

Destiny 591

Chapter 591 The Third And Final Day (Part 2)

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Shin and the others were getting ready for the final battle and finalizing their last-minute preparations.

"Is everyone ready?" asked Shin as he swept his gaze at everyone.

Hearing that, the group nodded their heads without showing any hint of hesitation. In fact, they were even more determined right now than ever. They already spent quite some time in this place and it was more than enough for them to no longer have any kind of hesitation on what they were going to do.

Seeing the expression on their faces, Shin started wearing a huge grin before nodding his head. "Then let's do our final hunt."

After that, they walked out of their hiding place and quickly headed towards their respective positions for the upcoming battle.

Earlier, Shin already discussed what they were going to do next after luring their opponents into the valley. And with all of the preparations that they had done, they were confident that they were going to win this battle despite them being too outnumbered by the opposing side.

Not long after, they arrived at their designated positions and waited for the final signal to make their moves.

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On the other hand, the Island Prisoners were advancing cautiously towards the valley ahead of them. They already experienced how troublesome the traps set up by Shin were, so they couldn't afford to be too careless with their movements right now, especially that they were almost reaching their target.

"I've got a bad feeling about this, Brother Ivan. Are you sure that we need to advance forward?" side one of the prisoners while looking at the Valley ahead of them.

But regardless of his concern, Ivan still ignored his warnings and said coldly. "If you are afraid of a bunch of kids, then you can go back now. We don't need cowards in this fight."

"B-but..." the other guy wanted to say something but couldn't find the words that he wanted to say.

Moreover, he couldn't help but shut his mouth after hearing Ivan's next words. "Are you going to let the lives of our dead brother go to waste? After all of the trouble that we have gone through, you should know better than anyone what I mean, Froilan."

Not having anything to refute with those words, the guy named Froilan could only lower his head and clench his fist.

Despite Ivan's hot-headedness, he was not a fool to order his brothers to mindlessly charge towards the valley without having any plan prepared.

"Go tell the scouts to check the area ahead and look out for the traps waiting for us inside. They can also dismantle them, if possible," said Ivan to Froilan.

Hearing that, the latter quickly nodded his head before quickly giving out the orders and sent out a unit of scouts to check the path ahead.

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On the other side, Shin and the others were already in position waiting for the right time to strike.

"Enemy spotted," reported Lorraine after seeing the group of scouts enter the valley. She was currently on top of the valley, lying flat on the ground with her specialized rifle.

"There are nine of them in total," she quickly added after spotting all of the scouts through the scope of her gun.

On the other side of the line, Shin nodded his head before giving his orders. "Wait for them to enter a little deeper before disabling them. Arthur and Leonard will handle the rest."

Nodding her head, Lorraine slightly nodded her head and waited for their scouts to reach the ideal distance before starting firing at them.

Bang!

Chk! Chk!

The first shot was quite loud which resounded in the whole valley. The group of scouts sent by the opposing side would naturally hear such a loud sound. And right after that, the leader of the group quickly swung his hand in the air to create a wall of mental energy to block the incoming bullet.

Confident that he successfully blocked it, he quickly turned his head towards his subordinates to warn them. "Ambush! Take cover."

Unfortunately for him, the bullet from Lorraine's rifle was quite special. And since it was reinforced with her own Mental Energy, it managed to drill through the Mental Energy Wall that was blocking its path before piercing through the leader's thigh.

"Ugh!"

He fell on his knees right after he felt the intense pain coming from his thigh while supporting his body with both of his hands.

"Big Brother!"

The group would naturally try to save him, especially that he was their leader.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

But the moment they tried to jump to his side, Lorraine quickly fired at them with quick succession and accurately hit them at their thighs and shoulders.

When the others saw that they quickly regained their senses and immediately took cover at the nearby rocks around them. But unknown to them, Arthur and Leonard were already sprinting towards their group, taking advantage of the fact that the opposing side couldn't see them since they were hiding from Lorraine.

p Bang! Bang!

Lorraine fire a couple of more shots to distract their enemy while Arthur and Leonard while taking down that she had incapacitated earlier. And right after that, they proceeded to take care of the remaining members of the opposing group.

With Lorraine's cover, the two didn't even spend much effort to deal with the group even though they were quite outnumbered by their enemies.

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Outside the entrance of the valley, Ivan was already getting impatient while waiting for the group of scouts that they had sent earlier.

Given that, he turned his head at Froilan before giving him yet another order. "Send another group to see what is going to happen. But this time, you also need to ask Aaron to follow them behind to see what is going to happen."

Nodding his head, Froilan quickly passed down the order given to him. And long after, the guy named Aaron quickly exited the valley in a great hurry. He then immediately reported what happened.

"A sniper, huh?" muttered Ivan to himself before looking at Froilan once again. "Go take a few of our men and deal with that sniper."

He then turned his head back to Aaron and said. "Take the first group and let them handle those two kids inside that valley. Bring that support group too, they can build a stronger barrier that can block her bullets."

Hearing those, the Froilan and Aaron quickly nodded their heads and went to do their respective jobs.

With that, Aaron led two groups from their main team while maintaining a very solid formation. The assault unit was leading the group while moving cautiously forward.

Behind them was the second unit which was composed of Mentalists members only. They created a thick dome-shaped barrier around their group to protect themselves from the strange bullets that were fired by Lorraine.

"Looks like Shin is right, doing such a method two times is the maximum that we can get," said Arthur while looking at the new batch of enemies.

But quickly after that, he suddenly started grinning from ear to ear before saying. "But it is all according to the plan. They already spend quite a number of their members just to get us. And having this additional batch, their main force is most likely thinned out right now."

At this point, Leonard lowered his hand from his ear, taking it away from the earpiece that he was wearing. He then looked at the opposing side before saying. "Shin Bro said that they also sent a few people to get Lorraine, so their main force is more than just thinned out."

"Is that so? Then what are we waiting for? It is time to get out of here," said Arthur with a sneering tone before moving deeper to the valley until they disappeared from the sight of their enemies with the use of the uneven terrain around them.

Seeing that, the opposing side immediately started to panic. They were afraid that they were going to lose their targets just like that, especially that they already lost a lot of their brothers for this operation.

"We are moving too slow, brother Aaron. At this rate we are going to completely lose sight of them," said one of the members of the group, voicing out the concerns of everyone.

"Don't be reckless! It is clearly another one of their tricks. We can't afford to fall for another trap. We are moving according to our pace, don't get carried away by their rhythm," said Aaron calmly.

Hearing that, the group could only nod their heads and comply with his orders. Then they continue moving cautiously just like what they plan. But not long after, they felt that there was something wrong about their situation, especially that they didn't see anything attack from the opposing side; not even a probing attack to test the waters.

"Something is wrong," said one of the members with a heavy tone as he could already feel the dangerous feeling coming from the valley.

At this point in time, Aaron could only nod his head, forced to acknowledge that they still fell to yet another trap despite them being cautious. And it didn't take long for him to realize what it was.

"Sh*t! Strengthen the barriers, use all of your strongest defensive techniques to reinforce them!" he shouted with a desperate tone.

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

Unfortunately, it was already too late. Before their group could even prepare their best defense, a series of explosions were already exploding on top of the valley's edge. And not long after that, the edge suddenly collapsed and huge rocks started to fall towards them.

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Boom! Boom! Boom!

Large rocks started to fall down towards the group of the prisoners which made them panic.

Aaron was wearing a solemn look on his face when he saw that and quickly gave his orders desperately. "Support team, use your toughest defensive techniques! Assault team, attack those falling rocks; pulverize them before they hit our barrier."

The group desperately did the best that they could, trying to save themselves from the current situation. But everything was already too late since they already fell on the trap set up by Shin and the others.

"Shatter!"

Then the group fell in terror on the very next moment because the barrier surrounding that was supposedly protecting them collapsed all of the sudden.

Aaron's eyes suddenly turned wide when he saw what happened and quickly turned his head towards the direction where the voices that they heard were coming from.

He then saw Jillian and Alice standing a few meters away from them. They were currently releasing a fraction of their Mental Energy while forming a seal with their hands.

"They disturbed the balance of our barrier by forcefully feeding it with their own Mental Energy!" said one of the Mentalists in their group.

"Then build it again!" shouted Aaron with a mix of enraged and desperate tone.

"B-but... it is impossible right now. There is a foreign energy mixed in the air and it is preventing us from properly rebuilding our barrier," said by another Mentalist.

After that, they saw the two girls simultaneously disappear after infusing their Mental Energy on the talisman that they were holding on their other hand.

"Don't underestimate us!" shouted Aaron as Natural Force surrounded his body before throwing a series of punches on the air above them to crush the falling rocks. And when the other members of the group saw that, they immediately followed suit and went all-out.

Even their Mentalists were doing the same. Since they couldn't properly rebuild their barrier, the only thing that they could do was to assist the others in breaking the falling rocks at them.

"I've been waiting for that."

Bang! Bang! Bang!

But amidst all of it, a series of gunshots was suddenly mixed in the rumbling sounds of the falling rocks. And the moment Aaron heard those shots, his eyes suddenly turned wide as he could already see what was going to happen next.

"She's been waiting all this time?" he thought to himself, cursing. Everything happened a little too fast for him to give his orders, so all he could do was to focus all of his efforts to defend himself. At this point in time, he knew that it was already too late to save the others.

"Ugh!"

Then consecutive grunting sounds could be heard among their group as the bullets pierced through their bodies. And even if it didn't directly kill them it was more than enough to put the final nail in the coffin to seal off their fates.

