

Chapter 2421 – Monster-level Genius Molten Ruin, inner corridor:

After venturing further into the inner corridor, Zwei and her team reached an altar hall the size of a football field. Because of the various traps and monsters they had encountered, less than 30 players remained on the team. Of the 8 Tier 3 players the team had started with, only 6 remained. Their losses had been considerable.

“Commander, those monsters seem afraid to enter the hall,” a Tier 3 Berserker mentioned when he realized that the Mechanical Golems pacing in the corridor refused to follow them. Breathing a sigh of relief, he continued, “That was close. I almost thought we wouldn’t make it.”

To escape War Blood’s pursuit, they had run through the inner corridor. They desperately fought the entire time, unable to relax their guard. Doing so had exhausted their Stamina and Concentration.

If they had to continue at that pace for another half an hour, War Blood wouldn’t have needed to attack; they would’ve died as soon as the Mechanical Golems caught up.

Now that they had made it to a room where the Mechanical Golems wouldn’t follow, they could finally catch a breather.

“This might be one of the inner corridor’s safe zones. Take this chance to rest up, everyone,” Zwei, the female Guardian Knight wearing a silver knight’s helmet and a black-white suit of armor, said as she glanced around the hall. “Assassins and Rangers, check this room for traps.”

As always, Zwei’s voice sounded gentle and sacred. It was impossible to detect her fatigue. It earned even more respect from her team members.

Zwei was the team's lead MT, and as such, she had been fighting for hours. She had even borne the burden of tanking two Grand Lords. She should've expended more Stamina and Concentration than any of her teammates, yet she seemed perfectly fine.

The team's Assassins and Rangers did as they were told and began to inspect the hall for traps. Meanwhile, the rest of the team sat and pulled potions from their bags, using the opportunity to restore some of their lost Stamina and Concentration.

"What should we do now, commander? War Blood's members are likely getting close, but if we move deeper into the ruin, we'll likely encounter a challenge we can't overcome," a Tier 3 female Elementalist worriedly asked as she examined her system map.

Although they had found a safe zone, it wouldn't protect them from War Blood's team. It was only a matter of time before War Blood caught up to them. Furthermore, they should be very close to the central corridor according to the system map. The monsters in that area were all Level 110 or higher and were too strong for players of their levels to defeat.

If they died, not only would they lose all of the Tree of Life's branches they had acquired, but they'd also lose levels and equipment.

"If we are doomed, we might as well charge into the central corridor and meet our deaths. I refuse to let War Blood take advantage of us," Prison Tiger, the Tier 3 Berserker, declared.

He had already thought the matter through. It did not matter whether their team ran into War Blood's members or rushed head-long into the ruin's heart. Both meant their annihilation. If they were going to die, either way, they might as well ensure that War Blood waste their time and energy.

The rest of the team members nodded their agreement.

They had thought that the Tree of Life's branches would help their adventurer team's development skyrocket, but War Blood had pushed them to the brink of annihilation. They absolutely couldn't allow War Blood to benefit from their destruction.

"I'm afraid that isn't for you to decide!"

Shortly after the Tier 3 Berserker's proclamation, a deep, powerful voice echoed throughout the hall.

"Who is it?!" Prison Tiger snarled in surprise.

Everyone spun toward the speaker, only to find no one there. It confused them.

Two seconds later, however, space blurred, and several translucent figures appeared. The figures solidified after another three seconds, revealing more than 30 players at the end of the hall, and every one of them radiated the aura of Tier 3 players.

"Blood Oath!"

Prison Tiger's expression turned grim when he saw who the man leading the group of new arrivals. He hadn't expected War Blood's team to catch up to them so quickly.

“That’s right. You guys really know how to run. We had to use a Tier 3 Group Invisibility Scroll just to catch up,” Blood Oath said, smiling. He then glanced at Zwei and continued, “Commander Zwei, it’s time for you to hand over the Tree of Life’s branches. Or do you still insist we take them from you?”

Blood Oath had wanted to avoid using the precious Tier 3 Group Invisibility Scroll, but when he had heard that Thirteen Thrones was on his tail, his hand had been forced.

If Thirteen Thrones’ main force caught up with Heaven’s Blade’s, not even War Blood and Starlink would be able to touch the adventurer team. Thirteen Thrones was a veteran Super Guild with a foundation that easily trumped Starlink’s and War Blood’s.

Blood Oath’s team didn’t wait for a response, and the 31 Tier 3 experts behind him moved to surround Heaven’s Blade’s members.

Heaven’s Blade’s team began to despair. They could sense that the weakest of their opponents was a Void Realm expert. Furthermore, Starlink’s Four Shadow Demons had joined War Blood on this hunt.

The Four Shadow Demons were particularly famous in the virtual gaming world. Any virtual gaming expert knew of them. During their early days, these four players had given the various super-first-rate Guilds and Super Guilds massive headaches.

Not only did those four players have Starlink’s full support in God’s Domain, but they had also reached Tier 3. The Four Shadow Demons could likely wipe out Heaven’s Blade’s entire team on their own.

“Commander, you should get out of here. Tiger and I will hold them back. They won’t be able to get to you once you’re in the central corridor,” the Tier 3 Elementalist advised Zwei.

The Elementalist recognized that Heaven's Blade's team stood no chance against War Blood's experts. Rather than involve Zwei in this meaningless battle, she'd be better off if she fled into the central corridor by herself while the rest of the team bought her time. Without needing to worry about her teammates, Zwei would have an easier time reaching the central corridor, as well.

"I've already told you that isn't up to you!" Blood Oath spat. He then turned toward the Four Shadow Demons and politely requested, "I'll have to trouble you four."

"Leave it to us. After all, it's why the Guild Leader sent us," Sword Demon agreed, nodding. He and the three other Shadow Demons then approached Heaven's Blade's commander. "We've heard plenty about you, Commander Zwei. Although we'd like a proper battle with you, we're burdened with responsibility. I'm afraid you'll have to take offense!"

The three other Shadow Demons then moved to surround Zwei. They were so fast that Heaven's Blade's other members didn't have time to react.

"Come! I've waited for the chance to learn from you four!" Zwei shouted back. Her helmet hid her expression, but based on her calm tone, everyone knew she wasn't afraid in the least. On the contrary, she burned with fighting spirit.

With her bold declaration, an immense amount of Mana burst from her body, so dense that a white mist began to manifest around her. She radiated a powerful, sacred aura, which felt as if a God had descended to the mortal plane.

"Amazing! As expected of the player to single-handedly lead Heaven's Blade in becoming one of Dragonheart Island's top 10 adventurer teams. I admire you for reaching that realm at such a young age!" Sword Demon praised Zwei, shocked by her performance.

Everyone believed that Zwei had only reached the initial stages of the Domain Realm and still had a long way ahead of her.

However, Sword Demon could tell that wasn't the case. Zwei had progressed quite far into the Domain Realm. Even he had only managed the feat in his old age.

As the two teams were about to engage, a loud commotion broke out outside the hall. Everyone spun to see what had happened.

"Has Thirteen Thrones arrived?" Prison Tiger muttered hopefully.

A moment later, a figure entered the altar hall, and when they saw who it was, Heaven's Blade's members were shocked.

"Cleansing Flame?"

Chapter 2422 – Black Flame's Arrival

Cleansing Flame's sudden appearance stunned and confused Heaven's Blade's members.

"Why is Flame here?" Prison Tiger wondered as he rubbed his eyes, wondering if he was so exhausted that he was hallucinating.

Their commander and sent Cleansing Flame retreating from the inner corridor with a portion of the exploration team. Although she had later run into Zero Wing, which had helped her team, returning to the inner corridor and reaching this altar hall so quickly shouldn't have been possible.

