

## **Destiny 601**

Chapter 601 Point Rankings (Part 1)

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For the next two days, Shin and the others did nothing but rest properly to recover their peak strengths.

Even though they played «Destiny's Fate» during their free time, they didn't do anything special since they didn't want to stress themselves for the time being. They only grind experience points by doing some minor quests and hunting some monsters.

Aside from doing those, Shin who had a town to manage was slightly busy compared to the rest. He rarely had the time to manage his town, so he took this opportunity to properly run the businesses that he had in there.

The state of Calderock Town was no longer the same as how it used to be. The mainstream players were slowly surpassing the level-100 mark while leading experts were already reaching the level-150 mark and were about to undergo their Tier 3 Promotion Quest.

Fortunately, the environment within the town was still good for training purposes especially that it had a first-class Battle Arena which was slightly worse compared to the Divine Coliseum of the NCP Cities.

There was also a branch of Hand of Midas Trading Firm where they could get quite a lot of high-class resources alongside top-quality weapons and items.

But Shin also knew that the current state of the town was still not good, which was why needed to speed up his plans of promoting the town into a city and relocating it to a different location. The only problem was he still couldn't find the perfect locations that fit his taste. And without it, he knew that he still couldn't get the full upper hand if he raised a negotiation with Shiella right now.

Regardless, Shin didn't have the leisure time to put too much concern about that matter since their current priority at this point in time was the exam to be accepted for the special program of the Magical Ace Academy.

Meanwhile, the Magical Ace Academy had given all of the examinees a full three days of rest to make sure that all of them got a proper rest before partaking at the next part of the exam.

The academy would naturally like to witness a good show for the next part of the exam since the participants were all talented individuals who would also lead their generation in the future.

The fourth day finally came and the academy summoned all of the examinees once again for the next part of the exam. And the place where they were summoned was the same gymnasium where they gathered on the first day.

"Alright! I'm pretty pumped up right now. I wonder who is going to be my opponent," said Arthur excitedly as he pounded his fists with each other.

In the meantime, Leonard was casually sitting on a nearby bench while waiting for the exam to start. And not right beside him sat Shin who was currently in deep meditation to focus his mind and relax his body.

The girls on the other hand seemed to be taking this matter a little too lightly as they were busily chatting with each other. Even Alice who was usually silent seemed to have gotten close with the two as she was now laughing with Cloe and Lorraine. It looked like what happened on the previous parts of the exam made them quite close with each other.

Not long after, Molton and Jillian finally arrived and joined them a little later. Molton walked over to Arthur to greet him before sitting on the bench alongside Shin and Leonard while Jillian joined the girls; but from the expression that she had on her face, she seemed to be in a bad mood right now.

"Looks like your sis really got an earful from your father. Is she going to be good for a duel later?" asked Arthur, whispering in Molton's ears.

Hearing that, Molton shook his head a little before saying. "That shouldn't be the case since she is not going to be in here if it is our father who scolded her. She probably got an earful from Mom and the others which is why she is making that face."

He then paused for a moment to take a look at his twin sister before continuing. "But since she didn't hear anything from Dad, then I guess she is going to be fine for today."

"So, you don't have to worry now, Senior Brother!" he quickly added while looking at Arthur cheekily.

Not long after, they saw the other guys started to arrive one by one. And the ones who really got their interest were the trio of Jean, Simone, and Thomas.

It was even true for Arthur since he was quite competitive when it came to these kinds of things, especially when he was seeing some rumors about the comparison between the Three Kings and the Monster Trio circulating in the academy's freedom wall. It was an online site that was available to all of the students of the Magical Ace Academy; it was an online forum in a sense but all of the topics posted on it were only about the news within the academy.

Arthur got access to it since they were already acknowledged as official students by the academy. That also meant that they had already been admitted to the school successfully and this particular exam that they were going to take would not affect them too much aside from the point standings that they currently had.

Not long after, Professor Jennifer arrived and stood at the stage before sweeping her gaze at all of them, making sure that everyone was present.

After that, she took out a pile of papers from her dimensional device before saying. "Okay, since everyone is already present, let me explain what we are going to do today."

"Just like what you already know, you guys are practically an official student of the academy after passing the previous parts of the exam. So, what's only left for now is determining which class you guys are going to."

"But since we are planning to make a special class that was specifically made to train such talented individuals like yourselves, the academy decided to have a very competitive curriculum just for all of you."

"Given all of that, we are hoping that all of you are going to properly show us your full capacities during your time here so that we can see what are the things that you need to develop."

"We are not telling you to show us all of your secrets since we all know that our countries are going to be rivals for the upcoming 'Empire Wars'. But at least tell us what we need to work on to improve yourselves so that your attendance here will not go to waste."

"And we also don't want to be a laughingstock when our school rivals around the world see you guys get beaten up by the representatives that they personally train," she added while checking the papers that she was holding.

After that, she distributed all of them to everyone before continuing. "Going on, we are planning to give you a special curriculum that is meant for students who are learning a higher form of education."

"So, for now, fill all of these forms up while you are waiting for your turn to take your test. You can leave a few of them blank but at least make sure to fill up the spaces that are meant for the Department that you want to join in and the courses that you want to take. That way, we can plan what path we are going to give you."

"That's all I need to say. The instructors for your physical tests are going to take over," she added before leaving that stage.

After that, Shin and the others suddenly felt that the floor of the gymnasium suddenly shook for a moment, causing everyone to be on high alert. They were already caught off-guard by the academy principal during their first day in his place so it was natural for them to be pretty much prepared right now.

They quickly jumped in the air and stood at the edge of the gymnasium with their backs facing the wall.

But those actions made Professor Jennifer laugh even though they responded pretty well. "Look at these little kids, it looks like our principal really scares them the last time he greets them."

Not long after, Shin and the others saw the floor suddenly split open and moved to the side as another floor rose from the ground. But instead of an empty floor, another floor replaced the previous one along with different training equipment on it.

Looking at each of those machines, Shin and the others could already guess what they were going to do first before the duel that they were expecting.

"These things are on par with the equipment that are being used by the special forces. I guess this is what we can expect from a top-class school," said Arthur the moment he saw the training equipment.

Meanwhile, Shin took a quick look at the thin pile of papers that he had and saw that there were some logs to fill among them. "Looks like they are going to monitor our progress regularly, huh?"

After that, he swept the other groups before mumbling to himself with a huge grin. "And it looks like they want us to have a proper warm-up before the main event."

#### Chapter 602 Point Rankings (Part 2)

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The air inside the academy gymnasium was still competitive as ever since all of the examinees were taking this physical assessment as another form of competition. It was even more true that the current point rankings were being displayed on a huge virtual screen on the stage.

Their points were quite close with each other which was why each of them was showing their real capabilities in this physical assessment exam. Moreover, they were also informed that whoever got the highest score on each of the training equipment would get 50 extra points. And if ever there was a draw in their scores, then those guys would divide the extra points among them.

There were 5 types of training equipment in total which were testing different capabilities. They needed to take each of the tests twice since the first round needed to be based on their pure physical abilities without any assistance of their Internal Qi and Mental Energy while the second round needed to be with the help of their respective disciplines.

The training equipments were the Strength Testing Machine, Body Toughness Machine, Explosive Speed Meter, Agility Testing Tools, and Reflex Testing Field.

The first 2 training equipments were taken by Leonard and Simone which earned them 50 points each. But the Explosive Speed Meter was taken by Leonard which earned him another 50 points which also upset both Ezio and Thomas who were supposedly the fastest among all of them.

Moreover, those two young assassins became even more upset when it came to 'Agility Testing Tools' since Shin took the 50 points for that training equipment. And as if rubbing some salt on their wounds, they were not even in second place since it was taken by Arthur.

In the meantime, the Reflex Testing Field was dominated by Shin. That result was to be expected since he and the Immediate Response talent, so it was natural for him to outclass everyone in terms of reflexes.

Aside from those tests, there was another set of physical assessment exams which tested their arms and leg strengths such as pull-ups, arm wrestling, sidesteps, long jumps, and many others. But unlike the first set of exams, these assessments were only meant for record purposes which didn't earn them any points.

With all those, the current Point Rankings were as follows.

1. Shin Kinghand - 4152

2. Diel Hendrickson - 4109

3. Jean Camus - 4095

4. Dylan White - 4082

5. Leonard Fireheart - 4070

6. Simone Bartolomeo - 4068

7. Arthur Springfield - 4050

8. Thomas Brook - 4030

9. Ezio Williams - 4025

10. Falcon Hawkins - 4020

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Shin managed to secure first place because he earned the extra points from the previous physical assessment exams. It was the same for Leonard and Simone who overtook the others due to the same reason.

After that, Shin and the others were given a full hour of rest to recover their peak states before Professor Valor appeared at the stage while ordering the instructors to clear the floor. And not long after, all of the training equipments were removed leaving nothing but an empty floor.

"Looks like it is finally time for the main event!" said Arthur excitedly when he was all of those, especially when he spotted some Mentalists sending up a barrier to protect the walls and the ceiling of the gymnasium.

Meanwhile, Professor Valor quickly started explaining what was going to happen next right after the Mentalists were done with their jobs. "Alright! Listen up, Unpossessed Gems! From here on out, we are going to test your real fighting capabilities in battle."