Boom!

Then the raining falling rocks that they failed to break buried them alive.

Hu!

In the spot where Lorraine was hiding from their enemies' sight, she finally got the chance to stand up and stretched her waist after lying flat on the ground for a long time. She then blew the muzzle of her rifle before muttering to herself. "Now, my job is finally done~!"

"You can't be sure about that yet. From what I heard from Shin Bro, the other side seems to send quite a few elites to capture you," said Leonard from the side as tried his best to redirect his eyes away from Lorraine who resumed stretching her waist left and right.

Seeing his reaction, Lorraine couldn't help but want to tease him a little more and continued to stretch her body with a much tempting position.

Cough! Cough!

Leonard suddenly cleared his throat when he saw her actions and quickly changed the topic. "We should be going now before our enemies arrive here."

Unfortunately, his efforts only made Lorraine tease him a little more. "Ho~! Can I take that as you worrying for me?"

Seeing that, Leonard could only sigh helplessly and decided to go back to how he used to treat her. So, he immediately turned around and started to walk away, ignoring her. But contrary to what he was expecting, Lorraine only found his actions cute.

Regardless, she still knew when to stop. So, she turned silent for a moment and chased after Leonard.

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In the meantime, Ivan suddenly heard the series of explosions coming from the valley. And not long after that, they saw that the edges on top of the valley suddenly collapsed and huge rocks started to fall from it.

"That's!"

Seeing that, Ivan knew that they fell into another trap set by their opponents. He wanted to save Aaron and the others, but he knew better than anyone that it was impossible to do that right now since with his great eyesight. He could accurately gauge that Aaron's team had gone a little too deep in the valley, so it was impossible to save them with the current distance that he needed to cover.

All he could do was tightly clenched his fist as he watched the rocks fall from the edge of the cliff. And while he was busy looking at the distance, he suddenly discovered that the area around him turned quiet all of a sudden.

Realizing that, he immediately spun around to take a look at his surroundings and saw that all of the remaining prison buddies that he had around him earlier were now all dead. "What!? Since when did-...?"

He was in the middle of talking when he suddenly heard a young man's voice behind him. "This happened?"

Hearing that, he quickly spun around for another time and saw Shin standing in the place where he was not standing previously. He tried to open and close his mouth and wanted to say something but no words came out of it.

On the other hand, Shin looked at the talisman that he was holding and muttered with a little unsatisfied tone. "You recovered a little faster than what I expected. Looks like there are still some things that I need to improve with this spell talisman."

"What did you do?" asked Ivan while looking around him and discovering that no one is alive aside from him.

"Nothing special, just a little trick to fool your senses for a brief moment," said Shin in a nonchalant manner.

"A brief moment?" repeated Ivan with a solemn tone while looking around him once again. 'If it is just for a brief moment, then how come he managed to kill all of these guys?'

Understanding what Ivan was thinking, Shin suddenly waved his hand and said. "There is no need to think too much about it, there is nothing special about this trick."

Bang!

But in response, Ivan suddenly kicked the ground below him and launched himself towards Shin in a very aggressive manner.

Unfortunately, Shin was just looking at his charge calmly while putting his left hand on one of his sheathed katanas.

Cling!

And with a flick of his thumb, the guard of that katana was slightly pushed out of its sheath and partially revealed its blade.

Then Ivan suddenly felt a very threatening feeling from Shin's body which made him forcefully halt his advance. He then stared at Shin with a dumbfounded look on his face. "This kid-...! Just how many did kill to get that kind of Killing Intent at such a young age?"

Meanwhile, Shin felt a little disappointed that his opponent didn't continue charging at him. "I guess the people living in this harsh place really have sharp battle instincts."

Gulp!

Overhearing Shin's mumbling, Ivan couldn't help but swallow a mouthful of saliva as he could read the hidden meaning from those words.

"If I continue moving forward, this kind really is going to kill me without any hesitation," muttered Ivan to himself as he broke in a cold sweat.

He was not as talented as the brightest prodigies and geniuses of his generation, but he was still a battle-sharpened veteran who had already gone through a lot of life-and-death situations. And the instincts that honed after going through those battles was currently telling him to run away from his place as soon as possible.

'Who the hell is this kid? He is completely different from the reports that we receive so far,' thought Ivan while staring at Shin with widened eyes.

Seeing that his opponent didn't have any plan of attacking, Shin could only take the initiative to end this final battle. "I want to end this as soon as possible so that we can finally go home and get a proper bath and peaceful rest, so don't blame me."

Swoosh!

He then suddenly disappeared from his current position and reappeared in front of Ivan, ducking forward while maintaining a sword drawing stance.

Shing!

After that, he quickly pulled out the katana from its sheath and swung it at his opponent with great speed and accurate precision. "Let me try this skill that I personally re-created during my special training."

Ivan didn't know why, but he couldn't move his body despite him being able to see that incoming attack. It was as if his own body was refusing to obey his orders.

All he could do was watch the incoming blade came after his neck. From its trajectory alone, he could easily see that this was a decisive blow that was trying to sever his head from his shoulders.

"Am I going to die here?"

In the face of death, Ivan's body suddenly froze as he saw the flashes of memories in front of his eyes alongside the crimes that he committed during his time outside the Prison Island. And when he saw that, he finally remembered why he was living in this sh*tty place.

"Yeah, that is right! I really deserve to die," he muttered with a soft voice before closing his eyes and fully accepting his fate with a smile.

Clang!

But contrary to his expectation, he didn't die as someone suddenly interfered.

"Looks like you finally realize and acknowledge your sin, Ivan," said a familiar voice. And when Ivan reopened his eyes, he saw Lennon standing between him and Shin while blocking the blade of the katana with his bare hands.

"Lennon! What are you doing here?" asked Ivan, fully surprised.

"Boss orders. He knows that you are going to do something stupid, so he sends me here to save your sorry *ss," replied Lennon with an annoyed tone.

In the meantime, Shin was quite shocked at the sudden appearance of the new guy; especially that his attack seemed to be casually blocked barehanded.

After that, he quickly separated from the two before solemnly looking at Lennon. "This guy, he is completely different compared to those prisoners that we encountered so far. He has an unusual speed and almost got me earlier. If not for my 'Zone', I'd most likely get assassinated by him."

But unknown to Shin, Lennon was also looking at him solemnly and assessing his strength closely. 'This kid is a monster. To think that he is going to redirect his katana at me at the very last second? I almost get myself killed instead of taking his life.'

"Kid, how about we stop here right now? You already killed quite a lot of our brothers, so that should be more than enough for you to pass the exam, right?" said Lennon after calming himself a little.

Naturally, Shin was more than willing to accept such a good proposal in normal circumstances. But how could he let his opportunity go by now that he finally found a good opponent to really test how much he improved after his special training.

"Fine by me, but how about seniors enlighten this junior for a moment? It is such a small request in exchange for his life, isn't it?" asked Shin to respond while pulling out his other katana with his free hand.

"This kid is crazy," muttered Lennon when he saw those actions. He then smirked at Shin and replied. "Don't push your luck too hard, kid. We are not playing here."

When those words left his mouth, a small group of prisoners suddenly appeared behind him before positioning themselves beside Lennon. Their numbers might be smaller than the previous group but it was clear that they were much stronger compared to all of the prisoners that Shin and the others fought so far.

But to these guys' surprise, Shin took a step forward and welcomed the pressure that they were releasing instead of backing down.

"Then it is even better since we don't conserve our strengths on this final day to just play either," said Shin as he released a powerful pressure despite having a smaller physique compared to the opposing group.

At the same time, the other members of his group also appeared behind him one by one while wearing serious looks on their faces. Especially Leonard who was dragging Froilan's corpse by hand and Arthur who was hanging his arms on the steel spear that was on the back of his neck.

Seeing the scene in front of him, Lennon was reminded of a certain event that he witnessed decades ago and made the hairs on his body stand straight. "These kids-...."

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"Then it is even better since we didn't save our strengths for the last day to play either."

Lennon could sense the overwhelming confidence from Shin when he heard those words. At first, he thought that it was just overconfidence from a kid. But he immediately realized that he was wrong when he saw what happened next.

First, he saw Shin's friends appear behind him one by one.

Starting from the right, Lennon saw the twins from the Potter Clan emerged. Each of them had a stunning air around them; the majestic air that could only be found from the descendants of Aristocratic families.

Moreover, they were also releasing a powerful pressure which was making an illusion that they were a pair of phoenixes standing behind them.

Then Alice stood beside them while emitting a similar pressure as them. But unlike the powerful pressure that the other two were currently releasing, the aura that she had around her was somewhat refined and dignified. It was like an elegant swan standing in the middle of a huge pond with floating lotuses around it.

Then there was Arthur who was hanging his arms on the steel spear that was resting on the back of his neck. He was lazily staring at the opposing team with squinted eyes but the pressure that he was releasing was no way weaker than the previous three. In fact, it might be much stronger than them in a sense.

On the other hand, the group standing on Shin's left side was not going to lose in terms of the pressure that they were released either.

Standing at the farthermost left was Lorraine who had a rifle in hand and resting it on her shoulders. Her aura was not as eye-catching as the others standing on the right side. But it was at least much deadlier compared to theirs aside from Arthur.

Standing beside her was a sweet and charming girl with an innocent look on her face. But contrary to her outer appearance, the pressure that she was emitting had a unique threat in them. It was like a harmless fox at first look but became threatening after baring its fangs.