Moreover, Heaven's Blade's members couldn't figure out how Cleansing Flame had made it past the army of Mechanical Golems that roamed the inner corridor. They had suffered considerably to get this far, yet Cleansing Flame didn't even seem to have lost much Stamina or Concentration, much less HP. She looked as if she had taken a leisurely stroll through her backyard.

"How did she get here?" Blood Oath narrowed his eyes at Cleansing Flame.

The corridor was littered with Mechanical Golems, and many of them were Great Lords. There were also several Grand Lord ranked Mechanical Golems outside the hall. Not even his team would've made it to the altar hall safely without using a Tier 3 Group Invisibility Scroll.

And yet, despite being a Tier 2 player, Cleansing Flame had entered the hall without taking any obvious damage. It was also obvious that she hadn't used an Invisibility Scroll. It was astonishing.

While everyone stared at her, Cleansing Flame ignored War Blood's team and addressed Zwei.

"Commander! Reinforcements have arrived!" Cleansing Flame excitedly announced, her voice resonating throughout the hall. "We're saved!"

"Reinforcements?"

"This is great! We can finally leave this godforsaken place!"

Heaven's Blade's members released a held breath, joy, excitement, and relief washing over them.

The constant fighting and hiding had tormented their mental states, and they had been incredibly depressed when they thought about how Heaven's Blade might fall from their position as one of Dragonheart Island's top 10 adventurer teams once they were annihilated. How could they hold themselves back from celebrating now that reinforcements had arrived to save them?

Even if without the main branch, Heaven's Blade's strength could reach a new level with the Tree of Life's side branches.

"Reinforcements?" In contrast, Blood Oath was clearly unhappy about Cleansing Flame's announcement. "How did Thirteen Thrones' members get here so quickly?"

He knew that Thirteen Thrones was trying to rescue Heaven's Blade since the Super Guild's representative had contacted him, asking him to give up on his hunt for Zwei.

However, the idea of owning a Tree of Life was too tempting, and Thirteen Thrones' forces had been nowhere near Zwei's team. If War Blood could annihilate Heaven's Blade's team and secure the Tree of Life's main branch, Thirteen Thrones would likely let the matter slide. Furthermore, War Blood and Starlink were partners in this situation, and starting a war with both organizations wouldn't benefit Thirteen Thrones, especially not over a Tree of Life main branch.

If War Blood clashed with Thirteen Thrones' main force, however, it would be a different story. The Super Guild would consider it a declaration of war, and to protect its reputation, Thirteen Thrones wouldn't let War Blood or Starlink off the hook.

“Are we going to continue this fight, Commander Blood?” Sword Demon asked in a whisper to Blood Oath.

“This...” Blood Oath hesitated, unsure of which route to take.

With Thirteen Thrones’ members here, the tables had turned, but he didn’t want to give up now that he had set his sight on the Tree of Life’s branches.

While Blood Oath hesitated, Cleansing Flame spoke again, and the atmosphere changed again with her next statement.

“Commander, Guild Leader Black Flame and his three companions will be here soon. Then we can all get out of here safely,” Cleansing Flame said, joyfully jogging up to Zwei.

Prison Tiger and the rest of Heaven’s Blade’s members fell silent at that, their expressions twisting in disappointment. What was going on?

Zero Wing was their reinforcements?

After giving the matter some thought, Heaven’s Blade’s members realized what was happening. Cleansing Flame had informed them that she had secured Zero Wing’s help and was going to lead the Guild’s members to the inner corridor.

But why did Zero Wing only bring four people to rescue them?

“Did you misspeak, Flame? Are you sure it’s four people and not forty?” Prison Tiger anxiously asked.

There was a huge difference between four and forty people.

“No, I said what I meant, four people,” Cleansing Flame confirmed, shaking her head.

The statement rendered Heaven’s Blade’s members speechless. They all assumed there was something wrong with Cleansing Flame’s mind.

“Good! This is excellent! You actually dare to play us for fools!” Blood Oath gave Cleansing Flame a painfully cold look. “Do you really think you can just leave because Zero Wing is here?”

His team had seen his earlier hesitation, but he had only paused because he had thought Thirteen Thrones’ team had arrived. But now he learned that Zero Wing’s members had come, not Thirteen Thrones. To make matters worse, only four of Zero Wing’s members were coming to rescue Heaven’s Blade.

If everyone thought he had shrunk back in fear of four Zero Wing members, he’d be humiliated.

Blood Oath wasn’t the only one enraged. Every War Blood and Starlink member in the hall was furious. A Tier 2 player like Cleansing Flame had played them all for fools.

“You’ve doomed us, Flame,” Prison Tiger said, smiling bitterly when he noticed War Blood and Starlink’s members burn with rage and fighting spirit.

Cleansing Flame might've fooled Blood Oath and his companions, but her actions had only added fuel to the fire. Even if Zero Wing's members could help them, they'd likely have an even more difficult time dealing with their enemies now.

"Relax, Big Brother Tiger. We're safe now," Cleansing Flame confidently replied, smiling at Prison Tiger's gloomy expression.

"Safe?" Prison Tiger was at a loss for words.

War Blood and Starlink had arrived with a team of 32 players, and every one of them had already reached Tier 3. How could they possibly be safe against such a force?

"Kill them! Leave none alive!" Blood Oath snarled, his expression darkening when he saw the smile on Cleansing Flame's face.

War Blood and Starlink's experts moved in on Heaven's Blade's members, rage burning in their eyes. They wanted nothing more than to tear Heaven's Blade's team to shreds.

Boom!

Suddenly, before War Blood and Starlink's team could act, a deafening blast echoed throughout the hall. A gigantic figure, eight-meters-tall, then flew into the hall. The figure was made of steel and wielded a greatsword. It was a Guardian Soldier, a Grand Lord ranked Mechanical Golem.

The Guardian Soldier crashed into one of the hall's stone pillars, shattering it. Upon close inspection, one would notice the deep slice in the Golem's body, which nearly split the Grand Lord in two.

"A Guardian Soldier?"

"Who did this?"

Everyone in the hall was familiar with how powerful the Guardian Soldier was. Even Tier 3 MTs struggled to tank the Level 107 Grand Lord's normal attacks, and yet, a sword strike had sent it flying...

Before everyone could react, another deafening boom reached them from the inner corridor. This time, several Great Lord ranked Mechanical Golems were thrown into the hall. As clouds of dust filled the corridor, the players in the hall felt as if some monster lurked within. Moreover, this monster was approaching the altar hall.

Everyone suddenly felt a cold chill crawl down their spines as they watched the hall's exit, overwhelmed with anxiety.

As the dust settled, four cloaked players walked toward the hall. Blood Oath and the others were quite familiar with the figure in the lead, instantly recognizing him—Sword King, Black Flame!

Chapter 2423 – Black Flame's Might

The appearance of Shi Feng's group of four instantly made both sides freeze. At this moment, let alone War Blood's and Starlink's members, even Heaven's Blade's members had their mouths hanging.

After all, this scene was simply too shocking.

Everyone present was well aware of how powerful the inner corridor's golem army was. Both teams had suffered severe losses due to these golems. Anyone who tried to force their way through the golem army would suffer losses several times higher than if they employed crafty methods like using a Tier 3 Group Invisibility Scroll.

However, Shi Feng's group of four had not only brute-forced its way through the golem army but also sent so many golems flying into the altar hall. This was simply unbelievable.

“Black Flame!”

An indescribably dark expression appeared on Blood Oath's face when he saw Shi Feng, the words he spoke sounding as if they had come from the pits of hell.

At this point, Blood Oath's hatred for Shi Feng was immeasurable. After Shi Feng killed him in the Dragon-Phoenix Pavilion's Residence, his prestige in War Blood had gone up in smoke.