"First of all, I want all of you to take a proper look at the current Point Rankings behind me," he added while pointing his thumb at the huge virtual screen behind him.

He waited for everyone to have a clear look at it before continuing. "Those points are not only for you to brag about your standings, but it is also your means of currency when you enter the inner court of the academy where you are going to study."

"Every resource that you can get from the inner court is needed to be exchanged with points. The higher the quality of resources you want will naturally be more expensive. And aside from your points, you can use any other currency to buy them."

"You also can't buy points from other students, and doing so is a crime. If you get caught, not only will you lose all of your points, but you can also be expelled depending on how many points you tried to buy or sell."

After that, he snapped his fingers and sent out some booklets towards all of the examinees before continuing. "If you have more questions about points and other things, then you can just read this book since everything you need to know is written on it."

He then paused for a few moments before quickly proceeding to the next topic. "Now that you know the importance of your point when you enter the academy, then let me give you a chance to earn more of it before you finally enter the inner court."

"And that method that we are going to use is the same as how you will normally earn your points in the inner court in the easiest way possible, which is obviously through 'Duels'."

Reaching this point, Professor Valor couldn't help but smirk and took a quick glance at Shin before thinking to himself. 'It is a surprise that this kid manages to seize the first place, but it shouldn't be a problem since he is now paired with Diel Hendrickson instead of Dylan White.'

Naturally, Shin was able to notice those slight actions given his sharp senses, "Did that old man just glance at me? And why do I have a bad feeling about this?"

After that, he started frowning quite deeply before muttering to himself. "Tsk! It looks like this is going to be a drag. Tch! This is why I don't want to stand out too much."

Meanwhile, Professor Valor continued to discuss the rules of the duels. "First of all, each of you needs to only have a single battle since me and the other professors were only going to test your full capabilities.

"But if you want to challenge another person after that, then it is also fine with us. But that duel is going to be a different one and will not be included in this part of the exam."

"Meaning, you can only challenge them when we are done with all of the scheduled battles for today. And those battles can't take place here, so you have to find your own battleground."

He took another pause and moved his eyes once again. But this time, it was meant to warn the other people who came from rival counties and the guys who had already been rivals since they were young like Diel Hendrickson and Jean Campus.

He then quickly continued when he saw that everyone understood what he was telling them. "But at the very least, you can make a gamble with each other on who was going to win each battle."

"Though, I have to remind you to choose your side properly since we are also going to test your judgments here. We want to know if you guys can properly judge a battle based on the information that you got about the contenders or you are just blindly believing with your comrades."

"And if you can give us a logical reason why you choose that person, then we are going to give you some extra points even if you lose the gamble or not."

Hearing that, Shin couldn't help but smile before muttering to himself. "Heh! So, they want us to also be engaged in 'battle' despite not being in the arena ourselves? Interesting!"

At the same time, Professor Valor pointed at the virtual screen behind him once again before continuing. "As for the matchups, we are going to make it as fair as possible and follow the point rankings that we currently have."

"The first placer will battle the second placer while the third ranker is going to face the fourth-ranked. This pattern will continue all the way to the last person in the rankings."

"But arrangements of the battles need to be decided by a random machine. After all, we can't have all of the battles of the top rankers be held first."

"I'm sorry to offend the others but honestly it is going to be boring later on if we proceed according to our original order, so we need to shuffle the order a little bit."

Then he clapped his hands before quickly announcing. "And with all of that, how about we start the first match already?"

Right after those words left his mouth, the Point Rankings behind him suddenly disappeared and was immediately swapped with another screen where all of the participants' names were displayed alongside their opponents.

After that, the paired names were shuffled with each other and rolled for a few seconds, eliminating the other names one by one and leaving just a pair of names behind.

– Leonard Fireheart vs Simone Bartolomeo –

Chapter 603 Leonard Fireheart Vs Simone Bartolomeo (Part 1)

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Leonard Fireheart vs Simone Bartolomeo

The moment everyone saw that a single thought immediately entered their minds. – A battle between absolute strengths.

These two were now regarded as the guys who had the highest strength among all of them. And from the look of it, they were immediately going to see which of them was stronger right off the bat.

"Alright! Time to bet some points for Leo!" said Arthur as he was ready to put half of his points for Leonard.

But before he could even do that, Shin immediately stopped him. "Idiot! Didn't you hear that we can't just blindly bet on our friends even though we are confident that they are going to win?"

Arthur's fingers suddenly halted when he heard those words and looked at Shin. "Then how about enlightening me, Mr. Know-it-all?"

"Just like what that professor has said earlier, he wants us to have proper reasoning before making a gamble with our points," said Shin with a sneer.

"And we are going to answer based on what?" asked Arthur while frowning.

Hearing that, Shin couldn't help but release a helpless sigh before answering. "Are you paying any attention to what is happening? We already have enough information to give some reasonable assumptions."

"Earlier, each of us underwent a physical assessment exam in front of everyone. And the real reason why the academy let us have those exams along with the others is to purposely give us enough information to have some proper assessments of our own."

"Given that, we now have no reason to just blindly pick the people who are close to us," he added in the end before gambling his own points.

Curious, Arthur looked on Shin's virtual screen and saw that he was betting his points on Leonard. "F\*ck! Look at this guy acting cool and all yet also come up with the same conclusion as choosing a friend!"

But despite hearing those criticizing comments, Shin kept his cool and looked at Arthur skeptically. "Don't put me on the same level as you. I at least came up with this conclusion after seeing the assessments that we have from Leo and that muscleman."

"When it comes to strength and body toughness, both of them are practically equal. But Leonard has a slight edge in terms of explosive speed while that bulk guy has more body mass. So, none of them have the absolute advantage in this battle, just a slight edge."

Ding!

Right after Shin said those words, both him and Arthur suddenly heard a ring from his virtual screen. And when they quickly looked at it, they saw an additional 100 points added to Shin's total accumulated points.

Seeing that, Shin looked at Arthur sneeringly while pointing his thumb on his virtual screen. It was as if he was saying – "See? I've told you." –

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In the meantime, Leonard and Simone were already standing at the center of the gymnasium where their battle was going to take place.

"Looks like the academy is favoring me this time. To think that we are going to face each other right at the first match? I can't help but feel a little excited," said Simone while cracking his knuckles.

"You know, I'm really quite curious why are you acting so familiar with me. We don't even know each other that well," replied Leonard as he put on a pair of metal gauntlets alongside a pair of steel combat boots that seemed to be on the same set as the metal gauntlets.

Seeing those actions, Simone suddenly raised his eyebrows for a moment before smirking. "Looks like you want to take this a little seriously, huh?"

Then he put on a pair of steel knuckles before continuing. "As for your question earlier, I will remind you of the resentment that I have for you, Crimson Devil!"

After that, both of them put up their respective battle stance while waiting for the referee to tell them the start of the match.

Not long after, Professor Michael suddenly appeared in the battle stage before giving the two a quick look, making sure that both of them were ready.

"What an interesting batch of youngsters, their battle intents are already reaching the level of some veteran warriors," muttered the professor to himself before quickly swinging his hand downwards, giving out the single to start the duel. "Start!"

Bang!

Right after he announced the start of the battle, Leonard quickly kicked the ground beneath his feet and lunged forward.

'Demonic Blood Sutra: Devil's Footprints'

Unlike before, Leonard didn't leave any footprint on the spot where he was previously standing, signifying how hard the floor of the gymnasium was. But just like always, his body completely disappeared from everyone's sight.

"Old tricks don't always succeed," shouted Simone as he clenched his fist tightly before taking a deep breath. And without further ado, he suddenly punched his fist in the air in front of him which immediately created a powerful shockwave.

Boom!

But unlike what he was expecting, no one was hit by the shockwave that he was sent forward. Though, he suddenly heard Leonard's voice from below. "Haven't heard the old quote saying that 'Old is gold'?"

Lowering his head, Simone saw Leonard ducking in front of him and was currently in the middle of throwing a punch towards his abdomen.

Bang!

Then another shockwave was created right after he threw that punch. And based on the much stronger shockwave that was released, this punch was obviously more powerful compared to the one that Simone had thrown earlier.

But despite that being the case, Simone didn't seem to be affected by it nor got sent flying by that particular punch.

"Not bad to be a decent attack, but it is not strong enough to hurt me, so you better work harder if you want to defeat me," said Simone as his left hand tightly held on the fist that he just caught earlier.

"But if that is all you have, then I suggest you surrender now before you embarrass yourself," he added as he suddenly pulled Leonard a little closer to him while using his other arm to wrap around the latter.

But to his surprise, he suddenly saw Leonard refused to budge; it was as if his feet were fixed on the ground. Moreover, he also discovered the wrist of his other hand was being grabbed by Leonard and prevented it from moving.

"You talk too much for someone of your size," said Leonard before lifting one of his feet and kicking it straight forward.

Bang!

And this time, he got Simone clean and sent the guy fly towards the direction of his kick, parallel to the ground.

Bang! Swoosh!

During his flight, Simone heard the sharp sound of the air being ripped apart by something. And when he was forced to slightly lower his head midair, he saw Leonard chasing after him with great speed.

Not long after Leonard caught up with him and quickly spun midair before borrowing the momentum of that spin to throw a downward punch at Simone.

Bang!

Simone managed to cross his arms in front of his face to block that punch in time. But given that he was not in a position to properly block that attack, he was still smashed on the ground after being hit by it.

Leonard was about to follow his attack with a downward kick but he quickly abandoned the idea when he suddenly sensed a threat coming from below.

During those critical moments, Simone still managed to find a small window to counterattack and managed to grab it perfectly.

Right after he hit the ground, he took advantage of the force from Leonard's previous attack that was pressing on his upper body downwards to lift his legs in the air and threw a kick at Leonard.

At the same time, Leonard bent his body in the air and quickly rolled to the side midair, barely dodging the kick that was coming after him.

Ta-ta!

Then he quickly jumped away right after his feet touched the ground because he saw Simone was planning to stumble him with a quick sweep kick right after getting back on his feet.

But immediately after that, Leonard leaped forward once again while Simone was still in the middle of standing up from his previous actions.

When he got near, he quickly raised his right knee, trying to strike Simone's face with it. But the latter seemed to be expecting that already since he managed to block the sudden attack with his arm.

After that, the two paused their actions as they maintained their current positions for a brief moment before quickly engaging in an intense melee battle.

Their exchanges were too intense especially that they were putting a lot of strength into each of their attacks. And every time their fists collided with each other, a powerful shockwave would always spread outwards and make the whole area shake a little.

In their fight, Leonard seemed to have a slight advantage since he was the one who was landing more punches. Well, that was to be expected since he had a nimbler body and could easily do more complex maneuvers during the battle.

But even if that was the case, Simone seemed to be unaffected by any of the attacks that Leonard threw as he was there were no visible injuries on his body; not even a scratch.

"Tsk! His 'Qi Reinforcement Skill' is quite troublesome," muttered Leonard before disengaging from the battle.

After that, he quickly took another battle stance which was a little different from what he had previously before releasing a much denser Internal Qi.

Seeing that, Simone immediately understood what Leonard was planning to do and immediately did the same. "So, are we now done with the warm-up? Then I guess it is finally time for the real deal."

Chapter 604 Leonard Fireheart Vs Simone Bartolomeo (Part 2)

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Leonard placed his left foot forward and slightly squatted his hips while pointing his left-hand fist forward with the other positioned right in front of his chest.

After that, his entire body was covered by an Internal Qi with a deep crimson color. And not long after, his evolved Aura Manifestation started to manifest behind him.

But unlike the usual Aura Manifestation that could only be seen by the targeted person, what Leonard currently had was now seeable by everyone. Moreover, it now had a humanoid figure instead of just being a beast.

Meanwhile, from the spectator's point of view, what they saw was a humanoid creature with three lion's heads and six arms, and a blazing magic circle behind it. Even if its entire figure was still slightly vague, it was clear that it was already close to being complete.

"A Battle Spirit. This kid is already very close to reaching the Ethereal Opening Stage and about to step on the Ascension realm," said Professor Valor while watching from the sidelines.

Hearing that, Professor Jennifer nodded her head before quickly adding. "And it is also not an ordinary Battle Spirit but a mutated one at that."

"An Asura and a Demon Beast, this mutated Battle Spirit reminds me of two particular individuals," said Professor Bullen who just arrived and sat beside Professor Valor.

Meanwhile, the other two professors simultaneously turned their heads at him and were about to ask who they were. But before they could even voice out their thoughts, another pair of professors suddenly arrived and sat alongside them; they were Professor Shane and Professor Billy.

And while taking his seat, Professor Billy answered the question that Professor Valor and Professor Jennifer had in mind by asking. "Are you talking about that Master-Disciple duo; Hundred Beast: Joaquin Geovanni and Blood Slaughtering Fist: Galileo Freeman?"

"But I heard that Master Galileo is still staying in Deep Blue Continent," said Professor Jennifer with a frown.

"Then this kid is most likely trained under Joaquin Geovanni," said Professor Billy.

"That is also impossible. I never heard that that Battle Maniac took any disciples up until now," refuted Professor Valor while shaking his head repeatedly.

Hearing that, Professor Billy shrugged his shoulders before replying. "Who knows that he actually takes his first disciple secretly?"

"What's more, those two were the only ones who know the training method for 'Demonic Blood Sutra', so there is no one out there that we can suspect as this little cub's master aside from them," added while looking at Leonard's Battle Spirit.

He then paused for a moment and shifted his gaze towards Simone before continuing. "But at the same time, this kid from Silver Wing Continent is not that bad either. It looks like we are going to witness another battle between the 'Demonic Blood Sutra' and 'Celestial Beast Scripture'."

Caster their gazes towards the direction that he was looking, the professors saw another partial Battle Spirit manifesting behind Simone as his jade-green Internal Qi covered his entire body alongside some black aura mixed in it.

The Battle Spirit was also a beast-like humanoid creature. It had a torso and a waist that were similar to bears, and a wide tiger's back. Its paws had four sharp claws each that were ready to rip apart anything that was going to come in contact with it.

In the meantime, the head that this particular beast had was a hybrid between, a bear, a tiger, and a lion. And the mane in its head was covering its back as it ran down all the way to its tailbone.

Bang!

The two opposing pressures that were coming from the bodies of these pair of little monsters clashed against each other as they tried to gauge the current strength that their opponent had.

The two auras tried to push each other but no one showed any signs of weakening. It was clear that both of them didn't want to wield.

Bang!

Not long after, the two of them simultaneously kicked the ground and charged towards each other before throwing their fist forward.

Boom!

Another powerful shockwave was sent outwards right after their fists collided with each other. And this time, they really made the whole place shake violently.

Even if most of the force from that collision was nullified by the barrier set, there were still some residual forces that managed to leak from it and made the gymnasium tremble intensely as if an earthquake was shaking it.

Seeing that, the Mentalists who sent up the Mental Energy Barrier immediately realized that they underestimated these kids a little too much. Then they quickly enhanced the barrier before these two young monsters destroyed it.

Unfortunately, their work became much harder because Leonard and Simone started exchanging more punches at that point in time, and created a very loud explosion sound every time their fist collided with each other.

And alongside those, the shockwaves that came from the point of impact made the Mentalists almost cry due to helplessness.

With that, they didn't have any other choice but to continuously channel their Mental Energy on the barrier to make sure that it was not going to collapse from the repeated assault of the shockwaves from the other side.

Realizing that they no longer need to concern themselves about the other participants outside the barrier, both Leonard and Simone became even more aggressive with their attacks, going all-out.

Reaching this point, Leonard was starting to lose some of his edge in their exchanges. He was starting to get overwhelmed by Simone's attacks, signifying the difference that they had in terms of body mass.

Leonard might be able to contend against Simone in terms of pure strength. But given that he had a relatively smaller body structure compared to the latter, it was pretty obvious that he would lag behind if it was a direct and continuous contest of strength just like this.

Given that, Leonard decided to go back to his previous approach and took advantage of his explosive speed.

First, he created some space between himself and his opponent before charging back once again with 'Devil's Footprint' while also throwing his offensive Martial-Art Skills at the same time.

By using the momentum of his charge, Leonard was able to have a much stronger force behind each of his attacks, making his opponent become wary of them.

Due to that, Simone started to dodge some of the attacks, especially that he started to feel that his innards were being shaken every time he tried to withstand all of the force from the impact.

Seeing that his technique was quite effective, Leonard started to become even much bolder with his attacks.

But it didn't take long for Simone to figure out the rhythm of Leonard's attacks and also found the weakness of the 'Devil's Footprint' a little later.

"I told you, your old tricks are useless. An attack that is always coming from a certain direction and going on a straight line is just a reckless assault even if it has both speed and power," said Simone sneeringly as he continued to dodge Leonard's attacks.

But it also didn't take for Leonard to respond with it. "Is that so? Then how about this?"

Bang! Bang! Bang!

Leonard started moving at random and circled around Simone with an unpredictable rhythm. He was still using the same foot technique, but instead of charging in a straight line, he was continuously changing the direction of his charge by repeatedly kicking the ground mid-stride and shifting it towards a different trajectory.

'Demonic Blood Sutra: Devil's Dance'

Seeing that, Simone also made some adjustments as soon as possible and decided to go on the defensive.

Ha!

Boom!

He took a horse stance and planted his feet firmly on the ground while releasing a greater amount of Internal Qi from his body, which quickly transformed into a transparent spherical barrier around him.

'Celestial Beast Scripture: Bestial Defiance'

Not long after, Leonard repeatedly attacked the barrier from different directions, making it tremble violently.

Cracks after cracks appeared on the surface of the barrier every time Leonard struck it with his fist. And after a few moments, the cracks already spread all over it, signifying that it could no longer withstand the repeated assault thrown at it.

But at the same time, Leonard was also reaching his limit. The continuous execution of 'Devil's Footprints' was also putting a toll on his body, especially his legs. And on top of that, he was also using some of his offensive skills which also consumed quite a lot of his Internal Qi.

"Then let's end this with a single strike," muttered Leonard as he used the 'Devil's Footprints' for the last time and appeared in front of Simone.

Then he focused all of his remaining strength on his right arm before throwing his fist forward. And alongside it, he also twisted his waist and pivoted his feet towards the direction of his punch.

'Demonic Blood Sutra: El Diablo'

During those movements, the Internal Qi surrounding Leonard was suddenly sucked on his fist and created a glowing sphere with a deep crimson color similar to human blood.

At the same time, Simone could see the face of a wicked demon right behind Leonard, staring at him with its baleful eyes. But instead of being shaken by that sight, the former welcomed it wholeheartedly and responded. "I've been waiting for this!"

Then savagery filled his eyes while the expression on his face turned bloodthirsty. And while Leonard was shattering the barrier around him, the remaining Internal Qi around his body gathered on his fist which was patiently waiting on the right side of his waist.

He then thrust it forward, throwing a punch straight to Leonard's face while also letting all of the accumulated force that he gathered earlier explode at a point-blank range.

'Celestial Demon Scripture: Bestial Fervor'

Boom!

Chapter 605 A Soldier And An Assassin (Part 1)

.....

Boom!

There was a loud explosion in the middle of the arena where Leonard and Simone were. And when the spectators saw that, they couldn't help but lean a little forward to have a better look at what happened.

Their line of sight was being blocked by a pair of blinding lights that were intervening with each other, so Shin and the others used their respective ocular skills to see through that curtain of light.

That was when they saw Leonard and Simone switch places for some unknown reasons. Those two were wearing a deep frown as both of them were also confused at what happened.

Swoosh!

Then they saw the lights created by their clashing Internal Qi dissipated as if they had never been there in the first place.

After that, they saw Professor Michael clapping his hands not far from them while saying. "That should be enough for now. Both of you put up a pretty good show for us, so how about we stop right now and call this battle a draw?"

Leonard and Simone stared blankly at him for a moment before finally reacting.

"Tsk! I almost had him. There's supposedly a hole in his abdomen right now," said the former while clicking his tongue.

"Heh! You got lucky that you still have your head intact," sneered the latter while retracting his arm.

After that, they quickly spun around and faced each other once again.

"Want to give it another go?" asked Leonard provokingly.

"Nice suggestion," answered Simone with a smirk.

Then they quickly charged at each other once again, planning to resume their battle.

Swoosh!

Bang!

Unfortunately, their fists were caught by Professor Michael before the situation escalated even further. He then gave them a sidelong glance and warned them. "I like your enthusiasm pretty much. But as I said, enough is enough, so both of you can stop now."

Swoosh! Swoosh!

After that, Leonard and Simone found themselves sitting on their respective seats, back to their comrades.

Meanwhile, Professor Michael swept his gaze at everyone before saying. "Since we have a really good opening match, I am hoping that all of you are going to show the same level of energy."

"Do worry about harming your rivals since you will not be able to kill each other as long as I am here," he added with full confidence.

After that, he snapped his fingers while saying. "Now, let's start the next duel."

Then the battles proceeded just like that. And with the words that Professor Michael had said, the other participants also became confident with themselves and immediately went all-out from the get-go.

The following matches were not as eye-catching as the previous fight between Leonard and Simone but they were at least as entertaining to watch since all of them were doing their best to show a good match.

And after a few minor matches, some of the most anticipated matches also took place, just like the battle between Ezio and Falcon, Molton against Mavin, and Lorraine versus Marie. These matches were at least on par with the first match that took place and the results were also the same.

All of those three matches also ended up with a draw as Professor Michael decided to step up at the very last moments. And out of these matches, the most eye-catching one was the matchup between Lorraine and Marie.

Both of the girls were quite skilled at being a mechanic but Marie had a slight advantage in this area since her county focused on developing scientific devices and technological tools. She relied on this aspect to suppress her opponent, also taking advantage of the large number of devices that she had.

Unfortunately for her, Lorraine also had a quite remarkable background; she was from a gunsmith family who was known around the world.

Their methods for gunsmithing were quite famous and unique since they combined the traditional way of making a gun and advanced technology. And one of their finest works was the pair of pistols that Lorraine was using.

Those guns could transform into four different forms, a pair of pistols, an assault rifle, a shotgun, and a sniper rifle.

With these forms, Lorraine could have different fighting styles depending on the situation that she was currently facing. And coupled with her abilities as a Dual-Partitioner, she was a very formidable opponent for anyone.

Their battle made the gymnasium a shooting ground without any covers to hide on. They continuously move while firing at their opponents without having any rest; they would only pause for a moment to reload their guns before firing at each other once again.

There were also some times when Marie was trying to throw some explosives at Lorraine, but the latter would always shoot them in the air accurately. Letting them roll was useless either since Lorraine would always spot them and let them explode before they could even reach a dangerous distance for her.

The battle lasted for quite some time before Professor Michael decided to stop the duel since it would take them forever to finish if not stop these girls.

In the end, those two also had no choice but to stop unwillingly and went back to their seats with a displeased expressions on their faces. No one from the team even dared to talk to both of them given the 'Kill I you, if you talk to me' vibes that radiating from their bodies.

After that, the rest of the matches took place. But they still couldn't finish all of them given the number of the remaining matches. And due to that, the professors assigned to oversee the matches decided to postpone the remaining duels and continue them tomorrow.

So, after the last match that took place in the afternoon, everyone was sent back to where they were living and told to come back tomorrow morning.

It was also for all of them to recover themselves. After all, Shin and the other participants who still didn't have their turn were also quite exhausted from sitting all day long and watching all of those battles from the sidelines.

Given that, Shin and his gang immediately went back to their respective rooms. But of course, it was only after they'd eaten the dinner that Shin prepared for all of them.

After a good night of sleep, everyone had gathered once again at the Magical Ace Academy. But this time, they were not summoned in an open field within the academy instead of being in the gymnasium.

"Heh! Looks like these old fogies finally realize how strong we are," said Arthur sneeringly as he surveyed the surroundings.

At the same time, Shin was also sweeping his gaze at the whole place before nodding in agreement. And thanks to his special Ocular Mentalism Technique, he was also able to see a very huge cube-like barrier right in front of them.

"They even created a proper barrier this time," said Arthur from the side as he also observed the barrier with the help of his own ocular skill.

Being able to notice that, Shin slightly knitted brows especially when he saw that Arthur's eyes seemed to be similar to what dragons had. "It looks like you have a rather interesting ocular skill – what is it called?"

Hearing those words, Arthur gave his brother a sidelong glance before replying sneeringly. "What? Got interested in my skill? How about you tell me about your Ocular Technique first and I will tell you mine?"

"I can't just expose my secrets for free even if it is you. We are still rivals after all," added while proudly crossing his arms in front of his chest.

Unfortunately, Shin replied to him as he wanted. "Tsk! Forget it then. After all, I can already tell that that ocular skill is self-created by you."

"What is it? A combination of your 'Foresight' Talent and one of your Martial Art Skills alongside some application of your breathing technique. Hmm... What is it called again? 'Imperial Tactics'? Yeah, that's how it is called; I believe."

Then he walked past Arthur while patting the latter's shoulder. "And given your personality, I'm pretty sure that you named this skill — 'Dragon's Eye'."

p After listening to those words, Arthur stared blankly in the air for quite some time before fuming in rage. "F\*ck! That is unfair! That smartass reads me like an open book when it comes to these things."

He then turned around and chased after Shin. "Hey, Mr. Know-It-All! At least tell me what is the name of your ocular technique!"

"Tsk! Guess it yourself. This is why I told you that studying can also be used in Martial-Arts," said Shin while sitting underneath a tree shade, planning to take a quick nap while waiting.

Though, not everything would always go according to the plan. Arthur persistently asked him about the name of his ocular technique, which was why he couldn't have a peaceful nap. So, he still gave up and answered.

"Tsk! I named it 'True Sight'. Happy? Now get out of here and let me have a peaceful time," said Shin while shooing Arthur away.

At that point, Arthur was about to stand up and head elsewhere when everyone suddenly heard Professor Michael's voice. "We are now going to start immediately since we don't have much time left to drag this special exam."

"Arthur Springfield and Thomas Brooks, enter the barrier now," he added without waiting for anyone to process what he just said.

In the meantime, Arthur was already waking his way towards the center of the open field right after he heard his name. He even grinned quite widely while muttering to himself. "Finally! I thought I would die in boredom while waiting for my turn."

He then started rolling both of his shoulders before saying. "This time, I am going to be the highlight of today's event!"

#### Chapter 606 A Soldier And An Assassin (Part 2)

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Arthur and Thomas walked towards the center of the open field and stopped when they were standing in a distance where they couldn't attack each other with a single charge.

"We meet again, Young Master of the Springfield Family," said Thomas, greeting his opponent with a sarcastic tone.

"But I'm not pleased to see someone like you; a young murder without a mercy," replied Arthur with a rare serious tone.

"Whoa! Don't accuse someone without definite proof; other people may misunderstand your words," he said while raising both of his hands in the air, trying to act innocent.

He then took a brief pause before smirking. "But if we are talking about killing someone, then aren't we the same?"

"Tsk! Don't put me on the same type of person as you. I only kill people who deserve to be killed – such as a criminal like yourself," replied Arthur with a sneer.

"Killing is still killing nevertheless. It doesn't matter if it is for a good or a bad cause, you still killed some in the end," said Thomas.

"There is no point arguing in this matter since our beliefs will never coincide," said Arthur while shrugging his shoulders.

He then paused for a moment to take a cylindrical item from his pocket before gripping it tightly. After that, he swung his arm downward once before doing another towards his right. And alongside his actions, the cylindrical item suddenly turned into a silver-steel spear.

"Just a piece of advice; our country may be too kind to get you admitted to a prestigious academy regardless of your background, but it doesn't mean you can just take it for granted since we will not overlook your actions if you get out of bounds," added Arthur while taking his battle stance.

"Heh!" Thomas didn't say anything after hearing those words but he instead took out a pair of daggers behind him and quickly assumed his own battle stance.

Meanwhile, Professor Michael who was patiently listening to them earlier finally raised his hand in the air before swinging it down. "Start!"

Swoosh!

Thomas quickly took the initiative right after he heard the signal and suddenly disappeared. And not long after, he arrived a few meters away from Arthur which was also an optimal distance for him to attack.

But before he could even do anything, he immediately saw a spearhead flying straight to his face.

Clang!

Thomas quickly leaned his head to the side to dodge while also swinging his right-hand dagger to change the trajectory of the spear.

But during that time, Arthur shifted his right foot forward before raising his knee toward his left while also twisting his waist towards the opposite direction. At the same time, he was also pushing his spear to the side, chasing after Thomas' head.

Due to those actions, the trajectory of the spear changed once again as the spearhead accurately followed his opponent's head.

"Tsk!"

Seeing that, Thomas tightened his grip on his dagger before swinging them upwards, forcing to change the direction of the spear once again. Then he quickly ducked forward to shorten the distance between him and Arthur, planning to attack in response.

His actions were quick but Arthur's response was already coming his way as if the latter completely read what he was thinking.

Thomas saw Arthur use the momentum of his push to lift the spear upwards while trying to adjust his grip on it. Then the latter jumped in the air with one leg before retwisting his waist towards the other direction while also throwing a back kick midair.

Thomas needed to quickly cross his arms in front of his face when he saw that since Arthur's foot was already magnifying in his eyes.

Bang!

Despite him blocking the kick completely, he was still pushed backward since he couldn't completely nullify the force from that sudden counter.

"Tsk!"

Thomas was still trying to recover his footing when Arthur used the moment of his spin to thrust his spear towards his opponent midair.

Seeing that, Thomas' eyes suddenly turned wide as he quickly moved backward while swinging both of his daggers in an outward circular motion.

Clang!

After his spear got deflected upwards, Arthur pushed the lower part of the spear downwards, letting it flip in the air as his feet fell back on the ground.

He then waited for a brief moment before punching his fist forward, accurately hitting the bottom of his spear and sending it flying towards Thomas who was trying to run away from him.

Swoosh!

Seeing the current speed of the spear, Thomas knew that he was going to be in trouble if he continued moving backward. So, he decisively stopped his movements before quickly jumping towards his right, barely dodging the spear.

But in that very moment, Thomas saw Arthur charging behind his spear from the corner of his eyes. And it didn't take long for him to catch up with his spear and quickly extend his left hand forward.

Thomas was still in the middle of his jump during that time and he was completely aware that he was going to be completely exposed to any attack when he stayed midair. So, he quickly forced himself to fall on the ground to have a better chance of dodging and blocking an attack.

But to his surprise, the attack that he was expecting was something that he did not expect.

Right after his feet touched the ground, Thomas also saw Arthur suddenly stop his charge and slightly lean his body backward.

Thomas was slightly confused when he saw those actions but he immediately came to a realization when he saw Arthur's left hand that was supposedly catching the bottom of the spear, strongly tapped it instead.

And due to that, the spear that was still in the middle of flying past Thomas spun horizontally in the air all of the sudden.

Thomas's eyes immediately turned wide when he saw that and could only stare at the blade of the spear that was magnifying right in front of his sight.

Swoosh!

But at the very last moment, Professor Michael suddenly grabbed Thomas' neck and pushed the latter's head downwards, barely saving the young assassin from getting his head chopped off.

Meanwhile, Arthur coolly caught his spear before resting it on his right shoulder. "That should be it. Tsk! Tsk! It is way too easy than what I've expected."

On the other hand, Thomas was still blankly staring at the ground as he couldn't believe what just happened. "How can this be?"

Seeing how pitiful the state that Thomas was currently in, Arthur couldn't help but smirk. "Heh! Three Kings my \*ss. It is just a false reputation that you get after some weak people overestimated yourself."

Hearing that, Thomas' eyes suddenly turned bloodshot for being fully enraged.

Professor Michael stared at him for a moment before raising his right hand and about to announce the winner of the duel. But he suddenly stopped when he noticed Thomas grabbed his left hand.

"Wait, Sir. We can just end it like this. I haven't shown my full capabilities yet," he said while still staring at the ground.

"Is that our problem? It is your fault for underestimating your opponent," said Professor Michael coldly before shaking Thomas' hand off him.

He was about to announce the winner when he was interrupted once again. And this time, it was Arthur who stopped him. "Wait, Sir. How about we give him another chance? I haven't shown my real capabilities either."

Professor Michael shot a sharp glare at Arthur and said threateningly. "Kid, we are not playing here right now, so you better consider your words before talking."

"If you want to have another match then do it later when we are done with everything just like what we told you yesterday," he added with a cold tone.

But despite being threatened by a much stronger expert than, Arthur was still acting quite calm which surprised the professor a little. And to add more into it, the latter even said. "Actually, we are only warming up earlier, Sir. It is not our real fight yet."

"Am I right, Thomas?" he added while looking at the young assassin on the ground.

Hearing that, Thomas became even more enraged since he knew that Arthur was purposely humiliating him. But the worst part of it was the fact that he couldn't do anything in response since he also wanted to have another match. So, he swallowed his pride and clenched his hands tightly, not saying anything.

Meanwhile, Professor Michael was also about to lose his cool. From his perspective, Arthur seemed to be also looking down at him.

But before he could even come up with a decision, he suddenly heard a voice transmission inside his head. "Let them be."

"Huh!?" Professor Michael was quite confused when he heard those words and quickly turned his head towards the owner of the voice. Then he saw Professor Valor assisting the academy principal sit on a chair.

"Principal's orders," added Professor Valor without turning his head.

"Tsk!"

In response, Professor Michael clicked his tongue and turned around, leaving the two behind. "Suit yourselves, kids. But this time, the two of you are on your own."

Chapter 607 A Soldier And An Assassin (Part 3)

...

Arthur watched Professor Michael walk away before looking at Thomas who was still on the ground.  
"Hey, stand up from there. Show me your real abilities."

Then he saw Thomas slowly stood up while his body started to release some black Internal Qi that was giving off a strange feeling.

"Huh? An 'Evil Qi'?" muttered Arthur when he saw the Internal Qi coming from Thomas. But he immediately rejected the idea a moment later. "No, it is not. Evil Qi is sinister and wicked but this one is somewhat different; it is more like a cold and dreadful aura."

While Arthur was still guessing what type of Internal Qi Thomas had, the latter answered it for him. "It is another type of 'Death Qi'. A combination of Assassin's Internal Qi and 'Aura of Death' that they nurture from assassination."

After that, Arthur suddenly sensed a very dangerous feeling coming from Thomas which was why he suddenly jumped away from the latter.

"What was that?" muttered Arthur while looking at his opponent with a deep frown.

Then he saw Thomas finally stood up from the ground while raising his head and looked at Arthur with his bloodshot eyes. "Arthur Springfield, you will regret your decision just now."

Right after those words left his mouth, a Battle Spirit with a form of cloaked skeleton manifested behind Thomas while wielding a pair of bone daggers on hand.

The eyes of this particular Battle Spirit were burning with purple flame while a glowing crown made of bones was on its head, making its appearance somewhat majestic yet frightening.

Seeing that, Arthur started grinning from ear to ear instead of being frightened. He then took his battle stance with the spear pointing towards the ground in front of him instead of his opponent. And at the same time, his left hand was placed gently on top of the spearhead.

"Regret, huh? I don't remember having something like that. I wonder if you have the ability to give it to me," he said while releasing his multicolored Internal Qi alongside his battle Battle Spirit.

Just like Leonard, the current Battle Spirit that Arthur had was quite different from before. It was still a muscular dragon in human form with dark skin and some golden scales on its bare chest and shoulder.

Its golden bull-like horns were glowing with a brilliant light alongside the floating crown above its head. This Dragonkin Battle Spirit was standing haughtily behind Arthur while staring at its opponent with full of arrogance.

Both Arthur and Thomas stood in their respective positions, staring at each other while releasing a powerful pressure that was trying to suppress their opponents. And that staredown lasted for a couple of moments before the latter suddenly took the initiative.

Swoosh!

Thomas disappeared and arrived near Arthur in an instant while planning to get as close to his opponent as possible.

Shu!

Unfortunately, he was immediately greeted by a spearhead right after he entered Arthur's attack range.

But this time, Thomas suddenly moved his feet with strange movements, making his body sway left and right before transforming into multiple blurry silhouettes. One of them was pierced by the incoming spear but given that there was no blood seen from it, it was clear that it missed hitting its target.

Meanwhile, the real Thomas suddenly appeared behind Arthur while planning to stab his opponent from behind.

But during this time, Arthur suddenly leaped forward while thrusting his spear towards his opponent behind him by letting his spear brush past his waist and doing a quick hundred and eighty turn midair.

Due to those sudden movements, Thomas was forced to dodge once again but he still chased after Arthur persistently.

Seeing that, Arthur quickly extended his other hand to hold his spear with both of his hands before forcing his body to spin in the air. And during that spin, forcefully swung his spear towards Thomas to buy himself more time to land back on the ground.

Just like what Arthur was hoping, Thomas was forced to duck forward to dodge the spear, delaying his movements for a moment. But that was still not enough to stop his advance, so he immediately continued moving forward right after the spear flew past over his head.

And when he reached the optimal range to attack, both of his daggers suddenly glowed with a deep purple light as he swung them at Arthur while striding forward.

'Demon Slaying Method: Life Execution'

But in the middle of his charge, Thomas saw Arthur readjust his balance in the air while using the momentum of his spin to swing his spear downwards in a very strong manner.

'True Nine Dragon Arts: Earth Splitter'

Swoosh!

Because of the falling spear, Thomas had no other choice but changed the trajectory of his attack and swung his daggers at the spear instead.

Bang!

Crack!

Thomas' feet suddenly sank on the ground as he tried to redirect the force that he got from the impact towards it. And because of that, Arthur was able to land on the ground safely.

After that, two were engaged in a very intense battle with Thomas circling around Arthur with his strange foot technique and the latter matching it up with his 'Dragon Dance' movement skill.

The two exchanged quite a lot of flashy moves and high-class Martial-Art Skills. And unlike the battle between Leonard and Simone which was a contest between absolute strength and strength supported by explosive speed, this particular battle was a competition of speed, agility, and technique.

This time, Thomas was much faster than what he showed during the physical assessment exam previously; he even surpassed Leonard's explosive and did it with great mobility. Unlike the 'Devil's Footprints' and 'Devil's Dance', the current movement technique that he was using was much controlled and consistent.

But despite him having the advantage in that area, Arthur was still able to keep up with him with the help of his own movement technique, the 'Dragon Dance'.

Even if it was slightly lagging behind in terms of overall speed, this foot technique was at least better when it came to mobility. And putting it together with Arthur's current attainment in spearmanship, his battle capabilities was not something to be scoffed at.

Moreover, there was also the ocular skill that Arthur had personally created. And with the help of that skill, he was able to see his opponent's tricks. So, no matter which direction Thomas was attacking from, Arthur would always respond to it accordingly.

The battle lasted for a few moments and the two of them already traveled the whole arena by running around and chasing each other.

In the meantime, Ezio was currently wearing a deep frown while watching from the side. "That guy from the Springfield Family sure is skilled."

He paused for a moment to look at Dylan sitting beside him before asking. "Hey, Sword Genius. What do you think about that guy's spearmanship? Is it-...?"

He was still in the middle of talking when Dylan immediately answered what he wanted to ask. "Yes. His spearmanship is on the same level of attainment as my swordsmanship in terms of skills and techniques."

"Oh! Is that so? Then who do you think will win if the two of you fight?" asked Ezio curiously.

Dylan thought for a couple of moments before answering the question. "If we are comparing our swordsmanship and spearmanship, then I will win without a doubt since he didn't train any kind of Qi related to weapon-wielding."

He then took another pause and frowned before continuing. "But if it is an actual fight between a Martial-Artist and a Swordsman, then the result is going to be really hard to predict."

"Ho~! That guy is that good, huh?" said Ezio with amusement. He then turned his head back to the battle once again before asking. "So, who do you think is going to win this duel?"

Hearing that, Dylan threw a sneering look at him before answering. "Are you really asking that question? Hasn't the winner already been decided since the very start?"

Ezio was confused at first before he immediately came up with a realization when he remembered what happened earlier.

,m Regardless, he still shook his head and said for not being fully convinced. "But Thomas is not showing his real skills up until now. I doubt he is going to lose that easily."

This time, Dylan shook his head and smiled bitterly before responding. "That is the whole point here. Since Thomas still hasn't learned his lesson after what happened earlier, then he will pay a heavy price sooner or later."

He then paused for another time to cast his gaze back at the battle before focusing his attention on Arthur. "After all, the patience of that Young Master from the Springfield Family is not endless. So, he can't wait forever."

"Huh?" Ezio raised his eyebrow for a moment when he heard before also turning attention to Arthur. He stared at the latter with squinted eyes before muttering to himself. "His patience, huh? – Since when was the 'Golden Dragon of the 32nd floor' patient?"

Chapter 608 Rules Adjustments

...

Clang! Clang! Clang!

Metal sparks were kept flying in the air as Arthur's spear and Thomas' daggers clashed against each other.

This battle lasted longer than previous duels as both contenders refused to give even the smallest opening that would lead to them losing this battle.

But during the entire battle, some of the sharpest individuals among the spectators were able to notice that Arthur was somewhat holding his real strength back, seemingly waiting for his opponent to also showcase his real abilities.

But even after a long time, Thomas was still not showing any signs of revealing his real strength, which also made Arthur somewhat disappointed.

"It looks like you really don't have a plan to show us your real strength. Then I guess it is time to end all of this," said Arthur as he created some space between him and his opponent.

Then he pointed his spear forward and slightly lowered its head as he placed his left-hand palm above it. And not long after, the head of the spear was suddenly set ablaze with a multicolored flame as it sucked the Internal Qi surrounding Arthur.

Meanwhile, Thomas immediately held both of his daggers in front of him and infused them with his 'Death Qi'. He was actually planning to unleash his real power but he kept getting a signal from Jean not to use them.

"Tsk! You are telling me to endure this humiliation just because of that so-called mission," cursed Thomas while glaring at Jean who was looking at him sharply.

Given that, Thomas limited his powers to an acceptable level and channeled them on his daggers once again. And quickly after that, he suddenly transformed into a streak of purple light that charged towards Arthur who was still in the middle of channeling his Internal Qi to his spear.

Arthur stared at the incoming streak of light before making his move when it was about to reach his attack range.

He pulled the spear a little before thrusting it forward, releasing all of the accumulated Internal Qi from the tip of his spear. And not long after that energy was released, it transformed into a huge serpent dragon that was charging towards Thomas. It opened its mouth quite widely, seemingly planning to devour Arthur's opponent alive.

'True Nine Dragon Arts: Devouring Heaven'

But instead of avoiding it, Thomas jumped on the dragon's mouth while moving forward continuously. And during his advance, he surrounded himself with a much denser Death Qi to protect himself from the energy wave that was accompanying the golden dragon.

'Demon Slaying Method: Dark Path'

His defense was quite strong but it was still not enough to fully protect himself from the heat within the dragon's body.

Not long after, all of the energy from Arthur's attack was fully exhausted and Thomas came out from the tip of its tail.

But after he passed through it, he immediately came to a sudden halt and stood in front of Arthur where a spearhead was pointing right in front of his face.

With this, it was already clear who was the winner of the match. But instead of showing some enthusiasm about the result, Arthur was currently wearing a disappointed look on his face.

He stared at Thomas for a few moments before muttering with a soft voice. "Soldiers have honor, Knights follow codes, and Assassins stick to their creed – as for you, you are a disgrace of your creed."

After that, he retrieved his spear back and transformed it into a small cylindrical object once again before turning around, walking away.

Meanwhile, Thomas tightly clenched his hands, tightly gripping on his daggers while glaring at Arthur's back viciously. There was even a thought in his mind to talk down this arrogant young master right now. But right after that thought flashed inside his head, he immediately sensed Jean's piercing gaze coming from a distance and the sharp look that Professor Michael was giving him.

With that, he couldn't only accept the result unwillingly before walking back towards the place where he previously sat. And when he came back to his spot, he directly sat under the tree while staring at the ground.

Seeing that, Simone couldn't help but knit his brow before looking at Jean while asking. "Are you sure that he is going to be fine? He is not going to kill someone when we are not looking at him, isn't he?"

"Just leave him be, he will be fine," answered Jean in a nonchalant manner.

He then took a brief pause to give Thomas a sidelong glance before quite adding. "But I'm actually quite concerned that he will make some trouble later, so keep an eye on him for me."

"Tsk! Tsk! I don't want to babysit this guy, but I guess there is no other choice," complained Simone but still decided to comply with Jean's words.

Meanwhile, on the other side, Arthur also sat under a tree where his group was staying. He lazily leaned his back on the tree and placed both of his hands at the back of his head.

Seeing that, Shin who was sitting beside him suddenly smirked and said. "Disappointed for not having your fill? You should exchange blows with Leo later then."

Hearing that, Arthur gave Shin a sidelong glance before asking with a provoking tone. "How about we give it a go then? You still owe me quite a few matches, remember?"

Shin smiled at him and shook his head when he saw Arthur's bad mood. Unfortunately, he couldn't accept the challenge right now. "Even though I love to accept your offer, you and I know that it is impossible right now."

"I still have my own match later," he added as he turned his head towards Diel Hendrickson who was sitting in the distance.

After that, the other matches proceeded as planned. And just like the previous round of matches yesterday, there were a lot of draws among these battles. But at the same time, there was also a fair share of victories and defeats.

What was amazing in this was the battle where Jillian, Cloe, and Alice had participated. Not only did they win each of their matches, but they also did it dominantly. And now that they were not fighting with a group, their real battle capabilities were finally shown to everyone.

Jillian won one-sidedly; she didn't even use her family signature techniques since her opponent was not worthy enough. It was the same for Alice who wrecked her opponent brutally. It was unclear if she was venting her frustration on her opponent, but one thing was sure, she indeed won without showing much effort in the match.

From Shin's perspective, he sensed the idol seemed to be upset about something. And he suspected that it was because she didn't get paired with Cloe. This thought came to his mind since he noticed Alice glancing at Cloe before and after her match.

It might be a coincidence but his instincts were telling him that it wasn't the case. He was not sure if it was because of competition or something else.

His suspicions became even stronger when he compared Cloe's match that just took place right before Alice's.

At first glance, there was nothing special in that match but it was also the reason why Shin took notice of that particular duel; it was so ordinary that it didn't attract any attention from the others.

But compared to all of the matches, this duel between Cloe and her opponent was the fastest to come to an end. And what surprised Shin even more was when he saw Cloe defeat her opponent in a leisure fashion.

Too normal and too ordinary; no flashy moves nor any eye-catching skills. But even if that was the case, Shin felt that there was something hidden in that duel that he couldn't put his finger on.

"Hmm... What is it?" muttered Shin as he looked at Cloe who was now merrily chatting with Lorraine.

"I also can't sense any special powers from her. There are no Bloodline Powers nor any signs of Special Physique – is it because of her Martial-Arts then? I wonder what method she is practicing," he mumbled without removing his gaze from her.

Sensing his gaze, Cloe suddenly turned her head at him before giving him a smile. Seeing that, he quickly smiled back at her in return.

Not long after, most of the schedules were done. There were only 2 matches left and they were the matches between the top 4 students in the point ranking list.

Shin Kinghad against Diel Hendrickson and Jean Camus against Dylan White – these matches were the most anticipated by everyone. Even the professors were putting a lot of attention on these matchups.

Shin didn't know whether it was on purpose that their matches were left or not, but he was sure that the academy really wanted to put a lot of importance on these particular matches. It was because he could sense a lot of strong presence hiding in the dark to watch them.

Some of them were the other professors of the academy while the others were their guests. Moreover, Shin was also sure that there were some even stronger experts that he couldn't sense.

Not long after, Professor Michael stood at the center of the battle arena after some discussion with the other professors who were overseeing this part of the exam alongside the principal.

Shin didn't know what they were discussing earlier, but after seeing the ugly expression that Professor Valor was making, he was pretty sure that it was something important and concerning.

Professor Michael swept his gaze at everyone for a moment before summoning Shin and the other three top rankers at the center of the open field.

The four were naturally confused about why they were summoned, but they didn't ask any questions and patiently waited for the professor to explain what was happening.

First, they saw Professor Michael breathing deeply before asking. "Due to some unexpected circumstances, we are planning to make some changes to the rules on your matches. But if all of you are against it, then we will respect your opinions and proceed on how we are planning to do it."

Hearing that, the four stayed silent for a moment as they were trying to guess what changes that the academy wanted to make. And not long after, each of them threw a quick glance at their rivals before falling into deep thought.

A few moments later, Diel finally raised his head and asked. "Can we ask what are the changes that you want first, Sir?"

Professor Michael hesitated for a moment before finally answering. "The Elders want the four of you to have a free-for-all battle."

### Chapter 609 Royal Rumble (Part 1)

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"The academy would like the four of you to fight each other," said Professor Michael, making sure that Shin and the others heard him clearly.

Meanwhile, the four crown emblem bearers were silent for a few moments as they were trying to consider the offer that the academy proposed to them.

But they were still not fully convinced and had some doubts in mind. And to voice out their thoughts, Diel opened his mouth and asked. "We are expecting to have some compensation for these sudden adjustments, aren't we?"

Professor Michael slightly raised his eyebrows when he heard the sudden question but he still nodded his head in response. "Of course, you all will receive some compensation from us even if you win or lose in this battle."

"Can we hear what are compensations first before deciding whether we are going to accept the proposition or not?" asked Jean Camus while crossing his arms in front of him.

Professor Michael was silent for a moment before answering. "We are going to give 200 points each regardless of the result as well as a first-class cultivation resource that will assist you on your progress in your respective disciplines."

"Quite a tempting offer but I wonder what it is exchanged for? I doubt that it is just us partaking in this royal rumble," commented Dylan while wearing a slight frown. Even if he was not saying it to the professor directly, it was pretty obvious why he was saying those words.

Given that, Professor Michael smiled at them quite stiffly before responding. "There is nothing much, we just want you to show us a good battle where we could at least gauge the majority of your battle capabilities."

"Asking us to give our best shot in exchange for those rewards? I think it is still not enough to convince us to work that hard, so I wonder what will be the rewards if we somehow win in the end," said Shin while stroking his chin. And just like Dylan, he made those words sound like him mumbling to himself but it was pretty obvious that it was actually directed to the professor.

At this point in time, Professor Michael couldn't help but wear a weird look on his face while looking at these kids who were ganging upon him. 'This is the reason why I don't want to talk to these four. They are too smart to negotiate with.'

Given that, he turned his head towards the direction where the academy principal sat, asking for his approval. And when he saw the latter nod his head, he immediately released a sigh of relief before turning his attention back to the four kids.

He was silent for a moment before saying. "We are going to give another 300 points for the winner alongside the right to train on a certain facility of the academy for a whole month. And that is more than enough for you to fully digest all of the energy of the first-class resource that you will get later."

Hearing that, Shin and the others seemed to be fully convinced and nodded their heads.

"That is quite generous of the academy, how can we reject them if they are showing us such sincerity?" said Jean Camus while looking at the other three.

Dylan nodded his head repeatedly as he seconded the idea. "I agree, we can't just ignore their generosity."

"Then I guess we now have our decision," commented Shin while sweeping his gaze at the others.

"If that is the case, then let's get this over already," said Diel as he quickly turned around and walked away from the group, planning to create some space between them.

But he just took a single step when Jean suddenly stopped him by saying. "Hey, where are you going? Isn't it more exciting if we start this free-for-all battle when we are close together?"

Hearing that, Diel couldn't help but come into a sudden halt and slightly turned at Jean before wearing a deep frown. But when he swept his gaze at Shin and Dylan who seemed to agree with the suggestion.

Diel stared at them for a couple of moments before smirking. "Heh! Then what are we waiting for? Let's start this already."

Boom!

Right after those words left his mouth, their powerful auras were released from their bodies which created an unexpected explosion.

Seeing that, Professor Michael couldn't help but shake his head a little as he stared at these kids who seemed to have forgotten about him.

Given that, he distanced himself away from the four young men as Professor Bullen and Professor Valor created a triangle formation alongside him. They surrounded the four in three different directions, increasing the security for this particular battle.

After all, they were not sure how this match was going to end, so it was better to be prepared about everything now rather than regretting it later when accidents really happen.

Meanwhile, all of the other future students of the academy were quite confused about what was happening since they didn't hear about the adjustments that were made just now. But after seeing the four not showing any intention of leaving the battle arena, it was pretty clear that this particular battle was going to be different compared to the previous battles that just took place earlier.

In the meantime, Shin and the others started getting ready for battle as they held their weapons while closely observing their opponents.

Shin put his hands on the hilts of his sheathed katanas beside his waist while Dylan was doing the same with the longsword hanging on his back. Jean also took out a long glaive from his dimensional device as Diel summoned a couple of talismans in the air out of nowhere.

But despite being in a battle-ready stance Shin and the other four still refused to do any sudden moves as they cast their gazes at Professor Michael who seemed to be waiting for them to start.

Seeing the looks on their faces that were practically saying "Can we start now, Sir?", the professor couldn't help but have an urge to remind these young men that he was still a professor of this academy. "Why are these kids looking down on me so much? Do I really look like a pushover in their eyes?"

Regardless, he still raised his right hand in the air and swung it downwards immediately after. "Start!"

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

And right after getting the signal, the four quickly made their moves at the same time.

Dylan quickly pulled his sword and swung it at Shin who was standing beside him but it was immediately blocked by the latter's katana.

Clang!

Clang!

And alongside it, there was also another attack coming from Shin's other side which was why he pulled his other katana in reversed grip and used the surface of its blade to block the tip of Jean's glaive.

Swoosh!

And on top of that, there was also an energy wave that flew towards Shin, seemingly perfectly timed to catch him off-guard and carefully controlled to head towards his face.

Bang!

Unfortunately, it was blocked by an invisible barrier that materialized in front of Shin to protect himself.

"Hey, hey! I'm starting to notice that you three are ganging up on me since the time we are having that written exam. Do you guys think that I am the easiest one to be taken down?" said Shin with a frown.

"Do you really think that way? Are you sure that it is not because we are thinking that you are the greatest threat that we have?" asked Jean as he tried to push his glaive a little.

"Is that so?" asked Shin back while raising his eyebrows. And quickly after that, he put a lot of strength on both of his arms before forcefully swinging his katanas to push Dylan and Jean's weapons away from him before spinning around.

"Then how about those guys?" he said before swinging his katanas once again to send a pair of crescent waves towards Diel.

At the same time, Jean and Dylan seemed to coordinate with his attacks and followed closely behind the mental energy wave that he sent.

Meanwhile, Diel controlled the talismans floating around him and positioned them in front of him to create a hexagonal formation which also expanded to form a very formidable barrier that blocked the consecutive waves that were flying toward him.

Bang!

On the other hand, Jean appeared on his right side while swinging his glaive powerfully. And while he saw doing that, Dylan also appeared on the other side while also doing a similar move with his sword.

Seeing that, Diel quickly put his palms together to gather some of his Mental Energy on them while waiting for the two attacks to reach his optimal range. And when then did, his arms seemed to disappear as he moved them in opposite circular motions.

Clang!

And with that move, he managed to change the trajectories of the two weapons and let them clash against each other before they could even get near him.

But at that very moment, Shin was able to hack down the hexagonal barrier and was about to throw another attack at Diel immediately after.

Though, at the same time, Diel was still wearing a calm look on his face just like before as a pair of daggers appeared on each of his hands.

Clang!

And right after Diel fended off the sword strike from Shin, the four of them noticed that they were now pointing their weapons at each other.

They looked at each other for a moment before Shin opened his mouth and talked. "This is more entertaining compared to what I've expected. So, how about we raise the level a little?"

Chapter 610 Royal Rumble (Part 2)

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"This seems to be quite entertaining from what I am expecting. So, how about we step up a bit?" asked Shin as he swept his gaze at the other three.

He was pointing his white katana at Diel while the black one was blocking Jean's glaive and letting it point at Dylan.

Meanwhile, Dylan was returning the favor and pointed his sword at Jean while covering his body with Sword Qi to block the dagger pointing at his waist.

On the other hand, Jean steadily held his glaive with one hand while his other hand was holding the flying dagger thrown by Diel between his index and middle finger.

The four swept their gazes on their opponents with sharp eyes before simultaneously disengaging from the fight and jumped away from each other.

But during his flight, Shin suddenly swung his two katanas in the air and sent a barrage of crescent energy waves in three different directions. Those energy waves accurately chased after the three as they were moving backward.

'Four Symbol Scripture – Swordsmanship: Breath of Chaos'

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

Seeing that sudden attack, Dylan quickly channeled his Sword Qi on his sword before horizontally swinging it in front of him while also releasing all of the accumulated energy from the tip of his sword.

'Divine Swordsmanship: Splitting the Sky'

Swoosh!

Then all of the Mental Energy waves that were sent by Shin dissipated in the air after coming in contact with the huge Sword Wave that was released by Dylan.

In the meantime, Diel suddenly moved his free hand in circular motion midair, seemingly drawing a series of Mentalism Runes in the air. And quickly after that, a Mentalism Circle suddenly appeared in front of the energy waves that were trying to catch up with them.

After that, the energy waves suddenly changed their trajectories and drew an arc as they headed towards Jean.

'Heavenly Cosmos Principle: The Deceiving Stars'

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

"Tsk! Playing dirty as always," muttered Jean when he saw what Diel did. After that, he quickly regulated his breathing while holding his glaive with both of his hands. Then the blade of the glaive was suddenly set ablaze with a purple flame.

He waited for the two groups of energy waves to reach the optimal range before swinging the glaive with a wide circular motion and powerful manner.

'Supreme Demonic Canon: World Annihilation'

Swoosh!

Boom!

Shin wanted to follow his attack with another when he suddenly sensed a strong threatening feeling coming from above.

Without any hint of hesitation, Shin quickly jumped backward and continuously flipped away from his previous spot as a series of Sword Qi fell from the sky and landed on the ground that he went through.

While it was happening, Diel took advantage of that opportunity to attack Dylan with nine beams of light; eight arching in different directions and one traveling in a straight path.

'Heavenly Cosmos Principle: Nine Constellation Laser'

Sensing the incoming attack, Dylan quickly faced the lasers that were heading his way before holding his sword with both of his hands while positioning it in front of him. He then waited for the lasers to get near him before swinging the left and right, deflecting away the eight lasers arching around him before cutting the one flying at him in a straight line.

'Divine Swordsmanship: Dancing in the middle of the Storm'

At this point in time, Jean was planning to give Diel a taste of his medicine as he took advantage of that change where the latter was still busy dealing with Dylan to throw an ambush.

"Hey, you haven't forgotten about me, have you?" said Jean as he powerfully swung his glaive at Diel as its blade was still blazing with a purple flame.

'Supreme Demonic Canon: Calamitic Destruction'

Swoosh!

A trail of blazing purple light was left behind by the blade of the glaive as it made its way towards Diel. But right before it landed on its target, it was suddenly stopped by a barrier that was made by overlapping talismans that came out of nowhere.

'Heavenly Cosmos Principle: The Unyielding Stars'

"You are still the same as ever, Jean. Always informing your opponents during an ambush," said Diel smirkingly as he gave Jean a sidelong glance.

Seeing that, Jean just gave him a smirk in return before replying. "It is fine, I'm not an assassin anyway so I don't need those cowardly tricks of surprise."

"I'm sorry to interrupt your heart-to-heart conversation, but it seems like you've already forgotten about us," said Shin a few distances away from them while making a couple of seals on his hands.

A moment later, hexagonal barriers suddenly appeared around the two, trapping them in all directions including the space above them.

'Four Symbol Scripture – Heavenly Turtle Technique: Abyssal Prison'

And as if coordinating with his attack, Dylan was already channeling a large amount of Sword Qi on his sword since earlier. And now that he saw Shin locked the other two in place, he suddenly thrust his sword forward while releasing all of the accumulated energy from its tip.

'Divine Swordsmanship: Passing through the Sky'

Swoosh!

Then a spiral sword wave flew straight to Jean and Diel. And at the same time, Shin coordinated with that move once again as he opened one of the sides of his prison barrier where the sword wave was coming from.

Seeing that, Diel immediately collected his talismans and quickly threw one of them outside while channeling his Mental Energy to the rest. And in the very next instant, he suddenly disappeared from his current position before reappearing at the place where he threw his talisman earlier.

### 'Heavenly Cosmos Principle: The Mysterious Stars'

Meanwhile, Jean who was left alone was currently wearing a weird look on his face as he felt somewhat cheated. "Tsk! Having that kind of move sure is convenient."

After that, he tightly gripped his glaive with both of his hands, getting ready to swing it powerfully at any given moment. And at the same time, his body was suddenly covered with a blazing flame that had an alternating black and purple color.

A few moments later, the spiral sword wave sent by Dylan finally arrived in front of Jean. But before it could even advance further ahead, Jean suddenly swung his glaive in a very powerful manner and instantly annihilated the sword wave in an instant.

### 'Supreme Demonic Canon: Thundering Catastrophe'

Boom!

After that, the chaotic battle continued as the four crown emblem bearers kept shifting their targets from time to time while also randomly ganging up on anyone who was unfortunate enough to be the target of the other three.

But despite that being the case, none of them was eliminated from the fight even if they were forced into a corner. No matter how difficult their predicament was, these four would always have their own way to get out of it every time. There were even some cases where they were able to turn the situation around and almost one of their rivals in return.

Meanwhile, the academy principal who proposed the idea of this battle, couldn't help but nod his head repeatedly as he was fully satisfied with what was currently happening.

And even if he could see that these young prodigies were still hiding quite a lot of their real strength, he could at least tell that they were showing more than half of their true battle capabilities.

"What do you think, Henry? Is this enough for you to determine the path that they need to take?" asked the principal to the old man sitting beside him.

Hearing that, Professor Henry slightly nodded his head before replying. "As much as I love to see more of their real strengths, I guess I need to satisfy myself with this."

The principal laughed quite heartily when he heard those words before saying. "Don't worry, this is not everything that we are going to see. We still have a lot of time before these kids finish this battle, so maybe we can still see a few more things."

Reaching this point, the principal seemed to remember something before asking. "Now that we are already in this, how about you also tell me who is the kid that took your interest among them? I'm also quite curious who this young man that our Head Researcher takes fancy of."

Professor Henry slightly knitted his brow when he heard that before nodding his head and answering. "That shouldn't be a problem now."

He then paused for a moment to point at Shin before continuing. "It is that young Mentalist with twin swords."

Casting his gaze at the direction where Professor Henry was pointing and saw Shin fended off yet another combined attack from the other guys.

"Oh~! That kid? He isn't too bad. And based on his Mentalism Techniques, he seems to be the student of that Old Fatty. He really found a good one this time," comment the principal with a nod.

But not long after, he immediately. "But I'm not sure if his real strength is as deep as those two foreign kids. After all, they are still the successors of the 'Heavenly Cosmos Principle' and the 'Supreme Demonic Canon', so the depths of their strengths are much deeper than we can imagine."

"Moreover, I also heard that they were also practicing another method which is not weaker than the ones that they currently had," added the principal while casting his gaze at Jean and Diel.

On the other hand, Professor Henry just raised one of his eyebrows before saying with a mystifying tone. "Is that so? But I still feel that my pick has more potential."