After her, was Leonard who was holding a corpse in hand while looking coldly at their enemies. The bestial pressure that he was releasing was so strong that the prisoners from the opposing side might mistake him as a monster beast in human skin.

And there was Shin who was standing at the forefront of the group with a pair of katanas in hand. His aura was the most eye-catching among the group because of the Killing Intent that he mixed in it.

Lennon was staring at this sight in front of him with an astounded look on his face. "Th-this kids... Don't tell me... another-..."

He was still in the middle of mumbling with himself when he saw Shin's group suddenly took the initiative to make the first move.

Shin charged forward alongside Leonard and Arthur was running with his side by side. And when the other prisoners saw that, they also lunged forward to greet the incoming trio.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

Then a series of gunshots could be heard as Lorraine fired at the incoming group of prisoners. And when they saw those bullets flying towards them, the prisoners readjusted their positions where a bulky rushed forward while the rest slowed down.

Right before the bullets reached him, the bulky guy suddenly stomped on the ground before lifting a portion of it to block the incoming bullets. Then he pushed the boulder forward, sending it towards Shin and the others.

Shing!

But it was immediately split in two by a Mental Energy Wave that Shin sent through his swords. Then the three of them jumped through the gap between the two portions of the boulder. And before the opposing side could even make their next moves, Shin quickly sent another pair of energy waves towards them with a swing of his katanas.

Seeing that, Arthur and Leonard suddenly accelerated forward, following close behind the two energy waves and using them as a cover to hide from their opponent's line of sight.

Bang! Bang!

The energy waves were immediately dissipated when the bulky guy threw two consecutive punches at them. But right after he did that, he was immediately greeted by an unexpected attack from Arthur and Leonard; the former was thrusting his spear forward, targeting the bulky man's head, while the latter ducking forward and was in the middle of throwing a powerful punch towards his opponent's abdomen.

Seeing that, the bulky man knew that he couldn't dodge those attacks all by himself. But he was still looking at them calmly regardless. It was because he knew that he was also not alone.

And just like what he was expecting, two of his brothers suddenly pulled him back while blocking the attacks that were coming after him. One of them redirected Arthur's spear to the side with his sword while the other caught Leonard's fist with precise timing.

But before those two could even do their counterattack, Lorraine fired a couple of shots once again. And this time, it was accurately targeting their heads.

Seeing that, they had no other choice but to abandon the idea of attacking and dodged the bullets instead.

"Tsk! Get rid of that girl first!" said one of them before charging towards Lorraine while leaving three of their prison buddies to deal with Arthur and Leonard; two for Arthur and the bulky man for Leonard.

Shing!

Bang! Bang!

But before they could even proceed, they were immediately blocked by Shin and prevented them from advancing further. He, alone, was able to repel seven of them at once. And the moment they saw that, they couldn't help but look at him warily.

While they were caught in a difficult situation, Lennon finally recovered himself and quickly helped them. "Leave this kid to me, you can deal with the others."

Shin didn't care if the others ignored him since his main target from the opposing side was Lennon anyway. Moreover, he also had full trust in his teammates, so dealing with those small fries shouldn't be a problem for them.

"Quite confident, huh? But are you sure about that?" said Lennon provokingly.

"Heh! If you think such a simple provocation can get on my nerves, then you truly are underestimating me, Senior," said Shin sneeringly.

He then took a brief pause before adding with a mysterious grin. "And those girls are stronger than what you can think anyway."

Bang!

And that was the time Lennon saw two of his buddies were sent flying by Alice and Cloe.

Lennon raised one of his eyebrows when he saw that and couldn't help but take a quick glance at them. Then he saw that they had a quite solid formation. Alice was leading the fight with Cloe assisting her and covering her blind spots. And behind them was Jillian who was giving them some ranged support with her Mental Energy while protecting Lorraine behind her.

As for Lorraine, she was giving cover to both the boys who were battling in the far front and the other three girls in front of her.

Seeing them, Lennon couldn't help but knit his eyebrows as he found that there was something wrong.
"Where is that boy with round glasses?"

Unfortunately, he didn't have enough time to dwell on that thought as Shin already made his move.
"Tsk!"

Clang!

"Kid, don't overestimate yourself too much. You may be biting more than you can chew," said Lennon while blocking Shin's swords with his hands once again. But this time, that hand was currently covered with his Natural Force.

But despite understanding the difference between their current Martial-Art Insights, Shin still refused to back down and advanced forward instead. "Heh! We will never know if it is more than what I can handle or not if I don't give it a try."

Then Lennon saw that Shin's arms seemed to turn into blurs before a large group of sword silhouettes covered his slight all of a sudden.

"Huh!?" Lennon looked at the scene in front of him with wide-opened eyes before doing everything he could to block each of the sword silhouettes in front of him.

After that, he was able to recover himself from being surprised at Shin's unusual attacks. He even started to see some patterns in it which also made him adjust his movements and waited for the right time to counterattack.

Not long after, that opportunity immediately arrived as he saw Shin inhale deeply to regulate his breathing, preparing to pick up the pace for a much stronger series of attacks.

But given that Lennon saw that, he would obviously prevent Shin from doing whatever he was planning.

So, he purposely took a step back to give his opponent some space, luring the Shin to do a wide swing. And sure enough, Shin took that opportunity to pull his arms back, preparing for wide swings.

"Still too green," said Lennon sneering when he saw that Shin took the bait. He then covered both of his hands with a much denser Natural Force before preparing to catch the blades of Shin's katana.

But at the very last moment, he got a glimpse of Shin wearing a mysterious grin which gave him an intense shiver that ran through his entire body.

Then he saw that the blades that he was trying to catch went past his hands like a mirage. "What? An illusion?"

And that was only when he saw the real attack coming at him.

Fortunately, he managed to save himself from that disaster with his rich battle experience; he kicked the ground beneath him and jumped in the air before creating a space between him and Shin.

"That was close. To think that this kid is actually that cunning? It seems like I can't let my guard down," he muttered to himself while looking at Shin cautiously.

In the meantime, Shin was looking at his katanas with a deep frown while muttering to himself. "I guess I'm still not used to using my Illusion and Sword Techniques simultaneously."

He then trailed his words a little to look at Lennon before continuing. "Then let's try the real stuff this time."

Chapter 594 Diel Hendrickson's Ploy (Part 1)

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The battle between Shin's group and the Island Prisoners was getting more intense as time went by. The group of prisoners that Lennon brought were not weak people at all, so they were able to withstand the momentum that the former group was riding after the series of victories that they had so far.

Moreover, there was also Ivan who finally was able to regain his composure after being shocked by Shin's earlier performance. But Shin already predicted that which was why he sent Molton to deal with the guy before he could even join his prison buddies.

The bulky guy was holding Leonard in place and was trying to overwhelm his opponent with his powerful strength. But to his surprise the young man in front of him not only could withstand his powerful

assault, but he was also able to contend against him with an equal footing despite having a much smaller body than him.

Meanwhile, Arthur was the one who was dictating the rhythm of the fight on his side. Despite fighting alone against two quite skilled opponents, he was able to repeatedly push his opponents backward with his spearmanship alone.

Previously, he didn't have a good opportunity to showcase his spearmanship since all of their targets earlier were relatively easy compared to his current opponents. But now that he had some good 'sparring partners', he could at least take this opportunity to show what he could really do.

With those three holding their grounds quite well, Lorraine didn't have to put any attention to them and could now focus on helping the other girls. And with her assistance, the opponents that they had on their side were suffering pressure from her; they couldn't afford to lower their guard at any moment since they were going to pay a heavy price from her guns.

On top of the constant threat from Lorraine, the teamwork that Alice and Cloe had was also giving them a lot of trouble. Though, the real credit of this teamwork should be going to the latter.

Alice was a talented Kaleidoscope Mentalist who could fight pretty well. And after her Bloodline Ceremony, the quality of her Mental Energy became much better compared to how it used to be. Moreover, she also underwent some special training with her grandfather, so her battle capabilities went up to another level.

But to her surprise, Cloe was able to keep up with her rhythm no matter how much she picked up her pace; it was as if Cloe was familiar with all of her techniques and responding to them accordingly. If the others looked at them for the first time, then they might think that the two of them were best friends who knew each other since young.

With all of that, the two of them were more than enough to deal with the remaining enemies even if they were totally outnumbered.

Naturally, the opposing side would consider taking down Lorraine first since she was the one who was giving them the greatest pressure. But doing that was much easier said than done since Jillian was there to repel all of their attempts.

With all of this, it was already clear which side had the advantage. And if there were no accidents that were going to happen, Shin's group already got into this fight.

Speaking of Shin, he was doing pretty well at pinning down the leader of the opposing side; he even dragged their fight away from the main battlefield to prevent Lennon from instructing his prison buddies.

"Tsk! This kid is really hard to deal with," cursed Lennon to himself as he tried his best to ward off each of Shin's attacks.

Shin's battle style was really giving him a lot of trouble due to its unpredictability. Each of his swings was powerful enough to threaten Lennon especially that they were empowered by Mental Energy.

Moreover, there were also those strange techniques mixed in his assault such as those illusions that always caught Lennon off-guard and almost lost his life in the process. There were also those Mental Energy Walls that kept on popping out of nowhere; they were messing with his rhythm every time he managed to find his pace and threw some deadly counters at Shin.