If not for his abilities and strength being sufficiently strong and the shares he held in War Blood, he most likely would've had difficulty remaining War Blood's commander. After all, unlike ordinary adventurer teams, War Blood had backing from major corporations. Hence, he wasn't the only decision maker in the organization.

Aside from Blood Oath, Starlink's Four Shadow Demons were also glaring at Shi Feng, belligerence written across their faces. All thoughts of fighting Zwei had vanished. Now, only Shi Feng existed in their eyes.

"I never thought that we would actually meet this brat here," Sword Demon said, a hint of excitement appearing on his face. "Ever since I got promoted to Tier 3, I've been itching to repay the humiliation he gave me. Wind, Mad, and Heart, you three get ready as well."

This was not the first time Sword Demon had seen Shi Feng displaying absurdly high Basic Attributes. Hence, he was not particularly surprised that Shi Feng had made it all the way here with just a group of four. On the contrary, his fighting spirit soared even higher. After all, ever since he got promoted to Tier 3, his strength had undergone a heaven-defying transformation. If Shi Feng had not improved as much as he had after getting promoted to Tier 3, then he would have been disappointed.

"You can count on us. Originally, I thought we wouldn't get an opportunity to exact revenge on him. Now that he's here, things could not be better!" Wind Demon replied eagerly.

After reaching Tier 3, the system restrictions on their bodies had been thoroughly lifted, which allowed them to control their bodies with much greater precision. In addition, the four of them had also learned a battle array. Shi Feng was undoubtedly the best target for them to test their new strength.

"Sword Demon, don't take this opportunity from me! He must die at my hands!" Blood Oath warned coldly when he saw the Four Shadow Demons preparing to take action. He could regain his lost reputation and prestige only by killing Shi Feng with his own two hands.

"Commander Blood, I'm afraid we cannot do that!" Sword Demon said, frowning as he rejected Blood Oath's warning. His desire to kill Shi Feng was not the slightest bit weaker than Blood Oath's. How could he possibly agree to leave Shi Feng to Blood Oath?

Meanwhile, upon seeing this scene, Heaven's Blade's members were stupefied.

"Crap! Just how much aggro has Black Flame built up with them?!" Prison Tiger blurted out when he saw Blood Oath and Sword Demon wrangling over who would kill Shi Feng.

Originally, War Blood and Starlink had partnered to target Heaven's Blade. However, the moment Shi Feng appeared, they fell out with each other and completely forgot about Heaven's Blade.

However, before Blood Oath and Sword Demon could settle their dispute, the Guardian Soldier that had clambered out of the remains of the stone pillar charged at Shi Feng without hesitation. At this moment, dark-green runes appeared all over the Guardian Soldier's steel body, and the ambient Mana flowed toward it rapidly. Its aura continuously intensified, and the cut on its body healed instantly.

"Oh no! The Guardian Soldier has gone berserk!" Prison Tiger exclaimed, his complexion paling when he saw the Guardian Soldier's transformation.

Although the Guardian Soldier was only a Level 107 Grand Lord, when it went berserk, its strength rivaled that of Mythic monsters of the same level. Even Zwei would not dare tank it in such a state.

To current superpowers, Level 100-plus Mythic monsters were still incredibly dangerous existences, killing even Tier 3 MTs in just two or three hits. Without special means, even the various superpowers' main forces would have to avoid fighting Level 100-plus Mythic monsters.

Hence, the Guardian Soldier was no trivial opponent now that it had gone berserk.

When Heaven's Blade's team came across berserk Guardian Soldiers before, they could only resort to Tier 4 Magic Scrolls to restrict the Grand Lords in order to escape. Unfortunately, they had already used up all their Tier 4 Magic Scrolls, so they were helpless against this berserk Guardian Soldier.

At this moment, aside from Heaven's Blade's members, War Blood's and Starlink's members also wore grim expressions on their faces. Although their team had previously defeated a berserk Guardian Soldier, they had paid a huge price.

In the next moment, the berserk Guardian Soldier arrived before Shi Feng and immediately swung its greatsword down at the Swordsman. As the greatsword covered in emerald runes descended, it tore through space and left a pitch-black trail.

"It's over!" Prison Tiger's heart sank when he saw the Guardian Soldier targeting Shi Feng's group.

From the fact that Shi Feng's group of four had managed to arrive at this hall, Prison Tiger could tell that they possessed extraordinary strength. These four Zero Wing members might not be able to save Heaven's Blade's team, but they would be of some help in the fight against War Blood and Starlink. Heaven's Blade's team might manage to flee again.

However, if the Guardian Soldier were to kill Shi Feng's group of four now, then Heaven's Blade's team would definitely be doomed.

Just as Prison Tiger and the others were about to shut their eyes and avoid watching the inevitable, Shi Feng suddenly unsheathed Killing Ray and held the Sacred Sword horizontally overhead. He showed no intention of dodging the Guardian Soldier's full-power slash at all.

Boom!

Along with the sound of an explosion, a powerful storm surged into the surroundings, nearly sweeping the Tier 2 players within a 100-yard radius off their feet.

How is this possible?! Prison Tiger, who stood a short distance away, gaped in shock at Shi Feng.

The Swordsman had actually blocked the Guardian Soldier's attack. Moreover, under the redirection of Shi Feng's sword, the Grand Lord's greatsword had landed beside the Swordsman. Hence, Shi Feng had barely taken any damage.

Meanwhile, War Blood's and Starlink's members were similarly gawking at Shi Feng in stupefaction.

The Guardian Soldier's attack was undoubtedly at the Tier 4 standard. Even a Tier 3 MT would suffer heavy injuries if they received this attack with a Lifesaving Skill. Shi Feng, however, had blocked it so easily.

Before everyone could wrap their head around this shocking scene, Shi Feng swung the Twilight Blade, which he held with his other hand, at the Guardian Soldier.

Tier 3 Legacy Skill, Void Slash!

Secret Technique, Lightning Flash!

Before becoming a Master Magician, Shi Feng could already execute his Tier 3 Skills at 90% Completion Rate or higher. Afterward, his control over his Mana Body improved significantly. As a result, the Completion Rate of his Tier 3 Skills reached whole new heights as well.

System: Void Slash Skill Completion Rate 99%. Skill Proficiency +5.

Suddenly, nine resplendent sword lights appeared and transformed into lightning arcs that pierced through the Guardian Soldier's body.

The Grand Lord's body shot back like a bullet and crashed into another stone pillar, shattering it. The Guardian Soldier then collapsed to the ground in a heavily damaged state.

As everyone stared at the prostrate Guardian Soldier, a deathly silence fell over the entire hall.

Chapter 2424 – Silenced

“Is he really just a Tier 3 player?” Prison Tiger was flabbergasted as he looked at the heavily injured Guardian Soldier.

He had experienced the strength of a berserk Guardian Soldier himself. Back then, it took all he had just to block one of the Grand Lord's attacks. Meanwhile, he had not only gotten sent flying by the attack but also lost more than two-thirds of his HP. If not for his commander's timely use of a Tier 4 Magic Scroll to bind the Guardian Soldier's movements, he wouldn't be standing here right now.

Shi Feng, however, had actually forcefully stopped the berserk Guardian Soldier's attack despite being a Tier 3 Sword King. Following that, he had heavily injured the Grand Lord with just one strike. His Strength Attribute was frighteningly high.

At this moment, aside from Heaven's Blade's members, even War Blood's and Starlink's members, who had planned to target Shi Feng, were stunned by this scene, their mouths hanging wide open as they gawked at the prostrate Guardian Soldier.

Damn it! How did he become so strong?! Blood Oath's expression turned indescribably heavy as he gazed at Shi Feng, his anger and fighting spirit fizzling out.

Previously, their team had managed to kill a berserk Guardian Soldier only after using three Tier 4 Magic Scrolls and sacrificing seven Tier 3 players. Although they had resurrected the fallen players afterward, the resurrected players still lost half a level, which would affect these players' progress considerably.

