not just a simple mad scientist or a horrifying heretic. He was a combination of both – the Chimera Creator.

As one of the heads of the Hextech Laboratory, his research projects were deemed to be one of the most immoral and forbidden experiments.

He was also a student of Doctor Frankenstein, who had a very close relationship with Professor Henry of the World Research Center.

Given the rich abilities and vast knowledge of Professor Henry, Shin could tell that this person, who was known to be the greatest researcher and scientist of the modern age, was not a simple person.

At this moment, Shin was seeing how powerful the student of this person was.

Marc Lincoln, who had the title of the Chimera Creator, was showing Shin the true power of his profession.

Shin saw this person use a variety of abilities from different kinds of species and monsters known in this world. He could name quite a lot of them, but there were still others that he was not familiar with.

The abilities that Marc Lincoln possessed were not limited to these creatures. He was also showcasing a variety of talents and special abilities that came from different people, which were most likely the artificial talents that he had robbed from certain people.

Even though most of them were not that powerful and still incomplete, their synergy with one another was more than enough to nullify almost all the weaknesses that they possessed.

"It seems like the revival of the Project Genius is going well," mumbled Shin after seeing Marc Lincoln showing all these.

The special abilities unique to certain monsters, together with multiple talents known to mankind in a single body. These guys were truly proving to everyone that they were close to reaching their goal.

Unfortunately, such a taboo had serious consequences that came alongside it.

From what he could see, Marc Lincoln was suffering from a series of side effects, which were most likely from overusing the said powers that he possessed.

The most obvious ones were how his face was gradually becoming more hideous the longer he used these powers. The bestial parts that he had implanted into his body were also showing signs of collapse as the battle progressed.

However, the First Head was not faring well either.

Or more specifically, the body that he was controlling was slowly breaking due to hosting his overwhelming powers for such an extended period.

Despite the huge advantage that he had during the battle, Mad Dog's body would most likely collapse before the battle ended.

Even if he tried to conserve the body for as long as he could by letting Marc Lincoln have all the initiative to attack during their exchanges, the drawbacks that the body was getting were slowly reaching their limits.

Marc Lincoln could see this as well, which was why he increased the pace of his attacks despite expending more energy. He was risking everything, trying to force the vessel that the First Head was using to collapse before he could overexert himself.

Boom! Boom! Boom!

Due to these intense clashes, the commotion that the two were making became even more powerful and chaotic.

The isolation barrier that Marc Lincoln had set up to seal this place had even shown obvious signs of collapse due to the intense collision of their powers.

In the meantime, Shin, who was trying his best to avoid getting swept by these chaotic storms, finally channeled enough Divinity Grade Mental Energy toward the forbidden talisman.

He quickly ignited it and activated the talismans with a thought.

Boom!

Immediately after, the talisman exploded with a blinding light that illuminated the entire place. It even overwhelmed the chaotic storm of energy produced by the constant collisions between the First Head and Marc Lincoln.

Boom!

It did not end there was as well, since a holy and majestic aura suddenly spread throughout the place and calmed everything down.

The space that was on the verge of collapse suddenly stabilized and repaired itself.

At the same time, the air seemed to have been purified by this aura, cleansing all the impurities and evil energy that it contained.

"This aura!"

A weird look suddenly appeared on the faces of the two, seemingly recognizing the owner of the aura that suddenly dominated the entire place.

The two quickly stopped what they were doing and swiftly retreated from each other while also distancing themselves from the center of this holy and majestic aura.

They also summoned a much larger amount of energy from their respective bodies, creating a protective barrier that could help them ward off this power that seemed to be trying to purify them.

Due to the two of them almost exhausting all their powers from their earlier clashes, the little energy that they could muster was barely enough to withstand the purification.

Mad Dog's body, which the First Head was using as a vessel, was slowly crumbling. The mechanical arm was the first to be destroyed, turning into dust right after being exposed to both the overwhelming evil powers coming from the evil core and the intense purifying energy of this holy aura.

Cracks also started to appear on his skin, signifying that it was barely able to hold itself now.

Marc Lincoln, the Chimera Creator, was not faring well either. He might not be in worse shape than the First Head's vessel was suffering, but he was suffering a similar fate.

Since a chimera body was created through immoral acts and evil experiments, it was considered an evil being.

Under such a condition, it was also suffering from the purification powers of this holy and majestic aura that came out of nowhere.

He could sense that the body parts from a variety of monsters and different people that he had forcefully stitched together were slowly losing their balance and starting to desynchronize with one another.

They were slowly reaching the verge of collapse.

If not for his powerful willpower and strong control over them, then they would have most likely gone berserk now and turned him into an absolute abomination with no hope of turning back.

Due to the intense clashes between the two, they had somewhat forgotten about Shin. To people of their level, such a kid in the beginning phase of the Ethereal Opening Stage was nothing but an ant that they could squash whenever they wanted.

But who would have thought that this little ant that they had disregarded would put them in such a desperate situation?