Alongside those illusions and Mental Energy Walls were those troublesome Mentalism Runes that really made Lennon very cautious. Shin was trickly using them; and every time he did, Lennon would always get his life almost close to death. If not for him being an expert who experienced quite a lot of life-and-death situations, then he most likely got killed right now.

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Meanwhile, in the sky above the Prison Island, the trio of world-class experts were putting quite a lot of interest on this particular battle.

"That adopted child of your family became quite skilled, Nathan. His Mentalism became quite refined," said Elias Stuart while looking at the battle on Shin's side.

"And he also has quite decent swordsmanship on top of that," added Eugene White as he nodded his head.

On the other hand, Nathan was looking at Shin with a great focus before replying to the two. "And this is him not showing his best yet. You should know that this kid is a Dual-Practitioner."

"Now that you mention it, I remember him battling with that genius Mentalist while undergoing a Demonic Possession," said Eugene while nodding his head. But he quickly added after a brief moment of pause. "But it looks like this kid doesn't have the plan to show real potential yet."

"Regardless, he is already strong enough to handle himself against an Ethereal Realm Stage expert with his Mentalism alone," commented Elias.

Hearing that, Nathan couldn't help grin meaningful before asking with a teasing tone. "What, getting interested in this kid now? Is he a good 'candidate' that you are looking for?"

Unfortunately, Elias just ignored what Nathan had said and continued to look at Shin until Eugene suddenly asked after a few moments of silence. "Have you seen the current level of his Martial-Arts?"

Nathan paused for a moment when he heard that before shaking his head. "No, I haven't seen it yet. I'm actually quite curious how much he improves after undergoing the special training that Professor Plum and Grandmaster Benn prepared for him."

He trailed his words a little to look at Shin before continuing. "But given that he managed to master the Mentalism Runes and even incorporate it during battle, I'm pretty sure that it also went up with a great margin."

"I will not even be surprised if its level is on par with his current Mentalism Techniques," he added.

After that, he looked at Eugene White before asking. "How about his swordsmanship? Do you think it is going to be on par with his other two disciplines?"

Eugene knitted his brow for a moment before replying. "As I said earlier, his swordsmanship is already good, so he just needs to polish it a little more before it can fully complement his Mentalism. Though, I still need to see his progress on his Martial-Arts to judge if it can also be supported by it."

He then paused for a moment to think about something before continuing. "But since he is Professor Plum's personal disciple, then that means he most probably practiced that famous Yin-Yang Swordsmanship."

"But... I haven't seen him incorporate any of the skills under that swordsmanship yet. He is probably trying to hide it purposely or he still doesn't know how to properly use them alongside his Mentalism Techniques."

Hearing his deduction Elias suddenly raised one of his eyebrows before commenting. "So, that is the reason why he applies for the Special Program of the Magical Ace Academy instead of Top Military School."

"To seek guidance from Professor Henry?" asked Eugene White to clarify.

Then Elias Stuart nodded his head to respond before answering. "Precisely! After all, that old man knows quite a lot of things regarding Secret Arts and Unified Strengthening. And if that kid is quite lucky, then he may even create a Secret Art Series of his own."

After that, he turned his head towards Nathan and asked. "What do you think Nathan? Do you think this kid has the ability to pull it off?"

But at that moment, he noticed that Nathan was currently looking in a different direction. And when he saw that, he couldn't help but frown and said. "Look at this arrogant guy. Only knows how to ask others but never-..."

Elias was still in the middle of talking when he noticed that there was something wrong with Nathan. "What is it?" while turning his head towards the direction where the latter was looking.

Nathan didn't reply to him immediately as he stared at a certain group in the distance with a deep frown. A few moments later, he suddenly opened his mouth and said, "I'm leaving this spot to the two of you, I'm heading towards that center of that island."

"I don't know what that kid, Diel Hendrickson, was planning. But I've got a bad feeling about it," he added before disappearing and leaving Elias and Eugene behind.

Chapter 595 Diel Hendrickson's Ploy (Part 2)

...

At the center of the Prison Island, Diel and his team arrived in front of a certain cave where one of the Monster Beast Overlords was residing.

"This should be the place, Young Master," said Falcon Hawkins, a trained young attendant of the Gordon Clan and Diel Hendrickson's current personal aide.

Hearing that, Diel started at the cave for a couple of moments before nodding his head. "Then let's go. Killing this beast will give us enough points to separate us from the others."

"W-wait!" said one of their teammates, seemingly against the idea. And when he saw Diel and Falcon halted their steps, he immediately tried to persuade them from entering the cave. "Are you sure about

this, Diel? We all know that both of you are very strong and we are very thankful that you carried us up until now, but inside that cave is a 7-star monster beast!"

Falcon quickly turned his head towards that guy before walking over in an aggressive manner. But Diel prevented him from moving forward. "Relax, Falcon. You should know why we are here."

After that, Diel looked at the other members of the group before saying. "Since when did I give you the permission to voice out your thoughts?"

Hearing that, the guy who talked earlier suddenly felt an intense shiver on his spine as he stared at Diel with full of terror. He started moving backward, trying to create more distance between him and the young man in front of him.

On the other hand, Diel suddenly extended his right which made the other guy tightly shut his eyes.

Fortunately, Diel didn't do any to him aside from patting his shoulders. "Do misunderstand. We didn't choose you to team up with us, not because we are strong enough to be our teammates. We only choose you to fill up the numbers since we are too lazy to form a decent team."

He then slightly slapped the other guy's cheek before adding. "And don't worry, we don't need you to join us anyway."

After that, Diel turned around and gestured to Falcon to follow him, leaving their teammates behind. "Let's go, we don't have much time left on this Island."

When they entered the cave, Falcon immediately surveyed the surroundings to look for any hidden cameras that might be spying on them. And after making sure that there were none, he quickly asked. "Is the timing going to be alright?"

"Don't worry, Falcon. Everything is according to the plan. And since we are already here, one of the administrators would surely come here to aid us," answered Diel in a calm manner.

Then they continued moving forward, getting deeper into the cave. And not long after they entered, Nathan appeared in the sky above the place before looking down below with squinting eyes. "What is this kid planning?"

Given Nathan's status in the military, it was natural for him to become aware of the real background of Diel Hendrickson. Aside from being one of the young masters of the Gordon Clan, he still had another identity hidden from public knowledge, a secret agent of a mysterious underworld organization.

He got the tip from an anonymous informer and that was the reason why he accepted this task personally to keep an eye on this particular candidate.

"Let's see what his organization is plotting in this exam," muttered Nathan before focusing his senses to bypass the thick wall of the cave.

...

In the meantime, Elias and Eugene decided to separate from each other since in the side where the other two remaining teams were about to bump into each other.

Jean Camus was leading his team towards the east side of the island where he suspected a ravenous point was placed by the academy. But at the same time, Dylan seemed to also have the same idea in his mind which was why they were heading in that place.

Given their current speed, the two groups were going to meet each other in front of a major settlement that was blocking their way. And not long after, both groups arrived in that place just like Eugene had expected.

"Looks like we are not the only ones who are suspecting the existence of the ravenous point," said Jean as he stood in front of a young man with a long sword hanging on his back.

Hearing that, the young man in front of him slightly nodded his head before replying. "It's been a while, Jean Camus."

"I see that you are still as polite as ever, Dylan. I wonder if your skills are also the same," said Jean while wearing a huge grin.

"That is a good question. How about we try to test it right now?" answered Dylan in a calm manner but the intense hunger for battle, that was coming from his body begged to disagree.

"Oh~!"

Hearing those words, the group behind Jean Camus suddenly became interested and seemed to have the urge to 'join' the 'conversation'. They took a step forward and stood beside Jean while showing their intent for battle.

On the other hand, Ezio Williams directly took out his daggers to welcome the auras coming from the opposing side. And even if the member-quality of the opposing side was much higher than their team, the young assassin seemed to be unwilling to back down from the challenge.

"Looks like these little cubs are underestimating me a little too much," he even said to return the challenge.

Given the air surrounding the two groups, it was pretty clear that an intense battle was about to break out.

Fortunately, Jean suddenly put his hands in front of his group to stop them from making any sudden moves before saying. "Relax, guys. This is not the right time to see which of us is the strongest."

He paused for a brief moment to look at the major settlement in the distance before continuing. "We still have a very important task in hand. So, how about we agree to have a temporary truce for the time being before continuing this battle at the next part of the test?"

"I'm sure that none of us want to be at the bottom ranking," he added to indicate their current standing at the exam.

Their teams were currently at the top second and third respectively while Shin's group ranked first.

On the other hand, Diel's team was currently ranked fourth but that was to be expected since they didn't kill a lot of monster beasts nor prisoners while advancing towards the center of the Prison Island.

But their ranking was definitely going to be higher if they managed to kill the Overlord Beast residing in the cave.

Naturally, Jean Camus and Dylan White didn't have any idea about that. But given that both of them were quite familiar with Diel, they were quite confident that the guy was cooking something behind the scenes.

"We both know how cunning that guy is, so it is better for us to arrive at the suspected ravenous point to solidify our standings. We may even overtake that particular group above us," he added more to emphasize that Shin's group was quite ahead of them in terms of points.

Dylan squinted his eyes a little when he heard that before asking suspiciously. "But how can we be sure you guys are not going to backstab us?"

Hearing that, Jean could only sigh helplessly and wear a bitter sigh since he knew where Dylan was coming from. He then looked at Simone and Thomas before warning them with a cold glare. "You two better behave when we start, or else you are going to suffer a heavy consequence later."

"Tsk!"

The two could only click their tongues as both of them knew why Jean was asking them that. And after a few moments of hesitation, both of them could only nod their heads reluctantly before agreeing with him.

"You can trust me in this, Dylan. If these two create trouble for us later, then I will take full responsibility for it," said Jean while looking at the sword genius with a determined look on his face.

Seeing that, Dylan hesitated for a few moments before nodding his head to agree with his offer. "You better honor your words later."

And with that, a temporary alliance was formed between the two teams before they proceeded towards the major settlement in the distance.

While all of those were happening, Daniel received yet another visitor inside his own room.

"It has been a while, Daniel," greeted the visitor as he appeared inside Daniel's room like a ghost.

But despite the sudden appearance of the man standing in front of him, Daniel was still wearing a calm expression on his face and welcomed his guest with a calm tone. "It looks like my time has finally arrived."

He then raised his head to look at his guest's face before adding. "Though, it is quite unexpected for them to send their top Executioner to eliminate a small figure like me. Am I right, Bane?"

"Is that so? But why do I feel that you are already expecting my arrival, old friend?" replied Bane while fixing the pirate hat that he was wearing.

He then raised his head a little to look at Daniel straight to the eyes before coming. "This is not going to happen if you remain silent until the day you die. But since you already decided to betray the organization, I guess you are also ready to die."

Hearing those words, Daniel suddenly wore a lonely smile before continuing. "I've always been ready since the time I decided to betray 'them'."

Bane was silent for a moment when he saw the look that Daniel was currently making before sympathizing with him. "This is the reason why we shouldn't get too involved with other people during our mission. It will only lead us to our own destruction."

Then a cold look suddenly formed with his eyes before continuing. "Regardless, please don't blame me for this. I'm only following their orders."

"Don't worry, I clearly understand how you feel," said Daniel while maintaining his lonely smile before closing his eyes.

Chapter 596 The End Of The First Exam

...

The end of the special exam was getting near as dusk approached. And during this span of time, news after news spread in the Prison Island like a wildfire.

The first news was about Lennon, one of the top experts of the Prison Island. This guy suffered a crushing defeat at the hands of a young Mentalist. And even if he managed to escape alongside his group, they still suffered heavy losses during the battle and the time of their retreat.

Next was about a major prisoner settlement; it was taken down by a group of youngsters and even razed the place to the ground.

The combined battle prowess of Jean and Dylan's group was quite a force to reckon with. They didn't slow down their advance even the slightest and left a trail of complete destruction behind. And since there were very few numbers of top experts on this particular settlement, no one could contend against the combined forces of those two groups.

Due to that, the surviving members of that settlement had no other choice but to retreat and abandon that place.

On the other hand, Diel and Falcon managed to kill the Overlord Monster Beast at the center of the Prison Island. Even if it was a 7-star monster beast and way beyond the strength that they currently have, they still emerged victorious after suffering a long struggle.

Because of this, their team immediately overtook the other teams and seized first place on the exam in terms of accumulated points that they got. And the teams who followed them were Jean and Dylan's who took second and third place respectively.

Even if those two managed to arrive at the ravenous point of the academy, the merit that they got from it was still a little behind compared to the achievement that Diel's team had achieved.

Shin and the others fell a little behind in terms of accumulated points which was why they fell from the rankings and got fourth place. But they didn't mind it too much since they were already expecting it to happen. They already knew that they were going to fall in the rankings after deciding to stay a little low.

But that was not only for the accumulated points. Aside from this system, the teachers that were watching from the conference room were still discussing the performance that the four teams had displayed.

After accessing everything, they allocated the designated bonus points that each team was going to receive at the end of the special exam. These points included the decision-making and strategic maneuvers that they had performed. There were also some survival abilities that the teams had. And with all of these, the rankings took another shift once again and put Shin's at the very top once again.

The other three teams did nothing but continue pushing forward to accumulate the greatest number of points. And because of this, there were some decisions that were made quite recklessly just like attacking the major settlements and hunting down an overlord monster beast.

Even if they still managed to win in the end, coming up with such decisions was quite unnecessary when it came to certain conditions. And what made the teachers give them low points in this was the fact that the teams didn't conduct a proper investigation before attacking.

They might have done it that way due to the pressure provided by the short amount of time that they had. But not undergoing a proper step during an operation was a grave mistake, so their decisions gave the teachers negative thoughts since it could lead to some accidents if something went wrong.

With all of that, the special exam finally came to an end. But before they could close the curtain of the day, another news suddenly shook the entire Prison Island.

Daniel Sky, the leader of the Sky Gang was found dead inside his quarters!

Lennon was planning to give their leader a visit so that he could give his report. But after knocking at the door for quite a long time, he still didn't receive any reply which he found suspicious.

Normally, Daniel was a light sleeper which was why he immediately woke up whenever someone was knocking on his door.

Suspicious, Lennon tried to open the door and suddenly discovered that it was actually left unlocked. And when the door was completely opened, he immediately saw Daniel's corpse hanging on the ceiling.

The news immediately arrived at Nathan's ears which was why he quickly headed to the scene as soon as he could right after sending the school examinees to a safe place.

When he arrived, Elias and Eugene were already investigating the place and looking for any clue that they could use to track down the assassin.

"Did you find anything?" asked Nathan the moment he arrived.

Hearing that, the two immediately shook their heads which indicated that they couldn't find any traces left in the scene.

"Even you Elias?" asked Nathan once again alongside a deep frown. He knew how skilled Elias was as a Mentalist which was why he currently had a heavy expression on his face after hearing that the guy couldn't find anything.

"I don't know. Whoever killed Daniel, that person is definitely a highly skilled expert," said Elias with a heavy tone. He was also having a hard time believing it since he was quite confident with his own skills.

But since he couldn't find any traces left behind the crime scene, he had no other choice but to admit that the assassin who infiltrated the Prison Island really had some ability.

"Not only skilled, but this person should also have a lot of confidence that this assassination is going to be a success despite knowing that the three of us are here," said Eugene White while wearing a deep frown.

No matter how hard he denied it, Eugene felt that the assassin seemed to be mocking their abilities for killing such an important prisoner under their presence.

"We are planning to transfer Daniel to the highest security prison after knowing that he still has some information about the inner circle of the Black Serpent Mafia. But from the looks of it, we are still a step too late," said Nathan with a heavy tone while surveying the surroundings.

Heating that, both Elias and Eugene immediately understood what he was implying before one of them asked. "So, are you saying that this is planned?"

"What else it can be?" said Nathan as he walked towards Daniel's corpse before examining it. And after a brief moment of silence, he suddenly added. "Luring us away from each other and making us focus on different matters, it is pretty obvious that we are being played by someone."

"That is quite a risky move; with the three of us being here, aren't they risking their plans in failure," said Eugene as he became even more sure that the opposing side was really looking down at them.

"That is where their confidence is coming from," said Nathan in an instant. He then looked at the two before continuing. "Since the three of us are present at the same time, we become a little overconfident that no one is going to infiltrate the place under our presence."

After that, Elias felt that Nathan was giving him a meaningful look as if he was trying to say something. And not liking the look that he was getting, he suddenly raised his eyebrows and asked threateningly. "Are you telling me that I'm the one to blame?"

"Your words, not mine," said Nathan while shrugging his shoulders.

Elias wanted to say something to defend himself but he couldn't find the right words for it since he also knew that the defensive formation that he placed in the whole island seemed to be breached without him knowing.

On the other hand, Eugene looked at Nathan before asking. "It looks like you are not surprised about this. Tell us honestly, do you already know that this is going to happen?"

Nathan slightly shook his head when he heard that before replying. "Even though it is true that I am expecting that something is going to happen, I still didn't expect that the real target is actually one of the prisoners."

Then Elias suddenly clicked his tongue before criticizing Nathan. "Is your heart turned into a stone after becoming the Commander of the Military Force? Even if this guy is a traitor, he is still a good friend from the past."

Hearing that, Nathan suddenly smiled bitterly before replying. "Is not about having a heart of stone but about steeling your heart to carry the burden that you will get from your decisions."

"There is no point in mourning for your dead comrades since it will not do anything. All you can do is move forward and find the target of that vengeance to avenge them," he added before looking at Daniel once again.

He then turned silent for a few moments before looking at the two while saying. "So, for now, our main task is to find the person who dared to use us for this plot."

"No one knew that we were going to be the administrators of this particular exam aside from the higher-ups of the academy. Don't tell me one of them is a spy of our enemies," said Elias after studying all of the information that they currently had.

Nathan also agreed with that conclusion since he also knew that there was a spy among the ranks of the most important figures of the Soaring Continent. And now that this event had happened, he was not sure about this piece of information that he got from David.

'Looks like Evangeline's disciple is right, our real enemies are way too close to us,' thought to himself before looking at the two before saying. "Let's wrap this up for now and report what we currently have."

,m "I will do a separate investigation later since we can't trust anyone for now," he added before a flash of killing intent appeared in his eyes.

Chapter 597 Written Exam

...

Back in the Academy's gymnasium, Shin and the others were gathered after being teleported back from the Prison Island.

"Are we still not going home? I've been dying to have a proper shower right now and have a good night of rest," complained Arthur while leaning powerlessly on the wall. And when the girls heard those words, they couldn't help but nod their heads in agreement.

In the meantime, Shin and Leonard were observing their rivals who were also looking at them. The latter was even putting a lot of attention to Simone and Ezio who were glaring at their group quite fiercely.

"Looks like those guys hate us a lot," said Leonard while returning the glares that they were receiving from those two.

Hearing that, Shin chuckled a little before replying. "Well, that is to be expected. If you take a closer look at the details of our scores, it is clear that we barely get our standing."

"If not for the extra points that we got from the teachers in the end, then our ranking should be in the last place instead of being first," he added while focusing his attention on the leaders of the other teams.

Sensing his gaze, the other three leaders also turned their heads at him. And after observing each other for a few moments, they nodded their heads to one another as a sign of acknowledgment for being real rivals.

"Shin Kinghad, huh? I'm looking forward to facing each other again in the future," muttered Diel Hendrickson with a huge grin.

"I wonder if his combat abilities are on par with his strategic skills," said Dylan White as an intense urge for battle came out from his body.

"I will not go easy on you the next time we meet," sneered Jean Camus while looking at Shin.

Meanwhile, Shin stared at them for a few more moments before grinning from ear to ear. "Then let's see each other in the next round."

After that, he turned his head towards his group before saying to them. "Are you guys done calming yourselves?"

Hearing that, the others quickly turned their heads at him before knitting their brows and looking at them with confused expressions on their faces. From what they could hear from his tone, they were pretty sure that this guy was not going to say anything good.

"Wait, wait, wait! Don't say anything for now. I'm still not ready to do anything right now," said Arthur, desperately trying to stop Shin from what he was going to say.

The others were also nodding their heads repeatedly since they could already guess what Shin was trying to say. And just like what they were expecting, the latter didn't give them any mercy. "Since you guys still have some energy left, I guess you will be fine for the next part of the exam."

"Ugh!"

Right after he said those words, they felt that their stomachs were being flipped over since they could already guess what the part of the exam would be. And from what Shin had deducted earlier, they became even more sure about their suspicions.

"If what Shin said is true, then we are really going to have a written exam later," muttered Cloe as she fell into deep thought.

Hearing that, Arthur suddenly clicked his tongue and started complaining once again. "Tsk! Tsk! Why do we need to answer those stupid paper questions while we are still too tired of that unreasonable practical exam!"

On the contrary, Shin seemed to agree with the methods that the academy was using. "From what I can see, this system is quite interesting."

"Having all of the candidates undergo a practical exam while they are expecting to have a written one. Then giving them a written exam while all of the 'surviving' students are still too exhausted from that previous test."

"By taking advantage of those cases, the academy can catch us off-guard and test our real abilities. Especially when it comes to unexpected situations," he added while shrugging his shoulders.

Nodding her head, Lorraine immediately commented from the side. "If that is the case, then don't we need to study a little more since we still have some time left before the next exam?"

She then paused for a moment to give Arthur a sidelong glance before continuing. "Especially this certain someone. Are you sure that he is going to be alright?"

Hearing that, Arthur suddenly stood up and looked at her sneeringly before saying. "Isn't it just a written exam? It is nothing special! All I need is to do how I usually deal with this kind of situation all this time."

He took a brief pause and turned his head to Shin before asking. "Right, Shin?"

Seeing his actions, Shin couldn't help but shake his head helplessly before muttering to himself. "This guy is really hopeless."

Not long after, all of the participants who passed the previous part of the exam were summoned to a huge lecture hall to take a written exam just like what Shin had expected. With that size of the lecture hall, it was more than enough to occupy Shin and the others even if they were seated a few seats apart.

At the same time, a beautiful lady walked up on the stage in the front of the hall before standing in the center. She looked at everyone before introducing herself. "I'm Jennifer Potter, one of the professors here in the academy. That is all you need to know from me for now since we are going to meet each other again in the future."

"Potter? Is she a member of your clan?" asked Arthur instinctively the moment he heard her name.

A few seats away from him sat Molton who replied with a slight nod. "She is my auntie, my mother's second older sister."

"Huh!?" Arthur was taken aback by the reply as couldn't help but have a double-take at Professor Jennifer. From what he could see on her current appearance, she was not even thirty yet; twenty-eight at most. 'But if what Molton had said was true, then her real age should be around-...'

"Wow~!" blurted out Arthur as he looked at her full of amazement.

Fortunately, he managed to suppress his voice so that it could not be heard on the front. But Jillian, who was sitting a few seats in front of him, managed to overheard their short conversation and picked up Arthur's reaction.

She slightly turned her head and looked over her shoulders before giving Arthur a sharp glare full of disgust.

Since Arthur was sitting at the back, he managed to see her actions and immediately cleared his throat before redirecting his gaze to something else. "Now that I think about it, the facilities of this school are somewhat amazing."

Naturally, Professor Jennifer was able to notice their actions but decided to ignore them and continue with her job. "I'm pretty sure that all of you are already aware of what you are going to do next."

She raised her hand, holding a pile of papers, and continued. "Since we all know that all of you are quite eager to go home right now, let's proceed immediately and stop wasting time."

"As you can see, we are going to test our knowledge this time. But instead of going with an online exam, we will go back to the usual way of taking the written exams – which is obviously writing on papers."

After that, she threw papers in the air and distributed them to everyone while using her Mental Energy. And after confirming that she didn't miss anyone she immediately added. "There are 5 major subjects in there; Language, Mathematics, Science and Technology, History, and Bestiary and Plants Encyclopedia."

"Each subject had 100 questions each and you need to finish answering all of them in the span of 5 hours, so it is basically 1 hour per subject. That should be plenty enough, right?"

She then paused for a moment to sweep her gaze at everyone before sneering at them. "And I dare you to cheat with each other. After all, those sets of questionnaires are unique to each of you. So, you will never find the same questions from others."

After that, she locked her gazes at the twins of the Sun-Moon Continent before continuing. "And another thing, any gadgets, and devices are prohibited during the exam, so I will be confiscating your earpieces and other communication tools for now."

She waved her hand and spread her Mental Energy inside the lecture hall before taking all of the communication devices from everyone. No one managed to hide anything from her.

Then she smiled at everyone before saying. "So, starting from now, all of you need to defend your own abilities to pass this test."

She was about to take her seat when she suddenly remembered something and quickly added. "Oh! Before I forget, the passing score is 90% per subject, and any lower than that is a fail! That's all, I wish all of you good luck!"

After that, she sat on a chair that was made from her Mental Energy before sharply sweeping her gaze in the entire hall. And that was the signal for everyone to start answering the questions on their test papers.

"Our own abilities, huh?" muttered Shin to himself before exchanging glances with his friends scattered in different parts of the hall before muttering to himself. "This is going to be a little interesting."

Chapter 598 The War In Lecture Hall

...

Right after Professor Jennifer gave them the signal to start answering their exam, Shin and the others immediately started answering.

The entire hall turned silent where only the sounds of pens tapping the table could be heard. Everyone was too focused on writing their answers on their test papers except for one; Arthur who was calmly sitting at the far back of the lecture hall, closed eyes and arms crossed.

His actions somewhat attracted Professor Jennifer's attention. "Huh? This kid seems to be quite confident about his skills. But from the data that I've got, he is not the type to study a lot. "

She paused for a few moments to observe Arthur a little more before deciding to observe the situation a little more.

But not long after, she realized that she was actually wrong. Because not after the one and a half mark, Shin who just finished answering his exam immediately sent a signal to Arthur to start asking questions.

But despite knowing what they were planning to do, Professor Jennifer didn't stop them. She even let them continue while observing what they were going to do next.

Meanwhile, Arthur immediately picked up his pen before tapping it on the table like some sort of a code. And when he was done, Shin quickly replied in the same manner as Arthur did.

"Oh~! Sound coding? As expected to a kid from a Military Family," muttered Professor Jennifer before ignoring them and turning her attention to what the others were doing.

(They are actually doing Morse Code to be exact.)

And just like what Shin and Arthur were doing, the others were also doing similar methods to pass the answers to their teammates.

"Looks like these kids already understand what it means to pass this written exam with their own abilities," she muttered to herself before quickly adding. "But I wonder when will they realize that it is not the only nature of this exam?"

After that, she started sweeping her gaze at everyone, observing how they were doing their respective side.

Shin's group was quite fine since most of them were bright students and quite good at study. Well, aside from Arthur who really didn't like studying. Even though he was not that bad of a student, he was at least average at most.

Leonard was at least on a better side since he was studying quite a few times compared to Arthur. But he was still not good enough to get a passing grade of 90% in this particular exam. Moreover, the questions were actually quite hard to deal with for someone like him; only a monster like Shin could answer such a difficult exam in the span of one and a half hours.

Regardless, he still tried his best to answer the questions on his test paper while waiting for Shin to finish helping Arthur.

A few moments later, Shin finally fished 3 of Arthur's exam papers and immediately left the remaining 2 subjects for Cloe to answer while he proceeded to help Leonard with the questions that he didn't answer yet.

But at this point in time, Shin and the other sharp individuals realized that there was something not right. It was as if they were doing something wrong the entire time; as if they were missing the critical part of this exam.

There were only 2 more hours left for them to finish answering their exam papers. And long after Diel was the one who managed to figure out what was the missing piece in this exam.

While everyone was busy answering their exams and helping their friends, he suddenly started tapping the tip of his pen on his table repeatedly, messing up with the rhythm that Shin and the others sound coding. And due to that, they couldn't properly communicate with each other.

"So, it finally started. Let's see how these young talents deal with this current situation," muttered Professor Jennifer while looking at everyone with an interested expression on her face.

Seeing that, the competitors started doing the same and messed up with their competitors. It was especially true for Arthur who immediately fought back by enfolding his pen with his Internal Qi and repeatedly tapping it on the table quite hard.

Surprisingly, the table didn't break even if Arthur tapped his pen on it even harder. And when Shin saw all those, he suddenly raised his eyebrows before grinning quite widely. "So, that was it, huh?"

"Then let's play within the rules," he muttered before waving his hand in the air to spread his Mental Energy inside the lecture hall.

At first, the others felt uneasy when he suddenly did it since they thought that it was some sort of offensive attack. But they immediately felt slightly at ease when they realized that it was not the case.

But it didn't take long for all of them to realize what Shin had done. Right after his Mental Energy filled the whole place, they suddenly realized they couldn't make any sound no matter how hard they tried to slam their pens on their desks.

"A territorial technique? How is that possible?"

Everyone had similar thoughts in mind as they couldn't help looking at Shin with a dumbfounded look on their faces; it was even more true for the Mentalists among them.

These young Mentalists were deemed to be the brightest since they were at a very young age. Their talents were truly remarkable even if they compared their abilities with the other people of their clans. And since their families were quite famous in their circle, it was pretty hard for them to see anyone who was more talented than them.

But in front of these young geniuses was a young man who was showcasing a shocking talent that almost surpassed them in terms of Mental Energy control and techniques even if he was a member of those famous Mentalist Clans.

Even the three Mentalists in Shin's group were actually as surprised as those people. And even if they spent quite some time with Shin during the previous part of the special, they were still not used to the surprises that he kept showing them.

That 'Zone' technique was one thing, but this 'Silencing Boundary' was still something that they didn't expect. Even if they could do a similar thing, they were not confident that they could do it in the same manner that Shin had done; he did it so casually which made others think that it was a simple technique.

"Oh~! Looks like we have a fierce tiger cub in this batch, huh? Interesting!" muttered Professor Jennifer after seeing what Shin had done.

"But this is not going to be easy," she added before turning her head towards the other Mentalists who belonged to other groups.

Meanwhile, Shin sent some eye signals to Arthur and Leonard to proceed with other means of communication. Just like the others, they also couldn't make any sounds with their pens since Shin couldn't fully control this technique which was why they were also affected.

But it was not going to be a problem since they still have other means to communicate with each other. They couldn't rely on the eye signals alone since they still needed to keep an eye on their rivals. So, for the time being, they could only use the hand gestures that they had learned from the military so far.

Cloe was not going to have any problem at keeping up with them since she also learned those hand gestures before just for fun.

But after learning that these three were actually using those methods as a way to secretly communicate with each other during their exams, she had no other choice but to learn it alongside them so that she could understand them when they started using those communicating methods.

On the other hand, Molton, Jillian, and Alice didn't mind the 'Silencing Boundary' after being surprised at it for a moment. They had a good head on their shoulders so they didn't mind whether it existed or not.

In the meantime, the other groups were now having a hard time communicating with each other right now due to the 'Silencing Boundary' that Shin had summoned.

"Messing up with their opponent while ordering his teammates to change into a different method to communicate with each other? Moreover, he even buys some time for his team to be ahead of others. Not bad, not bad at all~!" muttered Professor Jennifer while nodding her head repeatedly.

After that, she turned at the leaders of the other groups before mumbling. "So, what are you guys going to do now?"

Seeing that they were cornered by Shin in an instant by only using a single move, the other three leaders couldn't help but frown their eyebrows. They were being challenged right now, so they immediately gave their response.

Diel snapped with his fingers and released a chaotic Mental Energy that freed his teammates from being affected by the 'Silencing Boundary'.

Meanwhile, Dylan released a sharp Sword Intent which pierced through Shin's territorial technique and created a set of tunnels that connected him to his teammates.

On the other hand, Jean took the most direct way to communicate with his teammates, released a powerful Internal Qi that canceled out the 'Silencing Boundary' surrounding him and his teammates.

After all of that happened, Shin and the other three leaders suddenly exchanged glances with each other before starting to have the urge to fight one another.

And when Professor Jennifer saw that, she started grinning from ear to ear before saying with a soft voice. "Looks like they are finally going to start the main event of this 'written exam'."

Chapter 599 First Exam's Conclusion

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Shin and the other crown emblem bearers were fully on guard with each other as they were aware of what was going to happen if one of them attacked either one of them.

Having that in mind, Dylan took the initiative to make the move against Shin since he was quite curious about the latter's real abilities. He first gathered his Sword Qi and condensed a couple of small swords using it before sending them towards Shin's direction.

Swoosh! Swoosh!

The condensed sword energies flew straight at Shin with incredible speed. And when the latter sensed them, he quickly gave Dylan a sidelong glance before focusing on helping Leonard on his exam.

But despite him seemingly ignoring the incoming swords, none of them managed to get near him as a hexagonal wall made of Mental Energy blocked their path and prevented them from advancing forward.

Seeing that, Dylan slightly raised his eyebrows before planning to do another attack. But Jean beat him into it by gathering his Internal Qi on the tip of his index finger before pointing at Shin and sending out an invisible energy beam from it.

Meanwhile, Diel coordinated with his attack and quickly snapped with his fingers to release an energy ripple in the air with the help of his own Mental Energy. And due to that, the balance that Shin's wall had suddenly collapsed and let Jean's attack passed through it.

"Hey, hey! Ganging up on me? That is unfair," cursed Shin the moment he sensed what just happened.

After that, he lightly tapped the tip of his pen on his desk a couple of times, creating another ripple in the air that countered Diel's move before creating another wall in front of the incoming energy beam. That wall looked like a mirror and redirected the trajectory of the energy beam towards Dylan's direction.

Seeing that, Dylan suddenly smirked as he could read what Shin was currently thinking. Then he flicked his wrist to send a Sword Qi that collided with the incoming energy beam.

After that, the four started exchanging blows with each other with each attempt focused on a different target. They did all of it until the time that they had for the exam finally came to an end.

Professor Jennifer was smiling from ear to ear as she somewhat enjoyed the show. These selected four with crown emblems didn't disappoint the academy for giving them such acknowledgments.

When she was done collecting the exam papers from everyone, she immediately smiled at them before saying. "Alright, that should be it for now! You all can go back to your respective homes for the time being while we are checking these papers."

"We will summon you again a few days later if you manage to pass this test," she added before turning around and walking towards the exit.

But before her feet stepped out of the room, she suddenly remembered something and turned at everyone once again before saying. "Oh! Before I forget, please make sure to be at your peak form when you are summoned by the academy once again."

"I'm pretty sure that all of you already know what the next part of the exam is going to be, so you better be ready to give us a good show, alright?" she added before spinning around and finally walking out the room.

After that, the others started standing up from their seats, planning to leave. And while Shin was standing up, he suddenly saw Dylan walking towards him from the corner of his eyes.

Raising his head, he looked at Dylan and saw the guy extend his right hand, offering a handshake. "You're good. I hope that we bump into each other again on the next part of the exam."

Shin was stunned at first before accepting the handshake before nodding his head. "I'm looking forward to it."

Then Dylan walked past him before heading out of the room. Shin looked at the young swordsman's back before smiling quite widely as he felt a little excited to exchange blows with this guy. "The so-called Sword Genius, huh?"

Not long after, Arthur and Leonard walked towards him before the latter nudged his arm to tell him that Jean Camus and his two friends were looking at them.

Given that, Shin turned his head towards the direction that they were looking at. And after a little bit of staredown, he suddenly heard Arthur smirking at them. "The next time we meet, we will know which one group is better; the Monster Trio or the Three Kings."

Meanwhile, Diel ignored all of those and walked out of the lecture hall alongside Falcon. Shin gave him a quick sidelong glance before looking at the two beside him. "Let's go, I can't wait to have a proper rest right now."

"At last! A proper bath and a soft bed to sleep on! I can't wait to finally get home!" said Arthur while stretching his waists left and right.

Meanwhile, the girls were already outside and heading home ages ago since Professor Jennifer stepped out of the lecture hall.

And while they were about to walk out of the hall, the corner of Arthur's eyes caught the glimpse of Molton still sitting on his seat. "Huh? Why is this guy still sitting there?"

"Hey, Molton! Why are you still there? Don't you want to go back home?" said Arthur while waving at his so-called junior brother.

Hearing his voice, Molton finally snapped out from his dazed state and turned his head towards Arthur's direction. "Ah~! Yeah."

The trio waited for Molton to catch up with them before Arthur put his arm around Molton's shoulder while asking. "What are you dazing about? Don't tell me you are not confident that you are going to pass that written exam? Isn't it too easy?"

Hearing those words, Shin and Leonard rolled their eyes at him, unable to endure his shamelessness.

On the other hand, Molton immediately shook his head and quickly answered. "Ah~! That's not it, Senior Brother! I'm just reflecting on everything that happened up until now. And thinking about all of it, I don't think that I've shown any remarkable performance."

"Eh!?"

The three were taken aback by his words. Then they exchanged glances with each other before Arthur nodded his head and patted Molton's shoulder. "Who cares if your performance is remarkable or not? What's important is that you break through those hurdles and survive in the end."

"B-but... I don't think our clan will think the same," replied Molton with a meek tone.

"Huh~! Why is that? Don't tell me your clan is so strict to think that about that?" asked Arthur with a deep frown.

This time, Molton smiled bitterly before replying. "As much as I don't want to admit it, my Clan is indeed like that. And since this is supposedly a competition between geniuses, they are most likely expecting us to perform well and outshine the other clans from the other country."

"But after I look back at my performance, I'm pretty sure that I don't live up to their expectations," he added with a bitter tone.

Hearing that, Shin suddenly ruffled Molton's hair before saying. "Don't worry about it too much. Your performance up until now is actually outstanding, so there is no need to be this anxious, right?"

Molton slightly nodded his head after hearing those words but the expression that he was wearing didn't change much. And after a brief moment of hesitation, he finally voiced out his real concern. "Maybe I am going to be alright given the current goal of the exam, but it is a different matter for my sister."

Arthur's ears suddenly perked up the moment he heard those words and quickly asked. "What's wrong? Is there some kind of problem with her performance too?"

At this point in time, Molton couldn't help but sigh helplessly before continuing. "Of course, her performance is actually quite remarkable compared to mine since she perfectly fulfills the role that was given to her. But that is also the problem."

"Since we are young, Sis perfectly resembles a leading figure which is why the Clan has high hopes for her. She is really outstanding in everything that she does and she has always been the leader in every group that she partakes in."

He then paused for a moment to take a quick glance at Shin before continuing. "But in this special exam, not only does she fail to get the 'Leader Role', but she also takes orders from someone else. I'm pretty sure that she will get scolded if father heard about it."

Hearing that, Arthur frowned quite deeply before commenting. "Isn't it a little too much? It is the academy's decision to give her the 'Auxiliary Role', so it shouldn't be her fault."

"I know, but our clan will not think that way. For them, the fact that Sis didn't get the 'Crown Emblem' means that she lacked the ability to have it," said Molton.

"She may be fine outside but I know that she is quite frustrated deep inside," he added with a sigh.

When Arthur heard that, he immediately smacked his right-hand fist to his left hand before saying resolutely. "So, this is actually the time to lend her a shoulder to lean on. Don't worry, junior brother. I will make sure to comfort her later!"

Shin and Leonard rolled their eyes at him once again before deciding to leave. The latter even commented with a sneering tone. "Good luck with that. Don't you know that she already left ages ago?"

Arthur immediately stood straight and patted Molton's shoulder before refuting. "Heh! Do you already forget that her twin brother is still here?"

He then looked at his junior brother and asked. "So, tell me. Where are the two of you staying right now? I'll pay you a visit later."

"Ahm... Actually, we are currently staying at the school dorm, so we are not together," answered Molton while lowering his head.

Hearing this, Arthur suddenly froze on his spot as his plan immediately crumbled before he could even start it. And at the same time, Shin and Leonard burst out laughing the moment they overheard Molton's reply from a distance.

In the meantime, inside a conference room where their exam papers were being checked, the professors were engaged in a heated discussion because of a certain test paper.

Chapter 600 Intentionally Scoring Low?

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Inside a certain conference room of the Magical Ace Academy, Professor Jennifer and her fellow professors were checking the exam papers of the examinees earlier.

"Looks like this batch of students are not only good at fighting, they also have a good head on their shoulders," said one of the professors as he saw the scores on the papers that he was checking.

Hearing that, the other four professors who were also inside the room nodded their heads in agreement; this included Professor Jennifer who witnessed Shin and the others' battle capabilities personally inside the lecture hall.

Not long after, they checked all of the exam papers and nodded their heads in satisfaction since none of the examinees failed. And based on Professor Jennifer's report, their performances during the written exam were quite good too.

"Alright, good job everyone! That should be it for today, let's meet again two days later at the next part of the exam," said one of the professors who seemed to have a higher authority than the others.

"Too bad, no one managed to score perfectly on this exam. I guess that bonus points and extra rewards will not go to anyone yet," he added while standing up and preparing to leave.

They were about to wrap everything up when one of the professors suddenly opened his mouth. "Wait, Professor Valor! Can you take a look at these exam papers first?"

"What is it, Little Toru? Don't tell me that someone actually perfected the exam?" said Professor Valor sneeringly as he walked over.

"That's not it, Sir. It is just that there seems to be something odd with this kid's exam papers," replied the other professor while raising the papers that he was holding.

Taking those exam papers, Professor Valor looked at Professor Toru with a skeptical expression on his face. But that look immediately changed the moment he saw the score on that exam paper. "Ninety? This is the lowest score that I've seen so far. He even barely gets the passing score of the exam."

"I know right?" said Professor Toru noddingly. But immediately after that, he suddenly said, "But that is also the odd part of it. Go take a look at the other subjects."

Hearing that, Professor Valor further knitted his brows before turning the pages of the exam papers one by one. And with each flip of the paper, the expression on his face was tuning heavier, especially when he saw the scores on each subject were all the same.

"What is the meaning of this?" said Professor Valor with an even deeper frown.

In the meantime, the other professors walked over as they became curious about what they were talking about. Not long after, they also learned what happened.

"Maybe it is just a coincidence?" said one of the professors, trying to convince the others. But it was clear that he was also quite doubtful with his own words given the tone that he had.

"You are telling me that it is just a coincidence that the ten easiest questions are left behind while the hardest ones are answered correctly?" said Professor Valor with a sharp glare.

"Yeah! Look here, most of these questions are quite related to the next questions. And if you fail to answer them, then it is impossible for you to answer those harder questions. But this kid does it the other way around!" commented the other professor who was standing behind Professor Valor.

"The heck? This kid even skips answering the first ten questions on this subject and perfectly answers the rest," said another professor who snatched one of the exam papers from Professor Toru earlier.

The more they read the more they felt strange about it. They didn't know whether to laugh it out or became furious about the fact that this particular kid seemed to be messing with them by answering his exam papers that way.

"Is this kid looking down on us? What is his name? Let me take note of him!" said Professor Valor while flipping the papers on his hands, looking for the name of the owner of those exam papers.

"Shin Kinghad," said Professor Toru as he read the name written on the exam papers. And after a brief moment of hesitation, he suddenly muttered with a soft voice. "Why do I feel that this name sounds familiar? Where have I heard it before?"

"Hear? More like read it before," said Professor Valor from the side while wearing a deep frown.

Hearing that, the others turned their heads at him before Professor Jennifer asked. "Do you know this kid, Sir?"

The corner of Professor Valor's mouth twitched all of a sudden when he heard her question before answering with an even deeper frown. "If my memory is right, then this is the kid who was the last applicant for the Research Department before."

When Professor Toru heard that, he immediately came to a realization before speaking. "Oh! That kid who emailed us about the passing grade to enter the Research Department! I remember him now!"

"Yeah! That arrogant kid who answered the exact number of questions which are enough to pass him and get accepted to our department," said Professor Valor as the expression on his face turned heavy.

"But that is not the worst thing that he did to insult us! This kid even dared to cancel his application at the very last minute before the school year starts!" he added while clenching his fists.

"Now, this is surprising. To think that he is going to apply for the special program of our school after canceling his previous application? Is this kid mocking us or something?" commented the other professor standing behind Professor Valor.

"Do you think that is important right now? No matter what he did, it is still all according to the rules so we can't do anything about it," said Professor Jennifer before collecting the papers that they were holding.

"I'm taking these to Professor Henry now, so if you guys have some problem with the kid, you guys can directly raise your concerns to him," she added after making sure that she collected all of the exam papers.

"What do you think, Sir? Should we teach this kid a lesson? How about disqualifying him on the next exam?" said the professor behind Professor Valor.

Hearing the suggestion, Professor Valor nodded his head repeatedly. "You think so? Should we ask Professor Henry about it?"

"Why are we going to it? The kid didn't do anything wrong. In fact, I find his way of doing things rather interesting," said Professor Toru before turning his head at the other professor beside him before asking. "What do you think, Professor Michael?"

That professor nodded his head when he heard that before saying. "Yeah, I think keeping a low profile is the best thing for now."

Hearing that, Professor Jennifer suddenly raised one of her eyebrows especially when she heard the words 'low profile'. She then recalled all of the things that Shin did up until now including his performance during the first three parts of the exam.

After that, she started giggling before mumbling with a soft voice. "Low profile, huh? I'm not sure about that."

Then she left the group to argue with each other as she took her to leave. "If that is all, then I will be taking my leave. But make sure not to act as sour losers and punish that kid for not doing anything."

She was about to step out of the room when she suddenly thought of something. She quickly turned around before saying to them. "But if you want to really teach him a lesson for giving up that precious spot that you are planning to give him, then I suggest you pair him with some troublesome opponent in the next round."

"I'm pretty sure that Professor Henry will not only support you, but he will also not get angry for such a suggestion," she added before hopping out of the room.

Hearing those words, the other professors seemed to become enlightened and started grinning from ear to ear.

"That is not a bad suggestion. Should we give it a try?" said Professor Valor while nodding his head repeatedly.

"Yeah, that kid is thinking too highly of himself, so there shouldn't be any harm in humbling him a little bit," said the other professor behind him.

Even Professor Toru, who somewhat liked Shin, seemed to agree with the idea. "The next part of the exam will not affect them even if they lose right. Of course, aside from the Point Standings is what I mean."

"There are four Crown Emblem bearers in this batch, right?" asked Professor Michael while stroking his chin.

Hearing that, Professor Valor immediately suggested. "So, how about we pair them with each other? It is still going to be fair if we did that, am I right?"

After that, the three of them exchanged glances with each other before wearing a huge grin and nodding their heads in agreement.

"It is decided then, we are pairing up the crown emblem bearers with each other," said Professor Valor, finalizing their plans.

"Looks like the next part of the exam is going to be an interesting one," muttered Professor Michael as he became excited to watch the upcoming matchups.