Now, however, Shi Feng had actually heavily injured the berserk Guardian Soldier so casually. If they fought the Swordsman, their losses would most likely be even worse than if they went up against a berserk Guardian Soldier. After all, players were different from monsters as opponents.

The movements of monsters were controllable to a certain extent through the manipulation of aggro. Monsters were also lacking when it came to dodging and blocking attacks; they merely relied on their high HP to outlast players.

In contrast, players might not have as much HP as monsters, but they could avoid and defend against attacks. In a fight between experts of equal combat standards, it would be very difficult to reach an outcome, unless there was a massive difference in Basic Attributes, as neither side would be able to land a vital hit easily. Both sides could only resort to a battle of attrition.

"Old Sword, it seems we have a problem. I'm afraid this brat's Basic Attributes are on par with those peerless monsters'. In fact, his might even be superior to theirs," Wind Demon said to Sword Demon as he watched the Guardian Soldier struggle to stand up.

There were three peerless experts on Dragonheart Island, and the various superpowers dreaded every one of them. Even Starlink did not dare offend these monstrous existences.

Meanwhile, the strength Shi Feng had just displayed was not the slightest bit inferior compared to those three peerless monsters’.

If it came down to a fight, even if the four of them utilized their newly learned battle array, victory over Shi Feng would still be a long row to hoe. Not to mention, there was still Heaven’s Blade’s Zwei. The strength she had displayed similarly exceeded their initial expectations.

“His Strength Attribute surpasses that of Grand Lords of the same level?” Sword Demon was filled with an indescribable sense of consternation as he stared at Shi Feng. “Just how many resources and opportunities did he receive?”

With Starlink’s backing, the resources Sword Demon had obtained were far beyond what Guild Leaders of first-rate Guilds got. In addition, while challenging his Tier 3 Promotion Quest, he had come across a fortuitous opportunity and secured himself a Strength-type Bloodline and Peak Legacy. Now, in terms of Strength, he was already close to rivaling Grand Lords of the same level. With the boost from the battle array, his Strength would surpass that of a Grand Lord.

In terms of Strength, he undoubtedly ranked at the top of God’s Domain. The only ones that could surpass him were Dragonheart Island’s top three experts.

However, those three peerless monsters all had a Super Guild supporting them. The resources and opportunities they received were far superior to his. Hence, his inferiority was only natural.

Shi Feng, however, had only Zero Wing behind him. Even though the Guild was allied with superpowers like the Dragon-Phoenix Pavilion and Unyielding Soul, producing a peerless expert should still be impossible for it.

Meanwhile, after a moment of silence, whether it was War Blood's or Starlink's Tier 3 experts, every one of them froze, their eyes brimming with fear as they looked at Shi Feng.

Heaven's Blade's members were stunned to see this.

The fact that Shi Feng had heavily injured a berserk Guardian Soldier with one move was already plenty shocking. Now, he even deterred War Blood's and Starlink's members from taking action. These 32 War Blood and Starlink members were not only Tier 3 players but also at the Void Realm standard at the very least.

If news of this matter spread, it would definitely cause a sensation throughout Dragonheart Island!

"No wonder Black Flame brought only three people with him to rescue us. He actually possesses such frightening strength. With this, War Blood and Starlink will have to think twice," Early Butterfly, a Tier 3 female Elementalist from Heaven's Blade, said joyfully when she saw this scene.

The three peerless monsters of Dragonheart Island were terrifyingly strong. Even the various superpowers' main forces were afraid of provoking them. Now, Shi Feng had revealed that his strength rivaled those three peerless monsters'. If he worked with Heaven's Blade's members, then War Blood and Starlink's chances of victory would be considerably low.

"What do you think, Big Brother Tiger? I didn't say anything wrong, right?" Cleansing Flame said proudly as she glanced at the stunned Prison Tiger.

She knew very clearly what kind of strength Shi Feng possessed. Even Demon Palace's main force was no match for him. War Blood and Starlink naturally wouldn't stand a chance against him, either.

At this moment, Cleansing Flame even started wondering how Prison Tiger would react if he found out that Shi Feng had repelled Demon Palace's main force members all by himself in a frontal confrontation.

Meanwhile, after Shi Feng heavily injured the Guardian Soldier, Cola, Turtledove, and Shadow Sword joined the fight. Although the three of them were not as strong as Shi Feng, they still weren't existences that War Blood's and Starlink's experts could take on one-on-one. Only Domain Realm experts like Blood Oath and the Four Shadow Demons would stand a chance against them.

For a time, the members of Heaven's Blade, War Blood, and Starlink watched quietly as Shi Feng's group of four took out the Guardian Soldier, an indescribably complex atmosphere filling the hall.

After looting the Guardian Soldier, Shi Feng turned to Blood Oath, a smile appearing on his face as he asked, "Commander Blood, you've been watching for quite some time now. Are you planning to leave on your own? Or do you want me to send you off?"

Although Blood Oath and the others had reached Tier 3, they still were not much of a threat to Shi Feng. After all, he possessed multiple Fragmented Legendary items. He would, at most, be wary of War Blood's and Starlink's hidden trump cards. After all, as Dragonheart Island's number one adventurer team, War Blood should've come across plenty of fortuitous opportunities. The strength it concealed definitely could not be underestimated.

At Shi Feng's words, Blood Oath's complexion turned ashen. For a moment, the Berserker wavered over his decision. If he chose to fight, he would have to go up against Shi Feng, someone whose strength rivaled Dragonheart Island's three peerless monsters'. If he chose to retreat, he would be abandoning an excellent opportunity to obtain a Tree of Life. In addition, War Blood's reputation would most likely take a hit. After all, it would be impossible to keep such a huge incident under wraps.

Meanwhile, when Heaven's Blade's members saw this scene, they could not help but look at Shi Feng in reverence.

Ever since War Blood became Dragonheart Island's number one adventurer team, it had remained in the limelight of Dragonheart Island. No superpower dared to offend it.

Aside from Shi Feng, there were most likely only a handful of individuals that could push War Blood to such an extent.

Right then, however, another commotion occurred in the inner corridor. Immediately, everyone turned to look at the altar hall's entrance.

In the next moment, a team consisting of 50-plus members walked out of the monster-infested inner corridor and into the hall. The powerful aura the team exuded surprised everyone present. Meanwhile, every one of these players sported Thirteen Thrones' Guild Emblem. Leading these Thirteen Thrones members was an elderly man—Elder Wu, one of Thirteen Thrones' Grand Elders.

Chapter 2425 – At the Brink of War?

With the appearance of Elder Wu's team, the silent atmosphere grew tense once more.

“Commander, this is bad. Elder Wu actually made a personal trip here,” Prison Tiger said, his expression turning grim when he saw Elder Wu and the two neat rows of Thirteen Thrones experts standing behind the elderly man.

Every one of the Thirteen Thrones members present was a Tier 3 player. They outnumbered War Blood's and Starlink's Tier 3 experts combined—a clear display of a Super Guild's strength.

Meanwhile, Elder Wu was someone every power operating on Dragonheart Island knew about. After all, this elderly man was one of Thirteen Thrones' Grand Elders and major shareholders. He had watched Thirteen Thrones grow from nothing into a Super Guild. Even Thirteen Thrones' current Guild Leader had to listen to Elder Wu's words. He was someone with authority within the Super Guild Thirteen Thrones.

In addition, Elder Wu had full control over Thirteen Thrones' development on Dragonheart Island. Even Thirteen Thrones' Guild Leader could not casually interfere in the Guild's development here.

