

Destiny 411

Chapter 411 Doubts

.....

Shin stared at the ceiling once again the moment Grandmaster Benn walked out of the room. He was still trying to remember what had happened, especially how exactly he managed to get home 'safely'.

There were a lot of things that didn't add up. And from what he could see, he could tell that Grandmaster Benn knew something about it but refused to tell him the details.

Trying to figure it out, Shin first looked at the current state of his body.

Currently, he could at least tell that his body had undergone some intense battles while was unconscious. After all, he was a Battle Genius who could grow during battles. And since he was already familiar with the 'feeling of growth' after his hard-fought battles, he could easily tell the differences that he gained from each battle that he had gotten through.

Based on this, Shin was sure that the battles his body had gone through while he was still unconscious was not small.

He didn't need to further prove this suspicion since the current state of his special 'Golden Core' was more than enough to be the proof in this case.

Putting all of this together, Shin could only come up with a single conclusion. And that was his body was possessed by a 'demon' once again. But Grandmaster Benn rejected the idea earlier, since a body which was possessed by a demon would never be rational enough to use a teleportation talisman to send his body back home. Instead, it was going to seize the body of its host for itself.

"D*mn it! I can't think of anything! This is just going to make my headache worse," muttered Shin as he gave up on thinking about it."

Then he turned his body to the side to get a more comfortable position on the bed before adding. "Tsk! There is no point to think about it now. I'll just asked the Old Geezer about it later," while closing his eyes.

"That is everything that I got from interrogating that guy," said David with a heavy expression on his face.

He was currently inside Nathan's study room and reporting the information that he got from Code during the end of the previous mission.

On the other hand, Nathan fell into a deep thought after hearing everything. And after a few moments of thinking he asked another question, trying to get a confirmation once again. "So, you are saying that the Underworld Organization was currently in the middle of backstabbing each other."

David turned silent for a moment before replying. "Not exactly, Sir. But quite close."

He paused for a moment due to some hesitation before steeling himself, adding. "It is more like an internal competition among themselves. It seems like they are competing with each other to see which side will be chosen by the higher-ups. And the one who was going to be abandoned is going to be devoured by the other."

"I came across a similar situation before. It is during the time when I am still exploring the Lost Soul Continent. The arms of the Shadow Alliance also extended in some regions of that Continent."

"Similar things happened. No, it may be even worse since there are at least 3 subordinate organizations involved. What's more, the 'competition' during that time is quite large so some of the powerhouses of the said Continent became involved too."

"I also joined one of the main operations there and even worked with the 'Young Ghosts' of that Continent. The operations went well, but both sides suffered some huge losses."

David paused for another moment to take a deep breath before continuing. "But from what I can see, the Shadow Alliance still achieved their main goal. Even if they lost one or two major organizations from that incident, I still think that their sacrifices are still worth it."

"Due to that incident, a lot of internal conflicts occurred within the ranks of the major Families of the Lost Soul Continent. Some families even became hostile with each other, while there were a few families who became divided and broken into two functions."

"The news didn't become public since it will only cause even more chaos while the powerhouses of the Continent are still in the middle of recovery."

Nathan raised his eyebrows even further the more he listened. And when David was finally done, he suddenly asked. "So, what do you think about the outcome on our side."

David thought for a moment before replying. "From what I can see, we manage to avoid the major issue, thanks to the efforts that Shin and the others give during the mission. But I still suggest to take a look at the families who lost some of their younger generations."

Hearing that, Nathan nodded his head before saying. "I understand. I will not overlook anything. And to make sure that we didn't miss anything, I will even oversee this case personally."

David took a sigh of relief after hearing that. He was about to excuse himself to leave when he suddenly heard Nathan ask another question. "You said that these incidents are a competition within the Shadow Alliance, right? Then who won the previous one that took place at the Lost Soul Continent?"

David suddenly paused the moment he heard that. And after a few moments of thinking, he answered. "From what I can see, the one who ripped the most benefits during that time is the Black Serpent Mafia."

Nathan suddenly raised his eyebrows when he heard that. Then he suddenly asked. "And you said that the Black Serpent Mafia is plotting something even bigger than the previous incident, right?"

David nodded his head when he heard that and added. "That is according to the information that I got from the mole that they had planted at the 'Roku Prefecture', which was the main perpetrator of this incident."

He tilted his head to the side for a moment while knitting his eyebrows. "I just can't get any more details about that since the soul of that 'mole' is locked by a powerful Binding Technique created by a strong Mentalist."

"I failed to notice that when I scanned his soul. So, that mole suddenly died when he was trying to talk about the specifics. I couldn't even retrieve his body since it was suddenly ignited by a strange flame the moment he died."

Hearing that, Nathan slowly closed his eyes and into a deep thought once again. 'Black Serpent Mafia, huh? 'Snake Head', what kind of plot are you scheming this time?'

Meanwhile, David was currently having an internal struggle as he looked at Nathan. But while he was still in the middle of hesitating, the latter seemed to perceive his mood and asked. "What is it? If you want to say something, voice it out already. In this kind of situation, even a minor detail is crucial for us."

David closed his eyes for a moment when he heard that before bracing himself. "Sir-... about 'Snake Head'. It is not a person, but a-..."

In a very hidden place somewhere in the outskirts of the Dark Continent, a huge yet secluded city was located.

This city seemed to be quite advanced given the skyscrapers standing within it. There were also some strange vehicles flying in this city which made the appearance of this place to become even more futuristic.

Standing at the very center of this city was a very tall building which stood among the rest. Its height already reached the sky which was why its tip was hidden by the clouds. But the thing that made it different from the rest was the huge figure coiling around it.

From afar, that figure seemed to be a gigantic serpent monster coiling around the building. But in fact, it was actually a giant statue made to be part of the building so that it could have an appearance like that.

But no matter how majestic the appearance of this city has; it was still not written in the records of the world. It was because this city was in fact a major base of one of the strongest Underworld Organization of the world, the Black Serpent Mafia.

...

Standing in the air not far from the city, a pair of a man and a woman were currently observing the whole city.

"Tsk! These guys sure became too advanced. With this kind of environment, they can at least contend with the cities of the Sun-Moon Continent," said by the man.

This guy had a lean body but had some properly trained and perfectly shaped muscles which were being highlighted due to the fitted shirt that he was wearing.

The strands of his hair had silver color which were also quite long. Adding it to his handsome appearance, this man would surely make any girl fall for him just by seeing him. But contrary to it, the demeanor that he was giving was quite evil which would make anyone wary around him; especially with that evil grin that he was wearing and the purple pupils that his eyes had.

After a moment, this man looked at the woman beside him and asked. "Can you feel those guys' aura here? From what I can see, this is still not the right place that we are looking for."

"Can you shut up for a moment? I am trying to concentrate here," responded by the woman while glaring at him.

She was a very beautiful woman with long black hair. Her appearance alone was more than enough to make any man crazy for her. And if you add her perfect figure, then this woman could bring a nation into its own downfall with her appearance alone.

After scolding the man beside her, she turned her head back at the city before squinting her eyes a little. Seconds later, her eyes suddenly turned bright before shining a golden light.

Moments passed, the woman's shining eyes started to dim before she closed her eyes. And while doing that, she suddenly said to the man beside her. "This is still not the place. Go, do whatever you want. Just make it quick and don't wait for me to wait for long."

Hearing that, the evil grin that the man was wearing turned even higher while saying. "Don't worry, Honey. Less than a minute is more than enough."

After saying that, he suddenly flew forward and stopped right above the city before pointing at the sky. He took a deep breath for a moment before swinging his hand downwards before pointing at the city before below him.

Nothing actually happened when he was done with everything, but that man didn't seem to care about it as he quickly turned his body around before flying back to the woman's side.

And after arriving, he put his arm around her shoulders while saying. "Alright, time to go, Honey. Where are we going next? But-... do you mind going on a date first before going to the next location?"

Hearing him, the woman suddenly released a helpless sigh before saying. "Can you at least become a little serious this time? We are in a hurry, aren't we?"

After that, she turned her head behind them as they were flying away. A moment later, she turned her head at the man beside her while saying. "Isn't a little too much?"

"You think that I got a little overboard? Well, don't worry – they all deserved it. What's more, that city is originally not on the main map, so I am only turning this place back to its 'original' state." said the man nonchalantly.

And while the two of them were currently flying away, a huge shadow was suddenly casted on the whole city.

Naturally, all of the people within the city immediately noticed the sudden darkness in the middle of daylight. Due to that, they couldn't help but raise their heads towards the sky to look at what was happening.

But the moment they saw what was in the sky, their eyes suddenly turned wide while their bodies were frozen in place.

A gigantic meteor was falling towards the city with an extreme speed and unstoppable force!

And before they could even pull themselves together, the meteor immediately landed on the ground and erased the whole city's existence.

Chapter 412 Stop Practicing Martial-Arts?

...

Shin was told to rest for a few hours so that he could recover his peak condition, but it was already dark outside when he woke up.

"D*mn! So, I fell asleep for that long, huh? I guess I am really too tired this time," muttered Shin as he tried to get up from his bed.

The intense headache that he was feeling earlier was already gone, so he was able to get up without problem. But his entire body was quite stiff due to staying on the bed for quite long. With that, he did some body stretching to relieve that stiffness. But didn't dare to do his usual training routines since he was not sure if it was going to affect the current state of his dantian.