Fortunately, the explosion of the holy and majestic aura did not last that long. It might be intense and powerful, but it still lost its momentum after its initial explosion and clashed against the defenses of the two.

Regardless, both the First Head and Marc Lincoln did not dare to lower their guard since they could tell that this was not the end yet.

Not long after, the blinding light slowly receded, revealing an image of an extremely beautiful woman.

This was a projection of Evangeline Rose, who currently had a cold and indifferent look on her face while looking at the two.

She especially stared at Mad Dog, or more specifically, the First Head, who was possessing it. Her expression became even colder after confirming that the aura coming from the other party was among those she was looking for.

She did not say anything else and stared at the two silently. She had already confirmed that Shin was still safe. He might have lost his consciousness due to overexerting his energy, but Uno had already started to take over the control of the body.

The silence was only broken by the First Head, greeting Evangeline. "It has been a while, Celestial Phoenix. It seems like you have become even stronger since the last time we met."

Evangeline snorted when she heard those words before replying. "My husband has already broken free from his fate, so why can't I control my own destiny?"

"As expected by the Chosen Woman," said the First Head while nodding his head.

His remaining arm twitched repeatedly, seemingly trying to do something. But he quickly stopped himself from doing so when he could not find any opening.

He then looked at 'his' body, which was currently filled with cracks, before shaking his head. "I do want to test your current powers and see if you have recovered from that injury. But unfortunately, it seems like this is not the right time for our faithful..."

He was still in the middle of talking when Evangeline cut his words off.

"Stop with the nonsense. Get lost already!" she said coldly while releasing an even stronger aura.

Boom!

"Heh! We will meet again, Celestial Phoenix. And the next time will not be the same as the last time," he smirked before adding. "Let's see if you two can truly defy us."

Right after saying that, his consciousness that was controlling Mad Dog immediately left the body.

What was left behind was his heretical laughter that reverberated in the air.

Evangeline did not do anything to stop him since she knew that it was useless. It was just a fragment of the latter's spirit, after all.

"Hmph! You can't even say such arrogant words when Adam is around," she scoffed before turning toward Marc Lincoln.

"How about you?" she asked with the tone of authority.

The notorious Chimera Creator did not even dare to say anything else and just left. He knew that he would not be a match for this woman, even though she was just a projection.

After all, his current state was not ideal for continuing to fight. He had already spent quite a lot on his battle against the First Head. Anything more would be no different from committing suicide.

Swoosh!

Evangeline did not move for quite a while, making sure that no other threat was hiding in the surroundings.

It was only when she confirmed that the place was safe that she turned behind her.

Seeing her turning around, Uno swiftly bowed and greeted her. "Madam."

Evangeline briefly nodded her head before asking. "You are planning to use those things to stabilize your state and have better control over the seal?"

Uno nodded in response.

Evangeline sighed for a moment before nodding as well. "Alright. Since you have made up your mind, I have no choice but to help you."

"I know what Adam has said about you consuming a larger amount of Demonic Powers to fight against your inherited Seed of Hatred, fighting fire with fire."

"However, it can also backfire since it will also strengthen the powers of that seed. Or at least arouse more of its potential, making it more dangerous for the two of you."

She paused for a moment before continuing. "I can only enhance the seal for a bit more while you are consuming those treasures. The rest will be up to you and Shin to deal with."

"I hope that you two can win this time," she mumbled before raising her index finger and pointing at Uno's chest.

Swoosh!

Not long after, an extremely powerful Mental Energy pierced through the latter's chest and reached his heart, revealing an invisible seal that was already losing its luster.

Right after infusing her mental energy into the seal, its bright color swiftly returned.

After fixing and strengthening the seal, her projection slowly faded. She stared silently at Uno for quite a while before saying. "I'll leave the rest to the two of you."

.....

Chapter 1977: Pillars of the Sun-Moon Continent

...

Right after the apparition of Evangeline dissipated, Uno swiftly moved. He wanted to leave this place as fast as possible.

Given all the commotion that happened, the local government should be able to notice something strange about this place despite the isolation barrier that Marc Lincoln had set up earlier.

The barrier had also been on the verge of collapse, not just once but twice. Even if it managed to mend itself or with the help of Marc Lincoln, some signals would bound to leak out of it, which would then be picked up by the device of the Sun-Moon Government or their local top experts.

It was especially true when the First Head and Evangeline had briefly made their respective appearances, which would leak their unique auras.

The isolation barrier might have prevented them from being discovered instantly, but it would not be enough to thoroughly hide themselves from the other top experts of the Sun-Moon Continent, especially after the series of explosions of their powers.

However, Uno did not immediately look for Arthur and Leonard. Instead, he went toward the opposite direction while looking for a safe place to consume the two heavenly treasures that they had stolen from the Black Serpent Mafia.

He was not thinking of waiting for those with higher authorities sent by the Springfield Family, Magic Ace Academy, and Flying Dragon Corporation to find him and take these packages for 'safekeeping'.

