

Destiny 571

Chapter 571 The Wanderer And The Swordmaster (Part 1)

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After distancing themselves away from each other, the middle-aged man cleared his throat for a moment before saying "For the sake of those guys that didn't know who I am, let me introduce myself first."

"I'm one of the department heads of this academy, Serio Cervantes. And if things proceed smoothly as we planned, then some of you will be learning under me," he added to introduce himself.

After that, he swept his gaze at everyone once again before continuing. "Alright, for now, I need you to hold these crystals for now."

He then snapped with his fingers to summon a huge floating crystal in front of each group before saying. "Your test is quite simple; you guys only need to protect these crystals from being destroyed by your rivals. It is up to you who will be guarding the crystals and who will be on the offensive."

"This is a team royal rumble, so it means that you can fight each other or form an alliance with the others."

He then paused for a moment to summon a floating crystal of his own before continuing. "You can also try destroying mine and I will give you extra points if you are successful."

Hearing that, the pairs started discussing with each other, forming some plans that they were going to do. And when Serio saw that, he immediately nodded his head before adding. "And one more thing, I must remind you that this test is not all about winning or losing. All we need from you is to show us what you can do so that we can figure out which professor is most suitable to train and teach you."

"I will give you ten minutes at most to discuss your strategies with your partners before we proceed."

He trailed his words for a moment, waiting for the others to fully digest everything that he just said before continuing. "Alright! That should be everything that I need to say, so the rest is all up to you. This whole place is going to be your main battlefield so feel free to go on a rampage."

After that, he suddenly disappeared from his spot and left everyone behind. And when the others saw that, they immediately scattered and distanced themselves away from their rivals along with their crystals while discussing what they were going to do.

Unlike the other groups, David and his partner were the only ones that didn't know each other. The others were from the same county so it was natural for them to be familiar with each other and their strengths.

"Want to be on the offensive? I can guard this thing if you want," asked David while carrying the floating crystal by using Telekinesis.

Hearing that, the young man running alongside him gave David a sidelong glance before nodding his head. "Sounds good to me, I'm not good at defending something anyway."

"Then that settles it," said David before quickly asking. "Well, since we are going to be working together, how about introducing ourselves to each other?"

"Elijah Knight," said the young man in a nonchalant tone alongside a deadpan expression on his face.

"Oh~... I'm David Solomon," said David, introducing himself as simple as Elijah.

Elijah then gave David another sidelong glance before muttering with a soft voice. "Solomon, huh?"

Despite how quiet Elijah said those words, David was still able to hear it pretty clear given his sharp senses. He turned his head towards Elijah with a questioning look before asking. "Seems like you know something about me. Not the common knowledge I mean."

Elijah didn't deny nor admit those words. But he at least shook his head before answering. "Not me, but my Uncle Master."

"Uncle Master?" David felt that this guy might really know a few things about his secret background so he couldn't help but ask. "Will you mind if I ask you who this Uncle Master of yours is?"

"Eugene White," answered Elijah instantly.

"Oh! So, that's why," David immediately came into a realization before nodding his head. "If it is my Master's old friend, then that makes sense!"

After that, he looked at Elijah with a bright smile before extending his hand. "Then I guess that makes us quite related to each other. So, how about we become friends?"

Elijah hesitated for a moment before nodding his head and shaking David's hand.

Then the two of them immediately came into a sudden halt and looked in front of them with squinting eyes.

"It's been a while, David. How cold of you leaving us like that?" said Liebert as he stood on the path in front of David and Elijah. "We haven't greeted each other properly earlier. So, how about we do it now?"

Beside him stood Gendo who was looking warily at Elijah who was staring back at him with narrowed eyes.

On the other hand, David suddenly started chuckling when he saw the two blocking their path before saying. "I see that you two have grown so balls to challenge me now. Have you forgotten the lesson that I gave you already?"

"Lesson your *ss! If not for my master stopping me, then I should have destroyed you during that time," said Lieber while gritting his teeth and clenching his fist.

Hearing that, David chuckled once again before sneering. "Always making excuses. If you want to prove yourself then this is your chance to do so."

"Though, I'm pretty sure that you are just going to embarrass yourself instead," he added while looking at Liebert mockingly.

"Gendo, go deal with that swordsman. I'll handle this b*st*rd myself," said Liebert with a hoarse voice while glaring at David sharply.

"Just remember why we are here. And just the crystal properly," said Gendo before charging forward all of a sudden.

Swoosh! Swoosh!

On the other hand, Elijah also made his move and blocked Gendo's path while raising both of his palms in front of him. And before the latter could even respond, he swiftly thrust his right arm forward, lunging straight to Gendo's chest.

"A swordsman planning to fight barehanded? You are looking down on me way too much!" sneered Gendo as clench his right-hand fist before throwing a powerful punch forward.

In Martial-Arts, it was common knowledge that a thrusting palm blade was at a disadvantage when faced with a strong fist. Gendo was clearly aware of this which was why he threw a punch in response to the incoming attack.

But all of a sudden, the Umbra sensed a threatening feeling coming from the incoming palm blade. And due to that, he immediately retracted his fist and quickly leaned sideways to dodge.

Swoosh!

Despite his quick response, the thrusting palm blade was still able to graze his cheek and made a cut on it.

'A Sword Qi without a sword? This F*cker already achieved the 'Swordless State'?' thought Gendo to himself before immediately enfolding his fist with his Internal Qi before throwing a quick counterattack.

Bang!

Even if that counter was perfectly timed, it was still blocked by Elijah's other hand that was also covered with his Sword Qi. Though, he was still sent sliding backward by that power punch.

Wiping the blood on his left cheek, Gendo looked at Elijah with squinted eyes before saying with a serious tone. "I must admit that I underestimate you, but catching me off-guard once is already enough and it will not happen again."

Bang!

"So, if you don't want to lose so badly, I suggest you draw your sword right now," he added while taking a battle stance and enfolding his whole body with his 'Natural Force'.

Meanwhile, Elijah still refused to draw his sword and took a battle stance of his own before covering his entire body with a 'Sword Force' (higher form of Sword Qi) that was no way weaker than the 'Natural Force' of his opponent.

"I never drew my sword against someone without a weapon. If you want me to unsheathe it, then you should arm yourself too," said Elijah with all seriousness.

"Your choice," responded Gendo before charging forward to resume the fight.

In the meantime, David and Liebert were still not making their moves. Or to be more precise, the latter still couldn't find an opening that he could take advantage of.

Seeing that, David raised his grin even higher before saying mockingly. "Are you going to continue standing there? Where is that arrogance that you are showing earlier?"

Hearing those mocking words, Liebert couldn't help but grit his teeth as he had to admit David's current strength. Both of them were from the Dark Continent, so he was quite familiar with the strength that the latter initially had when he was still making his name in their country.

Liebert had already proven himself during that time and became an Umbra of their country. David, on the other hand, was still a no-named individual who was challenging all the other talents of their country.

But at this point in time, the current David in front of had already made his name all around the world and recognized as the brightest young Mentalist of their generation. And adding all of the experiences that he accumulated along his journey, his current strength was definitely something that couldn't be underestimated.

Hu~!

Taking a deep breath, Liebert calmed himself down before taking a battle stance while releasing his 'Natural Force'.

Seeing that sudden change of atmosphere around his opponent, David was sure that Liebert was finally taking him seriously. So, he also regulated his breathing before summoning his 'Spiritual Force' to protect his body.

After that, he raised his gaze and looked at his opponent with a serious look on his face while muttering to himself. "I heard this guy is placed sixth on the Umbra Rankings, so I should use him to gauge the strengths of those monsters standing above his rank."

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Bang!

The 'Spiritual Force' that was released by David revolved around him like a small tornado, affecting the air around him. His clothes were flapping violently along with the air as he maintained his battle stance.

On the other hand, the 'Natural Force' of his opponent was no weaker either while the pressure that they were releasing cancelled out each other for being equally powerful. This standoff lasted for a couple of moments before they simultaneously made their moves.

Liebert did a couple of hand gestures to cover the floating crystal behind with his Internal Qi, protecting it against any external factors that might harm it. After that, he suddenly kicked the ground and lunged forward.

But he was still in the middle of his charge when an energy wave suddenly greeted him, forcing him to halt his advance

Bang!

In that instant where his opponent took a sudden pause, David immediately flicked his wrist to summon a spherical barrier around the floating crystal behind before charging forward.

Meanwhile, Liebert currently had his arms in front of his face, protecting it from the energy wave that flew at him earlier. And when he slightly lowered them to take a look at his opponent, he suddenly saw a hand magnifying in front of his eyes before grabbing his face and smashing his head on the ground.

Bang!

Liebert was able to minimize the damage that he got from that sudden attack by nullifying most of the impact with the help of his 'Natural Force'.

After that, he suddenly grabbed David's wrist with both of his hands before trying to wrap his legs on his opponent's arm, planning to dislocate it by twisting his body.

Understanding what his opponent was planning to do, David immediately let go of the fact that he was grabbing before twisting his arm along the direction where Liebert was twisting it before pulling it backwards.

The sudden move happened a little too fast so Liebert couldn't fully lock David's arm. And since his body was still in the air due to his previous attempt, he was not in a good position to do a good counter move.

On the other hand, David quickly seized that opportunity for a follow-up move. He took advantage of his opponent's awkward position and quickly threw a punch with his left-hand fist as he retrieved his other arm backwards.

Seeing the incoming fist, Liebert quickly crossed his arms in front of him while reinforcing them with as much Natural Force as he could gather.