When he was finally able to move his body without having much problem, he immediately walked out of his room and quickly went to his Master's place.

It didn't take long for him to arrive at that Old Plum's humble house. And since he was already familiar with this place, he immediately opened the door as usual and went inside. "I'm here, Old Geezer."

And the moment Shin entered the room, he was immediately greeted by Old Plum's voice, saying. "Tsk! As usual, you still don't have some respect for your elders."

Shin turned his head at the source of the voice and immediately saw Professor Plum and Grandmaster Benn sitting on the ground, facing each other and were currently in the middle of playing a 'Go'.

Shin walked forward to take a look at the progress of the game and saw that it was a very close fight. Though, Professor Plum had a slight lead of '0.5 points' and was currently playing black.

At first, Shin was thinking that it was just an ordinary match. But the more he looked at the gaming board the stranger he felt inside. Due to that, he decided to stay silent and continue watching them.

Few moments later, Shin suddenly discovered what was strange about this gaming board. "This game!..."

Both Professor Plum and Grandmaster Benn suddenly started smiling when they heard him. The former even smirked at him and said. "Heh! Not bad for a greenhorn, I guess. So, you are able to see it, huh?"

Meanwhile, Grandmaster Benn placed a piece on the board which turned the favor of the game and gave him the '0.5' advantage. But Old Plum immediately countered it and quickly took back the lead.

Seeing that, Grandmaster Benn immediately responded and made an unexpected move. And when Professor Plum saw that, he suddenly paused for a moment before scanning the whole board.

From what he could see, this game would end up in a draw if they continued doing this. Which means, he was going to lose with the default rule. But he didn't think much about it since it was not the main point of this game. So, Old Plum continued playing his move after taking a quick glance at Shin.

Shin decided to sit down beside the two and continued watching for a while. As the game continued, Shin started to become immersed with every move of each side.

From what he could see, there were some Martial Insights within every move that Professor Plum was making. Meanwhile, Grandmaster Benn was responding with it by using a Mentalism Insight of his own.

Due to this, Shin became drawn in the match the more he looked at it. From his perspective, this gaming board became a battlefield between two Peak Experts.

Ta!

Grandmaster Benn placed the final stone on the board putting the game in an end. But he didn't care much about the result, the same went for Professor Plum. Instead, both of them stayed silent right after the game ended.

They closed their eyes as they waited for Shin to digest everything he saw on the board. And that current state of Shin lasted for a few more minutes before he was finally able to regain his senses. And the moment he woke up, he immediately raised head and looked at the two old men with dumbfounded eyes and quickly opened his mouth, wanting to say something.

But before he could even say something, Old Plum immediately beat him into it and asked. "So, what do you think about it?"

Shin tried to open and close his mouth but no words came out. He was trying to explain what he saw, but he couldn't find the right words to do so. And after a few more failed attempts, he finally gave up and shook his head.

Seeing that, Professor Plum couldn't help but smirk a little since he found another chance to tease Shin a little. But that was just a thought and didn't actually do it. After all, they were already running short in time for this kid's special training.

Due to that, Old Plum stayed silent for a moment before starting to talk. "You don't need to rush understanding all of that since everything you 'saw' will be included in your upcoming training. For now, we wanted you to understand the difference and similarities of these two disciplines."

"As you can see in this match, Martial-Arts and Mentalism are quite equal. They have strong points of their own."

He paused for a moment to pick up a black stone from the board before continuing. "Martial-Arts is just like this black stone. It is considered stronger by other people since it was the first path to be discovered right after the 'Cultivation Path' is lost."

Then he placed that black stone on another game board that Grandmaster Benn had created with his Mental Energy, before saying. "Martial-Arts gain an advantage since it has the first move. And due to that, it is able to progress slightly faster compared to the other discipline."

Reaching that point, Old Plum suddenly stopped talking which was also a signal for Grandmaster Benn to take over. And when the latter saw that, Old Benn picked up a white stone and said. "Meanwhile, this stone can stand for Mentalism."

"It starts late but that doesn't mean it is weaker. In fact, a Kaleidoscope Mentalist such as yourself is considered to be slightly stronger than a Martial-Artist in the same level of its versatility."

"A Kaleidoscope Mentalist is able to nurture both their body and spirit which give them the slight advantage over a Martial-Artist."

After that, he crossed his arms in front of his chest before adding. "A Martial-Artist can only make their bodies stronger, but that also makes their spirits become vulnerable to mental attacks when their minds are invaded. Let's say that is where the 'komi' stands for."

Then Old Plum's second move came in. He placed another black stone on the board while saying. "And that is where the 'Calming Techniques' comes in. Different kinds of 'Calming Techniques' are created to make the mind of a Martial-Artist hard to be invaded by a Mentalist."

"Then 'Illusion Techniques' are created to counter it by confusing them," Old Benn responded.

While placing another stone, Old Plum immediately countered. "Then 'Natural Forces' are created to destroy those illusions with brute force."

Then Grandmaster Benn quickly answered. "And that is when a specialized form of Mental Energy is discovered to fight against it," while placing another white stone on the board.

With that, another game was started but with a very fast pace. But they suddenly stopped when they reached half-way through the game.

Then Professor Plum turned his head at Shin while saying. "What we are trying to say – comparing these two disciplines to decide who is actually stronger is going to be an impossible feat. Because both of them are still in the middle of progression, so it is pointless to decide which side is better."

He paused for another moment to pick up a black stone. He squeezed it between his fingers and turned its color red by heating it with his Internal Qi. After that, he placed it on the board quite strongly while saying. "Then the balance was broken when a Dual-Practitioner suddenly appeared."

At the same time, Grandmaster Benn picked up a white stone from the board and changed its color into green before placing it black on its place. "Then 'Sword Qi' was also discovered not long after that and gave birth to another discipline which is a much higher form of the ordinary Swordsmanship. Then Sword Practitioner started to emerge."

Then Old Plum immediately added, "Then 'Bloodline Possessors' started to show their battle prowess. The same goes for the wielders of 'Demonic Arts' who come out of nowhere alongside the other people who went down on the 'Evil Path'."

"And there are even some unorthodox disciplines which almost rival those powerful disciplines. It an example of it are the peak 'Assassination Techniques' of some Assassin Families and Tribes."

Then Professor Plum paused once again and looked at Shin before asking. "I already asked you about this before, but I am asking you once again. Are you sure you want to walk in the path of being a Dual-Practitioner?"

Shin looked at Old Plum confusedly as he couldn't fully understand where this conversation was heading. Regardless, he still nodded his head repeatedly before saying with a firm tone. "I already decided, so there is no way I am going to turn back now."

Hearing that and seeing that expression that Shin was making, Professor Plum suddenly smiled before saying. "Then I suggest you to stop practicing Martial-Arts for now."

Shin's eyes suddenly turned wide the moment he heard those words which made him become very confused at what he had heard. And this time, he really couldn't understand what was going on. 'What the hell is running inside your head now, Old Geezer!?'

Chapter 413 Plans And News

.....

"Then I suggest you stop practicing Martial-Arts for the time being."

The corner of Shin's mouth kept on twitching uncontrollably after hearing those words. And since he found it too ironic to what Professor Plum had told him before, he couldn't help but ask. "What are you talking about, Old Geezer? Did you drink the wrong medicine this time?"

Old Plum suddenly smirked when he heard those words. Then he replied. "Don't freak out yet kid. I am only saying to you to delay your Martial-Art progress and not to disregard it entirely."

Hearing that, Shin immediately responded. "That is what I am talking about, Old Geezer! You said before that it is better to keep my Martial-Art attainments and Mentalism cultivation in an equal state. That way fusing them together was going to be much easier in the future."

"Oh! I said that? Then I am taking it back right now," said Professor Plum nonchalantly while also stroking his long beard.

The corner of Shin's mouth twitched even more after hearing that. He wanted to say something but he couldn't voice it out; all he could do was to open and close his mouth with no words coming out.

Watching the scene from the side, Grandmaster Benn released a helpless sigh before deciding to join the conversation. "That is enough fooling around, Old Monster."

He looked at Shin before adding. "Originally, that is what you are supposed to do. Keeping your Martial-Arts and Mentalism Techniques in equal state will surely make it easier for you to fuse them together."

Old Benn paused for a moment to hold his chin with his hand before continuing. "But that is only applicable to ordinary people."

Then Old Plum immediately added. "And you don't fall in that category, kid. You are in a special case. And the majority of the reason is because of the Demonic Qi in your system."

"Due to that oddity, your state has always been in a very risky state. That is why you always need to keep your emotions in check. And no matter how strong your willpower is, there will always be a time where you will become exhausted and lose some focus. Especially when you are fighting consecutive intense battles."

Then Old Plum crossed his arms in front of his chest before continuing. "What's more, you are currently suffering a Qi Conflition, so you need to be too careful this time. Maybe you are quite fine right now but it is going to be very dangerous for you if you mishandle your case. Especially that we are talking about the Demonic Qi here."

"If not because of your special Mental Energy that is currently calming the conflicting Internal Qi inside your dantian, then your case is going to be even more disastrous."

Grandmaster Benn nodded his head before adding. "Given that, you need to focus your training on your Mentalism to keep those opposing Qi in check."

After that, the two old men finally took a pause which gave Shin a window to ask a question. "Then what is going to happen to my Martial-Arts? Am I just going to halt all of its progress? And how is my special training going to be if that was the case?"