He would rather risk everything now and consume them somewhere before returning and meeting with the others later.

Swoosh!

He was not worried about Arthur and Leonard since Evangeline had already made her appearance earlier. Even though it was brief, he could tell that she must have made sure that the surrounding area was safe before leaving.

She must have found the two as well earlier, given her powerful Spiritual Sense – or more specifically, her Divine Sense, which was the more advanced version of it.

Since she did not say anything about them, he could assume that they must have already left the area safely.

He was not sure whether they used the teleportation talisman that Shin had given them, but he was not concerned about it since he believed that Evangeline must have already done something about it, particularly when their safety was at stake.

Swoosh!

Not long after, he had left the isolation barrier, which was already losing its effectiveness due to Marc Lincoln's absence.

But Uno did not dare linger nearby and continued to run away from it.

During the process, he craftily created a series of fake trails meant to misdirect the people who would try to chase after him.

At the same time, he skillfully erased all his tracks while swiftly retreating from the area.

...

Swoosh! Swoosh!

Not long after, a couple of silhouettes suddenly appeared in the sky before stopping in the air the area.

One of these people was an old man wearing a military uniform. He was passively emitting a heavy and authoritative aura that could suppress those who dared to show any signs of disobedience.

He had a pair of sharp and cold eyes, which were sweeping through the entire place. He seemed to be using the traces left behind in this place to replay the battle that took place in here inside his head.

This person was the head of the military forces of the Sun-Moon Continent and their Supreme General.

Not many people knew about him, but those from the Sun-Moon Government called him the 'Undertaker'.

The reason why not many people knew about him was that all those who encountered him on the battlefield either died in his hands or lost their minds after being influenced by his powerful mental techniques.

General Calcio Ernando, the Undertaker.

Due to the Sun-Moon Continent focusing more on technology rather than other disciplines, they barely had enough experts who could reach the peak of the three major paths. Most of them stopped at the peak of Domain Realm or Venerable Realm.

Not even a Sword Saint had emerged from their ranks, much less someone who had reached the Paragon Level.

General Calcio Ernando was among the few who had managed to step onto the peak of the path that he was walking on.

He was one of the rare Kaleidoscope Mentalists who had reached the Exalted Realm throughout the world.

He was also one of the five great pillars of the Sun-Moon Continent. He was the representative of one of the major factions – the Faceless Faction, which was also known as the 'shadow' of the Military Faction.

A few moments later, this great general squinted his eyes before mumbling. "There is no doubt about it. Marc Lincoln has come here and fought against some with equal strength – or even stronger."

He then glanced at the other person beside him, who seemed to have already abandoned being human and transformed themselves into a living machine.

"What do you think, Oliver?" asked the general.

This man, called Oliver, looked like a cyborg. All his limbs were swapped with mechanical parts, while his torso had been somewhat modified to a certain degree. There was even a circular core at the center of his chest, which was acting as an energy reactor that circulated the mechanical force within his body.

There was also a pair of small jetpacks sticking out of his back, which were helping him hover in the air.

As for his head, it was currently being hidden by a special mantle, which was hanging over his head and casting a shadow down to his face.

Aside from the crimson light that was moving left and right, which seemed to be acting as his eyes, nothing else was revealed to show his face.

This person was another member of the five pillars of the Sun-Moon Continent and the head of the Sun-Moon Technological Center and its leading researcher.

It was said that he had given up being human after releasing the limits of his talents when it came to Martial Arts, Mentalism, and Swordsmanship.

Instead of struggling to match the top geniuses of these three major paths, he had chosen to walk on a different path, wanting to prove to everyone that he could also reach the peak without the three top disciplines.

As a technological genius, he had pioneered cybernetics and biomechanics.

He indeed succeeded and created a new path solely on his own. But it was not acknowledged by the mainstream disciplines, especially when he could no longer be considered human after achieving such a feat.

However, his strength indeed matched the might of those who had reached the Transcendent Realm, Exalted Realm, and Sword Saint Paragon.

This was mostly credited to the technological weapons that he had created, which were meant for mass destruction. But this did not mean that he was weak without them. Their powers had just augmented his powers even further. After all, such weapons were something that even experts at such levels could not underestimate.

As the representative of the Technology Faction of the Sun-Moon Continent, he was titled as the continent's guardian and its strongest weapon.

Oliver Hall, the Mechanical Dullahan.

Beep! Beep!

After scanning the entire place with his special means, Oliver Hall finally responded. "It is not only the Chimera Creator who has appeared in this place."

"From the data that I have gathered, there is an 80-90% chance that both the First Head of the Black Serpent Mafia and Evangeline Rose, the Celestial Phoenix, have appeared here – or at least their respective avatars."

"They may not have any direct confrontations against each other, but their auras have clashed at the very least."

"Adding the residual powers that are left lingering in the air, which matched theirs by 94-96%, I can confirm that there is a 99% chance that it is the case."