To save itself, Heaven's Blade had had no choice but to make a transaction with Thirteen Thrones. Of course, the precondition for this transaction was for Thirteen Thrones to reach Heaven's Blade in the inner corridor ahead of Zero Wing. Whichever Guild managed to reach Heaven's Blade first would receive the Tree of Life's main branch.

The main branch should've gone to Zero Wing, as Shi Feng's group of four had reached Heaven's Blade's team first. However, with Thirteen Thrones' Elder Wu having personally made the trip to rescue Heaven's Blade's team, the situation was now much more complicated.

"It doesn't matter who they sent. A deal is a deal," Zwei said calmly. She remained utterly unfazed by the appearance of Elder Wu and Thirteen Thrones' experts. "We can only let Thirteen Thrones waste a trip here this time."

Upon hearing Zwei's words, Heaven's Blade's members could not help but gaze at her in awe and reverence. Her overwhelming strength and absolute justice were precisely the reason why they had chosen to join Heaven's Blade.

However, despite their sentiments, Heaven's Blade's members still felt their heads aching because of the current situation.

Thirteen Thrones was a Super Guild.

Having dispatched such a grand force to save Heaven's Blade, Thirteen Thrones was unlikely to tolerate returning empty-handed. Not to mention, a prestigious individual like Elder Wu was even leading the Super Guild's team this time.

If this matter was not handled properly, chances were high that Thirteen Thrones would decide to annihilate Heaven's Blade.

Meanwhile, on the other side, when Blood Oath saw Thirteen Thrones' arrival, his pale complexion suddenly brightened into a smile.

Nice timing! I want to see what Zero Wing is going to do in this situation! Blood Oath thought as he turned to look at Shi Feng, his excitement apparent for all to see.

Blood Oath knew about the agreement between Heaven's Blade and Thirteen Thrones. If Thirteen Thrones had reached Heaven's Blade before Zero Wing, he would indeed have considered the situation hopeless. After all, War Blood and Starlink's joint team stood no chance against the 50-plus Tier 3 experts Thirteen Thrones had dispatched.

Moreover, Elder Wu's left and right hands were also on this team. They were none other than the masked man and woman standing behind Elder Wu. Although this pair did not have any fame or

achievements on Dragonheart Island, Blood Oath had had them secretly investigated and learned that both of them were more than capable of ranking among the top 10 experts of Dragonheart Island. After all, both of them had secretly fought Demon Palace's Evil Qilin in a one-on-one fight before, with the result being a draw.

The presence of these two great experts, in addition to the 50 other Tier 3 experts, meant this team from Thirteen Thrones could move through Dragonheart Island completely unhindered. Even the three peerless monsters of Dragonheart Island would not be willing to clash with such a team unless absolutely necessary.

However, under the current circumstances, not only would Thirteen Thrones not become War Blood's enemy, but it would also serve as War Blood's greatest helper.

Unless Shi Feng was willing to give up on the Tree of Life's main branch, what awaited him would be Thirteen Thrones' sanctions. At that time, Blood Oath would not mind lending a hand to Thirteen Thrones.

During the time Heaven's Blade and War Blood were pondering over this matter, Elder Wu got a clear look at the situation inside the altar hall.

"Zero Wing arrived first?" Elder Wu's complexion turned slightly ugly when he saw Shi Feng.

The peak experts present were able to detect Elder Wu's change in complexion instantly. After all, the physique of Tier 3 players was incredibly powerful, allowing peak experts and above to perceive even the smallest changes in a person's expressions.

Immediately, the atmosphere in the hall chilled.

So, they're planning to fight? Prison Tiger's head ached when he sensed the change in the atmosphere. He then glanced at Cleansing Flame, who stood beside him, and said quietly, "Flame, can you try persuading Black Flame? A wise man does not fight when the odds are against him. We stand no chance against Thirteen Thrones' and War Blood's teams."

Prison Tiger knew very clearly that with Zwei's personality, it was utterly impossible to dissuade her from a decision she had made. Hence, their only hope now was to change Shi Feng's mind. If Shi Feng was willing to give up on the Tree of Life's main branch, then they could avoid fighting a futile battle. However, if Shi Feng was adamant in keeping the main branch, then a battle against Thirteen Thrones and War Blood would be inevitable.

"You want me to persuade him?" Cleansing Flame revealed a bitter smile upon hearing Prison Tiger's words. "Big Brother Tiger, I'm afraid that will be very difficult."

Through her journey with Shi Feng, she had gotten a clear idea of the man's personality. Similar to Zwei, Shi Feng would persist with his decisions regardless of the cost. Moreover, the decision to give up on the Tree of Life's main branch was for Zero Wing to make. An outsider like herself had no place in the decision-making process.

As Heaven's Blade's members racked their brains over this matter, Blood Oath and his team took the initiative to approach Elder Wu.

"Greetings, Elder Wu. I am Blood Oath, War Blood's commander," Blood Oath said, smiling. "I've been looking forward to meeting you for a long time now. Since you have made a personal trip here today, War Blood and Starlink will withdraw from the struggle for the Tree of Life."

"So, you're War Blood's commander. Younger people really are growing increasingly stronger with each generation." Elder Wu nodded his head approvingly at Blood Oath's respectful attitude.

“If Elder Wu requires War Blood’s help, please feel free to say so. We will definitely assist you to the best of our abilities,” Blood Oath offered, smiling. He then glanced at the distant Shi Feng and continued, “If there’s anybody that dares disrespect you, War Blood will definitely teach them a lesson.”

Blood Oath’s attitude immediately made the Heaven’s Blade members present nervous. They had never thought that Blood Oath would give up on the Tree of Life so decisively and even choose to side with Thirteen Thrones. This situation wasn’t beneficial to Heaven’s Blade or Zero Wing at all.

“Allow this old man to thank you, then,” Elder Wu said, chuckling. He then stopped paying attention to Blood Oath and started walking toward Shi Feng’s group of four, together with his subordinates.

As Elder Wu’s group approached Shi Feng, the anxiety Heaven’s Blade’s members felt ramped up. At the same time, the atmosphere also grew increasingly tenser. It felt as if a war would break out at any moment.

Hopefully, Guild Leader Black Flame won’t be too persistent, Cleansing Flame prayed inwardly.

Although the Tree of Life was important, there were still plenty of opportunities inside the Molten Ruin. If Zero Wing started a fight with Thirteen Thrones now, it would not gain any benefits. After all, Thirteen Thrones possessed far greater strength on Dragonheart Island than War Blood and Starlink combined.

Meanwhile, Blood Oath, who was watching this scene play out from a short distance away, wore a sneer on his face.

Now, so long as Shi Feng made one wrong decision, Zero Wing would face the full wrath of War Blood, Starlink, and Thirteen Thrones. Even if Shi Feng chose to compromise today, Zero Wing would still lose the Tree of Life.

Regardless of Shi Feng's decision, Zero Wing would not be gaining any benefits.

During the time everyone was anticipating a fight breaking out, Elder Wu arrived before Shi Feng and quietly observed the young Swordsman for a short moment.

"Guild Leader Black Flame, we meet again. I have to congratulate you this time. You actually reached this place so quickly from the Molten Ruin's outer corridor. This old man really cannot help but admire you. If you have some spare time in the future, you should pay a visit to Thirteen Thrones' Residence. You remember Happy Art, right? That little girl has been pestering me to form a partnership with Zero Wing," Elder Wu said with a friendly smile, his behavior making it seem as if he had just met an old friend.

Meanwhile, upon hearing Elder Wu's words, whether it was War Blood's or Heaven's Blade's members, they could not help but gape at this scene, unable to wrap their heads around this situation.

Chapter 2426 – He Is a Peerless Monster

"What's going on?"

"Why is Elder Wu treating Black Flame so politely?"

Everyone in the hall stared at the old man in astonishment, unable to believe what was happening.