Hearing that, Old Plum suddenly clicked his tongue before saying. "Tsk! This rascal. Didn't I already tell you not to freak out about it? We are just saying that you need to DELAY your Martial-Arts' progress for a bit so that your Mentalism can overtake it a little."

Then he took another pause before forming an evil grin before continuing. "As for your special training, there is nothing to worry about that. We already prepared a very good training plan for you."

Shin suddenly felt his body run cold the moment he heard that. For some reason, he really got a very bad feeling about this. And when Old Plum noticed that, his grin further raised upwards before adding. "And... reassured, kid. We are delaying the progress of your Martial-Art attainments but that doesn't mean we can't continue improving your body foundation."

The sudden chill that ran through Shin's body became even more noticeable after hearing that. He even gulped a mouthful of saliva as his instincts were telling him about the 'disaster' that was about to come.

While Shin was still having an internal struggle, Old Plum suddenly said to Shin, shooing him away. "Alright, that is all for now. You can now go back and take a few more rest."

Hearing that, Shin took a deep breath before standing up and taking a bow to bid his farewell. But before he could even raise his body up, he suddenly heard Old Plum additional instructions. "And while you are it, I also need you to prepare yourself since we are leaving the day after tomorrow."

"But I suggest you refrain from doing any kind of training for the time being and focus only on recovering your peak state so that you can be even more ready for your special training."

Then Shin nodded his head and replied. "I understand," before turning his body around to leave.

.....

When Shin went back to his room, he found himself pretty much bored. He just lied down on his bed, doing nothing. And since he just woke up earlier, he also couldn't bring himself to take another sleep.

During this time, he was most probably going to enter his Gaming Pod and dived inside the game. Unfortunately, the game already started its maintenance for another huge update.

From what Arthur had said, it was for the new regions and other system setups. There were also some interesting contents added in the game; and those were heavy focused for the leading players.

Players who were too advanced compared to the others were struggling to gain some levels in the latter stages of the game. And even if they had top-class items and equipment, leveling up by killing monsters became much harder for them.

Meanwhile, the Quests that they could do in that stage were quite limited and also pretty much impossible to be cleared even with someone like Arthur who was a Peak Godlike Player.

Thinking about all of this, Shin decided to take a look at the current news of the game. So, he suddenly got up from his lying position and sat on his bed before quickly opening his Advance Watch. And right after opening it, he immediately went to the official forum page of the game to see what happened when he was offline.

"What the!?" When Shin opened the page, his eyes were immediately greeted by some huge news. And in fact, there were only two news stories in total. But the changes that they would bring in the game were quite massive.

"So, this is the real reason why the major update was initiated ahead of time," muttered Shin as he looked at the different posts on the forum. And after a slight browsing, he decided to read the current hottest topic first.

– Big News at the Blind Abyss Empire, Home turf of the Undying Guild.

Two Top Ranking Guilds were currently in war with each other.

--The Central Order officially declared an all-out war with the Undying Guild due to the discovered Ancient Ruins at the borders of the Empire.

Based on the rumors and some photos taken by independent players who managed to sneak inside the place, the said Ancient Ruins was closely related to an Ancient God of the game. This case was even proven by some top players who were focusing on studying the history of the game.

...

Shin continued to read the entire article with extreme concentration. It was not because he was interested in the ongoing war, but it was due to the place which became the cause of the war.

He currently had a high-ranking hidden quest related to Ancient Powers which was also related to the Ancient Gods. So, if he took a look at this place, maybe he was going to get some clues about his quest.

But Shin's body suddenly froze while he was reading the latter parts of the article. It was because he saw some photos which gave him some hints about something else.

Seeing that, he continued to browse the photos one by one, trying to confirm his suspicions. And a few moments later, he finally saw a photo that gave him the proof that he was looking for.

In that photo, there was a huge wall full of cracks. On its surface, a huge drawing of a Sun was engraved on it. And Shin was pretty much familiar with that symbol since he already saw it a couple of times in the walls of the 'Church of the Sun and the Moon'. That emblem symbolized one of the gods of that Church, a fallen god, and the father of the first envoy of the church – the Sun God.

Seeing that, Shin finally decided to take a 'visit' to this place no matter what when he got back in the game.

Meanwhile, the second news was also quite massive. The entire article was quite short, but the significance that it had for the game was much larger compared to the other one.

– Massive NEWS! The Sky Island finally appeared! And it was discovered by two players who also managed to get all of its pioneering rights.

Chapter 414 Joining The Training?

.....

Shin spent most of his time inside his room to meditate while waiting for the time of his special training. Sometimes, he was also browsing in the online forums to look for some interesting topics that piqued his interest. He was also reading of Molton's guides from time to time.

Arthur and Leonard dropped by in his room for quite a few times to see what he was doing. They also informed him about the result of the mission which was considered a huge success. With that, Shin still maintained his perfect completion rate on his mission.

Meanwhile, the twin Potters went back to their home after finishing the mission. Jillian didn't bother to bid her farewell, but Molton dropped by the Springfield Household to say that they were returning to their home town which was the Western Plain Region. He also informed Arthur that they were going to Eastern Sea Region when the school year started. They were admitted as accelerated students in the Magical Ace Academy.

Angela, on the other hand, didn't bother bid her farewell as she was thinking that she would meet the group again in the future. She just left without a word and went back to her home land together with her master, the 'Hermit'.

After a day, Leonard told Shin and Arthur that he was going back to the Eastern Sea Region to continue his training under his master's guidance. He also informed them that he also decided to go to the Magical Ace Academy as his master introduced him there. Though, he still needed to pass the entrance exam before being admitted.

Naturally, he also didn't forget to properly explain to Laura why he was going to leave. After all, this little lass would throw a huge fuss if he left her again so unexpectedly.

At the same time, Arthur also informed Shin that he was going to accompany Nathan for a special mission in another Region. So, he would not be able to visit him again for quite some time.

But since Shin was also going to leave with Professor Plum and Grandmaster for his own special training, he didn't put much thought in it.

With all of that, the monster trio promised each other to meet at the entrance exam of the Magical Ace Academy when the school year started.

And the time for Shin to leave finally came.

"Hu~!" He took a deep breath after closing the zipper of his luggage. After that, he turned his head in his surroundings to check if he forgot anything. And after making sure that there was none, he immediately picked up his luggage and hanged it on his shoulder before walking out of his room.

Downstairs, he saw Laura sulking while sitting on the lowest steps of the stairs. Shin shook his head when he saw that and smiled wryly.

When he reached her side, Laura suddenly said. "You are also going to leave right, Big Bro Shin?"

Shin sat in front of her with one of his knees. He patted her head while saying. "Don't feel so down. We will see each other again in no time," with a smile.

Laura held back her tears while muttering with a soft voice. "But I am going to feel lonely."

With his senses, Shin would naturally be going to hear her words no matter how soft her voice. Then he stroked her head with care while saying. "What are you saying? We can still call you from time to time. The same with your brother. At least, I can promise you that. No matter how busy we are, we will always find time to contact you."

But Laura was still not moved. And when Shin saw that, he couldn't help but smile bitterly as he didn't know how to comfort her.

And while he was troubled, he suddenly heard David's voice behind him. "Then how about you bring her with you."

"Huh!?" Shin suddenly turned his head at David. He looked at the latter with a stunned face as he didn't know what to say.

Seeing that, David looked at him for a moment before saying in a nonchalant manner. "What with that look? Can't you just do that? At least, she can do something there."

With his twitching face, Shin replied. "What are you talking about, Senior Brother? I am not going to play there."

"And who said that you are going to bring her there to play?" refuted David almost instantly.

"Eh!?" Shin was stunned once again as he didn't know what David was implying.

David stared at Shin's stunned face for a moment before smirking. "Heh! You really don't have any idea how to properly use your Mentalism Technique aside from using it in battle."

He paused for a moment before continuing. "Should I say, 'As expected to a Battle Genius' mentality?"

Shin suddenly knitted his eyebrows a little when he heard that. But at the same time, he also seemed to know where this conversation was heading. So, he asked. "Are you saying that this girl had some unseen potential?" while turning his head back Laura.

David smirked once again when he heard that while nodding his head. Then he said after a slight pause. "Though, I also find it strange that her talent is completely different from her big brother."

After a slight pause, he added. "She has some potential at practicing Mentalism. Even though it doesn't look exceptional unlike monsters such as yourself, her talent is still enough for her to protect herself in the future."

When Laura heard all that, the expression on her face suddenly turned bright before raising her head to look at David, asking. "Really!?"

David smiled at her before confirming. "Yeah, it is true. So, do you also want to become strong?"

Laura immediately nodded her head without any hesitation. And when David saw that, he quickly said. "Then, you should join your Big Bro Shin on his special training," as if it was not a big deal.

Laura became excited when she heard that, but she didn't immediately give her reply as she stared at Shin first and waited for him to say something; she was waiting for him to let her accompany him on the so-called training.

Shin wanted to reject the idea at first since he knew that this training was not going to be easy. Especially that she was still a nine-years-old little girl. But when he saw the expression on Laura's face which was full of expectation, he couldn't bring himself to do it.

So, all he could do was to sigh helplessly before asking. "This is going to be hard – you know that, right? This is not something a kid like you should be doing."

Hearing that, Laura lowered head once again while saying. "But I also want to become strong so that I can protect myself. That way, Big Brother will not worry about my safety too much."

Shin smiled when he heard that. Then he gently patted her head once again before saying. "Then start packing up some of your things, we are going. But make sure that you are not going to push yourself too hard, alright? You are still a kid after all, and it is our job to protect you in the first place."

Laura became overjoyed when she heard that. Then she gave Shin a huge smile before running towards her room to get some of her the things that she needed.

Shin watched her with a wry smile before muttering. "I wonder what will the Old Geezer think when he learns about this."

Hearing him, David suddenly smirked. "Don't worry, those two are actually planning to take her in the first place. That is why I am here; it is to pick her up."

"What!?" Shin suddenly turned his head at him with an even more surprised expression on his face than before. And after a second, he immediately asked. "And why do they want to do that?"

David scratched the back of his head for a moment before saying. "I am also not sure. But from what I can tell, this girl really possesses something that only those old monsters can see. Though, it is also true that I can see that she has some slight talent for Mentalism."

"Tch!" Shin suddenly clicked his tongue when he heard that. 'What is running inside the head of those two now?'

It didn't take long for Laura to pack the things that she needed, so she immediately went back at Shin not long after. She was smiling from ear to ear as she walked towards Shin while each of her hands were holding the straps of her backpack.

"She sure looks excited," muttered Shin as he looked at her.

Hearing that, David couldn't help but nod his head while also commenting. "It looks like she is going on an adventure."

Then Laura stopped in front of the two before saying. "I am ready," while still maintaining her innocent smile.

Shin sighed a little helplessly before gently stroking her small head while saying. "Let's go," with a smile of his own.

Chapter 415 Training Starts

.....

Professor Plum and Grandmaster Benn brought Shin and the others at the border of the Main Region and Northern Blue Region. From the spot that they were standing, this place seemed to be a dense and boundless forest.

Shin stared down at the forest for a moment before releasing a helpless sigh. It was not because of the sight that he was seeing, but because of Laura.

"Tsk! In the end, those two old men refuse to tell me the real reason why they want to bring this little girl in this place training," muttered Shin while glaring at Old Plum and Old Benn who were standing at the forefront of the group.

"They already told you about it, right? It was because Old Benn wanted to take her as his second disciple," answered David while sweeping his gaze at the dense forest.

"Tch! As if it was that simple," refuted Shin while turning his head at him.

Then a sudden thought entered his mind and asked. "And why are you tagging along? I thought you are too lazy to join us here?"

Hearing that, David couldn't help but remember some unpleasant memories that sent a sudden chill on his entire body. Then he gave Shin a wry smile before saying. "Well, I really don't want to come here but I don't have any other choice."

Then he scratched his cheeks a little before adding. "Let's say that I am going to be your sparring partner for your training since you are going to improve much faster during the battle."

He paused for a moment to turn his head at Laura who seemed to be quite excited for this 'adventure' before continuing. "And also, to babysit this little girl."

The group started walking for a few more moments before arriving at a humble nipa hut in the middle of the forest. And right after arriving, Shin immediately noticed the invisible Mentalism Formation that was surrounding the place. He could also tell that it was not a simple formation since he was feeling that it was formed by multiple formations that were combined into one.

To further prove what he was feeling, he turned his head at David who was also quite amazed at the special formation. "Heh! As expected from an old monster of the Mentalism Circle, this formation sure is amazing."

Meanwhile, Professor Plum suddenly turned his body around and said to the three young'uns. "Alright, this is where we are staying for now. Go on, and enter. We will let you rest for today so that you guys can settle here. We are going to start your training early in the morning tomorrow."

Then he paused briefly to turn his head at Shin and instructed. "Just wake up in your usual time a day."

Hearing that, Shin nodded his head before walking towards the nipa hut. And after arriving in front of the door, he immediately pushed it forward to enter.

But his steps came into a sudden halt the moment he saw the inside of the humble house. "What the!?"

Looking at it, Shin took a couple of steps backwards and turned his head left and right to check the length of the nipa hut. And after confirming that he was not wrong, he walked in front of the opened door once again to look inside.

But standing there further shocked him. He was sure that he was not seeing things the inside of the place was completely different from what he was expecting.

Since he was frozen in place, Laura stared at Shin's with a confused look on her face and knitting brow. She pursed her lips for a moment before taking a step to the side to see what Shin saw.

"Wow! It's so big!" said Laura as she looked through the opened door. Then she started running inside of the 'humble hut' to more of it.

Inside that small house was something that Shin never expected. He was expecting that this nipa hut should have a small room just like the small hut that Old Plum was staying. But in front of him was a place that looked like an interior of a grand hotel.

Seeing that Shin was still in the state of shock, David suddenly slapped his back while saying. "Hey! What are you surprised about? Such things are only a common occurrence for a Mentalist that is on Grandmaster Benn's level."

'Even my master's place is more amazing than this. There is even a hot spring and a sauna in one of its rooms,' he added in his mind while walking past Shin.

Feeling the burning pain on his back, Shin finally recovered himself and went back to normal. Though, he was still amazed deep inside. 'So, this is another application of Mentalism? I read such things before, but seeing it for the first time is really quite shocking.'

.....

Shin spent the rest of the day staying inside of his room to achieve his peak form. He didn't do anything aside from meditating and resting.

The next day, he walked out of his room at the usual time of his morning training. The sky was still dark – and since they were currently in the middle of the forest, the whole surrounding was too dark.

Fortunately, Shin's eyes were already trained on this kind of environment. So, it didn't take long for his eyes to adjust to the darkness.

Outside, Professor Plum and Grandmaster Benn were already waiting for Shin. And they saw him, the latter couldn't help but give him a little compliment. "Heh! Quite punctual, huh?"

Hearing that, Old Plum couldn't help but smirk a little since this was one of Shin's aspects that he really liked the most. 'This kid is already trained at the Mafia when I take him as my disciple. So, I don't have to worry about him slacking off on his training.'

After having that thought, he looked at Shin with his sharp eyes as if he was scanning Shin's body. A moment later, he nodded his head full of satisfaction before saying. "I see that you are in your peak form. If that is the case, then let's start this training already."

The moment he said those words, Grandmaster Benn immediately made a snap with his fingers. A second after that, a large amount of Mental Energy was suddenly released from his body and started rushing towards Shin, binding him in place.

Shin was surprised at first, but he still kept his calm and let the rushing Mental Energy enter his body. Not long after, everything went back to normal.

Shin tried to look inside his body and didn't see any change on it. Then he started doing some body movements he was still doing just fine. Due to that, he suddenly became confused. So, he looked at the two old men in front of him with his knitted eyebrows.

"Heh! You seem fine, right?" Professor Plum suddenly smirked when he saw that expression of Shin. But he immediately explained without wasting any more time. "Don't worry, its effects will so themselves at the latter stages of your training."

"And didn't we tell you that you should stop practicing your Martial-Arts for a moment, right? We are serious about that. During your time here, you are forbidden to use your Internal Qi in battle."

"This Old Fatty, put a special formation inside your body. Its effects are quite simple, it is going to seal all of your Internal Qi whenever you are going to use them in battle. If you are just going to train your control over them, then it is still fine."

And when Old Plum paused, Old Benn immediately took over. "You are relying too much on your Martial-Art Skills which is making you use your Mentalism Techniques in similar fashion. Which is not that wrong, but not right either. But you are wasting too much of your Mentalism potential, so we came up on this plan."

Then it was Professor Plum's turn once again. "During the morning, you are going to train under me while the rest of your time until night is for your Mentalism training."

"On my course, we are going to focus on solidifying your foundation even more, so that it could withstand the drawbacks of using my 'Yin-Yang Arts'. And if you are diligent enough, then you might even nullify all of the side effects of using them by the end of this training."

He took another pause to raise his right hand with two fingers opened. "There are two major parts of your training. The first part is for physical training while the other part focuses on controlling your twin Internal Qi."

After saying that, he looked at Shin and asked. "Anything that you want to clarify before we start?"

Hearing that, Shin fell into a deep thought for a moment before shaking his head to tell that he didn't need any other explanation.

When Old Plum saw that, he nodded his head with satisfaction and said. "Then you should start now."

He pointed his thumb behind him while saying. "See that huge barrel over there? I want you to fill it with water before the sun rises. If you failed to do that, then there is no breakfast for you."

After saying those, he threw a pair of small wooden buckets at Shin together with a wooden pole while adding to his instructions. "The river is on the eastern side of the mountain."

Shin nodded his head before picking up the buckets and wooden pole. He was about to start the task given to him when he suddenly heard the additional words from Old Plum. "I don't need to tell you that using any Internal Qi and Metal Energy are forbidden, right?"

Shin's step suddenly paused the moment he heard that. Then he turned his head to look at Old Plum with his twitching face. 'Do you know you know how high this mountain is?'

Old Plum just ignored the expression on Shin's face and further rubbed more salts on his wound. "And don't try cheating on us, that special formation inside your body is going to restrict you from using any of those energies."

'So, that is the real purpose of that formation?' thought Shin to himself as he gulped a mouthful of saliva. He was already starting to see what kind of hell he fell into.

Seeing that Shin was still not moving. Old Plum looked at him with a sneering face before saying. "Why are you still standing there? You don't want to have your breakfast?"

Hearing that, Shin suddenly clicked his tongue and started running down the mountain at full speed.

Chapter 416 Training (Part 1)

.....

Shin filled the wooden buckets with water before placing them down for a moment. Then he raised his head to look at the sky and saw that the sky was already starting to get bright.

"This should be the last one," muttered Shin as he took a deep breath.

He already forgot how many backs and forth he did just to fill up that huge wooden barrel. All he could remember was him climbing up and down from the mountaintop to the river below it. And given how high the mountain was, it was natural for him to be exhausted even if he was a Martial-Artist.

Shin regulated his breathing before picking up the wooden stick below him and putting the buckets which were filled with water on each of its ends. Then he kneeled on the ground before putting the wooden stick over his shoulders while holding the wooden buckets with each of his hands.

"Hup!" Then he stood up steadily before looking at his front. "Alright, let's finish this job!"

Swoosh!

Shin started running as he climbed up the mountain. He was also hopping from time to time. And even if he was running with a quick speed, not a single drop of water was spilled from the wooden buckets hanging on each end of the wooden stick.

It was because Shin was controlling the movements of the buckets to prevent them from swinging in the wrong way while he was running. Sometimes, he was also twisting his waist from side to side whenever he failed to properly control the movements of the wooden buckets.

At the same time, Shin never turned his head to take a look at those buckets. It was because he kept his eyes on the road. After all, climbing the mountain without the help of his Internal Qi or Mental Energy was not easy. What's more, the road had an uneven ground, so he needed to keep his eyes sharp so that he could look for a steady footing to prevent him from slipping.

The sky was already starting to get bright, so it was quite easy to see right now. But earlier, Shin fell on the ground quite a few times by stepping wrongly; he even got tripped by some stones on the road due to the darkness earlier.

But right now, Shin already got himself familiar with the road. So, he didn't encounter many problems along the way this time.

Not long after, he arrived at the mountaintop and filled the wooden barrel with the water that he brought. After that, he placed both of his hands on each side of his waist while taking a deep breath.

When he finally steadied his breathing once again, he immediately turned his head left and right to look for Professor Plum. "And where did that Old Geezer go?"

.....

Meanwhile, Professor Plum was sitting on a rocking chair behind the nipa hut that they were staying in. He was reading a scroll on his hand with great amusement. He had already read this scroll for a lot of times already, but no matter how many times he did, he still kept being amazed every time he read it.

"Tsk! As expected of that guy. To think that he is able to make my 'Black Dragon Arts' complement the Demonic Qi? He is sure of a one and lifetime genius," muttered Professor Plum as he read the scroll.

A moment later, he sensed Shin walking towards him. Feeling that, he immediately closed the scroll and turned his head in that direction. "That is quite fast. You still have a lot of time to spare."

Shin stopped before meters in front of Old Plum before sitting on the ground. "So, what's next now?"

Hearing that, Professor Plum couldn't help but smirked a little before saying. "Looks like you are quite energetic, huh? Then starting tomorrow, you are required to do some basic foundation training before taking the water from the river. The same rules apply – if you failed to do your task, there was no breakfast for you."

He paused for a moment and squinted his eyes while looking at Shin. After a few moments of observation, he suddenly said. "Not bad. Looks like your Dantian is returning back to normal."

Then he threw the scroll that he was holding at Shin while saying. "Then read this for now. It is a modified version of my 'Black Dragon Arts'. It is specially made for you so that you can control your Demonic Qi properly."

"There is also a 'Qi Circulation Method' written to it. So, it is better you start with that first," he added while leaning his back on the rocking chair.

He didn't claim the ownership of the scroll since it was not his in the first place. Though, he also didn't bother to tell Shin about the truth to avoid some misunderstanding.

Meanwhile, Shin looked at the scroll curiously. He unrolled it to take a quick peek on its contents. And while he was looking at it, he heard Old Plum once again. "When I said read, you are only allowed to read it. Don't be too excited to try doing its contents on yourself. I am going to guide you personally during the course of your training, so don't do anything reckless again."

Hearing that, Shin nodded his head repeatedly while scanning the contents of the scroll. And while he was doing that, Old Plum was quietly observing him with his squinting eyes.

Professor Plum was trying to see if Shin was getting tempted by power described on that scroll. But after a few moments of observation, he saw that Shin was really just curious about it. Given that, he nodded his head and said. "Alright, you can go now and take your breakfast. We will continue after you are done with it."

Shin nodded his head once again after hearing that. Then he immediately closed the scroll before standing up. After that, he bowed at Old Plum to excuse himself before walking towards the cottage.

.....

Not long later, Shin immediately went back to Professor Plum to continue his training. And when he arrived at the back of their cottage his eyes were immediately attracted to wooden blocks hanging on a branch of a tree.

He was quite familiar with that setup since Old Plum asked him to do this kind of training before. It was a specialized training to improve one's awareness and reflexes.

But Shin immediately knitted his eyebrows the moment he saw that. It was because he already graduated from doing this training ages ago.

With his current state, he could do this training for as long as he wanted. So, he felt that there was no point at doing this training now. Regardless, he still walked at Old Plum to hear his instructions.

When he arrived, Old Plum immediately said. "You're already familiar with those things, right?"

Shin quickly nodded his head. And when he did, Professor Plum immediately added. "Then quickly stand on that circle and carefully listen to my instructions."

Shin was knitting his eyebrows when he heard that. But he still complied with the given instructions.

When he was already standing at the center of the circle Old Plum suddenly said. "This training still has the same purpose as before, but it had a little trick on it."

He then looked at Shin before asking. "What can you see on the wooden blocks?"

Hearing that, Shin looked at the wooden block confusedly before observing them. A moment later, he immediately noticed that these blocks were indeed somewhat strange. They had different sizes and colors.

There were three colors in total; red, yellow and blue. While the sizes seemed to be categorized as small, medium and large.

When Old Plum made sure that Shin already saw all of that, he immediately added. "You need to hit the red ones directly while the blue ones need to be deflected. Meanwhile, you need to avoid the yellow ones."

Then Professor Plum paused for a moment as if he was contemplating something. And after a few seconds of thinking, he finally said. "That's it for now. I will tell you the purpose of the sizes later."

Hearing that, Shin suddenly asked. "The same rules applied? I can make the blocks collide with each other as long as the strings are not entangled with each other while I can't step out of the circle, right?"

Old Plum nodded his head when he heard that before closing his eyes to take a nap.

"No time limit this time?" asked Shin once again.

"There is no need for that. You can continue doing it until lunch since that is my only plan for today," answered Professor Plum almost instantly.

After getting the confirmation, Shin stood in at the very center of the circle while straightening his back. Then he closed his eyes while taking a deep breath to enter a 'Deep Meditation State' (his first calming technique).

And when he successfully entered that state, he quickly reopened his eyes before quickly throwing a strong punch in the air.

Whoosh!

That punch sent the surrounding air in all directions and made the wooden blocks dance alongside it. After a second they started swinging back at Shin in a chaotic manner.

Seeing that, Shin immediately took a battle stance while reading the movements of the blocks with his senses. And a moment later, a red block was the first to arrive at Shin.

Pak!

Without any hesitation, Shin quickly threw his fist at it which made it fly back and collided with another block.

After that, he quickly retracted his arm to deflect an incoming blue block with the back of his hand.

Pak!

Immediately after that, he quickly leaned his body backwards to dodge a yellow block.

Similar series of actions lasted for a few more seconds before Shin made a mistake; he slapped a yellow block to the side instead of dodging it.

Due to that, Shin suddenly knitted his eyebrows. It was not that he couldn't dodge this certain block, but his body moved according to its instincts; he instinctively chose to deflect it since he was thinking that it was the best way to do so.

After that, he relaxed himself for a moment before restarting once again. But it didn't last long before he made another mistake. And this time, he dodged a red block instead of hitting it. And when he did another round, the mistake that he did was dodging a blue block.

Shin was forced to stop for a moment. "So, that was it. The other purpose of this training is to get rid of my habits. Since I have my 'Immediate Response' talent, I end up relying on it too much without me knowing. And I unconsciously moving my body according it most of the time."

"If my opponent knows about this, then they can use it against me by baiting my instincts. Interesting!"

Thinking about that, Shin immediately became motivated at continuing his special training. So, he immediately restarted another round with an excited look on his face.

Meanwhile, Old Plum couldn't help but form a satisfied smile when he heard it. 'It is really good to have a bright disciple. Teaching them sure is easy.'

Chapter 417 Training (Part 2)

.....

Shin was currently sitting on the ground right beside Professor Plum. It was near lunchtime, so his Martial-Arts training for today was already coming to an end. Though, he was not satisfied with his current progress.

Five minutes was his longest record before he made another mistake. That was not the worst but it was also not even good.

"Tch! I don't expect that getting rid of my battle habits is this hard," muttered Shin as he stared at the wooden blocks hanging in the branch of the tree.

A moment later, Professor Plum opened his eyes a little before saying to Shin. "If you already rest enough, then you can go back inside now and take your lunch before that Old Fatty comes here personally to pick you up."

He took a brief pause to close his eyes before continuing. "You don't have to come at me tomorrow. You can just redo what I told you earlier."

Shin nodded his head after hearing that. Then he immediately stood up and turned at Professor Plum and took a bow before leaving.

While he was walking away, Old Plum slightly opened his eyes once again and stared at Shin's back as he walked away. He squinted his eyes a little while looking at Shin as if he could see something that couldn't easily be seen. And after a quick smirk, he closed his eyes once again before going back to sleep.

...

After taking his lunch, Shin immediately looked for Grandmaster Benn. He heard from David that Old Benn was already training Laura.

Shin was quite curious what kind of training did that Old Fatty prepare Laura. She was still a young girl and didn't have any kind of training experience. But what he saw was entirely different from what he was expecting.

After arriving, his eyes immediately saw Laura sitting in front of a wooden table and seemed to be drawing something.

Shin knitted his eyebrows for a moment before walking towards her to take a look at what she was doing. He didn't disturb her when he arrived; he just stood behind her and watched her draw silently.

At first, he thought that she was only drawing some doodles on her paper since what he saw on it were seemingly random things. But he suddenly discovered something the more he looked at what he was doing.

"This!" Shin became shocked when he finally realized what she was drawing. Then he looked at Laura with a astounded look on his face as the little girl was seemingly enjoying what she was doing. In fact, she was even humming and swinging her legs back and forth while drawing.

He continued to observe for quite some time before turning his head around to look for Grandmaster Benn. It didn't long for him to find the old man as he was currently meditating underneath the shades of the tree not far from them.

He took one last look at Laura before walking towards Old Benn. And right after arriving, he tried to open his mouth to say something but no words came out. It was because he didn't know how he was going to address Grandmaster Benn.

He knew Professor Plum long enough, so they quite 'close' at each other. And due to that, he already got used at calling him Old Geezer. But Grandmaster Benn was quite different – they only met just recently so he was not sure if it was alright to treat him just like how he treated Professor Plum.

While Shin was still caught in a dilemma, Old Benn suddenly smirked as if he could read what was running inside Shin's head. "Just call me however you want. I don't really mind. You can also call me Old Fatty like your master. After all, it is a nickname that I choose for myself."

Shin was slightly taken aback after hearing that but he immediately recovered himself not long after. And after a brief moment of hesitation, he suddenly said while bowing. "I understand, teacher."

Hearing that, it was Grandmaster Benn's turn to be surprised. He even opened his eyes slightly to look at Shin.

A moment later, he started chuckling for a moment before muttering to himself. "This is quite unexpected."

Shin knitted his eyebrows for a moment when he heard that but he didn't put much thought in it. Instead, he raised his body once again before asking with a polite tone. "Are we not going to start our training yet?"

Hearing that, Grandmaster Benn couldn't hold himself any longer and started laughing heartedly. "That Old Monster really described you very accurately. You are always eager to learn more."

It took him quite some time to calm himself down before he could continue. "You are not even asking me about that little girl. Are you not interested in how she was doing?"

Shin stared at Old Benn for a moment before responding. "I am not sure about that. But from what I can see, she seemed to be really talented in terms of that thing."

"She is not only good at Mentalism Runes. She even has a potential to become a 'Great Formation Master' in the future. She is not aware of it now, but sooner or later that potential will grow stronger," said Grandmaster Benn almost instantly.

Then he turned silent for a moment before adding with a serious tone. "But your Mentalism Talent is no way weaker than her. In fact, there is a high possibility that yours is way greater than her potential."

Hearing that, Shin became quiet for a moment and didn't immediately respond. And when Old Benn saw that, he immediately asked. "So, what do you think? Do you want to train like her? From what I can see, you are probably going to become an 'Advance Talisman Master' at the very least by the end of this training."

Shin became even more quiet after hearing that. He thought to himself for a moment before shaking his head while saying. "No, I prefer focusing on solidifying my Mentalism foundation for now before anything else."

He then turned his head at Laura's direction and said. "Laura is still young so she doesn't have any idea of what she is actually doing. In fact, she may even think that those things that she was drawing are some random scribbles."

"Given that, she is going to build a very solid foundation at creating talismans and setting up formations without having any kind of pressure."

After that, Shin took a short pause to take a deep breath before continuing. "On the other hand, my case is completely different. I already passed the age where I can be trained in the same way as her, so training me with the same method will only put more pressure on me which is only going to slow down my progress."

"Instead, it is better for me to focus on building up my Mentalism foundation step by step and make it more solid so that training on the other aspects is going to be much easier in the future."

"Maybe it is true that I am going to become an 'Advance Talisman Master' if I take that shortcut. But I am sure that my Mentalism Attainment is going to lag behind due to being stuck at a certain bottleneck."

The lips of Grandmaster Benn suddenly curved into a satisfied smile after hearing all of that. He already heard from Professor Plum that this kid was very sharp and always considering the bigger picture during his training, but he didn't expect that the degree of Shin's understanding already reached this level.

Due to that, he became quite excited at teaching him. But before that, he needed to check Shin's current progress. "How was your control over your Mental Energy."

Shin knitted his eyebrows as he thought for a moment before replying. "I am not sure how much improvement I made. But when I am doing the 'Control Training', I can at least do 8 different revolutions up to 12 at most."

He then paused for a moment before quickly adding. "I can do it with an alternating clockwise and counterclockwise direction per revolution. The stones also have different sizes on each revolution with different speed at the same time."

When Grandmaster Benn heard all of that, the smile that he was wearing suddenly turned stiff as he thought to himself. 'Monster! He only started training his Mentalism not long ago yet he already reached that kind of level? Most of the Mentalists in his level are already struggling at doing the 7th revolution with '2 restrictions' yet he is already doing the 12th with '3 restrictions'?'

Seeing the expression on Old Benn's face, Shin misunderstood it as him not doing enough. So, he immediately bowed his head while saying. "I will do my best to improve myself better! So, please guide me!"

Grandmaster Benn already recovered himself after a second. But when he heard Shin's additional words, the corner of his mouth couldn't help but twitch uncontrollably as he didn't know what to say anymore.

Old Benn took a deep breath to calm himself down before standing from the ground and said. "Come with me."

Seeing that, Shin immediately followed after him without having any hesitation. And after a couple of minutes, he arrived at the bottom of the mountain.

Shin was quite confused at first why they walked down this far. But he still chose to turn silent and waited for Old Ben's instructions.

When they stopped, Grandmaster Benn turned his head around to check the soundings before nodding his head "This should be enough."

After that, Old Benn tapped his foot on the ground a couple of times.

Shin felt a faint ripple on the ground before a mini-earthquake occurred. And before Shin could even react, a huge rock boulder was suddenly lifted from the ground and appeared in front of them.

That boulder has a spherical shape. Its height from the ground was at least twice as Shin so he looked like an ant in front of it.

A moment later, Grandmaster Benn turned around and looked at Shin with a smirking face. "See this 'rock'? Your task is to push it up towards the mountaintop within three days. You are forbidden to use your physical strength at doing it. I need you to only use your Mentalism Energy alone."

"If you failed to do that at the given deadline, another boulder with the same size is going to be added. And we are not going to proceed on your next training until you finish this task."

"So, if you want to learn more about Mentalism, then finish this task as soon as possible," he added while tapping the huge boulder.

Chapter 418 Training (Part 3)

.....

"As long as you bring this rock boulder on the mountain top, then you already finished the task," said Grandmaster Benn while tapping the huge rock boulder beside him.

"No other rules required? Just bringing it on top of the mountain without using any physical strength?" asked Shin almost instantly.

Reading what was in Shin's mind, Old Benn suddenly started grinning widely before nodding his head. "Anything is fine, as long as you don't use any Martial-Arts or directly use your brute strength to push it up."

"So, I can turn it into pieces before bringing it up on the mountaintop?" asked Shin immediately.

Hearing this, Grandmaster Benn grinned even widely before answering. "You can also try that."

Then he started walking towards the mountaintop. And while he was brushing past Shin, he suddenly added. "Just remember, you need to bring it up within three days if you don't want another one to be added."

Shin slightly nodded his head before walking towards the rocky boulder while releasing his Mental Energy. He stopped a few meters away from that huge boulder before squatting his hips to take his battle stance.

With a deep breath, he controlled all of the Mental Energy that he summoned and gathered them on both of his hands. And when the accumulation of energies reached their peak, he quickly threw a barrage of consecutive punches in the air and sent a succeeding Mental Energy Wave at the boulder.

'Four Symbol Scripture: Savage Tiger Cannon'

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

Boom! Boom! Boom!

A cloud of dust started to form around the rock boulder as Shin bombarding it with his energy waves. And from the looks of it, this set of Mental Energy Waves were much stronger than how it was used before.

Sitting on a three branch few meters away, Grandmaster Benn watched Shin do all of that with great amusement. "Not bad. He is getting better at building up his Mental Energy before throwing an attack. I guess doing that control training really gives him some good benefits."

"But... you are still relying on your 'brute strength'. Mentalism is different from Martial-Arts where you can win with either overwhelming strength or unrivaled power; Mentalism is all about control and skills."

As he said those words, Shin finally stopped attacking. And when the dust that was formed due to his attacks started to settle down, he immediately frowned his eyebrows before muttering to himself. "Of course, it is not that simple. So, I still need to do some puzzles in the end."

At first look, there was nothing wrong with this rock boulder; it was just an ordinary rock with a very huge size. So, Shin tried attacking it using one of his Mentalism Techniques to test the waters. And after seeing that the boulder was still standing without having any scratch on it, it was quite obvious that it was not an ordinary boulder that could easily be destroyed.

While he was attacking earlier, Shin's Mentalism sense could feel an invisible barrier surrounding the rock boulder. And from the looks of it, that barrier was not an ordinary one either.

"Tsk! A 'Defensive Formation' perhaps?" Shin clicked his tongue realizing it.

After that, he walked towards the rock boulder before placing his hand on its surface. Then he closed his eyes before gently releasing his Mental Energy and slowly pouring them at the barrier surrounding the boulder.

Not long after, his Mental Energy covered the entire boulder. And due to that, Shin started 'seeing' a bunch of runes on the surface of that invisible barrier.

Shin observed them one by one before memorizing everything. After a few more moments, he finally took off his hand from the surface of the boulder before falling into a deep thought.

'Breaking the formation is one thing, but bringing it on top of the mountain is another thing. Smashing it into pieces may be the easiest way, but I feel that bringing it there whole and intact is going to give me more benefits. Though, I am still not sure what it is.'

After contemplating on it for a moment, Shin immediately forgot about the second matter and decided to only focus on the first problem. "Breaking this Defensive Formation is going to be my main problem as I still haven't learned much about the Mentalism Formations – I only read quite a few of them on the 'Four Symbol Scripture' and 'Jade Kirin Scripture'."

"By going to common knowledge, only Mentalists who reached the 'Venerable Realm' were the ones who could set a Mentalism Formation. But that doesn't mean they were the only ones who could unseal it."

"As long as someone is skilled and knowledgeable enough, even someone who is at the 'Grandmaster Realm' can figure out how to break it. But 'knowing how to break it' and 'breaking it personally' are two entirely different things. Because the difference between the quality and quantity of Mental Energies is going to be vast – and knowledge will not be able to fill it alone."

"So, how am I going to break this? I am sure that Teacher is not unreasonable enough to give me a task that is impossible to be done."

Shin turned completely silent when he was thinking about this. And when Grandmaster Benn saw that, his lips suddenly started curving upwards and formed a satisfied smile. "So, that Old Monster is right. This kid is mostly using his 'instincts' to solve his problems. But sometimes, he is forced to use his head when he encounters a 'problem' that can't be solved by his 'instincts' alone."

"Now, this is quite a problem for us too. He possessed the 'Immediate Response' talent, so it is quite normal for him to move according to his instincts since it is an optimal path for him to grow his talent and transform it into its ultimate form, the 'Ultra Instincts'."

"But this kid also has a bright head on his shoulders too – which is a good trait too. Unfortunately, it is going to conflict with his 'instincts' which will block the path of his talent."

He paused for a moment to think about something before muttering. "Based on the records, to achieve the 'Ultra Instincts', someone needs to separate their consciousness from their bodies so that their bodies could move and fight free from being tied with their own thoughts and emotions."

After that, he turned his head to the side and looked at David who just arrived. "So, if this kid possessed both that 'instincts' and 'bright head', those two are just going to be in conflict and will hold back each other's progress."

"And there are only two ways to fix it – which is to either separate them from each other or combine them altogether."

Then, Grandmaster Benn paused for a moment and waited for David to arrive. And when the latter finally stood right beside him, he continued. "Is what 'you' said."

Hearing that, David just shrugged his shoulders before replying. "I just delivered what they instructed me to do."

He took a brief pause to turn his head at Shin while saying. "But it seems like you, 'Old Monsters', are still thinking differently."

"One is trying to combine 'them' while the other one is trying to separate 'them' which pretty much confuses me and makes me worried at the same time."

Then he turned his head back at Grandmaster Benn before adding. "With all due respect, Sir. I don't want to die yet. If something goes wrong, I am surely going to be in trouble."

Hearing that, Old Benn suddenly smirked before saying. "Kid, as you said, we are already 'Old Monsters'. So, isn't it better to trust us a little more? After all, we have already accumulated a lot of experience given our age."

David pursed his lips a little when he heard that before asking. "If that is the case, isn't it better to do it the other way around?"

"If Shin started practicing to separate his consciousness from his body, then achieving the 'Ultra instincts' is going to be much faster. And if he combined the two together, then he will achieve that perfect state of Kaleidoscope Mentalism, especially that he possesses the 'Spiritual Embryo' special body," he added while pointing at Shin.

Grandmaster Benn started grinning mysteriously while saying. "I told you, just trust us. All you needed to do is to wait for its results."

And after a brief moment of silence, he suddenly added with a mystifying tone. "And don't take us for a fool. In this world, there are few people who could see the truth behind everything."

"Maybe we do not fall in that category entirely, but we still have our own means to see something that most of the other experts can't."

David knitted his eyebrows a little the moment he heard that. But he immediately eased them a second later before slightly nodding his head. And with that, the two of them suddenly turned silent as they observed Shin from a distance.

Chapter 419 Training (Part 4)

.....

"The answer should be here," muttered Shin as he looked at the huge rock boulder in front of him.

A moment later, he closed his eyes before spreading his Mental Energy once again and covered around the rock boulder for another time. And at the same time, his consciousness was also spread alongside that Mental Energy.

After that, Shin started observing the invisible runes around the boulder. Minutes later, he reopened his eyes and smirked. "So, that was it."

Then Shin sat crossed-legs on the ground before clasping his hands together while closing his eyes again. "Hup!"

Together with his actions, the Mental Energy inside his body started rushing out continuously like the flowing water from the river.

Shin made some hand gestures with an extreme speed and great precision. Alongside it, the Mental Energy surrounding him moved accordingly. Moments later, he suddenly reopened his eyes while thrusting his hand forward.

Pointing his hand at the huge boulder in front of him, the surrounding Mental Energy moved immediately accordingly – they started rushing towards the direction that he was pointing.

Those Mental Energy were focused on a single point where a particular rune was located. But when they reached that spot, the movements of the gusting Mental Energy suddenly came into a sudden halt as if they were being blocked by an immovable force.

Shin tried to persist for a few more moments before he suddenly remembered some of the words that Grandmaster Benn had told him earlier. 'Without the help of your 'Physical Strength'.'

Thinking about that, Shin was finally able to figure out the real meaning behind those words. "So, he doesn't want me to solve this with a brute force. Instead, he is expecting me to break this formation with the skills that learned so far."

"Did he want to evaluate how much of the 'Four Symbol Scripture' I understand," he muttered before pursing his lips a little. 'Tsk! Riddles, just like that Old Geezer.'

After that, he suddenly squinted his eyes a little before focusing some of his Mental Energy on his eyes. Due to that, his eyes started glowing with a faint golden glow as he stared at the particular rune that he was trying to break.

Then Shin started recalling all of the basic runes inside his head, trying to find what this particular rune was for. It didn't long for him to figure out the use of that rune.

"This rune stands for 'Strong and Steady' under the 'Strength Category'," muttered Shin to himself as he pulled his Mental Energy back together with the backward movements of his hand.

"And to break this particular rune, I need to hit it repeatedly until it finally collapses," Shin continued while making a few more hand gestures.

A moment later, he gathered the Mental Energy around him before focusing them on his right hand. And when the accumulation of the energies reached its peak, Shin suddenly thrust his hand forward and sent the gathered Mental Energy at the spot where 'Strong and Steady Rune' was located.

Bang!

But strangely, the Mental Energy didn't just hit the Rune once. Instead, it hit the rune repeatedly like the waves on the shore – it was one of the Mentalism Techniques that Shin had learned and mastered.

'Four Symbol Scripture: Turtle General's Pounding'

Bang! Bang! Bang!

Shin used the same move repeatedly all the way until he exhausted his Mental Energy on his reserves. But at the same time, he also managed to break the rune in the end.

Despite being exhausted, Shin still looked just fine – and it was because of his monstrous willpower. Most of the Mentalists on his level might have fainted already for exhausting their Mental Energies.

But Shin was different, he could stay awake even if he exhausted all of his Mental Energy reserves because of his strong will. And together with his tough body which was trained through Martial-Arts, a 'Mental Energy Exhaustion' didn't put much trouble for him. Unless, both his body and mind were exhausted at the same time.

Shin could immediately recover his exhausted Mental Energy through some meditation, but he thought against it since he wanted to digest the insights that he got from breaking the first rune.

After breaking the rune, Shin was able to discover another method for his Mentalism. That 'Strong and Steady Rune' gave him some idea how useful the runes were in battle. And that was when he recalled about the 'Mentalism Enhancement' which was the counterpart of the 'Qi Reinforcement' of Martial-Arts.

These two might have the same purpose, but the way they were used was quite different.

Qi Reinforcement Skills were skills used to empower the body of a Martial-Artist, turning their bodies into a dangerous weapon itself. It was like a sharpener that could make a sword even sharper.

Some of the Qi Reinforcement Skills could also be used for empowering a weapon. By channeling the Internal Qi of a Martial-Artist, the weapons that they were using tended to become much powerful and even stronger.

Even an ordinary stick could transform into a sharp sword or a tough polearm weapon if they were empowered by Qi Reinforcement Skill.

Meanwhile, 'Mentalism Enhancement Techniques' were slightly different.

Unlike the Qi Reinforcement Skill where the Martial-Artists needed to keep channeling their Internal Qi to keep the skill active, 'Mentalism Enhancement Techniques' didn't have such restrictions.

As long as the 'Rune Sequence' were still intact and not damaged, any 'Enhancement Techniques' could become active forever.

And if the 'Qi Reinforcement Skills' were only restricted to the Martial-Artist that was using it and the weapons that they were using, 'Mentalism Enhancement Techniques' could be used on almost anything. After all, the Mentalist only needed to draw the right 'Rune Sequence' to keep it active.

This was also the reason why the weapons created by Mentalists were pretty much famous around the world. It was because those weapons could be used by either a Martial-Artist or a Mentalist.

And if that kind of weapon was further empowered by a particular 'Qi Reinforcement Skill' that could complement it, the wielder would have a weapon enhanced by a 'Unified Strengthening'; a specialized technique resulting from combining the two methods.

"Unified Strengthening," muttered Shin as he recalled his conversation with Professor Plum.

During that time, Shin decided to walk down the path of practicing both Martial-Arts and Mentalism. And with a goal of combining them in the end.

"Hu!" Shin took a deep breath as he collected his thoughts before opening his eyes. And this time, there was a determined look on his face.

After that, he slowly raised his hand in front of him while focusing some Mental Energy at the tip of his index finger. Seconds later, the tip of his finger suddenly shone with a faint golden light as he used it to write something in the air.

Shin was moving his hand in a slow manner but they had some accurate directions. And when his hand finally stopped, a rune suddenly appeared in front of him, floating in the air. It was the same rune that he was trying to break earlier, the 'Strong and Steady Rune'.

While he was trying to break it earlier, Shin was also observing its patterns carefully so that he could memorize it.

Shin stared at the floating rune in front of him, trying to see if he drew it right. After a few moments of observing, Shin nodded his head with a satisfied look on his face and muttered. "That should be right."

After that, he rested for a few more moments, mediating. And when recovered his Mental Energy back to full, he raised his head and looked at the huge boulder in front of him while saying. "This kind of training is quite interesting."

"It can train my control over my Mental Energy while also teaching me about the Mentalism Runes. What's more, it can also evaluate my current progress on each of my Techniques."

Then he suddenly started grinning from ear to ear, saying. "So, Which rune should I learn next?"

...

At the same time, Grandmaster Benn and David saw everything from a distance. The former kept nodding his head repeatedly for being impressed and satisfied while the latter was staring at Shin with a dumbfounded look on his face.

"Hey! Isn't it a little too unfair? How can he draw the rune in the air already! He just learned it a few minutes earlier!" said David, feeling some 'injustice'.

Hearing that, Old Benn suddenly smirked before asking. "How many days did you spend to memorize all of the runes written in the Mentalism Manual?"

David thought for a moment before replying. "A day of memorization-... I guess. And I am able to draw all of them like that in a day or two after memorizing them all."

'Aren't you a monster too?' thought Grandmaster Benn as he looked at David with a skeptical face.

After that, he crossed his hands on his back before starting to walk away. And while walking, he suddenly muttered. "I guess, it is possible for this kid to learn all of the runes in three days then."

Meanwhile, David ignored his worlds as he squinted his eyes while looking at Shin. Then he put his hand on his chin while thinking to himself. 'Of course, a pair of monsters would surely give birth to another monster.'

He continued to watch for a few more moments before deciding to leave. He stretched his body a little while muttering to himself. "Given his current progress, I guess I need to make my move after a day or two. Tsk! Such a drag."

Chapter 420 Intial Progress

.....

Shin spent the next two days training the same task that was given to him.

He was going to wake up before the sun rose. Then he immediately did some foundation training before climbing down the mountain to take some water at the river. And given that he already went on the

same path on the first day, he immediately became familiar with the road. Due to that, filling the wooden barrel became too easy for him.

With that, he got a lot of free time before the sun could even rise. But he didn't take that time to rest. Instead, he immediately proceeded at the next training plan without wasting much of his time.

During the span of two days, Shin was now able to hold himself for more than an hour when he was doing his training with the wooden blocks. He failed to last more than that only because he kept on challenging himself. Every time he reached the ten-minute mark, he was always going to speed up the pace of his training; and the speed would always be twice of the previous pace.

For the record, the longest time that he achieved was 1 hour and 48 minutes. This achievement could already be considered as an amazing feat, but Shin was quite greedy and not satisfied with it. What he wanted was to reach the level where he could stop whenever he wanted to.

Regardless, Shin was able to get a lot of benefits already. He already got rid of his battle habits with just two days of doing this training routine. At the same time, he also became conscious with every move that he was making.

He was not relying on his instincts anymore. And even if he was still using it to respond with every movement of the wooden blocks, he was still using his mind to find the most optimal course of action. Meaning, he was able to use both of his 'mind' and 'body' at the same time. Though, maintaining this state was putting quite a tool on him which was one of the reasons why he couldn't hold himself at doing this special training for long.

Meanwhile, his Mentalism Training was not lagging behind either. In fact, his achievements in this discipline were much greater compared to his Martial-Arts Training, which also surprised even himself.

When noon arrived, Shin was going to take his lunch briefly before immediately going down the mountain for another time. And after arriving at the usual spot, he immediately went to proceed at breaking the Mentalism Formation that had been set up on the rock boulder.

On the first day, he was able to break almost half of the runes set up on the surface rock boulder. At the same time, he was also able to memorize each rune – and alongside it, he also managed to draw each of them in the air just like what he did with the first rune.

As more time passed, Shin became more familiar with this method; and the more runes he understood, the easier for him to break down the preceding runes.

But that was not the only thing that Shin got. Because he also started to see the purpose and usage of each rune every time he successfully deciphers them.

During this time, Shin also understood the other purpose of this training. Not only it taught him about the Mentalism Runes, but it also helped him to further understand each of the Mentalism Techniques that he learned so far.

Given that each rune needed a particular technique to break them, Shin attained a whole new understanding with each of his Mentalism Techniques. And due to that, using them became much easier for him.

At the same time, Shin also discovered that doing this kind of training also benefited his control over his Mental Energy. The more Mentalism Runes he learned, the easier for him to manipulate his Mental Energy while preparing for his Mentalism Techniques.

It was like learning a new rune gave him more options at using them. And the more options he had, the easier for him to see the most practical way to use each of his Mentalism Techniques.

Shin managed to complete all of the runes at the latter part of the second day. And that news gave quite a blow on David's confidence. He was quite proud about his own accomplishments regarding the Mentalism Discipline – and his achievement of learning all of the Mentalism Runes within a single day could already be considered as the best record so far. But Shin just surpassed him on that.

Shin did his Mentalism Training during noon until dusk at most, which was practically a quarter of the day. And since he completed the task given to him on the second day, which meant that he only spent half a day learning all of the Mentalism Runes.

So, technically, Shin actually broke David's record. And as if rubbing some salt on his wound, Shin was also able to perfectly draw each of the runes in the air at the same time.

David only did the same feat on the next day after he memorized all of the Mentalism Runes, but it only took Shin half a day to do both.

And to further hit him with an even harder blow, the little girl beside him was even doing a similar feat.

Laura still didn't have any Mental Energy since she still hadn't undergone her 'meditation awakening'.

But her 'achievements' were not way less than Shin – she also memorized all of the runes just like Shin and she did it on the same day when Grandmaster Benn told her about it. Meaning, she also completed the course within a day.

What's more, she was also able to perfectly draw them on paper. So, she also surpassed David's record technically.

"What's with these two? Especially with this girl. Is she a reincarnation of an expert from the old era, just like those novel books? Her growth rate makes no sense." muttered David to himself while looking at Laura who seemed to be enjoying what she was doing.

She was currently in the middle of drawing something on her paper. And with a closer look, David could tell that she was now starting to learn how to draw a real 'Rune Sequence' without her knowing.

Seeing that, David could only sigh helplessly while shaking his head with a bitter smile on his face.

Bang!

Then he heard a loud sound coming from a distance. Looking at it, he saw Shin 'place' the huge rock boulder on the ground.

"He really did it this time," muttered David before walking towards Shin.

Meanwhile, Shin was currently wearing a satisfied smile on his face. Breaking the formation on set up on the rock boulder was one thing, but bringing it on top of the mountain was another matter.

Given the size of the boulder, it was pretty much impossible for Shin to push it up with his Mental Energy alone. No matter how hard he was going to try, that boulder would not move even if he exhausted all of the Mental Energy that he had.

Fortunately, he already learned about Mentalism Runes.

What he did was to draw some runes on the surface of the rock boulder which could make it a little lighter. At the same time, he also drew some strengthening runes on his body, activating some basic Mentalism Enhancement Techniques.

Then Shin pushed the rock boulder using his Mental Energy. He refused to touch it since he wanted to finish this task without the help of his physical strength. He also refused to use any attacking method since he was thinking it was another form of 'physical strength'. Instead, he used his utility techniques to push that boulder slowly but surely.

He first casted a barrier around him, using a particular technique under the 'Heavenly Turtle Techniques'. Then he reinforced the barrier using an enhancement technique of the 'Immortal Phoenix Method'.

After that, he casted a strengthening technique from the 'Holy Dragon Method' on his body before using a movement technique of the 'Saint Tiger Method'.

With all of those, Shin pushed the rock boulder by colliding it with the barrier that he had set up. The process might be slow and hard but Shin made sure that he was moving steadily. And when he reached the mountaintop, the accumulated stress on his body finally kicked in and made him fall on the ground, exhausted.

Regardless, Shin was still wearing his satisfied smile on his face while looking at the sky. "D*mn! That sure is exhausting, but I still can't help myself but smile."

Then David finally arrived and stood on the side while looking at him. "That is because you can clearly see the rate of your growth."

Hearing that, Shin nodded his head slightly and continued to stare at the sky.

David shook his head when he saw that. But after a moment of silence, he suddenly said. "Look for me once you are done resting, there is something I want to tell you."

Then he shook his head for another time when he saw Shin starting closing his eyes. After that, he lifted Shin from the ground using his Metal Energy before bringing him into the cottage.