But despite being on point with his guard, he was still not in a good position to properly defend against the incoming attack. After all, his body was still in midair so completely blocking this punch was already impossible to begin with.

So, all Liebert could do was to nullify as much force as possible from the incoming impact to lessen the damage that he was going to receive.

Bang!

As expected, Liebert was immediately sent flying by David's punch right after the impact. After that, the former quickly twisted his body midair before flipping a couple of times, further lessening the force that he received from the previous attack.

But alongside him, the floating crystal that he was guarding also flew towards his direction as a black rope made of Natural Force was tied on it, connecting Liebert and the crystal.

Bang!

And when his feet touched the ground once again, a crater was immediately created as the ground where he landed suddenly sank quite deeply.

Hu~!

After taking a deep breath, Liebert kicked the ground under him and launched himself towards David once again.

On the other hand, David suddenly stomped on the ground as he placed his left foot in front of him while squatting his hips.

At the same time, both of his hands were suddenly enfolded with silver Spiritual Force before he threw consecutive punches in the air.

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

Each time he threw a punch, an energy wave was sent forward and flew towards his charging opponent to hinder the advance.

Meanwhile, Liebert immediately responded with the incoming energy waves and quickly adjusted his footwork to do a series of zigzag movements during his change.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

Craters after craters were left behind Liebert as he dodged each of the energy waves with ease and continued to advance forward.

Not long after, Liebert reached David once again and engaged in an intense melee battle against each other.

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On the other side of the battlefield, Gendo was having quite a lot of trouble dealing with Elijah. He was confident with his own strength and battle prowess which was not afraid of facing any geniuses of the same generation. It also held true even if those talents were the aces of the other country.

But right in front of him was a person that he never had heard of. And what made him even more frustrated was the fact that he couldn't suppress his opponent despite him being one of the famous Umbras of the Dark Continent.

"Hey! Who are you really? It is impossible for someone like you to remain obscure with that kind of strength and talent," asked Gendo with a solemn tone, refusing to admit that he was standing toe-to-toe with someone unknown.

Hearing that, Elijah suddenly wore a bitter smile, especially when realized that he was being called a talented individual. "Heh! Talent? I'm sorry to disappoint you but I never considered myself as someone as talented as the rest of you. All I did is to train, train, and continue to train even if I get tired of it."

"Bullsh*t!"

But naturally, Gendo was not going to accept it, especially that Elijah was fighting him on equal ground. He was a firm believer that talented individuals were supposedly standing at the very top of the world; that was why they were called Chosen Ones and Mighty Ones.

"You are really starting to get on my nerves now," said Gendo with a hoarse voice before taking out a pair of tonfas and enfolded them with his Natural Force. "Let's see how long you can maintain that façade."

Seeing that, Elijah suddenly raised his brows for a moment before pulling out the sword hanging on his back before saying. "I don't have the right to bend your belief if you don't want to accept my words. Whether you want to believe it or not is not my problem after all."

Bang!

At the same time, the aura that Elijah was currently releasing immediately changed when he held his sword with both of his hands. Especially when he pointed its tip towards his opponent.

The Sword Force that surrounded his body also changed and created an illusion where his entire being seemed to fuse with his sword and nature itself.

Seeing that, Gendo immediately became enraged and charged forward. "And you dare to claim that you are not talented when you have already reached that state?"

Swoosh!

In an instant, he suddenly appeared on the left side of his opponent while also swinging his tonfas at the same time.

Those swings were quite crafty time and made it hard to either dodge or block them. Dodging one of them would mean getting hit with the other tonfa, the same for blocking them.

And given that he appeared in front of his opponent in an instant, it was impossible for Elijah to create a space between them or even counterattack in that close distance.

Or so he thought...

Right before his tonfas hit Elijah, Gendo suddenly saw a flash of light in front of him followed by a consecutive clanging sound along with metal sparks that flew in the air.

Gendo was too stunned to realize that both of his arms were deflected away, making himself vulnerable for counterattacks. "What happened?"

Fortunately, he was now too close to Elijah which was why the latter couldn't make any appropriate move to follow up his previous movements given that he was holding a long sword.

But the fact that his opponent was too shocked to do a follow-up move gave Elijah a chance to create the space that he needed for appropriate attacks. And when he was in the optimal distance to attack, he immediately grabbed that chance and quickly swung his sword at his opponent.

At this point in time, Gendo finally recovered himself and quickly crossed his arms on top of his head blocking the descending blade.

Clang!

"Ugh!"

But Gendo still misjudged his opponent's sword swing which was why he was forced to kneel on the ground after blocking the attack.

Bang!

The weight that was pressing on him was unexpectedly heavy, making it hard for Gendo to quickly stand up once again.

So, he gritted his teeth and was forced to redirect the sword to land beside him before jumping backwards to create some breathing space for him.

But why would Elijah let that happen?

Right after seeing that his opponent was trying to run, Elijah immediately gave chase and swiftly swung his swords at the same time.

Fortunately, Gendo was not so simple either. When he saw the incoming attacks from his opponent, he quickly raised his guard up and blocked each sword strike with his tonfas.

Clang! Clang! Clang!

With that exchange, Gendo was able to stabilize himself and freed himself from being trapped in a passive state. And due to that, the battle went back to a deadlock where each of them was trying to gauge each other's strengths and battle habits.

While all of this was happening, the teachers and professors who were watching from the conference room looked at these two battles with an interested expression on their faces.

Chapter 573 The Top Young Ghosts (Part 1)

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Unlike David and Elijah who were immediately engaged in a fight against the two Umbras of the Dark Continent, the other prodigies from different countries were not bothering to pick a fight with each other for the time being.

This included the Bright Feathers of the Silver Wing Continent and the Marines of the Deep Blue Continent. These two groups were commonly known as rivals since their continents were always fighting against each other.

But even if that was the case, they were able to hold themselves back in this exam since they didn't want to reveal their cards yet from the very start. They were quite eager to fight each other, but they also couldn't afford to expose their weaknesses yet without knowing anything about their other opponents.

The other groups were also in a similar case. However, the Decastars of the Clear Sky Continent chose to approach the Supernovas from the Sun-Moon Continent and offered cooperation.

From the start, they heard from the administrator of this exam that it was fine for them to form a team with each other so that they could try fighting him.

Seeing that, Shiella and Mariel couldn't help but knit their brows before the latter suddenly asked. "Should we also form a team with the others?"

Shiella thought for a moment before replying with a bitter tone. "I'm afraid that it is not going to be easy. It was clear that those Supernovas and Decastars are quite familiar with each other, so it was natural for them to form a team."

"On the other hand, we don't have any connection with the other groups since we never met any of them until today," she added as she shook her head.

Hearing that, Mariel nodded her head in agreement before quickly adding. "How about Elijah and that guy paired with him? David, right? We can try our luck with them."

Shiella giggled a little when she heard that before teasing her partner. "Try our luck? Or do you mean your luck? It has been a while since you and Elijah talked with each other – I'm sure that you two really missed each other too much."

"Hey! We are just friends, alright? FRIENDS. Do you need me to spell it to you letter by letter?" said Mariel, trying to deny what Shiella had said. Unfortunately, her blushing face and the embarrassed look that she had begged to disagree with her words.

Shiella laughed at her for a few more moments before going back to their original topic. "But I must admit that they are a good choice to team up with. The problem is they are currently busy on their side."

She then cast her gaze on a distance and looked at the ongoing battle before shaking her head. "I suggest we should wait until they are done. Though, I think it will take a while before they finish that fight."

Hearing that, Mariel could only sigh helplessly and nodded her head powerlessly. "I guess you are right."

In the meantime, Jerimiah and Vincent were currently observing everything from the sidelines, assessing their rivals. They were even paying more attention to the battle between the duo of David and Elijah against the pair of Umbras from the Dark Continent.

"Looks like the Umbras that are sent here are not their best agents," said Jerimiah in disappointment after seeing the strengths of the two Umbras.

Hearing that, Vincent smiled and shook his head helplessly before replying. "What do you expect? Those guys from the Dark Continent will never expose their brightest stars in danger, knowing that the World Government will most likely send some of their undercover agents here."

Jerimiah pursed his lips for a moment before nodding his head. "Well, that makes sense. After all, those two forces are always keeping an eye on each other. Whenever one of them gains an advantage, the other side will always take measures to hinder the opposing side's progress."

"Tsk! If they really don't want each other, then just wage war on each other. What's with the long detour?" he added with a displeased tone.

Vincent shook his head once again when he heard that before saying. "You should pay attention to what you are saying. We are going to be in trouble if other people misunderstand your words."

"No worries, I'm not dumb enough to say such words in front of other people," said Jerimiah while waving his hand.

After that, he turned his focus on the ongoing battle once again before commenting. "Brother David is messing with his opponent a little too much. That Umbra is clearly no match to him, why is he wasting a lot of time playing with him?"

"To gain some information? He is probably trying to test the limits of that Umbra and use it as the base to guess the strengths of the upper Umbras," answered Vincent almost in an instant.

Hearing that, Jerimiah nodded his head in agreement. "Hmm... Probably. Given Brother David's temperament, it is most likely the case."

The two of them continued to watch the battle for a few more moments until they noticed that the pairs of Supernovas and Decastars were currently looking at them.

"Oh~! Looks like we are being targeted now," said Jerimiah with an amused look on his face after sensing the gazes locked on them.

"It seems like they formed a team together," said Vincent while casting a sidelong glance at them.