Elder Wu was a great authority in Thirteen Thrones, which even the Guild Leader had to bow to. Moreover, he was one of the most influential figures on Dragonheart Island. What possible reason would he have to act so friendly with a pseudo-superpower's Guild Leader?

What is going on?! Is Thirteen Thrones giving up on the Tree of Life?! Shock and confusion overcame Blood Oath as he watched Elder Wu.

The Tree of Life was a treasure that could tempt any superpower. It was capable of producing Water of Life, after all, which was necessary for resurrecting NPCs. A Tree of Life nurtured from a main branch could also bear Fruits of Life, which could increase Personal Guards' Growth Potential. A source of such valuable items would be a significant boon to any superpower.

Blood Oath had been clear about his offer to help Thirteen Thrones eliminate Zero Wing's few players for free, yet Elder Wu had decided to give up on this golden opportunity. It was utterly baffling.

War Blood and Starlink's team wasn't the only one confused. Heaven's Blade's members were just as astonished by the situation.

"What kind of person is he?" Prison Tiger muttered as he gazed at Shi Feng.

Elder Wu was famed for using force to get what he wanted on Dragonheart Island. He never even showed the other superpowers' Guild Leaders any respect. Furthermore, he had fought two superpowers over a treasure at sea; the incident had shocked everyone on the island. That treasure had only been an Epic item, which wasn't even in the same league as a main branch from the Tree of Life.

Prison Tiger had been certain that Elder Wu would move against Zero Wing, and Heaven's Blade wouldn't be able to do anything about it. Thirteen Thrones had never promised not to steal the branch from Zero Wing if the Guild's team won it. If Elder Wu ordered an attack, he wouldn't be breaking any promises.

But not only hadn't Elder Wu attacked Shi Feng's 4-man party. Rather, he had personally congratulated the Swordsman. For a moment, Prison Tiger even wondered if Shi Feng weren't actually Zero Wing's Guild Leader, but the leader of some Super Guild.

In truth, Elder Wu's amicable greeting had even surprised Shi Feng. He had never expected the old man to take such a friendly tone with him.

After a moment of silence, Shi Feng smiled and replied, "Elder Wu, your praise is too generous. If I have time, I will certainly pay Thirteen Thrones a visit. I believe there are many ways a partnership between our Guilds could benefit us in God's Domain."

Based on Elder Wu's attitude, Shi Feng realized that he wanted to form an alliance regarding the Tree of Life, which was wonderful news for Zero Wing. Not only was Thirteen Thrones a veteran Super Guild, but it also dominated a large section of the eastern continent. A partnership with Thirteen Thrones would greatly benefit Zero Wing's development.

Moreover, nurturing a Tree of Life's main branch wasn't, by any means, easy. Doing so would require many precious resources. Even if Heaven's Blade kept its main branch, the adventurer team didn't have enough resources to grow it into a Tree of Life. In the end, it would only be a very expensive decoration.

"It's a deal, then. Little Art will be overjoyed to hear this," Elder Wu said, his smile becoming even more companionable with Shi Feng's agreement.

"Of course. Zero Wing has always been open to working with Thirteen Thrones," Shi Feng said, nodding.

He wasn't joking about his interest in forming a mutually beneficial relationship with the Super Guild.

Thirteen Thrones' territory on the eastern continent was one of flatlands and mountainous regions. Because of that, the Super Guild had access to all sorts of well-known ores, including materials required to produce Level 100-plus weapons and equipment.

This was the very reason that Thirteen Thrones had enjoyed such an advantage in acquiring Level 100-plus weapons and equipment during his previous life.

If Zero Wing could negotiate for a stable supply of materials from Thirteen Thrones, it could surpass other superpowers when it came to equipment production, and the Guild wouldn't have to worry about a lack of materials due to limited territory.

Zero Wing still relied on the public market and the Secret Pavilion's connections as its main source of materials, but neither source was reliable. The materials available on both markets depended on how willing the various powers were to sell their materials. If the various powers refused to sell, securing the materials Zero Wing needed would be considerably challenging.

Because the drop-rate for weapons and equipment decreased drastically after Level 100, the materials necessary for producing such items had reached astronomical prices, and supply had been extremely limited during Shi Feng's previous life. Most of the market's items had come from independent players, and there hadn't been enough to support a Guild's development.

This was also why first-rate Guilds hadn't been able to outcompete superpowers after mainstream players had reached Level 100.

Meanwhile, everyone's jaws hung open as they watched Shi Feng and Elder Wu's pleasant conversation. As experts, they could all determine a player's emotional state.

If Elder Wu had only been performing for the sake of propriety, he was now truly treating Shi Feng as a friend and speaking with the Swordsman as an equal. Not even Blood Oath, War Blood's commander, qualified to receive such treatment.

After conversing for a short while, Shi Feng and Elder Wu parted ways. Keeping with his agreement with Heaven's Blade, Shi Feng then guided the adventurer team's members out of the Molten Ruin.

Black Flame! Blood Oath gnashed his teeth as he watched Shi Feng leave the hall alongside Heaven's Blade's team, his rage spilling forth and causing the players around him to shudder.

Blood Oath had already suffered a massive blow to his reputation after Shi Feng had slain him in the Dragon-Phoenix Pavilion's Residence, and now, he had to stand aside and watch the man lead Heaven's Blade's members out of his grasp. It was unprecedentedly humiliating.

"Commander Blood, you need to calm down. Thirteen Thrones' people are still here. Taking action now wouldn't be appropriate," Sword Demon quietly advised War Blood's leader.

Shi Feng's most recent display had proven that he could nearly rival Dragonheart Island's three peerless monsters, and the man had just solidified a relationship with Thirteen Thrones. If War Blood and Starlink attacked Zero Wing's small party now, they'd be digging their own graves.

With Sword Demon's warning, Blood Oath calmed immediately. He then shifted his gaze toward Thirteen Thrones' members, who stood a short distance away.

He realized that all of Thirteen Thrones' members were staring at his team, and based on their postures, they were clearly prepared for battle. It left no room for doubt that Thirteen Thrones' team would attack him if he tried to pull anything against Zero Wing.

Blood Oath was stupefied.

He could understand if Thirteen Thrones had simply intended to give up on the fight for the Tree of Life's main branch and maintained a neutral stance, but the Super Guild's players chose to side with Shi Feng. Blood Oath even wondered if they were putting on an act. Since when had Zero Wing and Thirteen Thrones been so friendly with each other?

Once Shi Feng's group was out of sight from the altar hall, Blood Oath shifted his gaze toward Elder Wu.

"What is the meaning of this, Elder Wu?" Blood Oath boldly demanded. "Even if you hadn't come for the Tree of Life, was it necessary to do this to us?!"

Blood Oath knew that even if they combined their strength, War Blood and Starlink were no match for Thirteen Thrones, but that didn't mean that they couldn't stand up to a Super Guild. Normally, he would've shown Thirteen Thrones the respect it deserved and let the matter slide. However, he couldn't care less if he were being disrespectful to Elder Wu right now. Besides, Thirteen Thrones wouldn't start a war with War Blood and Starlink over a simple question.

"I am doing this for your own good," Elder Wu answered. Surprisingly, he wasn't insulted by Blood Oath's rudeness. He actually chuckled and shook his head.

"What do you mean?" Blood Oath's anger grew. By protecting Zero Wing, Elder Wu had basically slapped him in the face, yet the old man was saying it had been for his own good. This was laughable.

“I know Demon Palace is supporting War Blood, so you think that you have nothing to fear on Dragonheart Island,” Elder Wu said as he shot Blood Oath a sidelong glance. Sneering, he continued, “However, I’m afraid that you aren’t aware that not long ago, Black Flame defeated Demon Palace’s main force members, who had been led by Evil Qilin himself. In fact, Black Flame very nearly killed Evil Qilin with one move. Now, Black Flame has been publicly acknowledged as a peerless monster. I’m sure the news will spread across Dragonheart Island soon. Now that you know, do you still wish to pick a fight with that Swordsman?”

Chapter 2427 – Dragonheart Shocked

When they heard Elder Wu’s explanation, War Blood and Starlink’s members gasped, filled with shock and disbelief.

“Elder Qilin’s team lost?” Blood Oath muttered, stunned. It was hard to believe, but Elder Wu had no reason to lie to him. He was also aware that Evil Qilin had led some of Demon Palace’s main force members into the Molten Ruin.

However, not only was Evil Qilin one of Demon Palace’s Elders, but he also ranked among the top 10 experts on Dragonheart Island. Not even Sword Demon was as powerful.

Moreover, Evil Qilin had his two vice commanders from Demon Palace’s third trump card legion to support him in combat, and Blood Oath had experienced their strength personally. Both could even put up a good fight against Sword Demon. Although the rest of Evil Qilin’s team was slightly weaker, they were all Tier 3 experts with the Demonic Hell Word’s special Legacy. Aside from Dragonheart Island’s three peerless monsters’ teams, no power on the island should be able to defeat Evil Qilin’s team.

And yet, Elder Wu had just informed them that Shi Feng had done just that. Moreover, Shi Feng had nearly instant- killed Evil Qilin. How could Blood Oath believe something so outlandish?

“I know you don’t believe me, but I have the battle video of that encounter. You can take a look for yourself,” Elder Wu said, smiling at Blood Oath’s frozen expression. He then sent the video to War Blood’s commander.

In truth, Elder Wu was a little annoyed that War Blood had ignored Thirteen Thrones’ warning and continued its pursuit of Heaven’s Blade’s team. Hence, he hadn’t minded letting Blood Oath and his team learn their true worth.

For now, Shi Feng’s battle video wasn’t available to the public, but War Blood should be capable enough to acquire it, which was why Elder Wu didn’t mind revealing this secret.

How is this possible? Blood Oath watched the video, utterly stupefied. The battle’s outcome was even more unbelievable than he had imagined.

Not only did the video show Shi Feng nearly instant-killing Evil Qilin, but it also displayed Demon Palace’s retreat as the team fled like rats from a sinking ship. The battle between Shi Feng and Demon Palace’s experts had been completely one-sided...

“With the players you have here, your team isn’t enough to take on Black Flame alone. Of course, if you think you can defeat Dragonheart Island’s peerless monsters, you can challenge the man,” Elder Wu said, still smiling as he saw Blood Oath’s expression shift to one of horror.

It’s no wonder why he ignored us. So, he already this powerful.” Even Sword Demon paled when he saw the video.

Sword Demon knew that he was just slightly stronger than Dark Scorpion, and that was only because he had superior combat standards. Shi Feng, however, had killed Dark Scorpion in one move. Sword Demon doubted that he would've fared any better if he had been in Dark Scorpion's place. Even if he activated his battle array, he would, at most, rival Evil Qilin's power. The outcome of a battle with Shi Feng wouldn't be any different for him.

Complex emotions swam within Blood Oath. He felt both terrified and fortunate.

The fact that Shi Feng had become a peerless monster after reaching Tier 3 petrified him, and he celebrated the fact that he hadn't rushed into a fight with the Swordsman. War Blood would've suffered so severely that it might have been forced to use its trump cards, which Blood Oath wanted to avoid more than anything.

"I've already done you a kindness in warning you. I've heard that War Blood has a grudge against Zero Wing. If that's the case, you should be careful in the future," Elder Wu said, chuckling before he left the hall with his team.

War Blood had disregarded Thirteen Thrones after gaining Demon Palace's support, but now that Zero Wing had a peerless monster like Shi Feng, War Blood would have a tough road ahead.

That despicable old fox! Blood Oath inwardly cursed as he watched Elder Wu's departing figure.

Elder Wu hadn't told him this out of kindness, but as a warning to War Blood. Now that the adventurer team's backer had made such a powerful enemy, War Blood had lost its reason to act so arrogantly.

"Commander, I'm afraid that our future is going to be challenging now that Black Flame is so strong," Ink Feather said.

They had clashed with Zero Wing on Dragonheart Island frequently. If Shi Feng disregarded his reputation and moved against War Blood's experts personally, the adventurer team would suffer grave losses. War Blood would be utterly helpless before the Swordsman...

"It seems I'll have to have a chat with Demon Palace and Starlink," Blood Oath said. He, too, understood that the situation had grown beyond War Blood's capabilities. A peerless monster had astonishing strength and influence. War Blood's only hope of survival was to rely on the two superpowers.

Meanwhile, news of Shi Feng's victory over Evil Qilin's team spread like wildfire. The strength he had displayed had particularly shocked Dragonheart Island's various superpowers. Only the island's three peerless monsters had the strength to defeat a team of that caliber single-handedly.

This incident had also begun to change the various superpowers' attitudes regarding Zero Wing.

The various superpowers had only felt that Zero Wing's peak combatants could rival those from ordinary superpowers, but when it came to overall strength, the Guild couldn't compare.

However, after this event, the various superpowers began to view Zero Wing as an equal. At the very least, they intended to treat Shi Feng, Zero Wing's Guild Leader, as respectfully as they did Guild Leaders of actual superpowers.

And this was all because of Shi Feng had been recognized as a peerless monster now that he had reached Tier 3.

It wasn't easy to reach Tier 3 in God's Domain. Even peak experts had less than a 50% chance to succeed. Although more players would complete their Tier 3 Promotion quests as they reached higher levels and obtained better equipment, they would still be a minority among God's Domain's player base.

Moreover, there would be a huge difference in players' strength depending on what difficulty they completed. All of the game's superpowers acknowledged this fact.

Based on the fighting combat power Shi Feng had displayed, it was clear that Shi Feng had completed a very high difficulty setting with his Tier 3 Promotion Quest. His potential growth and strength couldn't be underestimated.

While Dragonheart Island's denizens reeled over Shi Feng's strength, he had safely escorted Heaven's Blade's members out of the Molten Ruin. During their journey, the various superpowers' experts they had encountered had stared at Shi Feng as if they had seen a ghost, and they promptly made way for the team.

The spectacular scene had dumbfounded Heaven's Blade's members. It also reaffirmed that in God's Domain, strength was everything.

Commander Zwei was extremely powerful and ranked among Dragonheart Island's top MTs, but not even she could instill such fear and command such respect from the various superpowers.

"Thank you for escorting us out personally, Guild Leader Black Flame. According to our previous agreement, this main branch from the Tree of Life is yours," Zwei said when she sensed the seal on her lift. She then took a dark-gray crystalline tree branch out of her bag and said, "However, this branch has already withered. I'm afraid returning it to life will be very difficult."

Regardless of how precious the Tree of Life's main branch was, it had withered. Unlike the side branches, she couldn't sense a trace of life energy from the main branch. Although Shi Feng had earned it, whether or not he could nurture it into a Tree of Life was uncertain.

“It’s dead?” When he received the crystalline branch, Shi Feng inspected it with Omniscient Eyes.

Chapter 2428 – Tree of Life’s Quality

Shi Feng didn’t know how Zwei had verified that the main branch had withered, but his Omniscient Eyes wasn’t an ordinary appraisal Skill. His Omniscient Eyes would reveal more detailed information. He might still have a chance of nurturing the branch.

The moment Shi Feng activated Omniscient Eyes, a 30-second loading bar appeared before him.

Even a withered main branch from the Tree of Life is such an amazing item? Shi Feng stared at the crystalline branch in astonishment.

For Epic items, Omniscient Eyes only required 21 or 22 seconds, yet appraising this crystalline branch would require half a minute. Obviously, the Tree of Life main branch was even more valuable than an Epic item.

Furthermore, this was only a branch from the Tree of Life, not the actual tree. Moreover, Zwei insisted that the branch had already withered, which meant it shouldn’t be nearly as valuable as a living branch.

In God’s Domain, the Elven race considered the Tree of Life a holy relic. It wasn’t a true Divine Artifact, but its abilities and value were close.

Of course, not all Trees of Life were that valuable. Trees of Life were special items that contained life energy. They generally ranked between Epic and Legendary rank. The most powerful Tree of Life belonged to the Elven race and was rumored to be on the cusp of becoming a true Divine Artifact[1].

Despite its lack of life energy, the withered branch in his hand was more powerful than an Epic item, which proved that it had great potential.

Please don't let it be garbage! Even if it doesn't have any life energy, please have less than a 95% Withered Rate! Shi Feng silently prayed as he watched the loading bar fill.

The Tree of Life was not a unique item. Many superpowers had obtained them in the past, but only a few had successfully nurtured a Tree of Life of their own.

Naturally, a branch's Withered Rate.

Based on the various powers' research, a branch had no chance of surviving if it had a 95% or higher Withered Rate, regardless of whether it was a main or side branch. The lower the Withered Rate was, the greater the chances of survival the branch would have.

Branches that were empty of life energy generally had an 80% or higher Withered Rate, which included the main branch in Shi Feng's hands.

Shi Feng knew that the main branches the various powers had obtained during his previous life hadn't usually contained life energy. However, these branches were incredibly valuable, and as long as one could grow them, they'd be at least as valuable as several Fragmented Legendary items.

Fragmented Legendary items were some of the rarest and most valuable treasures in God's Domain. Not even first-rate Guilds had had more than 15 of them, on average, in the past.

First-rate Guilds had held full control over entire kingdoms and over a million Guild members, but despite the resources in their grasp, they had only secured a small number of Fragmented Legendary items.

Time passed slowly for Shi Feng as he grew increasingly nervous while he watched the seconds pass.

Ten seconds... Twenty seconds...

While Shi Feng stared intently at the crystalline branch, Zwei spoke up.

"Guild Leader Black Flame, Heaven's Blade has only dodged a tragedy because of your timely arrival. If you are interested, we will trade you a side branch for one Level 100-plus Epic item," Zwei suggested as she watched the focused man before her.

Zero Wing had certainly helped Heaven's Blade a great deal. Had Shi Feng's group arrived just a few minutes later, Heaven's Blade would've lost everything. She simply wasn't satisfied with repaying Shi Feng by offering a withered main branch from the Tree of Life.

"There's no need to feel bad about this, commander Zwei. A deal is a deal. In fact, Zero Wing has greatly benefited from this transaction. Nurturing a Tree of Life from a side branch isn't easy, and Heaven's Blade has suffered considerable losses in the Molten Ruin. If you sell another branch, your expedition will have been a complete waste of time," Shi Feng said, shaking his head as he refused Zwei's well-intentioned offer. "How about this? If you have any rare materials you wish to sell, Zero Wing would like to buy them at market price."

A Tree of Life's side branch was worth several Level 100-plus Epic items. If he accepted Zwei's offer, Zero Wing would massively profit.

However, the Tree of Life's side branches weren't that important to Shi Feng. Rather than profit from a one-time trade, he'd prefer to deepen the relationship between Heaven's Blade and Zero Wing.

Heaven's Blade was the fifth-ranked adventurer team on Dragonheart Island, and although it couldn't compare to the various superpowers, its naval prowess shouldn't be underestimated. It also had several dozen powerful adventurer teams under its command. Overall, Heaven's Blade had just as much access to the ocean's resources as the Dragon- Phoenix Pavilion.

As God's Domain's players progressed in the game, the various powers would turn their focus toward the sea. God's Domain was more ocean than land, after all. Even if Zero Wing eventually grew its naval strength, it would only be able to secure a small fraction of the available resources, which was why, despite having superior naval prowess, Starlink had chosen to ally with War Blood.

If Zero Wing could secure an alliance with Heaven's Blade and gain a stable source of materials, this partnership would be worth far more than a side branch from the Tree of Life.

"Alright, if you insist. From now on, we will sell all of the rare materials that we would've otherwise sold on the market to Zero Wing," Zwei agreed, somewhat taken aback. She had never thought that Shi Feng would refuse her offer. The Tree of Life's side branches were also highly sought after, even by the various superpowers. She then turned to Cleansing Flame and said, "Flame, from now on, you'll be the vice commander in charge of materials. You'll also be responsible for handling transactions with Zero Wing."

Cleansing Flame was stunned. She hadn't expected Zwei to promote her to vice commander so suddenly. However, she quickly recovered from her daze and nodded, "Understood!"

Heaven's Blade's other members couldn't help but envy their companion.

Heaven's Blade might not be a superpower, but it was a top adventurer team with tens of thousands of members and several dozen large-scale adventurer teams under its commander. Even Dragonheart Island's first-rate powers had to treat Heaven's Blade's current four vice commanders with respect.

Why wouldn't they be jealous that Cleansing Flame had just become the adventurer team's fifth vice commander?

Of course, despite their envy, nobody objected to the promotion. Cleansing Flame was a bona fide Void Realm expert. She merely bene unlucky during her Tier 3 Promotion Quest, failing it. Her combat standards, however, definitely qualified her for the position. The only reason she hadn't been promoted previously was because she hadn't contributed enough to the adventurer team.

After this expedition to the Molten Ruin, however, that was no longer the case. Their main force had only avoided utter destruction thanks to Cleansing Flame's success in acquiring Shi Feng's help. That major achievement was more than enough for her to earn the position of vice commander.

Even Yu Luo was a little jealous of Cleansing Flame. She had gotten lucky running into a peerless monster like Shi Feng, becoming a vice commander before Yu Luo.

Yu Luo had been surprised when her team encountered Zwei and Shi Feng's group halfway through their journey into the inner corridor. She had never expected Shi Feng to reach her commander successfully, and based on what Zwei's team members told her, it seemed that Shi Feng had suppressed War Blood and Starlink's 32 Tier 3 experts with his presence alone.

Just you wait! Sooner or later, I'll become a vice commander through my own strength! Yu Luo inwardly swore as she glanced at Shi Feng.

While Heaven's Blade's members envied Cleansing Flame, the loading bar before Shi Feng completed. The crystalline branch's Attribute Panel then appeared before him.

What?! This is a Tree of Life branch that has survived since the Great Destruction?!

Chapter 2429 – Divine Artifact Ranked Tree of Life

Shi Feng stared at the Attribute Panel before him, stunned, and he even wondered if he were dreaming.

[Withered Tree of Life's Main Branch] (Special Fragmented Legendary Rank)

A withered main branch from the Tree of Life. This branch contains a trace of the World Energy that has survived since the Great Destruction, which is why it continues to exist, even now.

Withered Rate: 94%

The branch's introduction was simple and brief. Players new to God's Domain wouldn't see any value in the crystalline branch, but Shi Feng, who knew plenty about this world, was a different story.

The Elven race's Tree of Life was the oldest Tree of Life still alive in God's Domain. It was also the highest-quality Tree of Life, yet it had only grown after the Great Destruction.

However, the main branch in Shi Feng's hand was even older. It was unbelievable.

Before the Great Destruction, God's Domain had enjoyed the era of the Gods, an age when even Gods and roamed the continent. One could only imagine how amazing the world had been.

It was no exaggeration to say that even an ordinary item that had survived since the Great Destruction was an absolute treasure in the present day. Shi Feng couldn't even begin to imagine what the rank the Trees of Life that had existed at that time had been.

For all he knew, those Trees of Life might have been Divine Artifacts!

Divine Artifacts could determine the prosperity or death of an entire race. