

Chapter 2161 – Suppressing with a Snap

Shi Feng was quite excited to have successfully summoned the Dark Tower. He had only ever heard of the tower in the past; he had never actually seen or experienced one.

The Dark Seed was extremely rare in God's Domain, even rarer than Fragmented Legendary items. Hence, Shi Feng had been quite surprised when Bright Dawn had revealed the item.

To summon a Dark Tower, players first needed to defeat the Demon summoned with a Dark Seed. However, killing that particular Demon was easier said than done.

Players had often relied on NPCs to suppress and defeat these summoned Demons during Shi Feng's previous life. Killing one without such help was extremely difficult.

Although the NPCs' participation wouldn't interfere with the Dark Tower Design's drop-rate, NPCs wouldn't allow the construction to exist. They'd confiscate the Dark Tower Design the moment it appeared; players wouldn't have a chance to get their hands on the item.

Because of this, Shi Feng could count the number of powers that had successfully summoned a Dark Tower on one hand. Moreover, outsiders weren't allowed within a tower or city that contained a Dark Tower. Only allied or subordinate Guilds would be granted entry.

Shi Feng had merely been a second-rate Guild's Guild Leader in his past. Even ordinary superpowers had been unreachable, not to mention top-ranked superpowers. They had simply lived in different worlds.

Hence, Shi Feng had never expected to summon a Dark Tower now.

“We don’t have much time left, Guild Leader Black Flame. The allied superpowers’ 50,000-man army will arrive in less than half an hour,” Yuan Tiexin reminded the younger man when he saw Shi Feng’s relaxed expression.

From his point of view, Shi Feng didn’t seem to understand the danger they were in right now.

The Dark Tower might be powerful, but one or two defensive structures wouldn’t be enough to stop the enemy they were about to face.

They’re all here?” Shi Feng’s smile brightened at the news. “In that case, let’s go meet them.”

“Meet them?” Yuan Tiexin was flabbergasted. Hurriedly, he asked, “Isn’t that too dangerous? Even with Stone Forest City’s support, stopping them will be difficult. If we lose our terrain advantage, we’ll be fish on the chopping block. With how much they have to gain, they won’t hold back.”

“Let’s see them try,” Shi Feng said, laughing.

“This...” Shi Feng’s very existence baffled Yuan Tiexin. He couldn’t tell whether the Swordsman was incredibly confident or just foolish.

“It’s fine. I don’t mind going by myself,” Shi Feng suggested once he noticed Yuan Tiexin’s hesitation.

“That won’t do! The Secret Pavilion is one of Stone Forest City’s shareholders. Since you’re going, Guild Leader Black Flame, how can I just stand by and watch? Besides, if the Secret Pavilion makes an appearance, these superpowers might hold back out of fear, maintaining some pretense,” Yuan Tiexin said, shaking his head as he prepared to risk his life alongside Shi Feng.

He didn’t think that meeting the various superpowers was altogether a bad idea. They hadn’t reached Stone Forest City just yet, so they might have an opportunity to ally with a few of these invading superpowers. However, if they waited until the armies arrived and solidified their alliance, the Secret Pavilion and Zero Wing would lose any hope of holding the city.

Following which, Shi Feng and Yuan Tiexin left Stone Forest City and made their way toward the various superpowers’ armies, which had just entered the Undead Forest.

Both of these individuals were well-known in the virtual gaming world at this point. Even if the various superpowers’ members weren’t familiar with Zero Wing, they had heard of Black Flame.

“Why are they here?”

“By the looks of it, they’ve come to negotiate.”

You’re probably right. After all, we have 50,000 top-tier experts on our side. How could a recently promoted Guild City possibly stop us?”

The various superpowers’ forces were surprised to see Shi Feng and Yuan Tiexin approach, discussing the matter amongst themselves.

“What is Black Flame trying to do? He actually wants to negotiate now?” Illusory Words was astonished to see the two famous players emerge from between the trees.

If they wanted to negotiate, they should’ve done so before the various superpowers’ armies had gathered. Now that these superpowers had combined their forces, convincing any of them to switch sides would be practically impossible. After all, they now had the initiative.

“You actually have to ask?” Crimson Gate replied with a sneer. “He must’ve realized how terrifying this army is and realized that he isn’t strong enough to stop us. He’s probably here to try to recruit three or four superpowers. If he succeeds, he might be able to hold onto a fraction of Stone Forest City.”

Every superpower present shared the same thought. They couldn’t think of any other reason that Shi Feng would make such a risky move.

If they killed Shi Feng here, they’d deal a severe mental blow to Zero Wing as a whole. Doing so would also increase their members’ morale, making it easier to capture Stone Forest City.

“Why are you here, Black Flame?”

“If you’re here to negotiate, I’d advise you to turn around. Of course, we’ll let you leave safely if you obediently hand over Stone Forest City. Ultimately, we only want the city, not your pitiful lives.”

“That’s right! Give us Stone Forest City, and we’ll let you leave with your lives!”

The superpowers’ upper echelons mocked Shi Feng and Yuan Tiexin with playful, confident attitudes. Naturally, the idea that they’d let Zero Wing’s members escape if Shi Feng handed the city over was

nothing more than a joke. Every player in God's Domain had already heard of Zero Wing's provocation. If they did not make an example of the offending Guild, how could they protect their reputations?

"Hand over Stone Forest City?" Shi Feng could not help but laugh. "Aren't you quite full of yourselves?"

Every player fell silent when they heard Shi Feng's comment. Even Yuan Tiexin stared at the Swordsman, dumbfounded as he felt his stress peak.

They weren't here to negotiate an alliance?

What was going on?

He even began to wonder if Shi Feng understood their current predicament.

They stood before an army of 50,000 players, all of which were experts among experts. If they worked together, killing a monster-level expert would be child's play.

Yuan Tiexin's scalp tingled just from being the center of these experts' attention. He didn't even dare imagine what would happen if they started a fight with these players.

Illusory Words, who stood among the joint army, was just as flabbergasted.

She had seen many courageous people before, but this was the first time she had encountered anyone as bold as Shi Feng. He had just openly provoked 12 superpowers with a simple comment. Only death awaited him now.

“Is this guy stupid?”

“Does he really believe he’s invincible? He’s only defeated Starlink. He better not run once the battle truly begins!”

As the superpowers’ fury grew, Shi Feng snapped his fingers.

In response, Stone Forest Town’s Dark Tower used its dark energy to manifest a vast Darkness Domain that enveloped the Undead Forest. All players within the Domain, both friend and foe, felt an immense weight drag at their bodies, losing more than half of their combat power...

Chapter 2162 – No Different from Ants

Everyone panicked as the abrupt pressure swept through the Undead Forest.

“What’s going on?”

“Why have my Attributes decreased? It’s so hard to move!”

“What did he do?”

After noticing the change, everyone focused on Shi Feng in fear and confusion.

Even a fool would realize that Shi Feng was responsible, but more than 50,000 players had gathered, easily occupying an area of several thousand yards. Not even a Tier 4 large-scale destruction Spell could encompass such a large area.

However, not only did a faint layer of dark gas collect around them, but it also covered the entire Undead Forest.

Ordinary Domain Skills only reduced players' Basic Attributes by a small fraction, but this Domain's suppression was extreme. Their movements were so sluggish that they were even less mobile than they had been at Tier 1...

The various superpowers' upper echelons watched the man responsible with grim expressions.

If only their Basic Attributes had been suppressed, they may have been able to adapt. However, it was an entirely different story if this Domain suppressed their physiques as well.

Experts were so powerful due to their quick reactions and extraordinary comprehension, which gave them far greater control over their virtual bodies than ordinary players. However, now that their bodies had reverted to their original, mortal state, they had lost their advantages.

In other words, they were only as strong as ordinary players while inside this Domain...

The ability is just as effective as the rumors made it out to be. When Shi Feng sensed the changes to his own body, he could not help his rueful sigh.

As an Advanced Construction, the Dark Tower had two abilities.

One of these abilities was Darkness Domain!

The Darkness Domain did not differentiate between friend and foe, affecting every creature within its range, covering a 100,000-yard radius.

Violent dark energy filled the Domain. Not only would this dark energy affect creatures' Basic Attributes, but it would also impact their reaction speeds, neural response times, and five senses. While bathed in this dark energy, expert players would lose all of their advantages over ordinary players. It was just as effective as a death sentence.

This was also why players in the past had referred to the Dark Tower as the Tower of Death.

Yuan Tiexin's eyes nearly fell from their sockets. He was even more astounded than the invading superpowers' members. He had been following Shi Feng around all this time, so he understood what the man had done perfectly.

What is this construction? How is it so powerful? Yuan Tiexin could not help but turn, his gaze settling on the Dark Tower in the distance.

Although he had recognized that the Dark Tower was extraordinary, he hadn't realized how truly horrifying it could be!

The Dark Tower could actually level the playing field between expert and ordinary players. Ordinary players might not realize how amazing that was, but to the various superpowers, it was devastating.

A large part of the reason for the superpowers' great strength was the number and quality of their experts, which far surpassed ordinary players. If one removed experts from the equation, then the various superpowers were simply wealthier and larger than their ordinary counterparts.

The Dark Tower's ability would even allow an ordinary power to face off against a superpower. Although superpowers had more members than ordinary powers, they had to manage far more territory, and as a result, they could only station a limited number of players to each area under their control. There was also the fact that every location had limited resources; even if a superpower wanted to, they couldn't afford to send all of their members to a single location. Doing so would negatively affect their development. Because of this, there really wouldn't be a major difference between superpowers and ordinary powers when it came to numbers.

"Do you still want to continue?" Shi Feng asked, casually sweeping his gaze over the players before him with neither joy nor sadness. It was as if this expert army was little more than grass on the roadside. They weren't enough to warrant a reaction.

Before the Dark Tower, experts at Tier 3 and below were equal. The tower would even heavily suppress Tier 4 experts, significantly reducing the difference between them and ordinary players. This was why the Dark Tower was only second to Peak Constructions.

The tower would've qualified as a Peak Construction if it recognized friend from foe. Moreover, it would've been one of the most powerful defensive structures in the game.

As Shi Feng's gaze rested on each of them, fear began to overwhelm the superpowers' members.

The ability to transform 50,000 expert players into ordinary mortals was simply unheard-of.

However, the various upper echelons quickly stepped forward to salvage the situation.

“Do you think we only planned to rely on our expert players, Black Flame?”

“That’s right! You might have suppressed our experts, but we have more than players to besiege Stone Forest City!”

If Starlink could employ three Mythic monsters and a Dark Seed, why wouldn’t superpowers of their caliber be able to do anything less?

Even if their expert players had lost their strength, their Guilds’ could still launch a terrifying assault if they worked together.

However, these threats were empty. In truth, they lost any intention of attacking the city. Even if they used everything in their arsenals to attack Stone Forest Town, they’d pay a high price to capture the city without the ability to rely on their experts. None of them could afford this outcome.

“It seems that it won’t be long before another superpower rises in God’s Domain,” Illusory Words said, smiling bitterly at Shi Feng’s serene expression.

Recognizing that none of these superpowers had any desire to take action, it was clear that capturing Stone Forest City was no longer possible. They were merely trying to salvage what little pride they had left, hoping to gain a little profit off of Zero Wing through intimidation.

Now that Zero Wing would hold Stone Forest City, it was guaranteed to become a superpower very soon.

Crimson Emperor had strived over several decades to become a super-first-rate Guild. Zero Wing, however, was on the cusp of becoming one after just a couple of months, and that success was purely due to Shi Feng...

“To think Stone Forest Town has such an ability. It’s no wonder why he dared to approach us.” Even Crimson Gate looked upon Shi Feng with envy and admiration. He had lost any desire to refute Illusory Words. After all, she only spoke the truth.

The conditions to become a superpower were not as harsh as those required of a super-first-rate Guild. As long as a superpower had enough financial strength and experts, it could rise as a superpower. As for a complete legacy, that wasn’t very important.

Now, as long as Zero Wing offered a portion of Stone Forest City’s benefits, the various superpowers would withdraw, and the Guild would retain the city’s shares. Naturally, the city would generate astounding profits with the benefits it could offer, and based on the strength and potential Zero Wing had displayed, it would attract many powerful corporations interested in investing in a Guild. Zero Wing would easily fulfill the financial requirement to become a superpower.

Of course, it could amass enough experts with money.

However, as Crimson Gate fell silent, Shi Feng took the stage once more.

“Since you still refuse to leave, you can remain here forever!” Shi Feng said as he revealed a Seven Luminaries Crystal, activating the Dark Tower’s second ability.

Demon God's Phantom!

The Seven Luminaries Crystal immediately turned to dust, and a gigantic magic array formed beneath Shi Feng's feet. The array released an endless stream of dark energy that enveloped Shi Feng.

After a short moment, a 10-meter-tall giant emerged from the black smoke. It wore pitch-black armor, and two icy- blue flames flickered through the gap in the giant's helmet. The giant's horrific aura bathed its surroundings in death and cold.

Chapter 2163 – Ancient God's Descent

Although the Demon God Shi Feng had transformed into was only 10 meters tall, a far cry from the size of Grand Lord and Mythic ranked monsters, everyone gasped when they saw his new form.

The aura Shi Feng radiated was far too powerful. If an ordinary Mythic monster's aura was seawater, Shi Feng's was steel.

Most of the experts in the superpowers' army couldn't even move when Shi Feng's aura washed over them. To them, the Swordsman felt like an Ancient God that had just stepped onto the mortal plane. They were afraid and awestruck. None of them even dared to consider resisting this man.

"How is this possible?"

As the various superpowers' upper echelons took in Shi Feng's new form, who loomed like the incarnation of an Ancient God, they felt more than just the unprecedented pressure; they also felt their Life Ratings suppressed. Not even Archaic Species ranked monsters radiated such an intense pressure. These upper echelons felt as if the person before them wasn't a player at all, but a true God.

Tier 4?! Just how many cards has he hidden?! Yuan Tiexin was utterly flabbergasted when he saw Shi Feng's new form. For a moment, he even wondered if he were dreaming.

Although the Darkness Domain Shi Feng had activated was horrific, it was insignificant compared to this ability.

After all was said and done, might was right in God's Domain.

Take the Great Demon Molfins, for example. The various superpowers hadn't even dared to set foot in the Undead Forest due to the Great Demon's presence, yet even after they had been swallowed by the Darkness Domain, they had remained adamant of taking a cut of Stone Forest City.

However, now that Shi Feng had transformed into a Tier 4 being, he posed an even greater threat to these superpowers than the Great Demon Molfins.

By this stage of the game, expert players had realized how frightening the tier system was. Even at the same level, a one-tier difference resulted in a massive combat power boost, not to mention a two-tier difference. The gap between their combat powers now was like the difference between heaven and earth.

Moreover, the more familiar an expert player was with their Tier 2 body, the more acutely they understood the power of tiers. This was no longer a matter of Basic Attributes, but the extraordinary

boost to players' physique. Even if two players had the same Basic Attributes and combat standards, a Tier 2 player could easily defeat a Tier 1 player.

Naturally, the higher the tier, the greater the tier's physique boost would be.

Right now, Shi Feng was a bona fide Tier 4 player. His physique had reached an unimaginable level. Even if his Basic Attributes were no higher than the rest of these players, he could likely slay a Domain Realm expert as if he were slaughtering helpless sheep. Furthermore, Shi Feng had the Basic Attributes of a Tier 4 player...

To ordinary players, Shi Feng's transformation might not seem like much. The various superpowers had already slain many Tier 4 Mythic monsters by now. How hard would it be to kill a Tier 4 player?

However, these superpowers' members knew better; a Mythic monster was cute compared to a Tier 4 player.

Unlike monsters, players could use the full potential of their strength. Some players could even surpass their limits in combat. Players also possessed a large number of Skills, and most importantly, they knew how to fight other players. They wouldn't give their opponents time to prepare, nullifying attacks as soon as they had the chance.

"Tier 4! How does Zero Wing have such a foundation?" Crimson Gate's eyes nearly fell from their sockets as he stared at Shi Feng from afar.

A one-tier difference resulted in such a massive combat power gap. Now that Shi Feng had a two-tier advantage, he was basically invincible. He could kill Tier 2 players as easily as stepping on ants.

“You win this time, Black Flame! We’ll retreat!”

The superpowers’ upper echelons realized that they had no hope of capturing Stone Forest City after seeing Shi Feng’s transformation. Retreat was their only option left.

“I gave you a chance to leave, yet you refused. Why would I let you walk away now?” Shi Feng asked as he took a step forward, his massive body instantly appearing 30 yards away. He then dashed for the joint army.

“Don’t push your luck, Black Flame! Although we aren’t a match for you, we are also capable of dispatching Tier 4 Mythic combatants! If we focus on assaulting Stone Forest City, neither of us will benefit!”

“That’s right! Moreover, do you really want our Guilds as your enemies?”

Shi Feng’s bloodlust enraged the various superpowers’ upper echelons.

They were overlords in God’s Domain. Although Shi Feng’s Tier 4 combat power was daunting, it was only a matter of time before they gained their own Tier 4 players. Shi Feng could only retain his arrogance for a short time.

They were already expressing a lot of respect for Zero Wing with their willingness to withdraw.

Yet, Shi Feng had no sense of propriety and wanted to kill them!

“So what if I do?” Shi Feng said, sneering as he increased his speed.

He would’ve feared the various superpowers’ wrath if he hadn’t acquired the Dark Tower for Stone Forest City. It was true that as time passed, these superpowers would find more treasures and grow stronger.

However, with the Dark Tower’s protection, no power could threaten Shi Feng’s city before players reached Level 100, and God’s Domain’s rare resources were limited. The competition for these resources would only become increasingly intense. It was only a matter of time before Zero Wing had to face these superpowers. Since the various superpowers would become his Guild’s enemies sooner or later, he might as well kill some of their members now, weakening his enemies and strengthening his Guild!

“Black Flame! You’re courting death!”

The superpowers’ upper echelons immediately retrieved the fruits of their respective Guild’s labor, revealing one Mythic combatant after another. These Tier 4 Mythic combatants were either summoned creatures or came in the form of tools like the Combat Puppets.

In moments, 15 Mythic combatants had joined the battlefield.

A force of this magnitude would be enough to intimidate any superpower. One could easily capture a Guild Town with just five or six of these Mythic combatants, yet now, these superpowers had worked together to amass a force of 15 of them. Even destroying a superpower’s nurtured Basic City wouldn’t pose much of a problem with such a force.

Of the 15 Mythic combatants, six moved to surround Shi Feng, while the remaining nine charged toward Stone Forest City.

The Zero Wing and Secret Pavilion members in the city paled as they watched these beings run toward them.

Three Mythic monsters had been enough to shake Stone Forest City's defensive magic array, but now, nine creatures with similar combat power were heading their way...

"Black Flame, you will pay for your foolishness!"

The various superpowers' upper echelons sneered as they controlled their Mythic monsters to charge at Stone Forest City at full speed.

"Are you so sure about that?" Shi Feng asked, swinging his sword at the nine Mythic combatants before they could split up to attack independently.

Shadow Blade!

Nine shadowy blades collided with the Mythic combatants, effortlessly slicing through them, before the beings flew through the air and slammed into the ground some distance away.

"How is this possible?"

The superpowers' members gaped in shock.

Those were Mythic combatants they were talking about, and Shi Feng had defeated nine of them so easily. Despite how much they wanted the scene to be an illusion, they had no choice but to acknowledge the truth before them.

After resolving the threat against Stone Forest City, Shi Feng turned and swung his sword at the six remaining Mythic combatants.

Sword's Transmigration!

This time, two of the six Mythic combatants, which had been thrown, sustained severe injuries, and their combat powers plummeted...

Although the exchange had been brief, everyone understood that the 15 Mythic combatants were no match for Shi Feng. They couldn't even get past the Swordsman, much less destroy Stone Forest City!

They had sorely underestimated Shi Feng's combat power!

Chapter 2164 – Devil

Every player was overwhelmed with shock and horror after watching Shi Feng toy with 15 Mythic combatants like they were infants.

Although they had known that a Tier 4 player would be more powerful than a Mythic monster, they hadn't expected Shi Feng to be this strong.

Logically, a Tier 4 player's combat power should only be slightly greater than a Mythic monster's. Once they reached the Tier 4 standard, monsters' combat power rose to a new level. Including monsters' natural Attribute advantage, Tier 4 players of the same level should have a hard time facing three or four Mythic monsters at the same time.

However, Shi Feng had suppressed 15 Mythic combatants with little-to-no effort. It was simply unbelievable!

Of course, Shi Feng wasn't particularly surprised. Activating Demon God's Phantom cost a Seven Luminaries Crystal. Moreover, its user could only activate the Skill once a day, and it only lasted four short hours. During that time, the Skill would forcibly elevate the target player by two tiers to a maximum of Tier 4 Peak-rank. The Skill also upgraded a player's Life Rating to Ancien Fiend at maximum.

Because of Shi Feng's normal tier and Life Rating, Demon God's Phantom could only elevate him to Tier 4 Upper-rank, which was still far from the Skill's maximum. Normally, only Tier 3 players could exhibit the Skill's full potential.

Even so, a Tier 4 Upper-rank player's combat power was more than enough to take out 15 Mythic combatants.

God's Domain hadn't launched that long ago, and players hadn't yet reached Tier 3, so they had no idea what happened at that Tier and beyond.

Tier 4 players had still been considered peak experts even a decade after God's Domain's launch. Ordinary second-rate Guilds hadn't even had any Tier 4 players in their ranks, and in first-rate Guilds, Tier 4 players had been upper echelons, tasked with safeguarding the Guild's neutral towns.

Once players reached Tier 4, their combat power would undergo a qualitative transformation with each minor threshold they crossed. It was like the difference between ordinary monsters and Ancient Fiends.

Although these superpowers had summoned quite a few Tier 4 combatants, all 15 of them were at the Lower-rank.

They weren't even Tier 4 Intermediate-rank. How were they supposed to defeat a Tier 4 Upper-rank player?

Purely comparing combat power, Shi Feng was only slightly weaker than Molfins when the Great Demon had been at his peak. Hence, killing 15 Tier 4 Lower-rank combatants wasn't an issue for Shi Feng in this state.

Because of the Skill's limited duration, Shi Feng had no plans to drag out this fight. He immediately and violently attacked one of the summoned Mythic monsters. With the huge difference between their combat power, the Mythic monster was utterly powerless against Shi Feng, and every one of the Swordsman's attacks obliterated a visible chunk of the monster's HP.

The Mythic monster's HP fell by 20% after a few seconds. At this rate, Shi Feng would finish it off in less than a minute.

"Zero Wing's rise is guaranteed now." Illusory Words sighed ruefully as she watched the Mythic monster rapidly lose HP from a safe distance.

Fifteen Mythic combatants!

Facing such a force would be a disaster to any superpower, yet they couldn't even pose a threat to Shi Feng.

Now, it was clear that capturing Stone Forest City was impossible for any superpower.

With the city under its control, Zero Wing would have no issues acquiring resources or funds for its development.

If Crimson Emperor hadn't been so greedy and negotiated with Zero Wing before Molfins's death, it might not have secured Stone Forest City's shares, but it could have secured some discounts and Shops within the city. Unfortunate^ the Guild would have to leave empty-handed.

In contrast, the powers that had formed a close relationship with Zero Wing were truly blessed, especially Unyielding Soul. With Stone Forest City's help, Unyielding Soul could stand on the same stage as Starlink in the Dark Night Empire in the future.

"Retreat! Everyone, retreat immediately!"

With one of the Mythic monsters so close to death, the superpowers' upper echelons hastily commanded a retreat. If not even their Mythic combatants stood a chance against that monstrous Swordsman, their players wouldn't fare any better.

Shi Feng was still occupied with the 15 Mythic combatants. If they waited until these beings died, they would lose their chance to escape.

As soon as the upper echelons issued the command, the army of 50,000 experts spread out and ran for the Undead Forest's exit.

"They're finally retreating." Yuan Tiexin released a sigh of relief as he watched the invading players flee.

Although he understood that these superpowers had lost any hope of capturing Stone Forest City the moment Shi Feng had proven capable of single-handedly suppressing 15 Mythic combatants, he couldn't help his shock at watching the 50,000 peak experts run for their lives.

"Don't think you can get away so easily!" Noticing the fleeing players, Shi Feng threw the Mythic combatants around him with a powerful blow before charging at the escaping army.

Mythic combatants might be powerful, but even they would need quite some time to destroy Stone Forest City's defensive magic arrays. Moreover, these Mythic combatants had been summoned with Consumable items. They were as good as lost. Even if he killed them, the invading superpowers wouldn't suffer any more than they already had. Furthermore, these Mythic beings wouldn't drop any items when they died.

But an army of players was a different story. Even within their superpowers, these players were experts among experts. The offending superpowers would suffer dearly if these experts died.

Since the various superpowers had banded together to attack Stone Forest City once already, there was no guarantee that they wouldn't do it again. Naturally, he needed to teach them a painful lesson to ensure they wouldn't cause trouble in the future.

"Black Flame! Do you really want to become our enemy?!"

The superpowers' upper echelons panicked as they watched Shi Feng dash toward them. They began to reveal one card after another, activating suppression and defensive magic arrays to slow Shi Feng down. Some even used Tier 4 Offensive Magic Scrolls against the incoming Swordsman.

"So what if I do?" Shi Feng replied with a sneer, showing no intention of stopping.

Whether it was magic arrays or Tier 4 Offensive Spells, all were useless against Shi Feng. Current players simply couldn't hope to contend with a Tier 4 Upper-rank existence.

Shi Feng brandished his swords, countering the magic arrays and incoming Spells with a few hits. They then proceeded toward the fleeing mass of players, ruthlessly massacring everyone in his path.

Even at their peak, these expert players were no match for Shi Feng, but suppressed by the Dark Tower, they were utterly powerless.

"Lunatic!"

"How is that a lunatic?! He's practically the Devil incarnate!"

"He'll definitely regret this!"

The superpowers' experts were horrified as they watched Shi Feng slaughter their allies. They couldn't believe that this player actually dared to attack so many superpowers at the same time.

Not even the Secret Pavilion would be so bold...

On the other hand, Zero Wing's members in Stone Forest City felt their excitement and joy reach a tipping point. Reverence for their Guild Leader overwhelmed them, and their pride as members of Zero Wing reached new heights.

"All hail the Guild Leader!"

"Our Guild Leader is invincible!"

One man suppressed 15 Mythic combatants!

One man made 50,000 experts flee for their lives!

Who else in God's Domain could possibly accomplish such a spectacular feat?

Chapter 2165 – Tide Changes

Dark Night Empire, Dark Night City:

Vendors' cries filled the business district. Practically every item for sale was of exquisite quality. Many of the vendors sold Level 60-plus Fine-Gold Weapons and Equipment, Tier 2 Skill Books, and powerful Master Potions. Players who were visiting the city for the first time were mesmerized by all of the precious items for sale.

"Dark Night City is amazing, Big Brother Ape! So many treasures are available for sale! A lot of vendors are even selling a wide variety of super-rare Tier 2 Skill Books! We'll be lucky to find any of these books in Ghost Rock City!" A Level 55 female Elementalist named Flashy Leaf expressed her surprise and joy as she gazed at the various stalls hawking the tomes for magical classes.

In God's Domain, magical classes were easier to control than melee classes. The Spells they wielded affected a large portion of their combat power. In comparison, melee classes didn't depend as much on their Skills.

That is only natural. This is the Dark Night Empire's imperial capital, and a large number of experts visit the city. Naturally, this city has more resources than our city. With enough Coins and Magic Crystals, you can even buy Level 65 Dark-Gold Weapons and Equipment. There is simply no comparison between Dark Night City and an ordinary NPC city," Sweeping Ape, a Level 62 male Guardian Knight with a silver shield, replied, chuckling.

You can even buy Level 65 Dark-Gold Weapons here?" Flashy Leaf muttered in shock.

Although many players had already surpassed Level 60, monster's drop-rates was significantly lower after Level 50 due to God's Domain's settings. As a result, weapons and equipment above Level 50 were extremely rare, especially Secret- Silver rank and above. Now, such high-quality equipment was a status symbol for expert and wealthy players.

Most ordinary players would be limited to Bronze and Mysterious-Iron Equipment after Level 50. Take Flashy Leaf, for example. She had only secured a full set of Level 55 Secret-Silver Equipment due to her low level, and it had still cost her a lot of money to collect the whole set.

She couldn't even imagine using Level 65 Dark-Gold Weapons and Equipment.

"Of course. However, you'll need a strong relationship with a large Guild to get access to those items," Sweeping Ape replied. Proudly, he continued, "Our Eagle Eye adventurer team is a well-known adventurer team in Dark Night City, and we have a connection to a few first- and second-rate Guilds. Now that you're a member of our adventurer team, Leaf, you can get your hands on one or two of these items if you save up enough Coins and Magic Crystals. Moreover, you can tell any Guild players you have trouble with in the fields that you're from Eagle Eye, and even first-rate Guild players will step back out of respect."

Suddenly, a commotion erupted on the street. Players moved aside, opening a spacious path as mounted players dashed through. Nobody dared to step in this group's path. They all acted as if they were watching a royal procession.

"These people dare to ride their Mounts here?" Flashy Leaf was astonished as she watched these players dash down the street atop their Mounts.

On the way here, Sweeping Ape had constantly reminded her that players were forbidden from using their Mounts in Dark Night City, and just as he had said, she hadn't seen a single mounted player within the city walls thus far.

However, such a large group thundered through the business district on their Mounts now...

"They are an exception," Sweeping Ape said, fear lacing his words as he watched the mounted group continue down the street.

“Why?” Flashy Leaf asked.

“They’re Starlink’s members, this city’s overlord. Not even super-first-rate Guilds like Crimson Emperor and Unyielding Soul are a match for Starlink,” Sweeping Awe said in awe. “Although, even Starlink’s members normally walk in the city. This is the first time I’ve seen so many people on their Mounts.”

“Starlink? Is the Guild really that powerful?” Flashy Leaf couldn’t help the sliver of jealousy as she stared at the fading backs of Starlink’s members.

Other players new to Dark Night City felt the same as they watched Starlink’s members pass. Some even played with the thought of joining the Guild.

“Starlink is that powerful. The Guild is king in Dark Night City!” Sweeping Ape confirmed.

However, a masked, Level 65 Ranger flashed the Guardian Knight a disdainful look when he saw Sweeping Ape’s glowing excitement.

“King? Maybe it had been in the past,” the Level 65 Ranger said, chuckling. “Those players are in such a hurry because Zero Wing has successfully defended Stone Forest City. Starlink’s status in the Ancient Undead Country has been threatened. I doubt it will be long before Stone Forest City replaces Starlink’s fortress as the most popular spot in the neutral map.”

“Replace Starlink? How is that...possi—” Sweeping Ape instinctively tried to rebuke the masked Ranger and mock the man for his ignorance, but when he saw the black tiger logo on the Ranger’s cape, he snapped his jaws shut. The Evil Tiger adventurer team?

The Dark Night Empire had countless adventurer teams, which rose and fell at a moment's notice. The Evil Tiger adventurer team, however, had survived in the Dark Night Empire since God's Domain's launch. It was also the empire's publicly acknowledged third-ranked adventurer team. Even first-rate Guilds' Guild Leaders treated its members with respect. The Evil Tiger adventurer team was leagues above the Eagle Eye adventurer team.

You'll find out if it's possible or not soon enough, but I'd advise that you begin to prepare. Major changes are coming to the Dark Night Empire," the masked Ranger said as he glanced at Sweeping Ape and Flashy Leaf. He turned away from the two and continued on his way.

"Big Brother Ape, is he telling the truth?" Flashy Leaf asked, noticing how Sweeping Ape watched the masked Ranger with awe.

"Evil Tiger is a peak adventurer team. There are rumors that quite a few super-first-rate Guilds have extended olive branches to the team. Many of Evil Tiger's members are also acquainted with players from super-first-rate Guilds, so its information network is far better than ours. I suspect he was telling the truth," Sweeping Ape said as he watched the masked Ranger's departing figure.

"Zero Wing? What kind of Guild is that, Big Brother Ape? If it's actually capable of making Starlink so afraid, could it be a super-first-rate Guild as well?" Flashy Leaf asked curiously.

She was completely ignorant of the virtual gaming world. She had only joined this world out of curiosity since God's Domain had become so popular. The moment she had joined God's Domain, she had realized that there was no going back.

"This..." Uncertainly, Sweeping Ape said, "I recall that Zero Wing is a new Guild, strong enough to rival first-rate Guilds." "A new Guild? Does that mean we have a chance of joining it?!" Flashy Leaf asked.

"Maybe..." Sweeping Ape turned to Flashy Leaf, speechless.

He had gone to great lengths to recruit Flashy Leaf for the Eagle Eye adventurer team, and now, she was interested in joining Zero Wing!

While Dark Night City's players discussed the prior commotion and latest news, the various large Guilds' Residences in the empire had fallen into utter chaos.

Not long ago, they had learned that Zero Wing had defeated the various superpowers' joint army, slaying more than 10,000 expert players and solidifying its position in Stone Forest City!

Chapter 2166 – War's Conclusion

Star-Moon Kingdom, Star-Moon City:

One team after another appeared in the Teleportation Hall, all comprised of Level 65 or above experts. Even the weakest piece of equipment on these experts was Level 60 Secret-Silver rank. However, these players didn't linger in Star-Moon City's Teleportation Hall, quickly moving to other platforms and teleporting to the kingdom's other cities.

With careful observation, one would recognize these players as adventurer team members. Many were even from well-known adventurer teams.

Other players in the Teleportation Hall were stupefied. They didn't understand why so many adventurer teams from other kingdoms and empires were visiting Star-Moon Kingdom.

While Star-Moon City's players wondered about the odd flood of adventurer team players, a Level 67 man sat in a top-floor VIP room in one of the Teleportation Hall's Advanced Restaurants. Quietly, he took this all in, envy and sorrow in his gaze.

If the city's players saw this man, they'd likely be taken aback.

He was none other than Galaxy Past, the Star Alliance's Guild Leader. By this point, the Star Alliance had become Star-Moon City's king.

"After this battle's conclusion, it's likely impossible for anyone to pressure Zero Wing within Star-Moon Kingdom," Galaxy Past enviously lamented as he watched the numerous teams teleport in and out of the Teleportation Hall.

Shi Feng had recently defeated the various superpowers' joint army, and news of his victory had yet to reach Star-Moon Kingdom's general populace. However, as one of the Secret Pavilion's subordinate first-rate Guilds, the Star Alliance had heard of the outcome almost as soon as the battle had ended.

He certainly hadn't expected this outcome.

He truly hadn't thought that Zero Wing would be capable of standing against such a force.

Zero Wing's Stone Forest City was akin to a diamond mine. The troublesome Guild would never have to worry about needing funds again. With the city's income, Zero Wing could easily support its current level of development, which meant it had resolved its sole weakness within Star-Moon Kingdom. From now on, even the various superpowers would find it exceedingly difficult to pressure the Guild in its own kingdom. Moreover, doing so wouldn't gain them much. At this point, he'd be hard-pressed to find a superpower that was willing to make such a trade.

First-rate Guilds like the Star Alliance dreamed of achieving such power, but now, a new Guild, one that had only established after God's Domain's launch, had been the one to realize this dream.

No one could've imagined that Zero Wing would've struck back as soon as Starlink had tried to hinder the Guild's development in Star-Moon Kingdom and successfully deal such a fierce blow. Starlink's fortress in the Ancient Undead Country was basically crippled...

"Even if that is the case, Guild Leader, Zero Wing will have more problems to deal with now. Honestly, Starlink hadn't taken Zero Wing seriously, but now, with Stone Forest City in its way, Starlink will view the Zero Wing as a sworn enemy. Moreover, Zero Wing has provoked more than a handful of superpowers this time. I doubt the Guild will find moving forward to be more difficult than expected," Purple Jade said.

Galaxy Past did not try to refute Purple Jade's logic.

In his opinion, Zero Wing's retaliation against Starlink's bullying had been splendidly carried out. Even before Zero Wing had taken action, the two Guilds had shed all pretenses. Increasing their hatred for each other wouldn't change things overmuch. However, the fact that Zero Wing had slaughtered the superpowers' joint forces would come back to bite it.

Those superpowers might be helpless against Stone Forest City and Zero Wing, but the Undead Forest was a small fraction of the Bottomless Abyss. The God Mode Regional Dungeon had other areas, and exploring those areas would require particularly powerful experts.

The various superpowers had both stronger and more experts than Zero Wing. Once Zero Wing's members left the forest, they'd find miserable deaths waiting for them.

While the various powers in the kingdom discussed Zero Wing's victory, adventurer teams crowded the entrance to the Guild's Residence in White River City. Just entering and leaving the Residence had become a struggle for Zero Wing's members.

Aqua Rose, who was responsible for the Guild's recruitment, was stunned. She had watched many expert players apply for membership before, but she had never seen this many apply at once.

A rough estimate calculated more than 10,000 expert applicants...

Moreover, quite a few of these experts were at the Half-step Refinement Realm, and some were even Refinement Realm experts. The Guild hadn't experienced such a thing before.

Half-step Refinement Realm experts generally served as core team leaders in first-rate Guilds. Most Refinement Realm experts were immediately promoted, becoming an upper echelon within the first-rate Guild.

Even Aqua Rose was only a Refinement Realm expert.

However, despite knowing that they would, at most, start out as an elite member, so many Refinement Realm experts were adamant about joining Zero Wing...

"What kind of magic did you use, Guild Leader?" Aqua Rose excitedly asked after contacting Shi Feng. "More than 300 well-known and 20 top adventurer teams have applied to join the Guild. After a rough estimate, more than 200 Halfstep Refinement Realm experts and 15 Refinement Realm experts have applied, as well..."

Zero Wing didn't even have 15 Refinement Realm experts in total. Even so, the Guild had far more than its first-rate competition. By accepting these 15 or so Refinement Realm experts into the fold, Zero Wing could double its total count.

If it succeeded in doing so, no ordinary first-rate Guild would have a chance against Zero Wing. Only the few top-ranked first-rate Guilds would be able to rival the Guild.

"Over 200 Half-step and 15 Refinement Realm experts? It seems the battle's outcome has been quite effective," Shi Feng said, smiling. He wasn't particularly surprised by the situation.

His latest battle held extraordinary significance. Although, defeating the superpowers' joint forces wasn't the victory that lured all of these adventurer teams to Zero Wing; rather, they were attracted by his success in holding Stone Forest City.

As long as Stone Forest City stood, Zero Wing would have a steady supply of resources and Coins. This also made Zero Wing a far tougher opponent for the various superpowers. Moreover, to become a superpower, one needed a foundation of money and resources.

Now that Zero Wing had that foundation, it was almost guaranteed to become a superpower in the future, and the Guild had already proven capable of fending off the various superpowers. After hearing the news of these victories, it was only natural that a large number of experts would rush to join the Guild and ride Zero Wing's coattails.

"Some top adventurer teams have also requested an alliance, committing to fight our enemies in the Bottomless Abyss." With a little hesitation, Aqua Rose continued, "However, they want Adventurer Residences in Stone Forest City in exchange."

Top adventurer teams possessed a lot of experts, and some were even led by Refinement Realm experts. There were also some that even superpowers feared.

Meanwhile, Zero Wing had provoked quite a few superpowers this time, and because of that, it was fated to encounter many trials and tribulations within the Regional Dungeon. If the Guild had to face these superpowers alone, it would likely struggle to establish itself in the Bottomless Abyss's other locations. It might even be trapped in the Undead Forest, which was only a fraction of the Dungeon and had very limited resources.

“If they want Adventurer Residences for free, they can forget it,” Shi Feng said, shaking his head. “Of course, if they’re willing to pay, it’s a different story. Each Adventurer Residence will cost 50,000 Gold or Magic Crystals of equal value.”

Adventurer Residences were similar to Guilds’ temporary Residences. The team’s members would be able to teleport in and out of Stone Forest City freely, but Adventurer Residences were a special type of building that could only be constructed in Guild Cities. Moreover, the ruling power could only construct a limited number. A Basic City could only support ten Adventurer Residences at a time.

“Fifth thousand Gold?” The amount Shi Feng demanded startled Aqua Rose. “Are you sure?”

One could afford a relatively good plot of Land in an imperial capital with so much Gold. Charging so much for an Adventurer Residence in a Guild City was absurd. No adventurer team would likely agree to that price.

“That’s right; 50,000 Gold. If they’re not interested, we won’t force the issue,” Shi Feng firmly declared.

“I understand. I’ll notify them of our price.” Knowing Shi Feng had made up his mind, Aqua Rose could only nod and agree. She could only hope that more opportunities to secure outside help appeared in the future.

After disconnecting the call, Shi Feng made his way to Stone Forest City’s City Lord’s Mansion to open the city’s doors to the public.

Chapter 2167 – Stone Forest City’s Opening

Unlike Zero Wing City, which had been a city upon its conception, Stone Forest City’s City Lord’s Mansion wasn’t a castle. It was merely a house atop a spacious compound. Thick, stone walls lined the compound, and the only entrance was through a set of sturdy, iron gates. Two Tier 2 NPC soldier parties stood guard.

When Shi Feng arrived, the NPCs opened the gates for him and respectfully welcomed him to the mansion.

Sure enough, this City Lord’s Mansion is far more secure. Shi Feng could not help his rueful sigh when he saw the water barrier beyond the gates.

The Isolation Barrier!

Not even Zero Wing City had this mechanic.

The difference between a Guild Town and a Guild City was massive in God's Domain. The method to capture each was also different. To capture a Guild town, one simply needed to claim the Town Token from the ruling Guild's Residence, but to capture a Guild City, players needed to secure the City Lord's Mansion.

While the difference between the two might not seem large, it was like the difference between heaven and earth.

The first reason for this gap was the difference in their magic arrays. A Guild had to set up the defensive magic array around its Residence itself, and Advanced Defensive Magic Arrays were particularly difficult to acquire. However, a City Lord's Mansion came equipped with its own defensive magic array, and it was even stronger than the magic barrier that protected the city. Only, it stored far less Mana, so it couldn't last as long as the city's defensive magic array.

The second reason was that no Guild Residence, regardless of how powerful it was, could affect a city's performance, but the City Lord's Mansion would.

The City Lord's Mansion acted as the city's heart. The stronger it became, the stronger the city would be.

However, upgrading a City Lord's Mansion wasn't easy. Doing so required a lot of money and super-rare resources.

This was why Guild Cities' development in God's Domain was generally quite slow. Guild Towns, in comparison, only needed Popularity, money, and players.

Normally, Guild Cities that had grown from Advanced Towns were much stronger than directly built Guild Cities. Needless to say, a Guild City promoted with a Gold Town Promotion Order would be even stronger.

The Isolation Barrier before Shi Feng was the best proof of this.

Shadow's Guild Cities in the past had only acquired an Isolation Barrier once they had become Intermediate Cities, yet Stone Forest City had gained one the moment it had become a Basic City.

Unlike defensive magic arrays, Isolation Barriers couldn't block incoming attacks, but they weren't any less important. An Isolation Barrier was capable of stopping unseen attacks and isolating the City Lord's Mansion from the outside world.

If players entered the mansion without explicit permission, they wouldn't be able to contact others outside of the compound's walls.

This ability had allowed Guilds in the past to hold meetings within the City Lord's Mansion without having to worry about information reaching their enemies too quickly.

Now that Stone Forest City's City Lord's Mansion had an Isolation Barrier as well, Zero Wing could use this place to discuss confidential matters. The Guild wouldn't need to take the numerous precautions it usually did when preparing for an important operation, and it could afford to consider even riskier plans.

Shi Feng entered the City Lord's Mansion, greeted by a garden filled with plants and flourishing flowers. Birdsong and floral fragrance filled the air. The garden had an easy-to-capture vibe, a stark contrast to Zero Wing City's heavily fortified City Lord's Mansion.

But Shi Feng remained unperturbed.

After all was said and done, Stone Forest City had only recently become a city. It would still take a lot of time, money, and resources to develop this City Lord's Mansion to rival that of Zero Wing City. This was also why the various superpowers had tried to capture Stone Forest City so soon after its promotion.

The City Lord's Mansion was still undeveloped and at its weakest.

Once Zero Wing fully developed the mansion, not even Tier 5 players could infiltrate it.

Although he had defeated the various superpowers and defended Stone Forest City this time, repelling future attacks wasn't guaranteed. He needed to upgrade the city as soon as possible.

Initially, the Secret Pavilion had suggested they wait for two or three days before opening Stone Forest City to the public. By then, most of the city's defenses would be operational. However, the Secret Pavilion wasn't aware that Shi Feng couldn't afford to wait that long.

Silverwing Town, Stone Forest City, and Zero Wing's development desperately needed Coins and resources, but due to the ongoing war with Starlink, Zero Wing severely lacked both.

Even though Shi Feng had acquired quite a few top-tier weapons and equipment pieces from the various superpowers, it was a pitiful amount compared to what the Guild needed, and selling the items would simply be foolish.

Hence, to ensure Zero Wing's future, he had to open Stone Forest City to the public as soon as possible.

Shi Feng soon arrived at the three-story house within the compound. An elderly butler, the City Lord's Mansion's manager, waited for him. Although the old man was only Level 10, he was invulnerable; no player could damage him.

"City Lord, how may I be of service?" the butler asked as he greeted Shi Feng with a smile.

"I wish to remove the seal on Stone Forest City," Shi Feng answered.

After its promotion, Stone Forest City had been sealed. Without the owner's permission, players would have to destroy the city's defensive magic array and walls to get into the city. If he wanted to attract visitors, he'd have to remove the seal.

"I will see to it immediately, but once the seal has been lifted, how much would my lord like to charge as an entry fee?" the butler asked. "With Stone Forest City's current scale, the lowest entry fee available to you is 40 Copper Coins."

"The lowest is 40 Copper?" Shi Feng could not help but chuckle. "What about the highest?"

He had gone to great lengths to relocate Stone Forest Town to the Bottomless Abyss. He had even upgraded it into a city. Naturally, he couldn't charge the lowest entry fee.

"Currently, you can collect up to 3 Silver per person. If you wish to raise the entry fee further, you will first have to upgrade the city," the butler explained.

"In that case, set it to 3 Silver," Shi Feng decided without hesitation.

Players couldn't set a city's entry fee to any amount they desired in God's Domain. There were lower and upper limits, and the city's geographical surroundings and development determined these limits. When Zero Wing City had first established, the lower limit had only been 30 Copper, yet Stone Forest City's was 40 Copper.

To attract more players to Zero Wing City, Shi Feng had initially set the entry fee to the minimum, gradually raising it as more players arrived. Now, players had to pay 80 Copper to enter Zero Wing City.

However, Stone Forest City's situation was different. It rested on the Bottomless Abyss's first underground floor, and it was almost guaranteed that only a small number of players would visit. Unfortunately, that meant that he couldn't choose the lowest entry fee available. He wouldn't make any money if he did. Furthermore, Stone Forest City was the only rest area in the God Mode Regional Dungeon, and unlike Zero Wing City, this city was essential for the players that wanted to grind in the area.

"Understood. I'll get it done immediately." The butler bowed before leaving.

In less than five minutes, a Regional System Announcement alerted all players in the Undead Forest that Stone Forest City was officially open.

Chapter 2168 – Not Like a Superpower, But Superior

Once the seal on Stone Forest City had lifted, Shi Feng began to draft a construction plan for the city.

Although Stone Forest Town had already contained a lot of buildings, it had grown several times after its promotion. As a result, Stone Forest City looked empty and could, at most, only accommodate 1,000,000 players.

This was the downside to a promoted city. A built city, on the other hand, didn't have this problem.

Although Stone Forest Town had more than enough buildings to accommodate visiting players, its visitors wouldn't be limited to experts as mainstream players reached higher levels and improved their equipment. Eventually, even ordinary players would be able to grind in the Bottomless Abyss's first floor with ease.

It was necessary to plan the city's constructions ahead of time to ensure that players had what they needed to live and rest in Stone Forest City. Not only would careful planning increase the value of the city's Shops and private housing, but it was also of the utmost importance for the city's development.

While Shi Feng planned the city's layout in the City Lord's Mansion, the powers from the kingdoms and empires near the Ancient Undead Forest received news of Stone Forest City's grand opening.

For a time, these powers were in an uproar.

"Zero Wing is actually opening such a precious city to the public?! Has the Guild gone mad?!"

"How generous!"

"That's a God Mode Regional Dungeon we're talking about! I can't believe Zero Wing is letting just anyone into the city! Just what is Zero Wing thinking?"

The many powers that had watched the battle for Stone Forest City knew how significant the city was. Whoever owned Stone Forest City would have a massive advantage when exploring the Bottomless Abyss.

However, Zero Wing so willingly gave up this advantage, granting the public access to such a valuable city...

Even the various superpowers were stunned by Zero Wing's decision.

They had known that the Guild would open Stone Forest City to the public sooner or later. Reaching the Bottomless Abyss's first floor wasn't particularly difficult, and even experts from first-rate Guilds and peak adventurer teams would be strong enough to grind in the area after another ten days or so.

Once they were, Stone Forest City wouldn't be nearly as much of an advantage. Even if Zero Wing wanted to avoid doing so, it would have to open the city to the public to earn a little money. The city's potential income would be far more important to the Guild than limiting access to its members and allies.

However, the various superpowers hadn't dreamed that Zero Wing would open Stone Forest City's gates so soon. Essentially, doing so now was throwing away any advantage the city could provide.

"A God Mode Regional Dungeon? This is a perfect opportunity to strengthen our adventurer team!"

“Zero Wing is truly amazing. It’s giving up such a massive advantage. Not even superpowers would dare to make such a sacrifice. Since no one’s explored the Bottomless Abyss yet, we can advance our Guild’s development if we can claim some of its treasures for ourselves.”

The various kingdoms and empires’ powers sprung into action the moment they heard of Stone Forest City’s opening. They all dispatched expert teams to the city.

The various superpowers occupied most of God’s Domain’s high-resource maps, and that should’ve been the case for the Bottomless Abyss as well. Superpowers had far better weapons and equipment for their members than ordinary powers, and by the time the ordinary powers were able to explore the Regional Dungeon, the various superpowers would’ve likely combed through the Dungeon.

Now that Stone Forest City was open to the public, however, ordinary powers could share the starting line with the various superpowers in the competition for the Bottomless Abyss’s resources. Although the superpowers still had a massive advantage in terms of combat power and equipment standards, it was the fairest condition that ordinary players could hope for.

If these ordinary powers got lucky in the Bottomless Abyss, they might be able to elevate their development to a new level. The Regional Dungeon was the current frontline in God’s Domain, and needless to say, the loot within would be among the best available at this stage of the game.

Because of this news, Zero Wing’s Residence in White River City had become more crowded than ever before. Players joined the growing crowd outside of the Residence’s entrance almost as fast as the seconds ticked by. They filled the several streets around the Residence, stupefying players who visited the city for the first time.

Meanwhile, Unyielding Heart and Mu Lingsha, who had finally made it into the Residence, couldn’t stifle their rueful sighs as they observed the current atmosphere within.

Although powers seeking refuge or alliances visited the various superpowers' Residences as well, their traffic was nothing compared to the number of representatives currently in Zero Wing's Residence.

They had already counted more than 100 representatives thus far, including upper echelons from first- and second- rate Guilds.

First- and second-rate Guilds might be insignificant to the various superpowers, but that was only true when two or three of these Guilds gathered. If dozens of first- and second-rate Guilds banded together, not even a Super Guild could afford to underestimate them.

Unyielding Heart and Mu Lingsha even felt as if their positions had been reversed. It felt as if Zero Wing were the superpower here, and Unyielding Soul was simply an ordinary power seeking refuge...

Almost every first- and second-rate Guild upper echelon in the Residence felt the same.

They had all assumed that they stood on equal footing with Zero Wing and that the Guild wasn't yet a superpower, even if it were stronger than a first-rate Guild.

But looking at it now, they realized how naive the thought was.

Although Zero Wing might not have the strength of a superpower, it possessed a foundation that no superpower could match. Despite its lower status, it was, in fact, more powerful.

Bottomless Abyss, Stone Forest City:

After working in the City Lord's Mansion for nearly two hours, Shi Feng received a call from Aqua Rose and Gentle Snow.

"Guild Leader, over 100 powers have visited our Residence in the Black Dragon Empire to discuss potential cooperation. Five of them are first-rate Guilds, and 17 are second-rate Guilds. Should we agree to their offers?" Gentle Snow asked.

"We're seeing roughly the same situation in White River City, Guild Leader, although two superpowers have also visited. One of them is Unyielding Soul. Both superpowers are requesting garrison rights in Stone Forest City, and they've offered considerable benefits in exchange," Aqua Rose said, unable to contain her excitement.

If Zero Wing accepted the benefits these Guilds offered, the Guild would undergo a qualitative transformation. Although it couldn't match a superpower's reach, it wasn't far off.

"So many powers have visited?" Even Shi Feng was a little surprised to hear the two Vice Guild Leaders' reports.

Although he had recognized how tempting Stone Forest City would be to the various powers, he hadn't expected it to attract so many.

"What should we do, Guild Leader?" Aqua Rose and Gentle Snow asked, staring at Shi Feng as they desperately waited for his answer.

Too many powers had approached the Guild for partnerships for them to handle. Even if Stone Forest City was a Basic City, it couldn't accommodate so many Guilds. It would be fortunate if the city housed a total of five Guilds right now.

“Since so many powers have approached us, it would be a waste to turn them away.” After giving the matter some thought, Shi Feng grinned and said, “The various superpowers have their own Chamber of Commerce. In that case, Zero Wing will establish its own. We’ll call it the Candlelight Chamber of Commerce. If these powers want a partnership, they’ll have to join our Chamber first. Then, we’ll cooperate as members of a Chamber of Commerce typically do.”

Zero Wing had certainly benefited from its membership with the Secret Chamber of Commerce, but after getting kicked out once already, Shi Feng knew that Zero Wing needed a Chamber of its own.

Zero Wing hadn’t had been able to fulfill the conditions of creating a Chamber of Commerce previously, but now that the ability to do so presented itself, he couldn’t miss this opportunity.

“What if they demand to garrison in the city?” Aqua Rose had already spoken with quite a few major powers’ representatives, so she knew that they aimed to secure a Residence in the city for their Guilds. Unfortunately, simply joining the Candlelight Chamber of Commerce wouldn’t fulfill that wish, in which case, these powers might refuse to join.

“We’ll follow the Secret Chamber of Commerce’s example then. They will only gain the right to garrison in Stone Forest City if they join the Candlelight Chamber of Commerce as advanced members. Normal members, on the other hand, will enjoy a 20% discount on the city’s entry fees,” Shi Feng said, chuckling. “The more they contribute, the more they will gain. I’m sure they won’t have any complaints.”

Aqua Rose and Gentle Snow’s eyes glowed with elation and realization upon hearing Shi Feng’s decision.

This was undoubtedly a solid solution. If this plan succeeded, Zero Wing’s sales channels would reach unprecedented heights. Not even ordinary superpowers would be a match for it. Even without Stone Forest City’s profits, the Guild would be able to develop smoothly by relying on the income from the Candlelight Chamber of Commerce.

Chapter 2169 – Gathering of Guilds

Shi Feng's decision inspired Aqua Rose and Gentle Snow, sparking countless ideas as restless excitement filled their hearts.

"Guild Leader, although I think it's a good idea to take advantage of a competition between these Guilds for the garrison slots, I'm afraid that some of the smaller Guilds will give up altogether knowing that they won't have any chance of winning. Most of the Guilds that have approached us with partnership proposals are small Guilds, and although they aren't powerful individually, their combined strength is even greater than that of the larger Guilds who are interested in an alliance," Aqua Rose said, quickly pointing out the problem with Shi Feng's suggestion. She was far more astute than Shi Feng when it came to management and business.

"That's right. These smaller Guilds don't share the same thought process as their larger counterparts. They aren't considering their future development, prioritizing immediate benefits over all else," Gentle Snow said as she nodded in agreement. "We might find it challenging to lure them into the Chamber if we only offer a 20% discount. The small Guilds don't have many experts, to begin with, and they can only afford to send a small number of players to explore the Bottomless Abyss. The benefits of joining the Candlelight Chamber of Commerce aren't greater than the cost. They will definitely reject our offer."

Aqua Rose and Gentle Snow's reasoning was sound. Although Shi Feng had only suggested the idea a moment ago, both women had already found flaws in his plan. His other subordinates, such as Blackie and Liang Jing, simply couldn't compete with these two.

"You're both correct. A discount on the city's entry fee won't likely be enough to convince these small Guilds, but this city isn't like others. This is Stone Forest City. Even if they wanted to, they'd find the offer difficult to refuse," Shi Feng said, smiling confidently.

Listening to his Vice Guild Leaders' suggestions, Shi Feng recognized how both had developed their respective Guilds into pseudo-super-first-rate Guilds in the past.

To grow stronger, a Guild needed more than just powerful experts; it also needed skilled managers with a sharp sense for business. If Shi Feng hadn't relied on philosophies that were beyond the current time and knowledge of God's Domain's future, not even he would've been a match for Aqua Rose and Gentle Snow's business sense.

"This..."

Both women gave their Guild Leader skeptical looks.

"These Guilds want to negotiate a partnership deal, correct? In that case, we'll sit down with them in Stone Forest City's Candlelight Trading Firm," Shi Feng declared, chuckling.

"Alright. We'll lead them there now, then."

Although these women were confused over Shi Feng's decision, they were familiar with his typical antics. Since he had come up with the idea, he must have considered certain factors. Moreover, Stone Forest City was key to Zero Wing's development. As the Guild's upper echelons, they had to visit the city and gain a proper understanding of what it had to offer.

Disconnecting their call with Shi Feng, the women contacted the various Guilds' representatives and informed them that the negotiations would take place in Stone Forest City.

“What is Zero Wing trying to do? They could negotiate with us directly, but they want us to head to Stone Forest City for the discussion? Isn’t this just a waste of time?!” a Level 68 female Elementalist in exquisite, light-red robes snarled as she watched Aqua Rose in the distance.

Over 200 Guild representatives occupied the spacious hall, but aside from Unyielding Heart and Mu Lingsha, none of them dared to look this furious woman in the eye. They lowered their heads and avoided her gaze, afraid of attracting her ire.

This woman was Sixteenth Cloud, the Second Vice Guild Leader of the recently-promoted superpower, Shining Tiger. She had also earned the nickname ‘Flame Empress.’ She had once been a peerless genius, nurtured by a Super Guild like the Dragon-Phoenix Pavilion’s Phoenix Rain, but she had left the Super Guild abruptly and joined Shining Tiger, performing many impressive feats for the new superpower.

Although Shining Tiger was not as powerful as Starlink, it ranked near the top among recently-promoted superpowers. The Guild currently controlled four kingdoms and had built a solid foundation in the Glory Empire. It was even stronger than Unyielding Soul.

“We are here to gain an understanding of Zero Wing and see for ourselves if the Guild is as impressive as the White Tiger Dojo claims, Vice Guild Leader. So please, endure this for now.” The middle-aged man, a Level 68 Assassin, beside Sixteenth Cloud tried to calm the woman, acting like her butler. It was obvious that he was used to the woman’s hot temper.

Unyielding Heart, who sat across the subservient Assassin, kept his guard up against the man.

This middle-aged man had an even greater backstory than Sixteenth Cloud. His name was Sorrowful Silence, and he had risen to fame even earlier than Unyielding Heart had. Moreover, Sorrowful Silence was a bona fide monster. The man specialized in eliminating high-profile targets. Since God’s Domain’s launch, he had been responsible for the deaths of more than six superpower upper echelons. These assassinations had foiled many of the superpowers’ plans.

How strange. Shining Tiger has clearly focused on its development in the Glory Empire. So, why is it here to discuss a partnership with Zero Wing? Initially, Unyielding Heart had been a little surprised to find Sixteenth Cloud and Sorrowful Silence in Zero Wing's Residence. Is Zero Wing already allied with Shining Tiger in secret?

Although Shining Tiger had only recently become a superpower and had begun its development in God's Domain much later than Starlink had, it hadn't developed any slower than Starlink. Shining Tiger even had the support of the Radiant Corporation, an international corporation. Like Blackwater, the Radiant Corporation specialized in the fighting and security industries. Hence, Radiant had no lack of expert players and an advantage over its competition.

If the Radiant Corporation hadn't waited so long to join God's Domain, Shining Tiger would've likely risen to rival Starlink and Blackwater by now.

While Unyielding Heart wondered about the other Guild's presence here, Sixteenth Cloud returned to her seat, no longer making a fuss.

"I know! I was just saying," Sixteenth Cloud grumbled.

She didn't have a great opinion of Zero Wing, which had neither a background nor any supporters. Since she had originally been a member of a Super Guild, she was very familiar with how powerful superpowers were. Although Zero Wing had made a name for itself by defeating the superpowers' joint army, that didn't prove anything. Zero Wing had simply accomplished the feat by relying on some fortuitous opportunity.

Such opportunities appeared randomly and were available to everyone. Throughout the virtual gaming world's long history, many Guilds like Zero Wing had risen to great heights due to fortuitous opportunities, but very few had eventually become super-first-rate Guilds or Super Guilds.

In Sixteenth Cloud's opinion, Zero Wing was little more than a lottery winner. It was nothing compared to families with wealthy histories.

If the White Tiger Dojo hadn't boasted of Zero Wing's amazing skills when nurturing experts, her Guild wouldn't have sent her here, much less decided to approach Zero Wing for a partnership.

Not long after Sixteenth Cloud's tantrum came to an end, the various representatives calmed as they followed Aqua Rose toward White River City's Teleportation Hall.

At the same time, Gentle Snow led her visitors toward the city from the distant Black Dragon Empire.

Suddenly, several hundred powers' representatives gathered in Dark Night City, causing a commotion that spread throughout the Dark Night Empire.

Chapter 2170 – Off the Charts

“Amazing! Why have so many Guilds gathered in Dark Night City?”

“They must be here for the same reason as those adventurer teams that showed up earlier, to discuss an alliance with Zero Wing.”

“Zero Wing sure is impressive. If it allies with so many Guilds, not even Starlink could afford to target Zero Wing rashly.”

“That’s not all. Do you see those people wearing Shining Tiger’s Guild Emblem? The Guild recently became a superpower. I’ve heard that it isn’t any weaker than Starlink and far stronger than the declining Unyielding Soul. If Zero Wing partners with Shining Tiger, Starlink will find the Guild to be a far more difficult target.”

“If that happens and Zero Wing really intends to develop in the Dark Night Empire, we’re going to see a massive war erupt.”

Players from the empire’s various powers chatted amongst themselves when they noticed Sixteenth Cloud and the other Guild representatives in Dark Night City’s Teleportation Hall. Many of them could already imagine the battle between the Dark Night Empire’s countless Guilds.

Players like them wanted nothing more than that outcome.

Heroes only emerged when there was trouble. No player or power dared to act up in the empire while Starlink was in control, and most conflicts were limited to small skirmishes. Starlink would jump to quash any larger fights, and because of this, expert players struggled to make a name for themselves within the Dark Night Empire.

Of course, everyone paid more attention to Shining Tiger’s presence than the potential turbulence.

If Shining Tiger and Zero Wing agreed to an alliance, Zero Wing would have the capital to develop in the Dark Night Empire. Partnering with Dark Night City’s other Guilds wouldn’t help the Guild much in this matter, and no one even bothered to take into account the Secret Pavilion or Unyielding Soul.

Unyielding Soul had constantly fought Starlink in the empire, so whether or not it allied with Zero Wing, its situation wouldn't change. Furthermore, Unyielding Soul had already begun to decline.

As a famous, transcendental power, the Secret Pavilion wouldn't involve itself in the struggle between God's Domain's various powers. It focused solely on its business and finances. The potential profits that were at stake were the only reason that the Secret Pavilion had sided with Zero Wing in the battle for Stone Forest City.

However, Shining Tiger was a different story. Shining Tiger was a foreign superpower to the Dark Night Empire, and if it were dragged into the empire's struggles, the resulting power shift would be significant.

"So, this is Starlink's main headquarters? These players' average standards are quite high. They're almost a match for those in the Glory Empire. I see now how Starlink has developed so quickly," Sixteenth Cloud commented as she briefly evaluated the players in the Teleportation Hall. "If Zero Wing intends to battle Starlink to the bitter end, we'll have to reevaluate our interest in an alliance."

Overall, the Glory Empire was stronger than the Dark Night Empire, and although the former didn't have a God Mode Regional Dungeon nearby, it had quite a few Asura Mode Regional Dungeons. These Dungeons were more than enough for Shining Tiger's needs. The Guild wasn't hard-pressed to secure the Bottomless Abyss's resources.

If the Guild Elders hadn't expressed their slight interest in the Bottomless Abyss and White Tiger Dojo hadn't made such a strong recommendation, Shining Tiger wouldn't have been interested in Zero Wing in the least.

"Indeed. These players are certainly high-quality. Obtaining fresh blood should be quite easy for Starlink. Including its possession of that item, its development speed should be astounding," Sorrowful Silence said as he nodded in agreement. "However, since we are here, we should pay Stone Forest City a visit."

Superpowers typically avoided provoking each other. Even if they had to do so, they weighed the potential benefits and costs before acting. Naturally, Shining Tiger wouldn't agree to challenge Starlink just for a particular grinding spot that it didn't even need.

"Of course. We will need a proper explanation for the Guild Elders, after all." Sixteenth Cloud nodded.

As Dark Night City's players watched, Sixteenth Cloud and the other Guild representatives teleported to an NPC town nearest to the Ancient Undead Country. Following Aqua Rose, the group crossed one neutral map after another. As their escort, Zero Wing's main force dealt with any monsters in their way.

The main force members' performance surprised the various representatives.

Once they had entered the Ancient Undead Country, Zero Wing's main force had eliminated the Level 60-plus Great Lords they had encountered as easily as if they were chopping vegetables. Aqua Rose and Gentle Snow's performances were particularly eye-catching. Each of the women single-handedly took on several Level 65 Great Lords at once, maintaining their upper hand in the battles. Only Level 65 Grand Lords had proven strong enough to make Gentle Snow struggle...

The various Guild representatives were utterly astonished by these players' Basic Attributes.

"Aren't Gentle Snow's Basic Attributes a little too high? Not even our Guild's Chief Berserker is quite as strong," Sixteenth Cloud commented as she watched the woman in question tank a Level 65 Grand Lord by herself.

Although Berserkers were famed for their Strength, this was the first time Sixteenth Cloud had seen a Berserker that could solo-tank a Grand Lord.

“Her Basic Attributes aren’t her only powerful quality. I doubt I’d even be a match for her in a frontal confrontation,”

Sorrowful Silence said solemnly.

“Is she that strong?” Sixteenth Cloud gave her companion a skeptical look.

Others might not know how powerful Sorrowful Silence was, but she was very familiar with the middle-aged man’s strength. Even though Sorrowful Silence was an Assassin, he had a Peak Legacy, the Blood Warrior hidden class. His Strength was no lower than normal Berserkers of the same level, and his Agility was far above what normal Assassins possessed. He certainly wasn’t a weakling in PvP.

Sorrowful Silence was even more of a threat on a lawless battlefield. Unlike in official competitions, Domain Realm experts could display their full potential on a battlefield without rules.

Sixteenth Cloud had watched Zero Wing’s performance in White River City’s Auction Arena, and while she could admit that Gentle Snow was strong, that had been an official competition. In a field battle, it would be a different story.

“I wish I were wrong, but she is truly that powerful,” Sorrowful Silence answered with a bitter smile.

He was very confident in his estimation of others’ combat power. This ability allowed him to slay one superpower’s expert after another. However, Gentle Snow felt like an extreme threat. He had also failed to mention the fact that she wasn’t the only one to feel like that.

Zhao Yueru and Violet Cloud, who stood beside Gentle Snow, felt just as dangerous, although they didn't seem as deadly as their Vice Guild Leader.

While the various Guild representatives gained a better understanding of Zero Wing's main force, the group arrived in Stone Forest City.

The moment they crossed the threshold to the city, they were shocked by its Mana density.

"How can this place have such dense Mana?" Sixteenth Cloud, an Elementalist, was shocked as she sensed the unbelievably dense Mana around her.

Chapter 2171 – Sorrowful Silence's Shock

Stone Forest City's Mana density didn't only stun the various Guild representatives, but Aqua Rose, Gentle Snow, and Zero Wing's main force members were shocked as well.

They were no strangers to high Mana density environments. In fact, they were accustomed to them.

However, the Mana in Stone Forest City was even denser than in the Holy City of Titan, and it didn't feel like the usual Mana they encountered. This Mana had a violent energy, although it didn't make them feel agitated. On the contrary, they felt warm and close to their environment.

This closeness gave them a newfound perception of their surroundings. This was a sensation they had never experienced before. It was as if they had just arrived at an entirely new world.

Logically, Mana shouldn't be able to cause such a sensation, even if it was particularly dense. They had all seen and experienced Mana so dense that it appeared as a fog, but it had never made them feel like this.

In truth, the sensation Aqua Rose and her party experienced wasn't related to the city's Mana in the least. Rather, it was a hidden effect of the Dark Tower.

While this sensation felt foreign to Aqua Rose and Zero Wing's members, it wasn't all that odd to Sixteenth Cloud and Sorrowful Silence. These two were particularly familiar with the strange feeling, which horrified them.

This close sensation everyone felt was quite similar to the sensation one experienced when they reached the Void Realm. Although what they felt now wasn't as intense as actually reaching the Void Realm, there was roughly a 10% resemblance.

Even among the various superpowers, Void Realm experts were treated as upper echelons-level individuals. They were a Guild's mainstays.

And within Stone Forest City, players could actually experience the sensation of being a Void Realm expert. Although the city's atmosphere could only replicate a small fraction of the sensation, it would be a massive help to expert players, particularly Refinement Realm experts.

If Refinement Realm experts could examine and experience this sensation, they'd have as much as a 30% chance of reaching the Void Realm in the future.

Most of the various large Guilds' experts would scoff at this 30% chance, but the superpowers' Refinement Realm experts would willingly bankrupt themselves for such a boost.

It's no wonder why so many superpowers fought to claim Stone Forest City. I had never dreamed that this city would offer such a benefit." Realization dawned on Sixteenth Cloud as she bathed in the city's Mana.

Once an expert reached the Refinement Realm, they were almost guaranteed to reach the Flowing Water Realm.

Players only needed to be able to observe their enemies' every action and predict their next move to enter the Flowing Water Realm, and normally, players would fulfill these requirements once they had accumulated enough combat experience. To put it simply, one merely needed to work hard to reach the Flowing Water Realm.

However, climbing from the Flowing Water Realm into the Void Realm was a different story. This was a qualitative leap. Reaching the Void Realm was akin to switching one's focus from one target to several hundred. The achievement was beyond simply observing one's opponent. Players needed to view situations from a different perspective entirely.

Although the various superpowers had plenty of Refinement Realm and Flowing Water Realm experts, very few among these experts were capable of reaching the Void Realm, even within Super Guilds. The chances of rising from the Flowing Water Realm to the Void Realm was less than 10%

However, if the various superpowers had Stone Forest City's environment, they could certainly nurture a few more peak experts.

A single peak expert could command and safeguard an entire section of their Guild's territory. With a few more peak experts, superpowers would have an easier time managing their members and territories. Moreover, these peak experts played an important role when acquiring powerful treasure. Monster-level experts were incredibly rare, after all, and most superpowers didn't even have a handful

of such experts under their command. In comparison, God's Domain had a plethora of precious treasures and dangerous locations to explore.

Vice Guild Leader, we must do whatever we can to secure a temporary Residence in Stone Forest City!" Sorrowful Silence resolutely declared.

"I know; relax." Sixteenth Cloud nodded, a vibrant light replacing the dull look in her eyes. Now, she couldn't bring herself to look down on Stone Forest City in the slightest.

Shining Tiger wasn't like the various super-first-rate Guilds and Super Guilds. Since it had only recently established itself, it had poached many of its experts from other Guilds. However, poaching peak experts was incredibly difficult since they were integral members of their superpowers. As a result, Shining Tiger had a lot of Refinement and Flowing Water Realm experts, but it severely lacked Void Realm experts. If the Guild wanted more Void Realm experts, it would have to nurture them on its own.

Unfortunately, doing so was a major challenge. Despite investing tons of resources, Shining Tiger had only nurtured two peak experts thus far. Who knew how long it would take for the Guild to nurture more?

However, if Shining Tiger could use Stone Forest City's environment, it could ease the burden of nurturing peak experts. The Guild could then expand its territory.

Even Unyielding Heart's eyes burned with passion. He was overwhelmed with a desire to obtain a temporary Residence in Stone Forest City.

Unyielding Soul and Starlink had roughly the same number of Refinement and Flowing Water Realm experts. Unyielding Soul simply didn't have as many peak and monster-level experts as its rival. If

Unyielding Soul could resolve that problem, it might become strong enough to continue its competition with Starlink.

Furthermore, Stone Forest City was located within the Bottomless Abyss. With the resources Unyielding Soul could obtain from the Regional Dungeon, the Guild could certainly continue duking it out with Starlink.

Before anyone had realized it, the crowd had arrived before the city's Candlelight Trading Firm.

Although Stone Forest City's Candlelight Trading Firm was no match for the Shop in Zero Wing City, it was still a 10-story building that was as large as a sports arena. It could easily accommodate tens of thousands of customers at a time, easily outmatching White River City's Candlelight Trading Firm. Unfortunately, this Shop had yet to open its doors to the public, still in the midst of its renovation. When Stone Forest Town had been upgraded to a Basic City, the Shop had been promoted as well, and it was in dire need of a reorganization.

As the Guild representatives entered the Shop, they were stunned by the items that were already on display in the first-floor hall.

"Level 60 to Level 80, eight-piece Dark-Gold Set Equipment?! How is this possible?!" Sorrowful Silence cried out when he saw the equipment on display in one of the glass counters.

All of the various Guild representatives were dumbfounded, their mouths hanging open as they stared at the set equipment in shocked silence.

Aside from Epic Equipment, the best available in the game right now was Level 65 Dark-Gold rank, but due to such equipment's rarity, one could count the number of experts in full sets of Level 65 Dark-Gold Equipment using the fingers on one hand, including those in the various superpowers' main forces. Fully geared in Level 65 Dark-Gold Equipment, players would have no problems diving into Level 70,100-man Team Dungeons.

And yet, a complete Level 60 to 80 Dark-Gold Set Equipment glittered before them. Moreover, it was an eight-piece set. Why wouldn't they be shocked?

Eight-piece Dark-Gold Set Equipment was only inferior to Epic Equipment of the same level!

However, that wasn't even the most important aspect. What truly shocked these Guild representatives was the set equipment's level.

If players could wear this Dark-Gold Set Equipment by the time they reached Level 70, they would breeze through Level 70,100-man Team Dungeons. Moreover, this set equipment was plate armor and wasn't restricted to a specific class. Even an MT could equip this set!

If their Guilds could get their hands on this set equipment, they'd have a massive advantage over their competition when raiding level appropriate Team Dungeons.

Chapter 2172 – Complete Legacy

The appearance of the Crystal Light Set stupefied everyone present. Some of the Guild representatives shuddered slightly upon seeing it.

While the various powers were still vying for Level 65 Dark-Gold Set Equipment, Zero Wing had already obtained an entire set of Level 60 to Level 80, eight-piece Dark-Gold Set Equipment!

With such a frightening advantage, everyone could imagine how much of a lead Zero Wing would have when it came to raiding Team Dungeons. In fact, before Level 80, Zero Wing would be able to steadily secure its position as the overlord of the Bottomless Abyss.

Moreover, this still wasn't the most horrifying part.

It might be fine if Zero Wing only had one Crystal Light Set, but there were currently three Crystal Light Sets in all on display inside the first-floor hall. This meant that Zero Wing could obtain more Crystal Light Sets.

The impact of one person equipped in Dark-Gold Set Equipment and that of an entire team equipped with it were as different as heaven and earth.

No matter how powerful an individual player was, there was a limit to how much they could contribute inside a Team Dungeon. However, if every player in the team was equipped with such equipment, the team's overall performance would skyrocket.

After all, the main impediment most powers faced in raiding a Team Dungeon was their inadequate equipment standards. This was especially true for the various superpowers. So long as the superpowers' teams met the required equipment standards, raiding Team Dungeons would be a piece of cake for them.

"It's no wonder Zero Wing dares to provoke Starlink. It seems Zero Wing isn't all bark, after all."
Sixteenth Cloud's eyes glowed brightly as she looked at the Crystal Light Sets on display.

If Shining Tiger could secure a temporary Residence in Stone Forest City, in addition to the Crystal Light Set, she believed that it wouldn't be long before Shining Tiger developed into the number two power of the Glory Empire, second only to King's Return.

After everyone was done admiring the Crystal Light Sets, Aqua Rose and Gentle Snow led the crowd to the Shop's top-floor reception room, where Shi Feng had been waiting for quite some time now.

Currently, Shi Feng wore a suit of pitch-black armor paired with a dark-gray cape. When the various Guild representatives saw Shi Feng's figure through the opened doors, they found that he gave off a very plain and approachable feeling, without even the slightest tinge of strength. He also did not act haughty the way overlords of kingdoms generally did.

However, the instant everyone set foot inside the room, they immediately realized that they were mistaken in their assumptions of Shi Feng—terribly mistaken.

Sorrowful Silence even gasped involuntarily when he stepped into the room.

Monster!

This word simultaneously appeared in everyone's mind.

The various Guild representatives reacted this way because the moment they stepped into the room, a horrifying pressure had assaulted their bodies. Moreover, this pressure didn't originate just from a difference in Basic Attributes but also a massive difference in Life Ratings. At this moment, everyone's gut instincts were blaring their imminent death. It was as if the person sitting before them wasn't a player at all, but a living Demon King instead.

Didn't they say that Black Flame is only a Domain Realm expert? How is he so powerful? Sixteenth Cloud's complexion turned indescribably grim as she looked at Shi Feng, who currently sat in the room's seat of honor.

She had been nurtured by a Super Guild, so she had seen many monster-level experts before. Although her current self had yet to reach the Domain Realm, she was very confident of putting up a fight against an actual Domain Realm expert.

However, when she stood before Shi Feng, she actually felt helpless.

When she imagined getting attacked by an expert like Shi Feng out in the fields, her scalp immediately turned numb.

"Welcome to Stone Forest City. Let me introduce myself. I am Zero Wing's Guild Leader, Black Flame," Shi Feng said. When he saw the various Guild representatives' darkened expressions, particularly Sixteenth Cloud's and Sorrowful Silence's grim expressions, he felt very satisfied with himself.

In reality, he wasn't as powerful as everyone thought. The reason why everyone was having such a misconception about him was simply the side effects caused by Demon God's Phantom. After Demon God's Phantom's duration ended, he would continue exuding Divine Might for the next 12 hours. When monsters were subjected to this Divine Might, they would instinctively run away from him. In return, however, his body would be suppressed to a mortal state, his combat power reduced drastically.

Of course, unless players fought him, they would not be able to tell that he was actually incredibly weak right now.

They would only be frightened by the Divine Might he exuded.

Meanwhile, after Shi Feng introduced himself, everyone present, particularly Shining Tiger's Sixteenth Cloud and Sorrowful Silence, no longer dared look down on Zero Wing even in the slightest.

The current Zero Wing might lack peak experts and capital, but its growth potential was extremely frightening. Not to mention, there was even an expert like Shi Feng protecting it.

If Shi Feng devoted himself to ambushing the upper echelons of superpowers, the superpowers would most likely be helpless to stop him. To the various superpowers, even losing hundreds of Refinement Realm experts would be considered a recoverable loss. However, if their peak experts and monster-level experts were killed, they would suffer irreparable damage.

After all, the various superpowers relied on these experts to secure treasures. The loss of even one of these experts could cause a superpower heartache. This was also the reason why superpowers feared monster-level experts so much.

Monster-level experts might have difficulty defeating other monster-level experts, but they would have no problems defeating peak experts on their own.

Now, however, Shi Feng was an even more frightening existence!

This was because even monster-level experts were potential prey to Shi Feng.

Previously, Shining Tiger had collected plenty of information on Shi Feng. The Guild concluded that although he was very strong, his chances of success when hunting ordinary monster-level experts were just slightly higher than other monster-level experts'.

After personally meeting Shi Feng, however, both Sixteenth Cloud and Sorrowful Silence understood that the Swordsman was much more frightening than the reports made him out to be.

Just Shi Feng's presence alone forced Sixteenth Cloud and Sorrowful Silence to treat Zero Wing seriously.

"Hello, Guild Leader Black Flame. I am Sixteenth Cloud, Shining Tiger's Second Vice Guild Leader." Sixteenth Cloud took the initiative to stand out and introduce herself. "I am here representing Shining Tiger to negotiate a partnership with Zero Wing. Our demands are not very high. We just want one temporary Residence in Stone Forest City. As for Coins and resources, we are willing to pay so long as the price is reasonable. We can even provide Zero Wing with a complete Refinement Realm Legacy."

The various first-rate Guild representatives present could not help but gasp at Sixteenth Cloud's words. Even Unyielding Heart, who had taken a seat in a corner of the room, twitched slightly, never having thought that Shining Tiger would be willing to pay such a price.

Current small Guilds were most likely ignorant of what a Refinement Realm Legacy was. They might even misconstrue it for a Legacy for a hidden class. However, it was something true large Guilds, particularly first-rate Guilds, dreamed of obtaining.

This was also where the foundations of super-first-rate Guilds and Super Guilds lay, something that was extremely difficult to acquire even with money. Only major corporations had the power and influence to obtain it. In the case of small corporations and companies, they should not even think of laying their hands on a Refinement Realm Legacy. They could only rely on their own Guilds' research.

Aqua Rose and Gentle Snow, who were now standing behind Shi Feng, also gasped when they heard Sixteenth Cloud's offer.

Previously, the fact that Unyielding Soul had volunteered to share a portion of its Realms of Refinement training resources with Zero Wing was already plenty amazing. In fact, Aqua Rose and Gentle Snow had felt ecstatic over the matter. Now, however, Shining Tiger was even more amazing. It was actually offering to provide Zero Wing with a complete Refinement Realm Legacy. In other words, Shining Tiger was willing to give Zero Wing the training data necessary to turn ordinary experts into Refinement Realm experts. Now, the Zero Wing experts who did not get a chance to experience the Secret Pavilion's or Unyielding Soul's training system would no longer have to train themselves blindly. They, too, would get to undergo systematic training. With this, their chances of becoming Refinement Realm experts would increase substantially.

Of course, there were many methods for players to reach the Refinement Realm, some simple and others difficult. However, regardless of the efficiency of the training data Shining Tiger provided, the amount of help the data would provide Zero Wing was something that could not be measured with money.

"It seems that one of the temporary Residence slots is going to end up with Shining Tiger."

"Sure enough, superpowers really are amazing. How are we supposed to continue competing like this?"

When the various first-rate Guilds' representatives heard the conditions Sixteenth Cloud offered, a little despair sprouted in their hearts. They were fully aware that Stone Forest City had a very limited number of temporary Residence slots. Meanwhile, to the current Zero Wing, nothing would be more attractive than a complete Refinement Realm Legacy.

In comparison, the Shops and treasures their Guilds could offer were most likely insignificant in Zero Wing's eyes.

Vice Guild Leader Cloud, your offer is indeed very tempting,” Shi Feng said. He, too, was very surprised by Sixteenth Cloud’s offer. In the next moment, however, he shook his head and added, “Still, that isn’t what Zero Wing wants.”

“What do you want, then?” Sixteenth Cloud asked as she stared at Shi Feng incredulously.

A complete Refinement Realm Legacy was a priceless treasure to any first-rate Guild. Some first-rate Guilds would even do everything they could to get their hands on one because only by obtaining a Refinement Realm Legacy would they have the means to become a super-first-rate Guild. Without it, a first-rate Guild had no business talking about becoming a super-first-rate Guild.

Now, however, Zero Wing was actually rejecting this legacy.

She simply couldn’t figure out what could be more important to Zero Wing than a Refinement Realm Legacy.

“I don’t want much. I just want you to join Zero Wing’s newly established Candlelight Chamber of Commerce!” Shi Feng replied calmly.

Chapter 2173 – Candlelight Chamber of Commerce

“Join the Candlelight Chamber of Commerce?”

Upon hearing Shi Feng's words, everyone present stared at him in astonishment, never having thought that the requirement would be so simple.

They all knew very clearly what a Chamber of Commerce in the virtual gaming world represented. It was an organization where members shared sales connections with each other for mutual benefit. However, whether one could actually benefit from this method of cooperation would still depend on the members' capabilities.

If one sold excellent merchandise, they would naturally be able to make more money. Average merchandise, on the other hand, would soon be overshadowed by the other members' merchandise, resulting in a drastic decrease in one's own sales and profits. A Chamber of Commerce was a double-edged sword.

Generally, there were more cons than pros for a small Guild to join a Chamber of Commerce. The reason for this was because small Guilds lacked resources and invested very little into nurturing Lifestyle players. Hence, the quality of merchandise they could offer to customers went without saying. There was simply no way for small Guilds to compete with large Guilds. For a small Guild, joining a Chamber of Commerce was akin to opening the doors for large Guilds to earn money in their territory.

However, if it meant being able to obtain a temporary Residence slot in Stone Forest City, then joining the Candlelight Chamber of Commerce definitely had merit.

After all, with sufficient strength, a small Guild could not only earn a large amount of rare resources but also nurture its experts in Stone Forest City.

"Guild Leader Black Flame, are you saying that, so long as we join the Candlelight Chamber of Commerce, we'll receive a temporary Residence in Stone Forest City?" Sixteenth Cloud pressed Shi Feng for confirmation.

She wasn't particularly surprised that Zero Wing would attempt to establish a Chamber of Commerce. After all, there were so many Guilds currently seeking a partnership with Zero Wing. If Zero Wing could pool the strength of these Guilds together, then even superpowers would grow fearful. If Zero Wing wished to continue competing with Starlink, then establishing a Chamber of Commerce was, indeed, the best decision to make.

A complete Refinement Realm Legacy might allow a Guild to nurture many Refinement Realm experts, but accomplishing this required a lot of time, which just so happened to be the resource that up-and-coming Guilds like Zero Wing lacked the most.

Hence, rather than aim for an uncertain future, it was much better for Zero Wing to further enhance its current strength.

"That's not entirely correct," Shi Feng said, shaking his head. "To be precise, only advanced members of the Chamber will receive a temporary Residence slot in Stone Forest City. As for how you can become an advanced member, that will depend on the amount of contributions you make."

"So, that's the case." Realization immediately dawned upon Sixteenth Cloud. Inwardly, she cursed at Shi Feng for being a sly old fox.

Originally, only a few Guilds should be able to partner with Zero Wing. Now, however, every Guild present would do so. Moreover, these Guilds would all desperately contest for the limited temporary Residence slots, which would allow Zero Wing to obtain the maximum amount of benefits possible.

Meanwhile, when the various Guild representatives heard Shi Feng's condition, they understood the implications right away. Zero Wing was trying to have them compete for the limited temporary Residence slots and labor for it, indirectly making them Zero Wing's subordinates.

“Guild Leader Black Flame, I’m afraid this arrangement is very unfair for small Guilds like us. Compared to the strength and resources large Guilds possess, what small Guilds have is insignificant. In the end, these Residence slots will still land in the hands of large Guilds. If that’s the case, small Guilds like ours might as well give up on competing right off the bat since we already know we won’t win. Moreover, we will even end up working for Zero Wing for free.”

“That’s right. Small Guilds like ours can’t compete against large Guilds at all. With your arrangement, how are we even supposed to compete? We might as well head back home now.”

For a while, a few representatives of small Guilds stepped forward and voiced their disagreement. These representatives even tried to get the representatives of other small Guilds to leave the venue with them.

Aqua Rose and Gentle Snow frowned upon seeing this scene.

Although they had expected that these small Guilds would react this way, they hadn’t anticipated such an organized refusal.

As for the representatives of large Guilds, they were gleefully watching this scene play out. After all, the fewer competitors they had, the better. In fact, they hoped that every other Guild present would stand up and quit the venue.

“Zero Wing’s ambitions are quite large. Unfortunately, it lacks the ability to control these small Guilds,” Sorrowful Silence commented as he watched the representatives of small Guilds prepare to leave the room en masse. “At the end of the day, Zero Wing’s foundations are still too shallow. If it were a superpower making this offer, these small Guilds would’ve most likely agreed without hesitation.”

At this moment, aside from Sorrowful Silence, Unyielding Heart also felt this way.

Zero Wing simply had too few territories under its control right now. The number of territories and sales connections it possessed couldn't even compete with that of veteran first-rate Guilds. A weak Chamber of Commerce like Candlelight just didn't hold any attraction for the various small Guilds. On the contrary, membership in the Candlelight Chamber of Commerce would let Zero Wing bleed them dry.

However, just when the representatives of the various small Guilds were about to leave the room, a calm voice penetrated everyone's minds.

"What you're saying is correct, but let me say this first: so long as you become a member of the Candlelight Chamber of Commerce, you'll enjoy a 20% discount on Stone Forest City's entry fee. Moreover, you'll get to purchase items that the Candlelight Trading Firm does not sell to the public," Shi Feng said, smiling calmly as he looked at the small Guilds' representatives.

As soon as Shi Feng was done speaking, the departing representatives fell into a daze, their breathing becoming slightly heavy.

"Items not sold to the public? Does this include the Crystal Light Set displayed on the first floor?" a small Guild's representative could not help asking Shi Feng.

The discount on Stone Forest City's entry fee might be very tempting, but a 20% discount was basically negligible to the various powers. However, Candlelight's merchandise was a different story. After all, they had seen the three Crystal Light Sets displayed in the first-floor hall. Those could tempt even superpowers into action.

"That's right. Including the Crystal Light Set," Shi Feng affirmed, nodding.

The moment he nodded his head, the entire reception room fell deathly silent. Even Sixteenth Cloud and Sorrowful Silence, who were originally planning to watch Zero Wing make a fool of itself, reflexively widened their eyes as they stared at its Guild Leader.

That was Level 60 to Level 80, eight-piece Dark-Gold Set Equipment they were talking about!

They had believed that Zero Wing was merely flaunting its strength before the various Guilds present by putting the Crystal Light Set on display. Now, however, Shi Feng was telling them that they could actually buy those Crystal Light Sets. How could this not excite them?

As for the various small Guilds' representatives, their minds momentarily froze. They simply could not understand what Shi Feng was thinking, to be willing to sell such precious set equipment.

However, after a moment of silence, everyone inside the room stopped wondering why Shi Feng pulled such an insane move. Instead, the various small Guilds' representatives promptly returned to their seats and expressed their willingness to join the Candlelight Chamber of Commerce, afraid that he would regret his decision if they waited any longer.

What no one present knew was that Shi Feng had never intended the Crystal Light Sets to be exclusive to Zero Wing; he had always planned to sell them as merchandise.

This was because, as players continued leveling up, the Crystal Light Set would quickly fall obsolete, uncompetitive with Epic items. Hence, he naturally had to sell the set while it was still valuable, converting it into Coins and resources for Zero Wing's development.

The various small Guilds present eagerly applied to join the Candlelight Chamber of Commerce, their eagerness surpassing even that of the large Guilds present.

“Zero Wing is really ruthless, actually offering to give away set equipment like the Crystal Light Set just to attract these small Guilds.” Sorrowful Silence marveled at Shi Feng’s generosity. In Zero Wing’s shoes, Shining Tiger would never choose to sell the Crystal Light Set to others.

“No pain, no gain. While it might seem as if Zero Wing gave up a huge advantage by selling the Crystal Light Set, Zero Wing obtained the strength and sales connections of more than a hundred Guilds in return,” Sixteenth Cloud said when she saw the eagerness of the Guild representatives around her. “Meanwhile, now that Zero Wing has gained such strength and connections, the various superpowers will have to think twice before targeting Zero Wing in the future.”

At this point, Sixteenth Cloud could already foresee the appearance of another powerhouse in God’s Domain!

Chapter 2174 – Frightening Stone Forest City

Within the magnificent reception room, Shi Feng began to sign contracts with the various Guild representatives.

Any Guild that joined the Candlelight Chamber of Commerce would qualify to participate in the auction for the Crystal Light Sets, which would take place once every three days. Candlelight would offer three to five sets in each auction session, and the Guilds would only be allowed to win a single bid. In addition, the Candlelight Trading Firm would offer other precious items, such as Exotic Stamina Potions, Stamina Gemstones, Advanced Mana Armor Kits, rare Master Potions, and more. Each member of the Chamber could even earn the rights to purchase Miniature Ballistas, depending on their contributions to the Chamber.

With this revelation, every Guild representative was ecstatic, especially those from the various small Guilds. At this point, obtaining a temporary Residence in Stone Forest City didn’t matter much compared to the items Zero Wing was willing to sell.

After three short hours, the Candlelight Chamber of Commerce had nearly 200 members, and Zero Wing had secured a massive alliance. Among these Guilds, Shining Tiger and Unyielding Soul had instantly become advanced members; both Guilds had presented an offer that Shi Feng couldn't refuse.

Not only had Shining Tiger offered to open two kingdoms' markets to the Candlelight Chamber of Commerce, but it had also agreed to give Zero Wing the complete Refinement Realm Legacy and a large stock of special materials. In addition, Shining Tiger had promised to fight alongside Zero Wing to protect Stone Forest City.

Although Unyielding Soul had only given the Chamber access to a single kingdom's market and a portion of the Dark Night Empire's, it had offered to provide some of the training data it had gained from its Flowing Water Realm experts. Furthermore, it had agreed to supply training facilities and energy resources, in addition to 10 unlimited training slots for Refinement Realm experts in its training system, which would allow these players to earn the experience necessary to reach the Flowing Water Realm quickly.

The unlimited training slots Unyielding Soul had offered weren't like those from the Secret Pavilion. Zero Wing's members would be free to fight any Refinement Realm or Flowing Water Realm expert they desired, and they could do so without limit. On the other hand, Zero Wing's members had to earn points in the Secret Pavilion's training system, which they would have to spend to train against their desired experts.

Of course, the Secret Pavilion had chosen this approach because of the high cost of doing otherwise.

Not only was High-level Energy extremely rare, but it was also quite versatile, useful in many aspects. As a result, it was strictly regulated. Even international corporations could only acquire limited amounts of High-level Energy, and simulating expert players required a lot of it. The more powerful an expert was, the more energy a system would need to mimic them. Even the Secret Pavilion could only afford for a select few talented members to use the system.

If Unyielding Soul hadn't been so desperate to secure a temporary Residence in Stone Forest City, it would never have offered 10 unlimited training slots to Zero Wing.

Of course, Unyielding Soul could only afford this offer because Zero Wing had too few experts that could actually use their training slots, especially when challenging Flowing Water and Void Realm experts. Zero Wing wasn't even a match for ordinary superpowers in this regard.

Although Shi Feng knew that Unyielding Soul was taking advantage of him, he didn't mind. Many of Zero Wing's experts, including Aqua Rose, Gentle Snow, Fire Dance, Violet Cloud, Shadow Sword, Flying Shadow, Alluring Summer, and Cola, were stuck in the Refinement Realm. However, their failure to progress wasn't due to a lack of talent, but a lack of combat experience. They weren't like Shi Feng, who had accumulated an abundance of combat experience in God's Domain. If Shi Feng hadn't retained his memories from his previous life, he would never have been able to jump from the Refinement Realm to the Flowing Water Realm so smoothly.

If Aqua Rose and her companions trained with Unyielding Soul's system, Shi Feng was confident that it wouldn't be long before they became Flowing Water Realm experts. Then, they'd be able to help Zero Wing far more than ever before.

Overall, the 10 unlimited training slots Unyielding Soul had offered were even more valuable than Shining Tiger's complete Refinement Realm Legacy.

However, Unyielding Soul and Shining Tiger's offers weren't the greatest harvest Zero Wing had obtained. The partnership with so many small Guilds was worth far more. With these small Guilds in the Candlelight Chamber of Commerce, Candlelight had gained access to the markets in 12 kingdoms and three empires. Although these small Guilds couldn't offer quite as much access as Unyielding Soul and Shining Tiger, it was more than enough for the Candlelight Trading Firm for now.

Zero Wing even surpassed ordinary superpowers in terms of sales connections after this deal. The various superpowers would have to think twice before trying to assault Zero Wing's financial prowess now.

Starlink's economic hindrance had only been so successful due to Zero Wing's limited range of influence. As a result, Zero Wing's Shops had been easy targets. However, now that Zero Wing could reach across over a dozen kingdoms and empires, not even superpowers could hamper its financial development.

Moreover, Zero Wing would have a much easier time collecting materials now. With a single word, the Guild could acquire a stockpile of whatever material it needed, as long as it wasn't a super-rare material. This would be a great help to the Candlelight Trading Firm.

Once Shi Feng had signed all of the contracts with these Guilds' representatives, he left the rest to Aqua Rose and Gentle Snow. He then returned his focus to managing Stone Forest City's construction and recruiting NPC soldiers.

Although Stone Forest City had been open for less than a day, more than 1,000,000 players had surged into the city. If not for the Bottomless Abyss's harsh environment and the difficulty of traversing the Dungeon, the city's player population would likely have been more than five times that.

However, the 1,000,000-plus visitors had earned Shi Feng a fortune.

It's no wonder why the Guilds that had established cities in the Bottomless Abyss had developed so quickly in the past. Shi Feng was astonished when he saw the income Stone Forest City had generated thus far.

By charging each player 4 Silver per entry, Stone Forest City had netted 51,204 Gold in entry fees alone. There was also the income from the Battle Arena and Auction House to take into account. Even though

players couldn't yet shop at the Candlelight Trading Firm, the city would earn more than 100,000 Gold per day. Not even top-ranked first-rate Guilds saw so much profit in a day.

This was only the beginning. As more players visited Stone Forest City, Zero Wing could earn more than 200,000 Gold every day from the city, even after deducting the Secret Pavilion's shares...

Ordinary superpowers would count their blessings if they had 200,000 Gold in liquid funds, but Stone Forest City had the potential to earn far more than that in the future. Any ordinary superpower that wanted to target Zero Wing in a war of attrition would only regret the decision.

Naturally, the Guild's debts, such as that for Silverwing Town's airport, were no longer a problem.

The sudden influx of so much money gave Shi Feng the freedom to consider plans he hadn't been able to attempt due to a lack of funds. For example, he could finally retaliate against Starlink on the Dark Night Empire's market, while also developing the Lost Town and Silverwing Town.

Usually, insufficient player populations and popularity were the greatest problems a Guild faced when developing its towns, but neither was an issue for Zero Wing. Rather, Zero Wing struggled with needing enough funding to develop its towns.

Shi Feng used the money Stone Forest City had earned so far to construct Shops, hotels, restaurants, bars, smithies, and private housing within the city. Recruiting NPC soldiers wasn't an issue, either, and he was able to gear them all in sets of Fine-Gold Equipment. Now, even a random Tier 2 NPC soldier in the city could slay a Tier 2 expert. Even peak experts would have to think twice before committing a crime in Stone Forest City.

Shi Feng didn't bother to gear his NPCs in Dark-Gold Equipment due to the whopping 1,500 Gold cost. He could only afford to give 10 Tier 2 NPCs with the highest Growth Potential Dark-Gold ranked items. In a one-on-one fight, even monster-level experts would have to flee from these NPCs. If three or four of these Tier 2 NPCs surrounded an offending monster-level expert, that expert would be doomed.

While Shi Feng focused on Stone Forest City's development, news of the Candlelight Chamber of Commerce spread to God's Domain's various powers, causing a commotion throughout the game.

Chapter 2175 – Times Have Changed

Black Dragon Empire, Black Dragon City:

Many players explored the city's prosperous central district. A 60-meter-tall Guild Hall, one of the most iconic buildings within the district, sat in its core. This was the Dragon-Phoenix Pavilion's status symbol in the Black Dragon Empire.

More than 10,000 players came and went from the Guild Hall, many there to apply for the Dragon-Phoenix Pavilion's recruitment test. Even the weakest of these players was Level 64 and wore a full set of Level 60 Secret-Silver Equipment. Level 65 experts had even shown up, fully geared in Level 65 Secret-Silver Equipment.

When such experts normally applied to first-rate Guilds, they were accepted and promoted to core member immediately, but in the Dragon-Phoenix Pavilion, even these players would be lucky to join the Guild. Even if they were accepted, they'd become, at most, elite members.

However, unlike the lively scene outside the Guild Hall, a deathly silence enveloped the Guild Leader's office on the top floor.

“Damn it! Zero Wing has its own Chamber of Commerce now! Not even Starlink will be able to affect its financial foundation!” Nine Dragons Emperor, who was now Level 68, paled as he read the latest report.

His competition with Phoenix Rain for the Great Pavilion Master position was almost at its climax, and he certainly hadn’t expected something like this to happen.

He had still hoped to use Zero Wing against Phoenix Rain. After all, she wouldn’t sit by and do nothing if her pet Guild was in danger. She would send a portion of her strength to support Zero Wing. However, not only had Zero Wing grown stronger, but Phoenix Rain would significantly benefit from this as well.

Nine Dragons Emperor knew that she was one of the Candlelight Trading Firm’s shareholders.

Now that Zero Wing had a Chamber of Commerce with more than 100 Guilds, albeit small ones, it had even more sales connections than ordinary superpowers. With how many Master Lifestyle players the firm had as well, it was easy to imagine how much profit Candlelight would generate in the future.

“Pavilion Master, our sides are currently fervently collecting funds to build Shipyards and buy Lands on Dragonheart Island. If Phoenix Rain’s side receives a cut of Candlelight’s profits, I’m afraid we’ll be in a precarious position,” Martial Dragon said solemnly.

“I know that. I truly hadn’t expected an ant like Zero Wing to develop to this extent.” Nine Dragons Emperor frowned again at the report regarding Zero Wing, overwhelmed with regret. Had he known that Zero Wing could become so powerful, he would’ve done everything in his power to crush the Guild in its infancy.

Those small Guilds have just signed a contract with the Candlelight Chamber of Commerce; they haven’t actually begun to work with Zero Wing yet. Why don’t we take a forceful approach and show these small

Guilds the consequences of allying with Zero Wing?” Martial Dragon suggested, a cold light glinting in his eyes as he clenched a fist.

“It’s too late for that. Even if we kill these small Guilds’ main forces, they’ll send their main force members to the Bottomless Abyss to level. Not even Starlink’s influence can reach the Regional Dungeon, much less ours. And killing their normal and elite members won’t harm these Guilds in the least,” Nine Dragons Emperor said, shaking his head.

Unlike like Guilds, small Guilds didn’t offer their members many guarantees, especially their normal and elite members. Small Guilds barely paid these members any mind, only providing a few Guild benefits. These Guilds didn’t even offer significant compensation if its members died.

As long as a small Guild could ensure its main force and core members’ survival, it could continue its existence. Of course, the opposite was also true. Due to this reason, the challenge these small Guilds presented depended on the situation.

Now that Zero Wing could offer these Guilds’ main forces and core members a safe haven, eliminating them would be quite difficult for the Heavenly Dragon Pavilions.

A battle of finances was the only reliable way the Pavilion could deal with these small Guilds now, but doing so would be expensive, and the Heavenly Dragon Pavilion couldn’t afford the expenditure right now.

“There really isn’t anything we can do about this?” Martial Dragon asked.

“There is only so much profit to go around in God’s Domain. Now that they’ve established such a powerful Chamber of Commerce, the others won’t be able to remain idle. Moreover, Starlink won’t stand for this. This matter will certainly affect Starlink’s development in the Dark Night Empire,” Nine Dragons Emperor said, sneering. “Starlink has always been so arrogant and unwilling to negotiate an

alliance. Martial, quietly visit Dark Night City and negotiate our terms with Lu Xingluo. The enemy of my enemy is my friend. I'm sure Starlink will fund us now."

Starlink was well-known for its wealth in God's Domain. At the moment, Nine Dragons Emperor's chances of defeating Phoenix Rain were only 40%, but if he had Starlink's help, he was certain his chances of becoming the next Great Pavilion Master would double.

"You're truly awe-inspiring, Pavilion Master. With this, we'll be able to turn the tables. If Phoenix Rain and Black Flame knew what we were planning, they'd likely go mad," Martial Dragon said, smiling. "I'll head to Dark Night City right away."

Following which, Martial Dragon left the office and made his way toward Dark Night City.

Meanwhile, Shi Feng had finally completed his tasks in Stone Forest City. All he needed to do now was to leave the city in Melancholic Smile's hands and wait for the influx of players.

He didn't remain idle after dealing with the city's construction. He made his way to one of the Candlelight Trading Firm's forging rooms and started to forge Crystal Light Sets and Advanced Mana Armor Kits.

Zero Wing and the various Guilds needed both the Crystal Light Sets and Advanced Mana Armor Kits desperately, but the Set Equipment was too difficult to mass-produce. Only Shi Feng was able to forge the sets at a reliable cost. If he tasked Cream Cocoa and the other Basic Master Forgers to produce the set, he wouldn't even recoup his production costs, much less make a profit.

Shi Feng spent more than four days in the forging room and forged 26 Crystal Light Sets and over 1,300 Advanced Mana Amor Kits. Not only had he earned a ton of Forging Proficiency during the past few days, but he had also gained enough EXP to hit Level 77.

Meanwhile, Stone Forest City's player population had skyrocketed, crossing the 3,000,000 threshold already. After deducting the city's operational costs, Zero Wing had made over 100,000 Gold in pure profit from Stone Forest City alone. Stone Forest City's income surpassed that of Zero Wing City and Silverwing Town by multiple times. Not only could Zero Wing afford to pay off all of its debt, but it could also set aside a fortune in savings.

However, what had Shi Feng truly ecstatic was the leveling speed of his Guild's core members.

Maybe it was because the Bottomless Abyss was a God Mode Regional Dungeon, but over the past four days, most of Zero Wing's core members had reached Level 68. Some had even risen to Level 70. Even superpowers' peak experts were just reaching this level by now.

The core members' combat standards had rapidly improved as well, thanks to the complete Refinement Realm Legacy Shining Tiger had provided. Although Fierce Snake was the only one of them to reach the Refinement Realm thus far, more than a dozen core members had reached the Half-step Refinement Realm. Their development speed was simply marvelous.

While Shi Feng instructed Zero Wing's internal members in the Guild's real-world headquarters, Liang Jing approached him with an anxious expression.

"Head Instructor Shi, the Big Dipper Dojo has contacted us to inform us that it will cease all cooperation with our Workshop and will no longer supply talented recruits. It has also instructed its members to leave Zero Wing..."

They're ending our cooperation?" The news blindsided Shi Feng. "What happened? Are you sure you're not mistaken?"

Although Zero Wing had grown quite strong and countless players applied to join the Guild each day, it still had very few internal members.

It took a long time to research all of the applicants' backgrounds through God's Domain, and no one could tell whether or not an applicant was a spy from another Guild.

Most players in God's Domain also had jobs in the real world. They couldn't fully devote themselves to the game and treated it as a way to earn some additional income.

This was why Zero Wing lacked internal members, despite how many experts joined the Guild in God's Domain.

Now that Zero Wing had nearly a million members in God's Domain, it needed enough internal members to manage these players. Hence, the Guild had been doing its best to recruit internal members.

Zero Wing had two main sources for internal members; the Big Dipper Dojo, and Zero Wing's other main headquarters. Among the two, the Big Dipper Dojo was the most important.

God's Domain was a virtual reality game that mimicked reality to a frightening degree. The state of one's body in the real world would affect their body in God's Domain to a certain extent. Most of the Big Dipper Dojo's members had excellent physical fitness, and since they were already used to combat, they had a natural advantage in God's Domain.

In contrast, the internal members recruited through the main headquarters weren't as high-quality. Most of these internal members had to be trained from scratch. They needed far more time to become combat-ready in the game, something which Zero Wing didn't have much of.

However, not only had the Big Dipper Dojo informed Zero Wing that it would no longer cooperate with the Workshop, but it was also withdrawing its members. This would severely hamper the Guild's operations. Many of Zero Wing's managers were Big Dipper Dojo members.

Shi Feng couldn't understand what would have prompted this sudden change of heart. His relationship with the Bid Dipper Group had always been good. In fact, they were mutually beneficial partners, with the Dojo providing talented fighters and Zero Wing training the Dojo's members. No matter how Shi Feng thought about it, the Big Dipper Group had no reason to dismiss their partnership.

"I have confirmed the news already. The Big Dipper Group's Board of Directors made this decision themselves. Not even Chairman Xiao has the power to change it," Liang Jing said with a grim expression. "Moreover, the Big Dipper Dojo isn't the only one. The several other dojos and training centers in the city that we had been negotiating with have declined any partnership as well."

The others have abandoned us, too?" Shi Feng was astonished.

Because of Zero Wing's rapid development, the Guild urgently needed internal members for its management. Relying on the Big Dipper Dojo's members simply wasn't enough. Hence, Shi Feng had instructed Liang Jing to negotiate with the city's other dojos and training centers.

Now, however, not only had the Big Dipper Dojo abandoned Zero Wing, but the other dojos and training centers had as well. No matter how he looked at it, this couldn't be normal.

“Chairman Xiao recently contacted me, informing me that he has some important matters to discuss. He hopes that you will take some time to listen to what he has to say,” Liang Jing reported awkwardly. After giving the matter some thought, she asked hesitantly, “Should I reject him?”

“It’s fine. I want to meet with Chairman Xiao.” Shi Feng understood why Liang Jing felt so awkward. Her prior home had just betrayed Zero Wing, and anyone in her position would feel uncomfortable. It wouldn’t even be strange if he suspected that she had been untrustworthy.

However, throughout his time working with Liang Jing, Shi Feng knew that she was more than just a capable manager; she was also consistently professional. Even Aqua Rose and Gentle Snow trusted her enough to give her important work.

“I’ll make the arrangements right away,” Liang Jing replied. When she realized that Shi Feng didn’t treat her any differently than he normally did, she mentally released a held breath. She then contacted Xiao Yu to notify him of Shi Feng’s decision.

Liang Jing and Xiao Yu quickly decided on the time and place for their meeting. They would discuss matters in the Redstone Restaurant, the most luxurious eatery in the city.

Shi Feng was a little surprised to hear that he’d sit down with Chairman Xiao there.

Although he wasn’t particularly familiar with Fenglin City, the first-tier city that housed Zero Wing’s main headquarters, he had heard of Redstone Restaurant. Rumors had it that the restaurant had a powerful background. Not only was its food incredibly delicious, but it also provided more for the human body than A-rank Nutrient Fluid. Of course, the food was also more expensive than A-rank Nutrient Fluid. Even so, countless professional fighters dreamed of dining in the Redstone Restaurant.

Naturally, Shi Feng had wanted to visit the restaurant in his previous life as well, but unfortunately, Redstone didn't cater to outsiders. Simply being able to afford the meals wasn't enough. Individuals would only be allowed to dine in its halls after becoming a member.

Shadow had become a titan in Jin Hai City in the past, holding a frightening amount of assets. It had far surpassed the current Big Dipper Group. Even so, Shadow had never become a member of the Redstone Restaurant.

Yet now, Xiao Yu had invited Shi Feng to meet there...

Shi Feng arrived with Liang Jing at his side at 6 p.m...

Contrary to most assumptions, the Redstone Restaurant wasn't particularly large, only nine stories. It also wasn't in the city's business district, but in the outer district. The interior, however, had an antique flair and impressive elegance. As he stepped inside, Shi Feng felt as if he had entered paradise as an indescribable pleasant feeling washed over him.

"Hello, sir. May I know the room number of your reservation?" a tall beauty in a blue dress asked, smiling as she approached Shi Feng and Liang Jing.

Although this woman was only a receptionist, Shi Feng could tell with a glance that she was excellently fit and likely a skilled martial artist.

The woman's movements were simple, without any excess motion as she approached.

It was no exaggeration to claim that an ordinary, provincial-level professional fighter would be a match for this receptionist. In the Big Dipper Dojo, she would've been one of the best fighters and lavished with attention during her training.

Yet, this woman was only a receptionist in the Redstone Restaurant...

"Room 908," Shi Feng answered after recovering from his moment of surprise.

"Room 908? Please, follow me," the female receptionist answered, astonishment flashing in her eyes when she heard Shi Feng's answer. She immediately adopted a more respectful attitude toward Shi Feng.

A short moment later, Shi Feng arrived in a large, lavish room. He felt a gaze lock onto him the moment he stepped through the doorway as a powerful aura washed over him. However, this aura felt nothing like that of a professional fighter. Rather, it felt like that of an assassin with immense experience in life-or-death combat.

What a powerful person! When Shi Feng had reached the Domain Realm, his mental abilities had reached new heights as well. His five senses had sharpened beyond an ordinary person's, so he was able to identify the source of the piercing gaze and powerful aura.

The man was thin, middle-aged, and wearing a black suit. He didn't look anything like a professional fighter or martial artist. He looked more like a butler as he currently stood next to an indifferent youth.

Xiao Yu sat across from the youth with a nervous expression. Shi Feng faintly noticed a few droplets of sweat crawling down his forehead. At the moment, the man looked like a greenhorn in the industry, not the veteran businessman he truly was.

“Head Instructor Shi, you’ve finally arrived.” When Xiao Yu saw Shi Feng entering the room, he felt as if he had been granted amnesty, and he stood and quickly welcomed Shi Feng.

Instead of bothering with idle chit-chat, Shi Feng shifted his gaze to the youth and asked, “And this is?”

“Let me introduce you. This is Young Master Han Yifeng, the Five States Corporation’s successor,” Xiao Yu said solemnly. “Head Instructor Shi, to be honest, I invited you here at Young Master Han’s request.”

When she heard the introduction, Liang Jing turned to stare at the indifferent youth from behind Shi Feng.

The Five States Corporation was one of the most powerful companies in the country. It dabbled in a variety of industries, including energy, combat, food, and entertainment. The corporation could easily squash the Big Dipper Group with a single finger.

“You’re Zero Wing’s representative?” Han Yifeng asked as he observed Shi Feng, his face void of human emotion.

“You could say that.” Shi Feng nodded as he watched Han Yifeng in return.

From what Shi Feng could sense, this youth didn’t possess the typical arrogance of a wealthy family’s heir. Han Yifeng felt transcendent as if the youth were a God, overlooking all beings in his domain.

He also sensed a peerless strength radiating off of Han Yifeng. The boy was among the most physically fit Shi Feng had ever met.

“If you can represent Zero Wing, I’m satisfied,” Han Yifeng said. “Your Guild is quite impressive to make Lu Xingluo suffer so grievously. I am prepared to establish a Guild in God’s Domain, and I want the entirety of your Guild to join it. I’ll ensure that Zero Wing doesn’t miss out on any benefits, and you will enjoy far more wealth and better status than you have now. You’ll also have access to more resources than you can imagine.”

“And what happens if I say no?” Shi Feng asked humbly.

Chapter 2177 – Clash in Reality

The moment Shi Feng finished his question, the temperature in the room seemed to plummet. Even Xiao Yu, who had fought in business for so many years, stared at Shi Feng in horror.

It’s over! Everything’s over now... Xiao Yu felt as if the sky were crumbling down around him.

Through Liang Jing, he had learned about some of Zero Wing’s accomplishments. He knew that Zero Wing had ties with a few major corporations and that it had even met with these corporations’ upper echelons. Zero Wing had been doing quite well in God’s Domain, a virtual reality game that had become incredibly popular.

However, after all was said and done, Zero Wing was only powerful within the virtual reality game. On the other hand, the Five States Corporation was one of the most powerful corporations in the country, wielding unimaginable authority and status. As the chairman’s only son, no one in the country’s higher social circles could afford to offend Han Yifeng. Countless companies and corporations would do anything to get into the boy’s good graces.

Shi Feng, however, had rejected Han Yifeng's offer without hesitation. He hadn't held back in the least...

If Shi Feng angered this youth, not even the major corporations that had invested in Zero Wing would escape Han Yifeng's wrath, not to mention Zero Wing itself.

After the silence stretched for a moment, the youth finally opened his mouth to break it.

"Very good! As expected of the person that has made Lu Xingluo so miserable!" Contrary to Xiao Yu's expectations, Han Yifeng hadn't reacted in rage or disdain. The youth remained strangely calm as if this matter had nothing to do with him. "Since that is the case, let's forget about this matter altogether. However, I have to warn you that the Starline Corporation isn't an easy foe. Lu Xingluo has already begun to use his connections against your Guild. I'm sure you've noticed, but this is only the beginning.

"God's Domain is involved in far more than you could possibly imagine, and Zero Wing has begun to touch upon too many people's interests. Without sufficient backing, you'd best be careful."

Following which, Han Yifeng glanced at the thin man beside him. The thin man then promptly revealed a card and handed it to Shi Feng.

"This is my card. If a day comes when you change your mind, you can contact me," Han Yifeng said, his voice just as void of emotion as it had been during their introduction.

Xiao Yu was surprised to see Han Yifeng offer Shi Feng his card. He had never realized that the youth viewed Zero Wing so highly as to offer his card.

To ordinary people, offering one's card had very little meaning, but for those of Han Yifeng's status, it was a sign of recognition. It meant that the receiver was allowed to contact the giver directly.

Han Yifeng's status was on par with a dynasty's imperial prince. Even Xiao Yu, a company's chairman, didn't qualify to reach out to this youth. If Xiao Yu wished to speak with Han Yifeng, he'd have to make an appointment with his secretary. Moreover, whether or not Han Yifeng agreed to meet with him was an entirely different story.

Shi Feng accepted Han Yifeng's card graciously. Even if they couldn't reach an agreement, a friendship was possible. Moreover, holding a person like Han Yifeng's card was the equivalent of securing a major customer. If Zero Wing had something valuable enough to sell in the future, it could do so with this contact.

Moreover, Shi Feng could tell that Han Yifeng wasn't like the usual wealthy young masters. He certainly wasn't anything like Lu Xingluo. The youth felt inhuman. Throughout their discussion, Han Yifeng had remained absolutely calm and was in better physical shape than Shi Feng had ever seen.

Even if he hadn't been the heir to the Five States Corporation, he would've had an extraordinary future. If he wanted to become a professional fighter, he'd easily make it to the international level. Not even an internal force expert like Lei Bao would be a match for Han Yifeng. If Han Yifeng continued to grow stronger, he could even claim the world championship.

Following which, Han Yifeng and Shi Feng chatted about the situation in God's Domain. Shi Feng then left the Redstone Restaurant with Liang Jing and Xiao Yu.

Once the trio left, only Han Yifeng and his middle-aged escort lingered in the room.

“Young master, aren’t you a little disappointed that Zero Wing refused to sell? If we pull a few strings, taking the Guild wouldn’t be difficult,” the middle-aged man asked softly.

“Zero Wing’s foundations are impressive, but it faces too many challenges at the moment. If we try to take it by force or push the issue of purchasing it, Zero Wing will unravel. That wouldn’t be beneficial to our entry into God’s Domain,”

Han Yifeng said, shaking his head. “Moreover, Zero Wing isn’t the only available option. Although Zero Wing has more of an advantage, the others have far fewer problems. Overall, they are a better match for our needs than Zero Wing.”

“If that is the case, why did you request to meet Zero Wing’s representative, young master?” the middle-aged man asked.

“I wanted to see its behavior and circumstances. I want to confirm whether or not Zero Wing can truly cause Starlink trouble,” Han Yifeng said.

“Young master, is there a need to concern yourself with a minor existence like Lu Xingluo?” the middle-aged man asked.

“You don’t understand. If it were only Lu Xingluo, Starlink wouldn’t be a problem, but those behind him aren’t easy to remove. I only hope that Zero Wing can buy me some more time. If it proves up to the task, I’ll have enough time to prepare,” Han Yifeng explained, glancing at the man.

Realization dawned on the butler.

However, in the middle-aged man's opinion, Zero Wing will have more trouble making waves now that Lu Xingluo had used some of his connections. Since he had some understanding of management, he also knew that if Zero Wing didn't have enough trustworthy internal members to operate the Guild, it would fall into ruin in the long run. Furthermore, Lu Xingluo had only begun to use his connections, yet Zero Wing was already in such great danger. The Guild had no hope of surviving very long.

Meanwhile, Xiao Yu had remained silent until the trio had moved into a limousine and left the Redstone Restaurant. Turning to Shi Feng, he asked, "Head Instructor Shi, this is a rare opportunity. How could you reject his offer? The Five States Corporation's influence is extensive. Even the slightest of relationships with the corporation could help a company's value skyrocket. If the Zero Wing Workshop became a subordinate company, it could operate unhindered even in a first-tier city like Fenglin City. Even Starlink would struggle to take down Zero Wing."

The Big Dipper Group dreamed of establishing in a first-tier city like Fenglin City, but it didn't even dare to imagine the freedom of moving without hindrance.

Yet, Shi Feng had declined such a golden opportunity...

Moreover, Zero Wing's current position wasn't particularly optimistic. Due to Lu Xingluo's interference, no company or corporation had any interest in working with the Guild. If this persisted, how would the Workshop solidify its position in Fenglin City?

Even Liang Jing began to worry as she sat quietly next to Shi Feng.

She hadn't known the full story. Now that she knew that the Starline Corporation was responsible for the Big Dipper Group's abandonment, she understood the severity of the situation. Zero Wing truly stood on a precipice. Their current opponent fought in the real world, not in the game, and the power capital held in reality was no trivial matter.

“The Five States Corporation might be incredibly powerful, but Zero Wing isn’t completely helpless without it. The Starline Corporation can’t just push my Guild around,” Shi Feng calmly replied. “Lu Xingluo wants to prevent allying with any training centers or dojos? In that case, we’ll open a dojo of our own!”

Chapter 2178 – Insane Shi Feng

“Open one of your own?” Xiao Yu was a little taken aback and saw Shi Feng’s idea as a little too immature. “Head Instructor Shi, without exaggerating, opening a training center in Fenglin City would be extremely challenging. Not even the White Clan Group is powerful enough to succeed.”

Establishing its own training center was a good idea for Zero Wing. At the very least, the Workshop wouldn’t need to rely on others.

However, opening up a training center in this day and age was not an easy task. First, in this era of physical fitness, countless people had tried to capitalize on humanity’s focus in this aspect and opened training centers and dojos, and as a result, competition was fierce.

Second, starting a new business required a massive amount of capital. Even ignoring venue costs, the latest training equipment cost a fortune. The state-of-the-art facilities were a minimum requirement for any training center or dojo in a first-tier city like Fenglin, but to attract more consumers, one would need nutrition and medical facilities.

Without these basic amenities, nobody would join.

The only reason the Big Dipper Group had earned its current status and fame in Jin Hai City was its decision to follow the evolving trends early and its decades-long history.

Just to open a training center or dojo in Jin Hai City required a powerful corporation's full financial support. Naturally, one would need far more capital to open one in a first-tier city like Fenglin. Even the current Big Dipper Group would struggle to succeed.

This was why the Big Dipper Group hadn't opened a branch in a first-tier city.

Xiao Yu couldn't even imagine where Shi Feng would find the money necessary to open a training center here. He knew quite a bit about Zero Wing, and although it had the support of the White Clan Group, which was slightly more generous than that from the Big Dipper Group, White Clan was already struggling to support Zero Wing's headquarters. How could it possibly afford to establish a training center in Fenglin City?

Furthermore, the Starline Corporation had set its sights on the Workshop. No financial group or corporation would dare to ally itself with or lend money to Zero Wing.

"Then, would you be interested in investing in Zero Wing, Chairman Xiao?" Shi Feng asked, chuckling. He did not try to rebuke Xiao Yu's claim, quietly observing the man, instead.

Shi Feng was fully aware of how difficult it would be to open a training center.

Aside from his inexperience in managing a training center, the required capital was indeed a massive issue. He had already spent all of the funding Phoenix Rain had invested in Zero Wing to secure Ouroboros's old training ground, although Phoenix Rain hadn't supplied her full investment yet. The funding she had given him was a deposit, which Zero Wing would slowly pay back through a portion of

the rent from Stone Forest City's Shops and virtual stores. If Zero Wing lost Stone Forest City, the Guild would have to return the remaining funds.

Xiao Yu, on the other hand, had years of experience with running a training center. If Shi Feng could enlist Xiao Yu's help, establishing a training center for Zero Wing would become much easier.

You sure know how to ask," Xiao Yu replied after a moment of silence, smiling bitterly as he examined Shi Feng's serious expression. "I have dreamed for many years of opening a training center in a first-tier city like Fenglin, but the Big Dipper Group isn't capable of doing so. The Board of Directors will never agree to a partnership. They won't even agree to lend you a single cent."

"I'll think of something to resolve the financial issue. What I'm asking right now is whether or not you, as an individual, are interested in becoming a partner with Zero Wing," Shi Feng clarified. He recognized Xiao Yu's concerns. Even though Xiao Yu was Big Dipper's chairman, the Board of Directors had the final say in all matters. Unfortunately, who would dare side with Zero Wing while the Starline Corporation targeted the organization? "If you are willing to become a partner, I'm willing to offer you 5% of the training center's shares."

Shi Feng valued Xiao Yu far more than the Big Dipper Group as a whole.

Not only did Xiao Yu have a wealth of experience with managing training centers, but he also had connections throughout the industry, far more than an outsider like Shi Feng. Not even Gentle Snow was a match for the man before him. The White Clan Group, after all, dabbled in a variety of industries.

Xiao Yu had to admit that he found Shi Feng's offer a little tempting.

He had always wanted to manage a training center in a first-tier city, but doing so was a larger challenge than he could afford. Not only would he need enough funding, but he'd also need sufficient strength.

Meanwhile, Shi Feng was even more skilled as an internal force expert than Lei Bao. Even in a first-tier city brimming with experts, he was a force to behold. Shi Feng's only flaw was his lack of fame, but that could easily be resolved with enough money.

"How large of a training center are you preparing to open?" Xiao Yu asked.

A training center's size was particularly important. Small training centers, with only one or two floors, had no place in first-tier cities. Such minuscule facilities wouldn't even be large enough for state-of-the-art training equipment, much less nutrition and medical facilities.

But if Shi Feng could secure a five- or six-story building within the city center for his training center, he might just have a chance of survival. Unfortunately, he'd need to own the building, not rent it. With Starline Corporation's harassment, it could easily force the building's owner to dissolve the lease half-way through.

"I'm thinking about one of the skyscrapers in the city center," Shi Feng replied after giving the matter some thought.

If he were to establish a training center under Zero Wing's name, a small building wouldn't do. It wouldn't even be enough for Zero Wing's uses. During his previous life, even second-rate Guilds like Shadow had the full support of multiple training centers and dojos, and only with that support had Shadow filled its management positions with trustworthy experts, ensuring the Guild's normal operations could continue.

If he didn't secure a training center that was on a similar scale to the Big Dipper Training Center, Zero Wing could stagnate.

“An entire skyscraper?” Xiao Yu could not help but roll his eyes.

Fenglin City was a first-tier city, and its land cost far more than in Jin Hai City. Even if the Big Dipper Group invested everything it could, it would, at most, secure an eight- or nine-story building in the city center.

Meanwhile, most skyscrapers in Fenglin City had more than forty floors.”

“Is it not enough?” Shi Feng asked as he gave Xiao Yu a curious look.

“If you can purchase a skyscraper, then I wouldn’t mind partnering with you,” Xiao Yu decided. He felt that Shi Feng had played God’s Domain too much and gone mad. He had held on to a thread of hope at the thought of managing a training center in a first-tier city, but now, Shi Feng’s madness had dashed that hope.

Securing a skyscraper in Fenglin City’s city center was easier said than done. Did Shi Feng really think it was some cabbage, easy to buy and widely available?

Satisfied with Xiao Yu’s agreement, Shi Feng returned to Zero Wing’s main headquarters and logged back into God’s Domain.

Chapter 2179 – Stone Forest City’s True Value

Bottomless Abyss, Stone Forest City:

As soon as Shi Feng came online, he noticed that he had more than a dozen unread messages, all from Melancholic Smile, Youlan, and Blackie. Among the three, Melancholic Smile had sent him six messages. Something urgent must have happened in the Guild, and Shi Feng immediately sent the woman a call request.

“What’s happened?” Shi Feng asked as Melancholic Smile’s face appeared on the screen.

Zero Wing had considerable savings set aside now and could afford to recruit new members en masse with plenty of funding to spare.

The bounty Starlink had placed on Zero Wing’s members was of little concern at this point, as well. Practically all of the Guild’s core members grinded in the Bottomless Abyss thanks to Stone Forest City’s relocation, and as a result, the burden on Zero Wing’s leveling resources had lightened. Now, even the Guild’s normal and elite members could safely develop within its territories since other players rarely dared to provoke the Guild in these locations. Although Starlink secretly dispatched experts to ambush Zero Wing’s members, they weren’t able to cause much damage.

On the contrary, Starlink had suffered significantly due to the counter-bounty Zero Wing had issued. Every day, a large number of players visited Zero Wing to claim their bounties.

Although the situation wouldn’t shake Starlink’s foundation if it persisted, it would continue to drain the enemy Guild’s liquid assets, slowing Starlink’s development.

Starlink expended a lot of high-ranked Consumables each day to wrestle control over neutral maps’ resources, but even as a superpower, it couldn’t produce enough Consumables to satisfy its needs. As a

result, the Guild continued to spend its Coins on additional Consumables. If Starlink did not have enough funding saved, its neutral map exploration would begin to stagnate.

“Guild Leader, Starlink has recently allied with a few other superpowers and three Chambers of Commerce to monopolize the materials for brewing Advanced Darkness Potions and Advanced Forest Potions. Whenever these materials show up on the market, someone from the Guild snatches them up at a high price. The prices for these materials have climbed to three times the normal rates. Although we have tried to contest for the materials, we’ve only managed to acquire a small stock. I’m afraid we don’t even have enough to brew potions for our own uses,” Melancholic Smile reported anxiously.

“They’ve monopolized the materials for two Advanced Potions? It seems Starlink is starting to get nervous.” The situation actually surprised Shi Feng.

Advanced Darkness Potions were one of the rarer Advanced Potions in the game. Not only did they increase players’ Darkness Resistance, but they also enhanced players’ night vision. It was the perfect potion when exploring areas with dense dark energy.

The Advanced Forest Potion was also quite rare. It would increase player’s resistance to corrosive effects and slightly improve their perception range.

These two potions worked wonders within the Ancient Undead Country and Bottomless Abyss. By consuming both, players could increase their leveling efficiency by at least 30%.

Meanwhile, producing these potions required quite a few types of materials. Monopolizing all of them should be impossible for one superpower. These materials originated from different locations, and trying to control all of them would cost an astronomical sum of money.

However, if one could monopolize these potions, they'd hamper their opponent's exploration in the Ancient Undead Country and its Regional Dungeon.

"Unfortunately, that isn't what's making me anxious. Starlink has begun to offer insane salaries to poach Candlelight's Lifestyle players. Not only is it offering huge monthly salaries, but it's also offering to provide a wealth of developmental resources. I've heard that the Guild is offering 20,000 Credits per month for Advanced Lifestyle players, and 100,000 per month to Master Lifestyle players. We've already lost more than 50 Advanced players and two Master Lifestyle players. Everyone in Candlelight is talking about it," Melancholic Smile said. "We've just established the Candlelight Chamber of Commerce, and we still need a lot of merchandise to benefit from it. If we continue to lose so many Advanced Lifestyle players, we'll be left crippled."

The Candlelight Trading Firm's Lifestyle players relied on their shares of the revenue to earn a living, exchanging Coins for Credits. Starlink's offer of a stable salary was sorely tempting.

As players continued to level up, Coins would become more attainable, and as a result, their value would depreciate. However, if one were paid in Credits, they wouldn't have to worry about losing income as Coins became less valuable. It was only natural that Starlink's offer would attract Lifestyle players.

"Starlink is using its capital now?" Shi Feng could not help but chuckle.

The concept of paying Lifestyle players with Credits wasn't foreign to Shi Feng. On the contrary, he was very familiar with the idea. When players had reached Level 80 during his previous life, the various superpowers had gradually realized how important Lifestyle players truly were. As a result, they had begun to use this method to poach capable Lifestyle players, and in the end, even the various major powers had to resort to such a tactic.

Many of the poorer powers had been thrown back to the stone age, with some crumbling as a result.

“Guild Leader, if we don’t take any countermeasures, I’m afraid that we’ll lose even more people,” Melancholic Smile said worriedly. “However, if we use the same tactic, will we have enough Credits to support the Candlelight Trading Firm with how much our Guild is earning right now? If we sell our Coins, we’ll play right into Starlink’s hands.”

It was at this moment that Melancholic Smile realized how truly terrifying a superpower could be. It was actually possible to kill someone with money alone.

“I’m not sure who gave Starlink this idea, but it should prepare to lose a few teeth if it thinks it can use capital to compete with Zero Wing!” Shi Feng declared with a smile.

If this had happened before Shi Feng had upgraded Stone Forest Town into Stone Forest City, Zero Wing would’ve likely suffered, but it was no longer the Guild it had been.

The various superpowers simply did not realize what Stone Forest City represented.

“How are the private houses around the Battle Arena coming along?” Shi Feng asked.

“We finished 70% of them. The remaining 30% will require another two or three days,” Melancholic Smile replied. Although she didn’t know why Shi Feng asked, she quickly sent him a report on the construction process.

Zero Wing had spent over 160,000 Gold over the past few days to build these private houses, and it was, undoubtedly, the largest investment the Guild had made thus far.

“We have 70% complete?” Shi Feng nodded in satisfaction as he inspected the report. “Over 7,000 houses should be enough. Publish an announcement that Stone Forest City is renting its private houses to the public. We’ll hold an auction for them throughout the Candlelight Trading Firm’s branches simultaneously. We’ll only accept Credits as payment, and we’ll start the bid at 30,000 Credits per month.”

“Thirty thousand Credits for one month? Isn’t that a little too expensive?” Shi Feng’s price shocked Melancholic Smile.

Private houses weren’t like Shops, which could generate profit for players. Renting a private house was akin to buying a Consumable item. They’d be fortunate enough to find players that were willing to rent a private house for a few thousand Credits. Thirty thousand Credits per month was just absurd.

“Relax. Just have someone spread the news. The sooner we get this done, the better,” Shi Feng said, chuckling. He did not offer any further explanation.

Cities within the Bottomless Abyss had been holy sites for players in the past. Countless expert players had dreamed of owning private houses in these cities. Unfortunately, the ruling powers had only leased these private houses, but even so, experts had fought desperately to acquire one for themselves.

At one time, renting these holy cities’ private houses had cost more than 50,000 Credits per month. That situation had enlightened God’s Domain’s players of just how much money one could make in the game. Compared to the past, 30,000 Credits was quite cheap.

Melancholic Smile followed her orders and posted the announcement on the official forums in God’s Domain’s various kingdoms and empires.

Chapter 2180 – Crazy Auction

The moment God's Domain's players heard that Stone Forest City's private houses would be available to rent, the news caused a sensation throughout the various kingdoms and empires.

"I'm not seeing things, right? Zero Wing is actually leasing its private houses to the public?!"

"This is wonderful! If we can rent a private house in Stone Forest City, we can teleport there anytime we want!"

"Crap! Zero Wing is so scummy! It's only leasing the private houses, not selling them!"

Almost every player in the game paid close attention to Stone Forest City since they all had optimistic hopes for the Bottomless Abyss, especially now that players had begun to explore the Regional Dungeon, spreading the news of their harvests.

Many independent players had found Fine-Gold Treasure Chests, and independent teams had obtained Advanced Legacies after killing Grand Lords. Even the weakest Boss in the Bottomless Abyss dropped Level 65 Secret-Silver Equipment, and that was when their luck had failed them. If players' luck held out, even Level 65 Fine-Gold Weapons and Equipment dropped from the weaker Bosses.

However, the various kingdoms and empires' players were focused on something else entirely.

Players' leveling speed in the Regional Dungeon excited them far more than its frightening drop-rates. Everyone had been impressed with their leveling speed in neutral maps, but they could level twice as fast in the Bottomless Abyss.

Because of this, the Bottomless Abyss had become a sacred leveling ground.

Unfortunately, it wasn't easy to reach the Dungeon's first floor. Even ordinary expert teams suffered annihilation before they got that far.

However, the announcement regarding Stone Forest City's private houses alleviated this problem. With a private house, players could teleport to the Bottomless Abyss at any time, from anywhere. They could also teleport to their private houses from within the Regional Dungeons. It would save them plenty of travel time, and they could explore farther than before.

However, when the public discovered Zero Wing's intentions to auction off the private houses and the starting bid, they burst into heated discussions.

"Not only is Zero Wing refusing to sell the private houses, only rent them, but it's starting bid is 30,000 Credits per month? Is Zero Wing insane?"

"Zero Wing is too greedy! I don't even make 10,000 Credits per month! You'd have to be wealthy to afford these houses!"

"That's right! Who would want to rent those private houses at such a high price?"

Countless players cursed Zero Wing for its fraudulence when they saw the minimum bid. The Guild had essentially excluded ordinary players from the auction with such a high price. Only wealthy players would be able to afford to grind freely in the Bottomless Abyss.

Meanwhile, several flashes illuminated Dark Night City's Teleportation Hall as a 6-man party arrived. These six players were not particularly high-leveled, with most of them around Level 56 or 57. The party's highest-level player was only Level 60. However, she wore a full set of Level 60 Fine-Gold Equipment and carried two longswords of indiscernible rank.

Despite her low level, many of the Level 65-plus experts in the Teleportation Hall sensed danger the moment she arrived. They couldn't help but turn to look at the elegant girl, who appeared to be barely 20-years-old.

"Tian Tong, do you really plan to compete for a private house in Stone Forest City? The starting bid is 30,000 Credits. How can a student like you afford that?" the Level 56 female Cleric, the Level 60 female Swordsman's companion, asked worriedly.

"If worse comes to worst, I'll just sell those items. Including what I have on me, I should have enough. My level isn't high enough yet, and I have no choice but to try if I want to level up quickly. I have to catch up to the game's frontline players if I want to compete with Black Flame," Tian Tong, the female Swordsman, declared. "Big Sis Tong keeps telling me that I'm not qualified to follow her, and the only way I can change that is by defeating him. I'm curious to see how strong Black Flame is to gain Big Sis Tong's recognition."

"Black Flame is Zero Wing's Guild Leader. He even earned the title of Sword King from the Secret Pavilion. Do you really think he'll be so easy to defeat?" a Level 57 Shield Warrior said.

"That is only true right now. Once I've caught up with the frontline experts' levels, it will be a different story," Tian Tong confidently replied as she glanced at the dilapidated longswords hanging at her waist.

Her companions had nothing more to say about her ambitions and fell silent. They, more or less, understood the young woman's strength. She was a monster in human skin. If she hadn't joined God's Domain so late, she might have already become famous in the game.

The party then made their way to Dark Night City's Candlelight Trading Firm to participate in the auction for Stone Forest City's private houses.

Independent players and Guild representatives did the same throughout the various kingdoms and empires. For a time, players squeezed into Candlelight's many Shops.

Even the various large Guilds' upper echelons were shocked to see such massive gatherings of independent players, adventurer team members, and Guild representatives.

There sure are a lot of participants."

"I know, right? Well, who could possibly resist the temptation of grinding freely in the Bottomless Abyss?"

"Honestly, I hadn't expected Zero Wing to lease its private houses. I had assumed the Guild would keep them for its own members and bolster its strength."

"We have Starlink to thank for this. I've heard that Starlink has been spending insane amounts of money to poach Zero Wing's Lifestyle players, and Zero Wing is suffering for it. The Guild must have decided to rent Stone Forest City's private houses to alleviate some of the pressure."

"But how much can Zero Wing actually earn from renting the private houses? The amount of Credits it rakes in will only be a drop in the bucket to Starlink. It might be a different story if Zero Wing sells the private houses, though. Doing so might give it a chance of contending with Starlink."

The various powers' upper echelons attending the auctions were more than happy to watch Zero Wing and Starlink continue their feud and take advantage of the situation. Only, in their opinion, Zero Wing was trying to get itself killed by competing with Starlink's on a financial front. Giving up those Lifestyle players would be a much wiser move.

While Candlelight's guests chatted about the situation, its staff began the auction for Stone Forest City's private houses.

"Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to the Candlelight Trading Firm. First, I must inform you that due to the limited number of private houses in Stone Forest Town, our firm can only afford to lease a small number. Any player that wins a bid in this auction will gain priority bidding rights in the next. If two players bid the same value in the next auction, we will prioritize the player who has rented from us before. So, everyone, please take advantage of this opportunity," the Candlelight Trading Firm's auctioneer explained, smiling as she glanced over the crowd before her.

Every guest gulped audibly and glowed with excitement.

Players could grind to Level 100 in the Bottomless Abyss, which would take more than two or three months. Needless to say, players would need to rent Stone Forest city's private houses for more than one.

With prioritized bidding rights, players would have a massive advantage in the next auction.

"Now that we have that out of the way, let's start the auction for Stone Forest City's first private house! The starting bid is 30,000 Credits! Each increment must be no lower than 500 Credits!"

As the auctioneer finished speaking, the venue exploded with sound.

“Thirty-five thousand!”

“Forty thousand!”

“Crap! Everyone’s gone crazy! I bid 45,000!”

“Don’t compete with me! This one’s mine! Fifty thousand!”