"Hmm... it is going to be troublesome if we fight them with just the two of us, should we seek some cooperation with the others?" asked Jerimiah while touching his chin and pursing his lips.

Hearing that, Vincent turned his head towards the other candidates before replying. "Those two Bright Feathers and two Marines are out in question. Teaming up with either one of them is the same as being an enemy of the other side."

"It is better if we remain neutral for now since we will surely get involved with their rivalry if we choose a side right now. You know how their countries think, whoever teams up with their foes will also become their enemy," he added after a quick moment of pause.

Jerimiah thought for a moment before turning his gaze at Shiella and Mariel. "Then how about those two? They are our only choice right now. Though, their strengths shouldn't be weaker than ours from what I can see."

"The problem is we are not familiar with each other," said Vincent.

Hearing that, Jerimiah thought for a couple of moments before standing up while saying. "That shouldn't be much of a problem, right? After all, one of them is Brother Sickarius' big sister."

Vincent thought for a moment when he heard that before nodding his head. "I guess so. Let's just hope that our connection with him will help us here."

After that, the two walked towards Shiella and Mariel, planning to propose a cooperation.

Unfortunately, their rivals were fully aware of what they were planning to do. So, before Jerimiah and Vincent could even form a team with others, the Supernovas and Decastars immediately made their respective moves.

Swoosh! Swoosh!

Seeing that, Jerimiah immediately sighed helplessly before muttering. "Of course, how can those guys let us team up with others?"

"So, what's the plan?" asked Vincent while getting ready for battle.

Hearing that, Jerimiah waved his hand and said. "You can go. Leave this stupid thing to me," while pointing his thumb at the floating crystal behind him.

"Just take them seriously, we can't afford to be careless. After all, they still have the same standing as us," he added before casting his gaze at the four guys rushing towards them. "Though, we can also take advantage of the fact that they are still taking us too lightly."

Swoosh!

Vincent didn't reply to Jerimiah after that. He just slightly nodded his head before disappearing from his current position before reappearing in front of the two incoming Decastars.

"You are coming at us alone? You are looking down at us a little too much, Vincent Valentine!" said one of the two Decastars while throwing his fist forward.

On the other hand, his partner immediately put his palms together to summon a mental energy barrier around him and the floating crystal on his back.

Swoosh! Swoosh!

But at the same time, both of them saw Vincent flickered in front of them in an instant before a powerful force sent the two of them flying.

They didn't know what hit them nor did they have the time to think about it since they immediately saw a pair of flying daggers chasing after them.

The Mentalist didn't have to think too much about those flying daggers since he was currently being protected by his Mental Energy Barrier. Though he was really concerned about how he was sent flying despite being able to complete his barrier.

On the other hand, his partner quickly covered both of his hands with his Natural Force before catching the flying dagger that was coming after him.

But right after he caught the dagger, his eyes suddenly turned wide as his peripheral vision saw an enlarging silhouette coming from the side.

Bang!

The Decastar was able to block the incoming attack by quickly crossing his arms to guard his head. But since he didn't have a proper footing to defend against it, he was sent flying once again and separated him from his partner.

Meanwhile, Vincent immediately forgot about that guy after he sent him flying with his kick. But it was different for the other guy guarding the floating crystal.

Since he was still in the air after his previous attack, he used the momentum of his kick to spin midair before catching the other flying dagger that he threw earlier. And by borrowing the same momentum that he had, he lunged forward with the dagger in hand.

Vincent's movements were too quick, so it was quite hard to predict and respond to. Fortunately, the Decastar was currently protected by his barrier which was why he felt at ease in front of the incoming dagger.

Or so he thought...

Because on the very next moment, he saw that his barrier was easily torn down by Vincent's daggers.

Seeing that, the Decastar immediately covered both of his hands with his Spiritual Force before putting them together while catching the blade of the incoming dagger. "Ugh!"

But to his surprise, Vincent immediately let go of the dagger after it was caught by his opponent. After that, he quickly spun in the air once again while throwing a powerful kick that flew straight to the Decastar's abdomen.

Bang!

Fortunately, the Decastar was a Mentalist and able to create a little wall of Mental Energy in front of his stomach, protecting himself from directly getting hit.

Swoosh!

But despite his efforts, he was still sent flying by that powerful kick. Though, he was able to take the flying crystal alongside him at the very last moment.

"Underestimating you? More like underestimating me," muttered Vincent right after his feet touched the ground.

In the meantime, the two Supernovas gave Vincent a sidelong glance as they brushed past him earlier before continuing their charge towards Jerimiah.

"I don't think it is a good idea," mumbled Vincent when he saw the two charging straight to his cousin.

On the other hand, Jerimiah shook his head bitterly when he saw the incoming opponents before sighing. "Why are these guys looking down at us too much? Did they forget that the two of us stood on the very top of the Young Ghost's List?"

And when those words left his mouth, the other guys watching them from the sideline witnessed something that they did not expect.

Chapter 574 The Top Young Ghosts (Part 2)

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Jake and Jayce were brothers who were chosen to be in the ranks of Supernovas not because of their individual battle prowess but it was due of their mechanical knowledge and their ability to utilize their gadgets.

The Sun-Moon Continent was a country that focused on its technological department. And because of this, the said continent became the most advanced country when it came to their technology.

Using this advantage, they tried to be ahead of their competitors. But the other countries also had their respective specialties.

Just like the Soaring Continent for example; a country known for having the strongest military prowess in the whole world.

Or like the Lost Soul Continent that was known to have the greatest assassins of the world.

...

While advancing forward, Jake and Jayce immediately took out their weapons as they didn't want to underestimate their opponent after seeing what happened to the two Decastars earlier.

Unfortunately, it was already too late to think about it now.

Bang!

Swoosh!

As the two Supernovas were preparing to take out their weapons, the two of them suddenly heard a loud explosion coming in front of them. And before they could even see what it was, their vision suddenly turned dark as a pair of hands blocked their line of sight.

Bang!

And without further that pair of hands grabbed their faces before their heads were smashed on the ground with a loud sound.

But despite their heads being buried on the ground, both Jake and Jayce still remained calm as they were able to nullify the impact of the previous attack.

First, Jake threw something in the air which suddenly exploded and released a blinding light, forcing the others watching the fight to take their eyes away from it.

On the other hand, Jayce also threw a certain device on the floating crystal that they were supposedly protecting, creating a barrier around it.

"Tsk! Crafty," muttered Jerimiah, complaining while clicking his tongue.

Regardless, he still ignored the two Supernovas lying on the ground and quickly took a stance in front of the floating crystal before swiftly throwing a straight punch towards it.

Bang!

A loud explosion was immediately created when his fist came in contact with the barrier protecting the crystal and instantly broke it.

Fortunately, the floating crystal was still after that attack. Though, it was now fully exposed to any kind of attack.

At this point in time, the two Supernovas finally recovered themselves and quickly picked themselves up from the ground before immediately making their respective moves.

Jake suddenly transformed into a streak of light that flew straight to the floating crystal and took it away from Jerimiah.

Meanwhile, a huge hammer suddenly appeared on Jayce's hands before swinging it to the Young Ghost in front of him, planning to send the latter away.

,m Bang!

To the Supernova's surprise, Jerimiah casually blocked the swing with his right hand, not taking the attack seriously at all. And while Jayce was still stunned at what happened, the Young Ghost threw a powerful punch with his free hand, sending his opponent away.

Bang!

Swoosh!

"Tsk! Those gadgets sure are a cheat. Not so manly at all," said Jerimiah with a displeased and disappointed tone.

In the meantime, the other guys watching from the sideline were completely surprised at what they just witnessed.

Whether it was Vincent who had insane speed and crazy maneuvers or Jerimiah who possessed amazing strength, both of them seemed to be unrivaled after showing what they did just earlier.

"So, this is the strength of the famous Young Ghost of the Lost Soul Continent," said Mariel who couldn't help but feel impressed after seeing what she just witnessed.

Hearing that, Shiella slightly nodded her head before saying. "From the information that we have, those two are supposedly standing at the top of their ranking list – Jerimiah Smithson, the Berserker Young Ghost, and Vincent Valentine, the Executioner Young Ghost."

Mariel nodded her head when she heard that before adding. "From what I've heard, that guy with the title of Berserker is the only one who fights like that. Out of all the Young Ghost of their country, he is the only one who is not fighting like an assassin."

"Even if the Lost Soul Continent is supposedly the home of the best assassins around the world, it doesn't mean that assassins are the only ones that they had," commented Shiella while looking at Jerimiah.

After that, Mariel thought for a moment before looking at Shiella while asking. "How about we team up with them? Not a bad idea, right?"

Shiella considered it for a moment before nodding her head and agreeing. "Sounds good. We can do that."

"So~! Should we help them now or should we wait for them to wrap it up?" asked Mariel with a knitted brow.

Hearing that, Shiella laughed at her for a moment before replying. "Do you honestly believe that those two can defeat those four with just the two of them? Those four shouldn't be in here if that is the case."

"Ah!" Mariel immediately came back to reality after hearing those words. "I almost forgot about that. I really think that they are some small fries when compared to those two Young Ghost."

She then turned her head at Shiella and asked. "So, are we going to help?"

Mariel seemed to be quite excited that she was finally able to get in action. She was feeling quite bored right now for only standing at the sideline and doing nothing.

Unfortunately, Shiella didn't respond as Mariel wanted. "Don't you think it will hurt their pride if we suddenly jump in and join the fight?"

This time, Mariel stood on her spot with a blank expression on her face before quickly saying. "You know? I really can't understand what's running in your head. Everything you say is always contradicting with each other."

Shiella giggled at her words for a moment before saying. "Don't worry, they are going to ask for our help first as well as asking for cooperation."

Not long after she said those words, both Jerimiah and Vincent ditched out their respective opponents and appeared in front of the two girls.

Seeing that, Shiella looked at Mariel with an expression as if she was saying 'See?'.

On the other hand, Mariel rolled her eyes at her as if replying with 'Whatever!'

Meanwhile, Jerimiah ignored the brief exchange between the two girls and said with a little awkwardness. "Ahm-... I apologize for this but we really don't have a better choice. Can I ask if you are willing to form a team with us?"

Shiella put up a poker face after her brief exchange with Mariel before observing both Jerimiah and Vincent, assessing their strengths. 'This two really are strong.'

She really wanted to test out their strengths by exchanging blows against them. After all, it was quite rare for her to meet someone with similar strength like hers. Unfortunately, this was not a good time for a friendly sparring match.

After that, Shiella extended her hand while saying. "It is a pleasure to team up with the famed Young Ghost of the Lost Soul Continent."

Hearing praise from a beautiful girl, Jerimiah couldn't help but feel a little embarrassed before accepting the handshake. "No, the pleasure should be ours. The Junior Monsters of the Soaring Continent have more reputation than us from what I know."

"Or you should say that the Valentine Family is too secretive about their strength," said Shiella with meaningful eyes.

From what she knew, the said family was the most secretive Assassin Family around the world. Only a very few people knew about their existence. If not for them accepting a few contracts here and there, then the other organizations would not know about them.

Hearing that, Jerimiah didn't know how to respond to that since he had a quite strange relationship with the Valentine Family.

With her sharp eyes and senses, Shiella was able to notice the sudden change of emotion on Jerimiah. So, she immediately changed the topic to avoid the awkwardness lingering in the air. "So, how do you want to cooperate?"

She then turned her gaze at the Supernovas and Decastars who were not regrouping with each other. And at the same time, she immediately noticed that they didn't want to continue fighting anymore after seeing Jerimiah and Vincent formed a team with the two girls.

"It looks like they are already unwilling to pursue this matter," added Shiella with a smirk.

On the other hand, Mariel immediately became disappointed when she saw that before commenting with a dejected tone. "Cowards!"

Meanwhile, Jerimiah ignored the opposing group and turned his attention to the other fight that was taking place a few distances away from them. "For now, we are thinking to wait for that side to calm down a little."

Turning her head to the direction where he was looking, Shiella slightly nodded her head before asking. "You are planning to team up with David and Elijah?"

After that, she turned her head back to Jerimiah before asking. "Are you also planning to fight against Professor Bullen? I think it is not a good idea."

Hearing that, Jerimiah and Vincent couldn't help but turn their heads. They remained quiet but it was clear from their expression that they wanted an explanation.

Seeing that look on their faces, Shiella could only sigh helplessly before explaining. "I know you want to get those so-called 'extra points', but let me warn you that they said that to bait us."

"Or to be more exact, it is to bait you guys who are unfamiliar with him," she added after a brief pause.

Reaching this point, Mariel suddenly chimed in from the side. "Professor Bullen is far from being the strongest in our Academy but he is known for having the greatest defensive capabilities out of all the professors."

"So, trying to destroy the crystal that he was guarding is definitely pointless. We are only revealing all of our cards if we do that," added Shiella.

She really didn't want to show her full strength to others even if they were currently in a team. In her eyes, they were still competitors at the end of the day.

Sooner or later, their countries were still going to clash against each other when the 'Battle for Supremacy' arrived. So, keeping their cards hidden until the end was still the best thing to do from her perspective. Especially that there were some unexpected rules that were added just recently.

BOOM!

They were still discussing with each other when a sudden explosion attracted the attention of everyone in the field.

"What happened!?"

Chapter 575 A Fierce Competition (Part 1)

...

Boom!

While everyone was busy doing their own thing, a loud explosion suddenly attracted the attention of everyone and made them cast their attention towards that direction. And the moment they saw what caused that explosion, the expression on their faces immediately turned weird.

It was the same for David and Elijah who were fighting the pair of Umbras currently. Both of them were forced to stop their fight when they saw what happened.

They saw a large monster crawling out from the ground which had the appearance of a giant lizard. And it didn't stop there, more and more monsters of the same species came out from the ground, following the appearance of the previous one.

"Looks like your school doesn't want us to stand on the sidelines idling," said Jerimiah after seeing the large group of Lizard Monsters crawling out from the ground.

"Earthen Demonic Lizards? This is going to be a tough one," commented Vincent from the side while nodding his head.

On the other hand, Shiella and Mariel couldn't help but wear a deep frown after seeing those giant lizards and silently agreed with Vincent's remark. Their small group observed the Monster Beasts for a few more moments before deciding to retreat towards the forest a few distances away from them.

"We should get out of this place as soon as possible before those annoying lizards swarm at us," said Shiella before running in a certain direction.

"Those Earthen Demonic Lizards love to eat all kinds of metals and crystals. No wonder Professor Bullen is grinning from ear to ear when he gives this floating thing to us," said Mariel as she followed Shiella's lead.

Hearing her words, Jerimiah and Vincent couldn't help but nod their heads in agreement while taking another look at those giant lizards. From the frenzied and vicious eyes that those monsters currently had, they could discern that all of them were pretty hungry and starving for food.

At the same time, David and Elijah immediately disengaged away from their respective opponents and quickly regrouped with each other.

"Now it is clear that your school wants us to work together. Though, I doubt that it is going to be easy given that there are some grudges involved," said David after taking a good look at the Monster Beasts crawling out from the ground.

Elijah could only nod his head in agreement as he also understood what the academy was planning after seeing the giant lizards.

In the meantime, the two Umbras also regroup with each other after understanding their current situation. But at the same time, the two of them were still unwilling to let go of their opponents. Especially Liebert who seemed to have an old grudge with David.

"Don't run away David! We are not done yet!" shouted Liebert when he saw that David was planning to retreat.

Hearing that, David couldn't help but laugh at the guy and replied. "Are you an idiot? Do you still want to fight when a bunch of six-star monster beasts appears in front of you? You must be crazy."

Liebert gritted his teeth when he heard that. He wanted to refute but he couldn't find the right words for rebuttal, especially that he was also aware of what David was implying.

Seeing that Liebert couldn't say anything, David waved his hand at the two Umbras before turning around. "Don't worry, we still have a lot of chances in the future to settle this. But for now, let's agree with a temporary ceasefire."

David didn't even wait for Liebert to reply as he quickly kicked the ground and ran towards a certain direction.

Following closely behind him, Elijah took another look at the Earthen Demonic Lizards before asking. "So, what's the next plan?"

David didn't even need to think what he was going to say as he quickly replied in an instant. "Of course, forming a team with others! After all, we can't deal with those overgrown lizards with just the two of us."

Nodding his head, Elijah turned his gaze towards a certain direction where Shiella and the others were heading to.

In the meantime, the situation inside the gymnasium turned for the worst. The battles that were happening in this place became even more chaotic as Shin and the others were almost dragged into the chaos.

"Are we still not going to fight back? These guys are really getting on my nerves," said Arthur impatiently as he looked at the other candidates attacking the barrier surrounding their group.

Earlier, the chaotic battle that was taking place inside the gymnasium suddenly got out of hand when all of the hotheaded individuals started attacking whoever was around them.

Seeing that the situation was about to become more chaotic, Shin immediately asked the other Mentalists of their small group to support him by creating a defensive barrier around them.

The others were quite confused at first when they heard that, but they immediately responded with his words when they realized that there was something wrong with the chaos surrounding them.

With their combined efforts, a sturdy barrier was immediately formed around them that warded off any attacks that were trying to harm them.

"Calm yourself, Arthur. We will only fall into a trap if we fight back," said Shin as he swept his gaze at the surroundings.

"Huh?" Arthur knitted his brow when he heard those words before asking. "What are you talking about?"

Shin facepalmed when he heard those words. 'Sigh~! All in his mind is to fight and show off his skills!'

After that, he pointed at the chaotic battles happening beyond the barrier protecting them before explaining a little. "Can't you see what is really happening? There are few people who purposely create chaos out there."

"And if my guess is correct, then the academy purposely put those guys in the mix to purposely spread chaos," he added while taking note of some suspicious individuals that he spotted.

"Oh~! There are such people hiding there?" asked Arthur, surprised. And as he said those words, he suddenly sensed stabbing gazes directed on his back.

Turning his head around, Arthur saw that everyone in their small group was staring at him with a weird look on their faces.

Despite receiving such looks from them, Arthur remained calm before shamelessly saying. "Of course, I know about that! I'm just testing you guys if you are going to fall on the academy's schemes."

Naturally, the group would not buy his words as they continued looking at him skeptically.

Ignoring those looks from them, Arthur turned his head back to Shin before asking. "So, what are we going to do next? Continue hiding here?"

Seeing that, Shin could only shake his head while wearing a bitter smile before replying. "Since we already figured out the nature of this test, then we naturally need to proceed accordingly."

"If I'm not wrong, then we obviously need to take out those guys who are purposely spreading chaos," he added while turning his head back to the chaotic battlefield.

Hearing that, Arthur immediately responded proudly. "See? Technically, I'm not wrong! So, why are these guys looking at me like that."

Ignoring that remark, Shin looked over his shoulders before asking. "It looks like we need to separate in smaller groups while taking out those guys. At least one Mentalist per group, what are your thoughts?"

The others didn't say anything after hearing his words which indicated that they were going to agree with his arrangement. Though, one of them remained silent to follow the others.

Alice was not familiar with any of them when it came to battle. She only grouped up with them since she was always together with Lorraine since she lived with them. At the very least, the two of them were somewhat close with each other.

She was at least following the lead of the group. But she was somewhat confused why all of them were listening and following Shin's arrangements without question.

It was even more true for the twins of the Potter Clan. Both of them were talented enough to lead the group, especially Jillian who was known for her tactical knowledge in her previous school.

For every school competition, Jillian was always chosen as the leader of the team no matter what kind of tournament it was.

But right now, the same famous leader was listening and getting some commands from someone unknown. Or at least someone that never appeared in any school competitions that she knew.

Sensing that gaze that was directed at her, Jillian suddenly turned her head towards Alice before smiling at her. She seemed to be able to read what was running inside the latter's head before whispering a few words. "Don't worry, that guy is more capable than what you can think of."

Alice was still knitting her brows despite hearing that. Though, she also nodded her head before turning her gaze back to Shin, wondering how he was able to convince someone like Jillian to listen to him.

A few moments later, Shin was finally done with his arrangements before asking. "Is everything clear?"

Responding to his words, the others immediately nodded their heads, indicating they were ready to execute the plan anytime.

After that, Shin looked at Arthur and warned. "Remember, you can defend when the other candidates attack you but you can't fight back. Maybe you are not going to fail the exam if you fight them, but I'm pretty sure that you will lose a lot of points in the process."

He didn't even wait for Arthur to refute his words as he turned his head in front of them once again before saying. "Alright! Let's wrap this up quickly before the other groups get ahead of us!"

Then the others nodded their heads before quickly scattering in different directions alongside their pair after the Mental Energy Barrier was removed.

But at the same time, the other groups that were also waiting on the sidelines earlier also made their moves, signaling the start of a fierce competition that was about to take place.

Chapter 576 A Fierce Competition (Part 2)

...

Shin and the others were separated into 3 groups to maximize their efficiency. The first group was Arthur, Jillian, and Molton while the second group was Leonard, Lorraine, and Alice. And the last group was composed of Shin and Cloe together.

The moment they move away from each other, they quickly charge towards their respective targets while ignoring the other candidates around them.

In the first group, Arthur would naturally be the vanguard as he charged through the chaotic battles blocking their way while Jillian and Molton supported him from behind.

Even if Arthur was quite eager to fight the other candidates, he couldn't do it right now since needed to follow Shin's instructions. So, whenever he was attacked by the other candidates, he couldn't do anything but defend himself and rely on Jillian and Molton to fend off those attacks.

Naturally, he was going to be quite frustrated about this matter since he was not used to being in a passive state. Fortunately, he was able to vent out his frustrations on their targets who were barely able to fight back against their combined attacks.

It was the same for Leonard's group where he was also the vanguard with Lorraine and Alice supporting him while following closely behind. And their poor targets couldn't even fight back with the combined forces of these three.

Strange enough, Shin and Cloe were the ones who had the highest efficiency among the three groups even if they were only two of them working together.

Shin was also taking the lead while Cloe was supporting him closely behind. But their roles were going to switch whenever they encountered a large number of attacks directed at them.

Shin would immediately use his defensive Mentalism Techniques to ward off those attacks, while Cloe would quickly switch positions with him and swiftly take down their targets. There was nothing special with her Martial-Arts but it had a very solid foundation. In fact, it seemed to be more solid than the foundation that the trio of Shin, Arthur, and Leonard had.

Her Martial-Arts Skills were also quite ordinary when compared to the others but the way she utilized them was very flawless. She would only use her skills when it was necessary but it was always going to be executed perfectly whenever she performed them.

But this was not the only thing that made her stand out among the rest of the candidates. Her positioning and timing would always match with Shin's movements no matter how sudden or unexpected it was.

Due to that, their teamwork looked very seamless and perfect. There were no words needed when they were fighting alongside each other; Shin would only need to do whatever he wanted and Cloe would immediately follow his lead.

Whenever Shin took a step back to switch on defense, Cloe would immediately take a step forward and take the offensive role. And if the former did the other way around, she would quickly move backward and take on the supportive role.

This seamless teamwork would naturally attract the attention of the teachers and professors watching from the conference room. It even ignited an intense discussion between them.

"That girl is really something. She compensates her lack of talent with her efforts alone," said one of the teachers.

"Lack of talent? You must be kidding! What she is currently showing us can already be considered a talent," refuted another.

"She also had a very solid foundation. And from what I can see, she is also the one who has the most solid foundation among the candidates," said another teacher without removing her gaze at Cloe.

Hearing that, one of the teachers seemed to disagree with her. "But I doubt that she would survive the competitive nature of the academy with just solid foundations alone. We can clearly see that her partner is the one dictating the tempo of their teamwork and she was only responding with his moves."

"Moreover, the two of them seemed to be familiar with each other, so I doubt that she will get the same results if she is paired with a different person," he added with a sneer.

Hearing his remarks, the others seemed to agree with him as they nodded their heads repeatedly.

But at the same time, there were still a few people who were disagreeing with his words. And one of them was the old female professor sitting right beside Henry Cortez. "But I like this girl. If she is able to survive until the end of this exam then I'm willing to take her under my tutelage."

The other teachers and professors sitting around the conference table were immediately taken aback after hearing her words. They were thinking what exactly made her take Cloe under her tutelage.

All of them were quite familiar with this particular professor and she never taught anyone unless they were in her class. Aside from that, she never took anyone as her disciple and never showed an interest in taking one.

But at this point in time, it seemed like she was quite interested in taking this girl without amazing talent as her very first disciple given the words that said earlier.

The room was quiet for a few moments after she said those words. The other teachers and professors seemed to be digesting her words, or even thinking whether she was serious or not.

But based on the current expression that she was wearing, it seemed like she really wanted Cloe to be her very first disciple.

The female professor ignored the confused gazes directed at her and looked at the old man sitting beside her while asking. "What do you think, Head Researcher Henry? Has my choice piqued your interest?"

Hearing that, Professor Henry thought for a couple of moments before smiling quite widely before nodding his head. "Quite intriguing indeed. This girl really fits your style. I wonder what she will become after learning under your tutelage."

"You should guide her well, Cora," added Professor Henry while turning his attention back to the virtual screen.

"Isn't it?" Professor Cora immediately smiled as she was quite satisfied with the reply. And while she was in the mood, she suddenly asked with a casual tone. "What about you? I heard that one of these candidates also piqued your interest. I wonder who it may be."

Hearing that casual question, Professor Henry smiled mystifyingly and chose not to reply to her directly. "There is no need to rush, you will see who it is later."

He then paused for a moment to sweep his gaze at the other professors who were currently looking at him before continuing with a joking tone. "And I don't want these sly foxes to snatch him from me."

Going back to the other side, the competition between the leading candidates immediately became fierce as they met each other.

Everything was going smoothly for Shin and the others until their targets overlapped with the other groups who were also doing the same thing as them.

The competition was quite fierce as they started clashing with one another. Even if they couldn't directly fight each other, it didn't mean they couldn't sabotage their competitors; especially that they were targeting the same person.

In the meantime, the other candidates around them also noticed the strange movements of these groups. And not long after, they immediately realized what was going on and quickly joined the prey.

Even if these guys were slightly behind the other groups who immediately figured out the real nature of this test, they still had a slight advantage since they already fought the other candidates.

They could attack Shin and the others since they knew that they would no longer lose anything. They were fully aware that they made a 'little' mistake at the start, so why not pull the others to the ground alongside their fall.

"If we are not going to pass this test, then why not drag you along with us?"

"If we can't have it, neither can you!"

Crab mentality was one of the most toxic nature of humans. When they saw someone else's success and they were still struggling behind, they would do everything they could to sabotage those people ahead of them out of jealousy and envy.

Due to this, the chaotic battle inside the gymnasium became even more chaotic as this toxicity spread around.

When Shin saw this, he knew that the situation was already out of hand. So, he immediately gave his signal to the others, telling them to regroup.

p They already got what they needed and they were also ahead of the others, so there was no point competing with these crazy lunatics anymore.

After regrouping with each other, Shin and his friends immediately compared their progress before discussing what they were going to do next.

But while they were in the middle of planning, the lights inside the gymnasium were lit once again before a powerful pressure suddenly appeared out of nowhere and pressed on the bodies of every candidate.

Due to that, everyone suddenly stopped moving so that they could focus their strengths on enduring the pressure that was trying to crush.

And since everyone suddenly halted their movements, the chaotic battles inside the gymnasium also stopped which signified the end of the second part of the entrance exam.

But to their surprise, the administrator of the exam immediately started the third part, not giving them any time to catch their breaths.

Chapter 577 Assigned Roles

...

As Shin and the other candidates were defending themselves against the powerful pressure crushing on them, a middle-aged man suddenly appeared at the center of the stage of the gymnasium.

He observed the current state of each candidate before waving his hand to remove the pressure that he was releasing while sending all of the unconscious candidates out of the gymnasium using the formation that was suddenly beneath their feet.

"A Teleportation Formation right under us? I have a bad feeling about this," muttered Shin and the other sharp Mentalists among the candidates.

In the meantime, the middle-aged man didn't wait for them to recover as he quickly said with a mocking tone. "Alright, young'uns! That's enough of chaos right now as we are going to proceed with your next test. And since all of you still look so energetic, how about we proceed to the main event off the bat?"

"B*st*rd!" cursed a few candidates as he could clearly feel that the middle-aged man was mocking them given the tone that he had while saying those words.

But despite the hateful looks that the candidates were sent to him, the middle-aged man still continued making a mocking look at them before waving his hand to summon a huge curtain of light that basked each of the candidates.

A moment later, Shin and the others discovered a glowing emblem at the right side of their chest. And when they compared it with each other, they immediately realized that each of them had different emblems.

The middle-aged man didn't wait for them to raise any questions as he quickly explained the purpose of those emblems. "As you can see, you have different emblems and each of them stands for the roles that you are going to do for the next part of the exam."

"The shield stands for the 'Vanguards', a fist for 'Strikers', a goblet for 'Auxiliaries', a crossbow for 'Marksmen', a pair of eyes for 'Scouts', a compass for 'Tracers', an inverted sword for 'Specialists', and a crown for 'Controllers' – these roles are going to be your jobs when you form your teams later."

He then paused for a moment and snapped with his fingers, distributing a black watch on each of the candidates. "I'm not going to waste our time explaining what exactly those roles are for. After all, it is pretty obvious given the names that they had."

"But if you want to know more about them, then you can read their descriptions on the files recorded on those watches – everything that you need to know are all in there."

And just like earlier, the middle-aged man didn't wait for the candidates to keep with him and immediately added. "Later, you are going to form teams with each other which don't concern me at all. It's up to you how you guys are going to form your teams."

"Heck! I don't even care if you want to form a team composed of vanguards alone. But each team needs to at least have a single member with 'Crown Emblem' since they are going to be the leaders of each team."

"On the other hand, each team can't exceed 10 members but also can't be less than 5 members. The team composition is all for all of you to decide but keep in mind that you also need them to be people who you can put your trust in."

"After all, you need to entrust them with your lives later," he added with a mystifying tone.

After that, the middle-aged man took a brief pause before continuing. "And as you can see, there are some numbers displayed on your watches."

Hearing that, Shin and the others quickly looked at the black watch that they got earlier. And just like what the middle-aged man had said, there were some digital numbers displayed. Though, they vary from each other; all of the candidates had different amounts on their black watches; some of them even had zero on display while there were a few people who had negative numbers.

And before anyone could ask what those numbers were for, the middle-aged man immediately explained it to them. "Those numbers stand for the points that you gained previously."

"And as you can guess, you need to reach a certain number of points to pass this entrance exam. But you guys also don't have to worry about not having enough, since the people who are going to survive until the end but don't have enough points can still enter the academy. Though, you can also no longer be part of the special program that you guys are aiming for."

"In the meantime, gaining more points is very simple. rob them from the others," added the middle-aged man while wearing a huge grin.

Hearing that, the faces of the other candidates immediately turned solemn as they knew that there were some people among them that they couldn't beat just like the so-called 'Three Kings' of the East who were also famous among the first-year students of the academy.

There were also the rumored 'Monster Trio' who hailed from the Capital City of the Main Region, and many other candidates with the same popularity. And if these 'freak of natures' formed a team and hunted the others, these weaker candidates knew that it was impossible for them to survive the next part of the exam if they were going to face them head-on.

Fortunately, the middle-aged man immediately saved them from that bad news and quickly added. "But there is also another way to earn more points."

"The venue for the next part of the exam will have a lot of monsters roaming around. And killing them will give some points that correspond with their ranks."

Though, this new piece of information didn't help the weaker candidates to increase their odds of surviving for the next part of the exam.

At the same time, the middle-aged man finally finished his job and said. "And~...! That is all I have to say. I'll leave the other secret information for you to figure out."

He then paused for a couple of moments, thinking what he was going to do next, before continuing. "And since I'm in a good mood right now, I will give you 5 extra minutes to form your teams right now before I send all of you to the place where the third test is going to be held."

Right after he said those words, each of the candidates immediately became busy forming their teams.

In the meantime, Shin and his friends were exemptions in this since they already had a team of their own.

"So, the earlier test is also used to determine which role fits us the best," muttered Shin while looking at the emblems that each of them had.

In their team, Arthur was a vanguard while Leonard was a striker which didn't surprise them that much. But the Potter Twins were quite confused that they got different roles despite them doing the same thing earlier; Jillian got the auxiliary role while Molton was assigned as a scout.

On the other hand, Lorraine obviously got the marksman role which she liked pretty much. And at the same time, both Cloe and Alice were surprisingly assigned with the same role which was the specialist.

And obviously, Shin got the crown emblem which indicated that he was a controller and the leader of the group.

"So, what we only lacked is a 'Tracer' which is not that important since we already have these two with us," said Lorraine while pointing at Shin and Arthur. "Both of them had a Military background, so we don't need to worry ourselves of losing our way later."

Hearing those words, Molton couldn't help but ask a little. "What is the difference between a scout and a tracer?"

When the others heard him, Shin quickly explained. "They didn't have much difference with each other aside from their main role. A tracer is responsible for finding our way out from certain places and circumstances. They are also the ones who will point us where we need to go and which path is the fastest way to take."

"On the other hand, scouts are the ones who need to be ahead of the team to check if the direction that the tracer picked is a good choice. They are also responsible for clearing the path of the team while also gathering some information along the way."

"In a sense, a scout and a tracer need to work together so that their team can advance smoothly while traveling," he added while patting Molton's shoulder.

On the other hand, the young mentalist immediately became flustered as he was not used to having such an important role.

p Seeing that, Arthur quickly put his arm around Molton's shoulder, reassuring his so-called junior brother. "Don't worry! Since we currently don't have a tracer, then I can be your partner for the time being. And you can also rely on me anytime you want."

Hearing that, Molton immediately became thankful and nodded his head.

After that, Shin immediately instructed the others to set their black watches and added each of them to his team. He had the crown emblem which also indicated that he was the leader, so he had the right to put others under him, using the special features that his black watch had.

Not long after, the five-minute mark finally arrived, signaling the middle-aged man that it was finally the time to proceed to the next part of the exam.

"Alright, young'uns! It is finally time, so wish for your success," he said while clapping his hands a couple of times before the whole gymnasium suddenly shone with a blinding light.

And a few moments later, all of the candidates disappeared without a trace, leaving the middle-aged alone. "I wonder how many unpolish gems will survive this exam."

Chapter 578 Examination Ground (Part 1)

...

Swoosh!

Shin and the others appeared in the middle of a forest after being swallowed by the blinding light of the teleportation formation earlier.

After their eyes adjusted with the light, the group quickly swept their gazes in their surroundings, studying the unfamiliar place that they were in. The trio of Shin, Arthur, and Leonard even went to three different directions to survey the area around them, making sure that there were no threats looming in the vicinity.

Meanwhile, Lorraine and Cloe quickly moved into a position, getting ready for a fight at any given time. The former took out a pair of pistols and quickly pointed them in the direction where Leonard and Arthur were heading to give them cover if something unexpected came up. On the other hand, Cloe was busily sweeping her gaze left and right, ready to jump in action at any given moment.

The other three were slightly lagging behind since they were not familiar with the others. But they were able to quickly respond in time after seeing their teammates busily surveying their surroundings.

Jillian quickly clasped her hands together, creating a barrier made of Mental Energy that would protect their group from harm. At the same time, Molton's eyes suddenly glowed with a flickering light which signified that he activated an ocular technique while sweeping his gaze around.

Meanwhile, Alice quickly spread a gentle wave of Mental Energy to extend her senses while taking a battle stance and standing on the opposite side that Cloe was guarding.

A few moments later, the group secured the surrounding area and quickly regrouped after making sure that there were no threats around.

"Tsk! Tsk! The academy sure is stingy, they are not giving us much information that we can use," complained Arthur while walking back to the team.

"They did not even tell us the time limit of this exam!" he added while ruffling his hair.

Hearing that, Shin immediately smirked at him. "That's exactly what they want us to do. To gather information on our own. They clearly want to see how we are going to respond after sending us to an unfamiliar place."

He then paused for a couple of moments before quickly adding to his words. "As for the time limit, I think they want to work in this test without the pressure of time while also observing our abilities for as long as they want."

"Maybe taking this exam without the pressure of time is good but that fact alone is also a pressure itself since we don't know when this test is going to end," said Jillian.

When Shin heard that, he couldn't help but nod his head since he was also aware of it. The fact that this test didn't have a time limit would put a lot of pressure on those teams that already accumulated enough points since they didn't know when they were going to get attacked by their rivals to steal their points from them.

This would clearly put a lot of pressure on those weaker teams who were not confident that they could fight against the stronger teams.

After that, Shin clapped his hands once to wake the others from their thoughts before saying. "Alright, let's forget about it for now since it is not our problem. So, how about we focus on what we are going to do next?"

Hearing that, the others immediately looked at him, waiting for him to give his orders. After all, he was currently the leader of this team.

Shin thought for a couple of moments before looking back at them while saying. "We don't know where we are right now and we obviously don't have much information about this place, so let's get as much information as we can for the time being."

"So, which direction are we heading to?" asked Jillian.

Shin quickly turned his head towards a certain direction where a huge mountain was located before replying. "Even if this test didn't have a time limit, I'm pretty sure that the academy wants us to head towards a certain place that will be our finish line."

"For example, that sole mountain over there that is standing alone in the middle of this huge forest," he added while pointing at the direction where the mountain stood.

After taking a good look on that mountain, Shin arranged the formation of their team before they proceed moving forward. "Since we don't have a tracer for now, let's have Arthur take that role for now. He will work with Molton to scout ahead."

"Me and others will assume a kite formation while moving. Leonard, you will be in the front as we advance forward. Cloe and Alice will closely follow after him with Jillian standing between them."

"Lorraine, you can stand behind them while I'll cover the rear. Is there any question?" he added while looking at the game.

Hearing that, Cloe quickly asked. "You are in command so why not stand in the middle too and let Lorraine take the rear?"

Understanding the scheme she hid behind her rational question, Shin finger flicked on her forehead while saying. "Nice try pulling it, unfortunately that is not the best formation that we can have right now."

"It is logical for us to put Lorraine at the very rear of our formation given her rage and good awareness of the surroundings. But she will get a lot of pressure focusing in two different directions."

"We also need to consider that we are still a new team, we can't expect her to be able to coordinate with the entire team instantly. So, it was better for her to focus only in front of her so that she can quickly adjust with our rhythm," he added after a brief pause.

Cloe pouted her lips when she heard that while also rubbing her forehead. She felt being scolded even though Shin was only explaining their formation.

Seeing that, Shin patted her head before continuing. "On the other hand, it is better for me to be in the rear since I have 'Immediate Response' talent. I can still protect our formation while standing at the back and giving out orders."

"Moreover, I also have a new trick that is perfect for this situation," he said while executing the territorial skill that he learned from his special training.

With that, Shin spread some of his Mental Energy around them while also expanding his senses along with it.

Arthur and the others quickly sensed the invisible energy that came out from Shin's body, which gave them the impression that they were currently standing inside someone's territory.

"False Territory!"

"Spiritual Sense!"

Training under one of the strongest Martial-Artists around the world, both Arthur and Leonard quickly recognize what Shin was doing. In fact, the two of them also have the same skill.

It was the same for the trio of Mentalists in their group. And being a part of a Mentalist Family with a long history, it was natural for them to be aware of what kind of technique Shin was using; especially that the three of them were currently using similar techniques.

But immediately after the initial surprise, the group quickly realized that they were wrong. They could feel that Shin was currently using the same technique as them but also different at the same time.

It was more like... a combination of two different techniques.

"Hey! What was that!" asked Arthur as he instantly appeared in front of Shin and tried to grab the latter's collar.

Unfortunately, Shin was able to read his move and instantly respond with it accordingly; he took a quick step backward before grabbing both of Arthur's wrists. "Hey, relax! It is not a big deal!"

Arthur slightly knitted his brow when he saw that Shin was able to predict his move. And because of that, he couldn't help but become curious about what this strange territorial skill could do.

Having that in mind, he quickly turned his wrist before pulling his arms backwards, freeing them from Shin's grip. He then lowered his stance a little and clenched his fist before throwing a powerful punch forward.

Shin couldn't help but curse out loud when he saw Arthur's actions. "F*ck! This guy wants to create trouble again!"

Regardless, he didn't have time to complain right now, so could only respond with the incoming attack and calmed Arthur down. And with that thought, he quickly took a step backward before waiting for incoming fist to arrive.

And before the fist could even hit him, Shin suddenly raised one of arm and used the back of his hand to redirect its trajectory before quickly turning his wrist and accurately catching Arthur's wrist.

Shin's movements were quite fast, not giving Arthur enough time to react. Moreover, he also felt a strange sensation on his wrist that Shin was holding; it travelled in his entire body before his strength suddenly left his body.

"Ah! This technique!"

Shin ignored Arthur's surprise and quickly spun around and threw the troublemaker on the ground.

Bang!

"Tsk! What do you think you are doing? We are currently in the middle of the exam! This is not the right time to mess around," said Shin as he restrained Arthur's movements.

"Alright, alright! I get it. I just want to try what your new technique can do. And what exactly is it?" said Arthur while raising both of his hands.

After that, Shin let Arthur go and helped him stand up while answering. "Just like what you are thinking, it is the 'False Territory' technique but also not at the same time."

"What do you mean by that?" asked Jillian curiously.

Hearing her, Shin turned his head towards her and didn't mind replying honestly. "Well, you can also say that it is a combination of 'False Territory' of a Martial-Artist and 'Spiritual Sense' of a Mentalist."

"It is actually not a not that special, more like a trick used by a Dual-Practitioner like me," he added while scratching his cheek. "Though, we do have different methods of doing and naming this trick. And I named mine as 'Zone'."

'Not special your *ss!' – thought the others when he heard his words while throwing skeptical looks at him.

Arthur was about to say something once again when they suddenly heard a loud explosion not too far from them.

BOOM!

Hearing that, they simultaneously turned their head towards that direction before looking back at Shin.

Understanding their thoughts, Shin thought for a moment before nodding his head. "Alright, let's put this discussion on hold and investigate what happened over there."

Hearing those words, the group quickly nodded their heads and immediately went back into their formation. Then they move ahead with Molton and Arthur in the lead.

Chapter 579 Examination Ground (Part 2)

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Shin and the group quickly proceed towards the source of the explosion that they heard earlier while maintaining their formation.

Meanwhile, Arthur and Molton were moving ahead of the team to investigate. And along the way, the two immediately noticed the mess on their path. There were a lot of broken trees scattered on their path, indicating that a fight just took place in this place.

Arthur stopped in front of a fallen tree trunk and touched the surface, observing it. "It is too cold; it is as if this is close to freezing. But it is clear that this trunk is just taken down given its resin is still flowing out from it."

"Moreover, the air around here is quite hot, so it is quite strange for this thing to be this cold. Unless it is because of the abilities of one of the Monster Beasts fighting here earlier."

As he observed a little more, Arthur discovered more traces of the intense battle that just took place here, which also further proved his suspicions. He saw a lot of claw marks on the other fallen tree trunks and a couple of huge footprints of Monster Beasts on the ground.

Molton's discoveries were pretty much the same as Arthur's. But unlike the latter, he had some ocular techniques of Mentalists so he could scan the surroundings more clearly than Arthur even if his so-called senior brother had more experience in this field.

Due to that, he was able to see the chaotic energy lingering in the air. And with his discoveries, he immediately regrouped with Arthur and reported what he discovered.

Arthur might be acting like a fool most of the time but he was quite reliable when it came to these kinds of situations and could make some rational decisions. "I can't recognize these footmarks on the ground and I have never seen them before. We can't just blindly proceed with this kind of uncertainty; especially that we don't even know how strong these monster beasts are."

"Let's go back for now and inform the others with our discoveries before deciding what to do next," he added after some careful consideration. "I just hope that Shin recognizes what kind of monster beasts are ahead of us to avoid some potential risks."

Not long after, the two met up with the team and told them what they saw ahead. Hearing their reports, Shin contemplated for a couple of moments before deciding to proceed at the place that Arthur and Molton had seen, planning to investigate the place himself since he couldn't get much information from what they said.

When the group arrived at the place, they immediately busied themselves investigating it while keeping an eye on their surroundings.

Unlike what Arthur was hoping for, Shin seemed to also have a hard time figuring out what kind of monster beasts were fighting ahead of them. "I also can't recognize these footprints. It is also not recorded on the Bestiary that I know. This is going to be a little troublesome."

After that, he proceeded to scan the humidity in the air. "A pair of Monster Beasts with opposing elements?"

While Shin was muttering to himself, a sudden flash of an idea unexpectedly entered his mind. "Could it be!?"

Having that in mind, he suddenly said. "Let's go! We are going to proceed ahead."

His decision somewhat surprised the group, especially the guys who were familiar with him. Though, they immediately recovered themselves since they were confident that Shin would risk their safety without having a plan in mind that would guarantee their success.

But Jillian and Alice were not the same.

"Are you sure about this? From these trances that those monster beasts left, we can tell that the scale of this battle is clearly not something we can handle," said Jillian with a frown.

He was also quite knowledgeable with Monster Beast Bestiary, and the fact that she also couldn't recognize what type of monster beasts were ahead of them really concerned her. She also didn't want to take the risk given the uncertainty that they had.

On the other hand, Alice also nodded her head and seconded. "There is even a possibility that they are 5-star monster beasts given the traces that we have here. We can't afford to proceed with the limited information that we have."

Hearing their thoughts, Shin nodded his head in agreement before explaining his decision. "But that 'uncertainty' is clearly being emphasized by the academy since the start of the exam."

"Since the very beginning, we all don't know what is happening in his exam; especially that second part where we need to observe the situation for a long time before we are able to figure out what's really happening."

He then paused for a moment and pointed in their surroundings before continuing. "And now, they sent us to an unfamiliar place with who knows where."

"From this information alone, we can clearly tell that the academy is trying to test our abilities to solve these 'uncertainties'," he added, emphasizing the last word.

After saying that, he turned silent for a couple of moments and waited for Jillian and Alice to think about his words.

A few moments later, he then quickly added. "And right now, we are facing yet another 'uncertainty' and being tested whether we are going to proceed ahead or retreat away."

"So, I will leave the decision to you – are we going to continue moving forward or not?" asked Shin while crossing his arms in front of him. "Though, I also want to remind you that we may get some extra points if we choose the first choice."

Hearing those words, both Jillian and Alice couldn't help but hesitate how they were going to respond. They wanted to get those extra points but they still couldn't risk their safety due to their greed.

Seeing their hesitation, Shin helped them decide by saying. "Don't worry, I'm still the leader of this group, so I'm responsible for all your safety. I'm not going to tell you to advance if I'm not confident that we can't safely retreat if the situation turns for the worst all of a sudden."

Unfortunately, the two girls were still not fully convinced with words. After all, those were still just words, what they needed was a proof that they could see in front of their eyes.

Shin could only sigh helplessly when he saw those looks that they were making before taking out a talisman from the small belt bag around his waist. He then held it in between his index and middle fingers before channeling some of his Mental Energy on it.

A moment later, the runes that were written on the talisman suddenly glowed with a brilliant light before floating in the air and forming a rune circle around the group.

When the rune circle was completed, the Mentalists of the group immediately sensed that there were some spatial distortions in the air surrounding them. "An assisted spatial technique!?"

"You are also an Advanced Talisman Master!?" blurted out by both Jillian and Alice when they saw the actions that Shin had just displayed.

Shin immediately replied to them as he asked his own question. "Is this enough to reassure both of you? Fully activating this 'Assisted Teleportation Technique' may consume most of my Mental Energy in my reserve, but it is more than enough to let us escape any unforeseen situations in the future."

The two girls didn't pay attention to his words since showing the 'Assisted Teleportation Technique' was more than enough to reassure them. Both of them just looked at him, waiting for him to answer their previous question.

Seeing that, Shin could only release yet another helpless sigh before deactivating the technique with a flick of his wrist. Fortunately, it was just partial activation that did not consume a lot of Mental Energy.

After that, he replied in a nonchalant manner. "Yeah, you two are right – I'm indeed an Advanced Talisman Master."

p "That shouldn't surprise you, right? After all, both of you have the same level of achievement; an Advance Forgemaster and Advance Enchanter," he added while looking at Jillian and Alice respectively.

In a sense, what he said was actually true. The problem was the fact that he was a Dual-Practitioner who focused on training both Martial-Arts and Mentalism. So, him being an Advanced Talisman Master on top of practicing those two disciplines really surprised them.

'This guy...' the two were quite speechless as they couldn't believe what they just learned. But quickly they recovered their composure after a moment and became motivated to train harder.

After all of that, Shin and the others quickly reorganized themselves before proceeding to move forward. And just like earlier, they were moving with the same formation with Arthur and Molton moving ahead.

But this time, they were quite tense and more focused while advancing forward.

Boom! Boom! Boom!

Not long after, they started to hear a consecutive explosion sound which indicated that they were already near the place where the two monster beasts were currently fighting.

Chapter 580 Examination Ground (Part 3): Prison Island

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Boom!

Arthur and Molton didn't take long to arrive at their destination and immediately witnessed an intense battle of two Monster Beasts ahead of them. And when the two of them saw that, they quickly took cover behind the dense bush nearby.

"What kind of beasts are those?" muttered Molton when saw them.

One of those two monster beasts was a huge lizard with crimson scales on its hind and spreading through to its arms. Meanwhile, the scales under it had a golden color as it spread from its jaw running all the way to its belly and up until the tip of its tail.

Its razor-sharp claws were leaving deep scratches on the ground. There were also some flames coming out from its mouth as it breathed in and out.

Seeing this particular monster beast, Arthur couldn't help but blurt out due to his excitement. "Is that a dragon?"

Hearing that, Molton slightly knitted his brow before replying. "It's just like an overgrown lizard to me."

Naturally, Arthur was able to discover it too after taking a closer look at it. And because of that, he couldn't help but feel a little disappointed. "Too bad."

After that, they shifted their gazes towards the other monster beast which had the appearance of a huge fox with furs as white as snow.

"What a beautiful creature," muttered Molton unconsciously as he couldn't move his eyes away from the white fox.

"Unfortunately, it is still a vicious monster that can eat you alive at any given moment," commented Arthur from the side, pulling his junior brother back to reality.

Then they continued to observe for a couple of moments to understand more what was currently happening. And from their spots, they could see how the two monster beasts fought.

The so-called overgrown lizard was breathing out fire towards the white fox, burning all of the fallen trees on its path. But before it could even burn them into coal, a gentle breeze of wind and snowflakes put the fire out before creating cold vapors lingering in the air.

"So, that's what happened," muttered Arthur after seeing that scene.

They continued to observe the fight for a few more moments before Arthur told Molton to investigate the surroundings. "Given the abilities of those two beasts, both of them can't be here. This is supposedly not their territory."

"If I'm not wrong, those two are lured here by something or someone purposely," he added while squinting his eyes, surveying their surroundings.

"Fellow candidates?" asked Molton with a knitted brow after hearing that.

But the idea was immediately denied by Arthur. "That shouldn't be the case. Given the timing of our arrival, it is impossible for the other candidates to do this."

He trailed his words a little and looked again at the two beasts before continuing. "If my guess is correct, then this place had natives living here."

Molton nodded his head and was about to make his move when Arthur suddenly grabbed his shoulders, preventing him from standing up from their hiding spot.

"Wait!" said Arthur with a solemn tone while looking in a certain direction.

Molton couldn't help but frown his brows when he saw that, especially when he sensed the seriousness of Arthur's tone. Given that, he cast his gaze towards the locations where Arthur was looking and saw a man standing on a tree branch not too far from the two battling beasts.

The person was not wearing a shirt and showing a bare upper body. And since he could barely see the figure from afar, Molton couldn't help but use one of his Mentalism Techniques to have a clear look at that person.

A moment later, Molton's eyes suddenly turned wide as he saw a strange tattoo on that guy's shoulder; it looked like a barcode which further strengthened the unease that he was feeling.

"Is that a prisoner code?" blurted out Molton, shocked.

On the other hand, Arthur nodded his head heavily before saying with a deep frown. "From the looks of it, we are currently in a Prison Island where a lot of criminals are being held."

Hearing that, Molton immediately came to a realization before saying with a heavy tone. "Then, does it mean?"

Arthur immediately nodded his head before Molton could even complete his words. "Yeah, from the looks of it, the true nature of our test is to not only kill some beast or steal some points from the other candidates. It looks like they also want to test our real battle capabilities by letting us fight against these notorious criminals."

"B-but... B-but isn't it too dangerous?" said Molton stutteringly.

"Indeed, it is," said Arthur instantly, agreeing.

He was quite familiar with these kinds of people. In fact, the place where he was sent by Nathan for his special training was also a prison that had criminals that always wanted to attack him. "Tsk! This is going to be really troublesome."

"Why did the Magic Ace Academy change their exam format? This is more like the style of Top Military School," commented Molton while wearing a deep frown.

The two stayed for a few more moments to observe the situation a little more while also trying to see if there were some criminals hiding in the vicinity. And just like what they were expecting, they spotted 4 more people hiding in different places and seemed to be waiting for the two Monster Beasts to further weaken themselves.

"Let's go back for now and report our findings. We can't take this lightly anymore," said Arthur before retreating alongside Molton while avoiding being spotted by the criminals in the vicinity.

Not long after, the two were able to regroup with the group behind them and quickly reported what they just discovered.

"Criminals, huh? Then there is really a high chance that we are currently a Prison Island," muttered Shin before falling deep into thought.

"Is the school planning to get us killed? Sending us to a place full of criminals? Those guys will not think twice before killing us," said Jillian with a deep frown.

"For these guys, then yes. But I doubt it is the same for us; given our appearance, I bet those trashes will start drooling when they see us," said Lorraine with a disgusted tone.

In the meantime, Cloe turned her head at Shin before asking. "So, are we going to continue moving forward and try to steal the kill from those criminals or are we going with our original plan and head over that mountain?"

Shin was silent for a few moments before sweeping his at them while asking. "What do you guys think?"

Hearing those words, the group also became quiet for a couple of moments before replying to him.

"I'll go with whatever your plan is. You know me, I don't like these complicated things. But if it is a fight, you can always count on me," said Arthur tapping his chest.

Leonard was the same. He might not voice out his thoughts but his intention was clear given that he nodded his head after his words. And when Lorraine saw that she immediately released a helpless sight before nodding her head. "Well, if Leo is coming with you, then I will definitely be coming along."

On the other hand, Cloe didn't say anything but given that she moved closer to Shin, it was clear that she was coming with the group.

Seeing that, Jillian could only shake her head and smile bitterly in defeat. "What's the point of asking our opinion? Given that you have the advantage in numbers it is obvious that the majority of votes is obviously going to be in your favor."

Meanwhile, it was clear that Molton was agreeing with his sister despite not saying anything. And when Alice saw that, she knew that it was no point voicing out her thoughts right now.

Seeing that everyone seemed to come up with the same answer, Shin nodded his head before saying. "Then let's continue pursuing our current target."

"Maybe it is quite risky given that there are some criminals over there. But we are going to face them sooner or later, so it is better for us to face them now to understand their strengths rather than being caught off-guard sooner or later," he added after a brief moment of pause.

"Moreover, the academy will surely have some arrangements to save use when the situation go for the worst. If I'm wrong, then these black watches that we have is also for that purpose," he continued to reassure the girls.

Hearing that, the others nodded their heads in agreement before waiting for Shin to continue.

Seeing that, Shin turned his head towards Arthur and Molton before asking. "How strong are those guys that you saw?"

Arthur thought for a couple of moments before replying. "From what I saw, they seem to be at the Early Phase of Ethereal Opening Stage. Dealing with them shouldn't be much of a problem, but the two beasts are going to be tricky."

"Both of them are 5-star Monster Beasts. Even if they are currently heavily wounded, we can't still ignore their strengths," he added after some careful consideration.

"But they are still heavily wounded, that fact alone is a given. So, all we need to do is wait until the very last moment before making our moves," said Jillian immediately after Arthur was done talking.

In the meantime, Shin fell into deep thought before starting to arrange some plans for the team. And when they were done, they immediately started moving to execute the plan.