His mechanical voice sounded a bit disturbing, especially when it oddly reverberated in one's ears whenever he talked.

However, General Ernando did not care about it, seemingly used to this already. He briefly nodded his head before asking. "Any other findings?"

Beep! Beep!

"I can tell that there were other people present during that time, but due to the repeated void collapse and spatial mending, most of their traces have already been erased."

"Evangeline's powerful aura had even dominated the entire place, covering whatever clues that were left behind," answered Oliver Hall.

"It is a pity, then," General Ernando shook his head before turning around and preparing to leave.

But before he could even leave, Oliver Hall's mechanical voice sounded once again.

Beep! Beep!

"But our luck is a bit better this time," he said while turning his head toward a certain direction.

Beep! Beep! Beep!

Alarms then rang when his gaze locked on a certain figure, who was lying in that direction.

General Ernando had also halted his tracks and turned his head toward the same direction. He squinted his eyes a little before nodding. "I will leave him in your care. I'll report to the Board."

Oliver Hall briefly nodded his head while staring intently at the figure through his special lenses.

"Interesting," he mumbled, seemingly finding something.

...

Chapter 1978: Always the one Missing

.....

During the time that the trio of Shin, Arthur, and Leonard was caught by the spatial distortion that Marc Lincoln had created earlier, the side of the Magic Ace Academy had already managed to leave the area and regroup with their main forces.

Grandmaster Benn and Joaquin Giovanni had covered for their retreat while also trying to deal as much damage to the opposing parties for as much as they could.

The members of the Voidwalker Tribes had managed to escape, leaving their partners, the Black Serpent Mafia.

They might be working with the Black Serpent Mafia as per the instructions of their Great Ancestor, but since the entire operation had already failed, there was no need for them to stay in this place.

There was no point in staying here. The materials had already been stolen by other parties, so there was no need for them to stay here and get entangled in a life-and-death battle against the top experts from the opposing camp.

They immediately retreated right after knowing all these.

As for Belladonna, who was supposed to be fighting alongside the elder of the Nightfall Tribe to hold down Joaquin Giovanni, she too disappeared after seeing the Voidwalkers retreat.

She was barely able to hold Joaquin Giovanni down despite working together with an elder of the Nightfall Tribe, so it was not hard to imagine the outcome if she dared to stay here alone.

There was also Grandmaster Benn, who was supposed to be tied down by Elder Zhi. She would only risk herself being captured if she insisted on staying here and tried to save that useless bunch.

She was already in trouble for losing the vessel that they had acquired by chance, along with the Nirvana Pill that the organization had risked a lot just to get their hands on it. She did not have any energy to worry about these expendable agents.

It would be a waste to leave the Artificial Mutants behind, particularly the slightly more advanced ones, but she did not have a choice but to do so if she did not want to risk everything but a bunch of prototypes.

There were also the members of the Hextech Laboratory, who were trying to fish in the troubled waters earlier.

Unfortunately for this bunch of people, they had become the main targets after Shin, Arthur, and Leonard were taken away earlier.

The members of the Magic Ace Academy had targeted them due to the trio's disappearance, while the members of the Black Serpent Mafia were blaming them for the failure of the important operation that they had been preparing for a very long time.

...

After regrouping with the main forces, Grandmaster Benn looked at everyone before briefly nodding his head.

He then turned to Joaquin Giovanni and instructed. "Look after them. We have basically finished everything that we have to deal with for this operation, so all you need to do is make sure that the kids are safe."

He then turned to leave while adding. "You stay here and ensure their safety while I look for the three troublemakers."

"I can still sense the mark that I have left behind on Shin's body, albeit it is a bit vague. There should still be somewhere in the continent, so I should be able to find them in no time," he said, assuring everyone.

Whoosh!

He did not even wait for anyone to say anything when he suddenly disappeared. It was clear that he was quite worried about Shin's and the other two's safety.

Dayna and Elijah, who were the leaders of their respective clubs for this operation, squinted their eyes a little, seemingly figuring out something.

"Grandmaster Benn seems to be aware of the identity of the person who has abducted those three," mumbled Benedict, seemingly voicing the thoughts of the two.

The two turned to him at the same time but did not say anything else. He was right after all.

Even though they were quite curious about the identity of that person, they were not too keen on knowing more since they knew that it was not their place to ask such questions of an elder with such a very high status.

Unfortunately, or fortunately, for them, Joaquin Giovanni overheard their conversation and said. "If I am not mistaken, that person must be the Chimera Creator of the Hextech Laboratory."

Everyone simultaneously snapped their heads toward his direction after hearing his words. They then stared at him intently, waiting for him to elaborate even further.

Joaquin Giovanni clicked his tongue repeatedly after seeing their gazes that were filled with different emotions. He was starting to regret saying those words just now.

After a while, he sighed helplessly before continuing. "Chimera Creator, it is a moniker given to him by the World Government and the top experts around the world."

"He is one of the leading figures of the Hextech Laboratory and one of their main researchers. And just like how his title suggests, he majors in creating monstrous individuals, which are commonly known as chimeras."

He thought for a moment before continuing his explanation. "You can say that they are another version of the Artificial Mutants that you faced just now."

...

In the meantime, Grandmaster Benn was currently standing in the air high above the city, spreading his Spiritual Sense in every direction without any regard for how the top experts of the Sun-Moon Government would think about it.

Due to his actions, the Sun-Moon Government had no choice but to send a few people to him.

Fortunately, the people that they had just sent were his old acquaintances, preventing any accidents from happening.

"Don't you think this is a bit rude, Fatty Benn?" said an old man in a Taoist Robe.

"This is not your territory, so you should behave yourself and respect our rules," said another old man, who was wearing a casual outfit.

Both old men looked rather ordinary on the surface, but the aura that they were currently emitting was filled with mystery. They seemed to be resonating with nature, making them a part of it.

"Hoh~! Finally willing to show yourselves?" Grandmaster Benn glanced at them briefly before ignoring them once again.

"Fatty Benn, we know that we are not your match, but we must warn you that our country also possesses old monsters of our own," warned the old man in a Taoist Robe.

Grandmaster Benn scoffed when he heard those words. "Don't worry. This will not take that long. Just let me find my disciple, and all of this will be over."

The old man in a casual outfit frowned slightly before saying solemnly. "We have agreed to work with you for this operation because we are also quite curious what those guys from the Black Serpent Mafia are plotting."

"Now that we all know that they are colluding with the Voidwalker Tribes, we will do our utmost to deal with them."

"But don't you think that you are going a bit overboard this time? Ignoring all the rules we have laid since those years?" he added with a somewhat threatening tone.

Sensing the danger coming from this old man, Grandmaster Benn smirked. "If it is before, then you may be able to discourage me. But it will be different this time because I have already perfected my method."

"Do you want to give it a try? It just happens that I am curious if the so-called 'Fisherman' is still as strong as they," he added as the mental energy around him started raging violently.

"Hah! Have you also healed your wounds from that time? I want to see if you are," said the other old man while preparing to fight.

A fight was about to break out. Fortunately, the old man in a Taoist Robe quickly stepped between the two and mediated. "The situation within the continent is already quite chaotic. I don't think that it is a good idea to make it any worse than it already is."

He was feeling a bit troubled since he did not want a fight to break out between these two, especially so when the superiors on the Board repeatedly warned them not to cause too much commotion during these times.

The two pillars of the continent were also on the move after sensing strange signals somewhere.

The situation was starting to get a bit too chaotic, so they had to avoid any more conflict that could escalate it to a much worse situation.

They did have some good history with Grandmaster Benn, but that did not mean that they were not rivals during those times.

But the truth was, they used to be great rivals before, particularly when they all participated in their generation's Battle for Supremacy.

"Hm?"

Fortunately, before the situation could even get serious, Grandmaster Benn suddenly felt something.

He suddenly turned toward a certain direction, focusing his spiritual sense on that area. It was only at that moment that he sensed a familiar aura coming from that direction.

"The talisman that I have given that brat has been activated?" he mumbled before heaving a sigh of relief.

If the teleportation talisman was successfully activated, then it could only mean that the trio was somewhat safe.

After that, he waved his hand, summoning a bunch of runes in the air.

"What are you trying to do!" The two old men could not help but become alert after seeing his actions.

But he just ignored them completely since there was a more pressing matter at hand.

"Come!"

Right after establishing a connection with the talisman, he purposely changed the coordinates where the teleportation talisman was directed and forcefully pulled the ones from the others out of the void, summoning them before him.

Swoosh! Swoosh!

Unfortunately, the expression on his face immediately changed when he saw that only a pair of unconscious kids appeared before him.

Arthur and Leonard, who were both in a weakened state, were the only ones who appeared.

Shin was currently not present!

...

Chapter 1979: Accidents

.....

Once the operation led by Belladonna failed, most of the Black Serpent Mafia's forces began retreating in response.

Adding that even Butcher and Spellbreaker had failed to capture Shiella, the entire operation had crumbled.

They might have secured the other vessel that they had brought, which was supposed to be the original 'package' that they were supposed to use for the ritual, if not for the appearance of the empty vessel made of dense Primal Demonic Powers.

They were able to bring this vessel back after running away from the forces of the Springfield Family and the Green Family. This achievement was mostly credited to the experts that the Voidwalker Tribes had brought with them, particularly those from the Void Tribe.

However, they still suffered quite a lot during their escape, suffering serious damage during the process. They had lost quite a lot of experts along with the more powerful Artificial Mutants.

To make it even worse, some of their people were also captured by different forces. Not only the Springfield and Green Families, the ones who had participated in this operation, but the Sun-Moon Government and the World Government had also joined the prey and took a slice of the pie.

Even the Hextech Laboratory had secured quite a few powerful Artificial Mutants and captured some of their agents.

During this incident, the Black Serpent Mafia had suffered quite a lot. This did not even include the damage that they had suffered from other places.

Most of their bases that were still under the siege of the forces from the Soaring Continent were still in great danger.

Even though they had managed to avoid most of their most valuable data from being stolen from those bases, quite a lot had fallen into the hands of their enemies.

Most of these data were secured by the World Research Center and the Springfield Family.

The other organizations had also joined the fun, scavenging on the little scraps that were left behind. Even though the things that they had gotten were not that big or important, they could still use them to improve themselves or their research.

Given that the war had already broken out, the status quo that everyone was maintaining throughout the world would slowly crumble. This would then lead to a series of conflicts, which would later become a chaos that would sweep throughout the world.

There were not many who could feel this, but the top experts and mighty existences all around the world would most likely sense this chance.

They would then respond to it according to how the situation would develop.

This storm that was sweeping through the world was just the beginning.

...

The forces of the Soaring Continent did not care about all the joining parties despite their respective hidden agendas. After all, these organizations were not interfering with their operations.

So long as these people were not obstructing them, everything else could be overlooked.

While all the operations around the world were going smoothly, Nathan, who was monitoring everything from the headquarters, suddenly received a series of problematic reports.

"The operation led by Martial King Lin Huang and Undefeatable General Manuel Morales has encountered some problems despite the assistance of the Top Military School's experts?" mumbled Nathan as he skimmed through the details of the operation.

The more he read through the report, the deeper the frown he wore. "An existence with a strength equivalent to a Sword Saint Paragon has made an appearance?"

"It was someone who was carrying a bunch of swords in them, which were also suspected to be top-notch artifacts of ancient times."

Nathan could not help but pause when he reached this point, recalling another report, which was about the previous incident in the Eastern Sea Region.

"From what I remember, there seems to be such a person who appeared alongside the 'First Head' at that time. They have even saved Jan Mateo from Adam," he mumbled, feeling that they seemed to have fallen into some sort of trap.

Fortunately, it was reported that the three elders were able to escape from the scene while only suffering some injuries.

The Devil Instructor of the Top Military School had also played quite an important role in the escape, saving as many people as possible from both schools.

However, both the Top Military School and the Magic Ace Academy had suffered serious losses, particularly their faculty members.

The other experts that the Black Serpent Mafia had stationed in the said base were quite powerful on their own right, but the main reason why the forces of the Soaring Continent had lost was due to this Sword Saint Paragon, who appeared at the final moments.

Fortunately, the elders were quite cautious during that time, saving their necks from being severed from their shoulders.

"Fortunately, the damage is not too serious," he mumbled.

They knew that a powerful expert was stationed to guard the said base, especially when it was one of the most important bases of the Black Serpent Mafia.

They had made quite a lot of preparations just to take it down, but it seemed like they still underestimated the strength of their opponents.

"A Sword Saint Paragon Level expert? It seems like the 'Snake Head' is already becoming that powerful," he said while massaging his temples. "It seems like a lot of headaches will be coming our way."

The war was far from over, so he knew that a lot of things could happen at any time.

Given that the Black Serpent Mafia was now willing to bear their fangs and show everyone their true strength, Nathan knew that a more intense bloodbath could happen at any given moment.

There was also the information about these lunatics were working with the members of the Voidwalker Tribes, which was much more serious than they had originally thought.

Even though they could use this information to their advantage and tried to pull the other major forces to take down the Black Serpent Mafia together, particularly the World Government, Nathan understood that those organizations would most likely choose to sit idle on the sidelines and wait for the right opportunity to pounce on them.

Unless the Voidwalker Tribes made their appearance once again or directly hit the major forces around the world, the World Government would most likely not involve itself.

Aside from the issue about this powerful 'Snake Head', Nathan was also quite concerned about the disappearance of the higher echelons of the Seven Seas Group.

Given all the clues at hand, it was clear that they had most likely been rescued by some powerful expert of the Black Serpent Mafia. There was even a high chance that another member of the 'Snake Head' was involved in the process.

While Nathan was thinking about these problems, another problematic report just came in and added to his headache.

"What!?" Nathan could not help but raise his brows after skimming through the report.

The report was about the operations that were taking place at the Sun-Moon Continent, which was one of the most important operations they had.

Everyone was going quite smoothly. They had even sabotaged all the operations that the Black Serpent Mafia was doing in that place, which was great news.

Even though they had encountered quite a few mishaps during the entire operation, they were able to deal with them quite well and even dealt serious damage to the opposing parties.

They had even benefited quite a lot, capturing quite a few high-ranking agents and some Artificial Mutants.

Sheilla was attacked and almost got kidnapped by Butcher, but they were still able to manage it well and even dealt serious damage to Butcher and Spellbreaker during the entire process.

It was also included in the report that they had secured the important' packages' from the Black Serpent Mafia's operation.

Everything was good and well until he reached the bottommost part of the report.

– "The packages disappeared alongside Young Master Shin." –

Bang!

A powerful aura suddenly erupted from his body right after his eyes fell on these words. Immense killing intent suddenly spread out and filled the entire room while his eyes turned extremely cold.

It took him quite a while to calm himself down before contacting someone.

Beep!

He did not wait that long until the person from the other side of the line picked up the call.

"Explain!" said Nathan coldly right after the call connected.

Joaquin Giovanni, who was the person on the other side of the line, smiled bitterly before replying. "You must have read the report already, so there is nothing for me to say."

"The brat disappeared after covering for your nephew's and my disciples' retreat. As for the more detailed information about this, we have to wait until those two wake up."

He then paused for a moment before assuring Nathan. "But there is no need for you to worry that much. Grandmaster Benn is already looking for that brat."

"Elder Benn said that he has placed a mark on the brat's body, which can inform him about the latter's condition and location."

"He can tell that the brat is far from danger through this mark, but there seems to be certain circumstances that prevent the brat from coming back."

"Elder Benn has also discovered that the signal from the mark is quite faint, which indicates that he is inside an isolated area or something."

Nathan continued to listen to Joaquin's words, patiently waiting for the latter to finish.

However, before that could happen, the two suddenly heard someone chiming in on their conversation.

"There is no need to worry. I can sense his location quite clearly."

The two turned tense for a moment, especially when they could recognize the owner of the voice.

Nathan robotically turned his head toward the direction from which the voice came while also turning the lenses of his advanced watch, letting Joaquin see the person as well.

Sitting leisurely on the sofa within the office, Evangeline was currently making tea for herself.

She then casually turned to the two, who still wore a stiff expression on their faces, before smiling. "The kid is fine. He just needs some time to deal with someone on his side."

The nerves of the two became even more tense when they saw that gentle smile. For some reason, they could feel an immense threat coming from such a harmless and kind smile.

They were very familiar with it. It was something they regularly saw in their younger days, especially when she was dealing with Adam.

She paused for a moment, seemingly recalling something, before saying to Joaquin. "Tell Teacher that he doesn't have to interrupt what that brat is doing once he finds him."

"It is something that he necessarily needs to overcome to somewhat break free from the shackles and burden that Adam and I have placed on him."

...

Chapter 1980: Hunted?

...

Twitch!

With a slight movement of his fingers and a brief trembling of his eyelids, Shin slowly opened his eyes, waking up from what he felt was a long slumber.

Feeling the cold ground and hearing the faint sounds of droplets falling into a small pool nearby, Shin slowly picked himself up.

While people from the Soaring Continent's forces were worrying about Shin, the man in question found himself lying in a place filled with darkness.

Shin was confused at first before a flood of memories entered his mind, making him recall what had happened.

After shaking off the intense headache that he was suffering, Shin gently sighed before speaking.
"Where have you brought me this time?"

He seemed to be talking in the air, but it was clear that he was calling out for Uno, who was in control of the main body earlier.

Uno then replied nonchalantly. [I am not sure either.]

"You-...!" The corner of Shin's mouth twitched when he heard those words. He wanted to curse on the latter, especially after hearing such a tone, but he knew that it would do nothing.

"What are you planning to do this time? I thought you wanted to consume both the pill and that vessel made of demonic energy, so why are we here?" he asked.

There was a brief silence as Uno refused to answer at first. But he later decided to speak after thinking about it for another time. [That is originally the plan, but I've changed my mind after stumbling into this place.]

"Eh!? This place? What is special about this place?" asked Shin subconsciously before turning his head around.

But he could not help but frown deeply after seeing nothing but eternal darkness.

However, he knew that Uno had a purpose when he brought him into this place, so he regulated the flow of mental energy within his body before activating his True Sight Technique.

Focusing his mental energy toward his eyes, he was able to enhance his vision by a great margin while also possessing the ability to see through anything.

Illusions were nothing before these eyes, much less such a thing as darkness.

It was at that moment that he realized where he actually was.

"What!? What is this place?" he asked subconsciously after realizing that they were not in an ordinary place.

At first, he thought that there was nothing special about the place, especially when he saw nothing but pillars at the edges of the room. But he later realized that there were statues in between each pillar, which seemed to be emitting holy auras within them.

Upon closer inspection, he realized that these stone statues seemed to be very similar to the Buddha Statues that he had heard about from his senior brother and the ones that he had seen in the books.

"Now that I think about it, isn't this an abandoned Buddhist Temple?" he mumbled while trying to recall the information about ancient cultivation methods.

It was clear that these statues were very similar to the Buddhist Temples of the ancient religions and ancient customs.

It was then he heard Uno's voice saying. [You are right. This is an ancient Buddhist Temple. Moreover, it is not just an ordinary temple, but one of the main temples at that.]

Shin then stood up and started walking around, exploring the temple. It was in ruins and almost unrecognizable, particularly due to the collapsed walls and thoroughly destroyed statues.

Aside from the room where he came from, everything else seemed to be in total ruins.

Shin later discovered that this place was an underground temple. It was mostly inside a mountain or something, especially with the overall structure of the place.

What Shin found magical was the walls surrounding the entire place. The entire temple was in total ruins, but Shin could sense that the walls were filled with special powers.

It was neither Internal Qi nor Mental Energy, but some sort of force that came from an entirely different system.

What he found even stranger about this foreign and unfamiliar energy was the sacred energy that they were giving off. It was oddly similar to his Sacred Qi, but also carried different properties.

"What kind of place is this exactly?" asked Shin, knowing that Uno must have discovered something about this place already.

Another silence followed his question. He was not sure whether Uno was doing this on purpose or if he was trying to organize his words.

A moment later, Uno finally started taking once again. [If I am not wrong, then this place must be among the hidden temples used by a certain branch of Buddhist Monks during ancient times.]

[Or it can also be a special hideout or secret temple solely meant for pursuing enlightenment.]

[The room where you woke up earlier is most likely the center of this place, which can be considered the Zen Room or something.]

Shin slightly furrowed his brows before asking. "What does it have to do with what you are planning?"

[This place is very old. Most likely older than the so-called Ancient Era that you know of.]

[A major event or a huge catastrophe must have taken place in this temple, which resulted in its current state.]

[However, it was later discovered by a certain expert of the latter generation, who had set up that ancient formation that covered the entire place.]

Shin then turned his gaze toward the walls surrounding the ruined temple, particularly the invisible energy that was covering them.

Before he could even ask anything else, Uno immediately continued. [They must have modified the original formation that was supposed to hide this place from the outsiders and transformed the entire place into some sort of cultivation room or something similar.]

[You can also call it some sort of Immortal Abode used by those ancient people pursuing immortality through cultivation.]

At this point, Shin was finally able to figure out what Uno was trying to imply. "So, you are telling me that this place is the perfect place for cultivation or something."

"The entire place has become a powerful furnace while those surrounding formations are supposed to absorb the surrounding energy and convert it into a fuel that will keep the flames within the furnace working for eternity or such."

His eyes swept through the entire place, closely observing the grand formation through his True Sight Technique, before sighing. "But don't you think that the formation is beyond repair? It is not something that I can fix, given my current achievement."

"You should have brought Teacher along if you wanted to fix this thing," he added.

[That is a good idea,] answered Uno before adding. [Unfortunately, I don't have the time to call for that Old Fatty during that time, especially when 'we' are being chased by someone beyond his level.]

"Someone beyond the teacher's level?" Shin's expression suddenly turned grave when he heard this.

He was aware of how powerful his mentalism technique, Grandmaster Benn. As a member of the Elder's Council, he was among the strongest people beneath the apex of each modern path.

Grandmaster Benn was a half-step Exalted Realm Mentalist, so if someone was stronger than him, then that person must be a genuine expert standing at the peak of their respective discipline.

Regardless of whether they were a Transcendent Realm Martial Artist, an Exalted Mentalist, or a Sword Saint Paragon, they would be, without a doubt, a great threat to his teacher.

"But why is someone of that level chasing after us?" Shin was confused. "Is it the First Head or someone else?"

[I am not entirely sure either. But I can feel a great level of hostility coming from them,] replied Uno before continuing. [Moreover, their source or power is somewhat strange.]

[It is neither Internal Qi, Mental Energy, nor Sword Qi. It is not even Blood Power or Demonic Powers, which makes it somewhat difficult to figure out their methods, even for myself.]

"Something that comes from ancient methods, perhaps?" asked Shin.

But Uno shook his head inside the Sea of Consciousness, denying it as well. [I can tell if it was from the ancient methods since they shared certain properties and have the same roots.]

[But this person who is chasing us has a whole different form of power.]

Uno paused for a moment, seemingly trying to find the closest example that he could give, before continuing. [If I put it in modern terms, then the energy coming from that person is mostly the same as those things that make your so-called technology work.]

"The energy that makes modern technology work?" repeated Shin before asking. "Do you mean that it is something similar to the energy that the energy reactors or energy cores used by vehicles and firearms?"

[Ah! That's right! It is something like that, it seems," nodded Uno.

"Then it must be Mechanical Force or something similar," mumbled Shin while trying to deduce the identity of the person chasing after them.

"Someone who is not using the modern disciplines and possesses a Mechanical Force instead. And as strong as the old monsters at the pinnacle of the three major paths-..."

Reaching this point, Shin could not help but pause, especially when he realized something.

He then gulped hard before blurting out. "There is only a single person who fits all these criteria-... Oliver Hall, the Mechanical Dullahan!"

Other people might not have any idea about this person, but Shin, as a student of Professor Henry and a member of the Research Department of the Magic Ace Academy, naturally knew about such a legendary person.

The expression on his face then suddenly turned grim before asking. "Why is such a monster coming after us?"

...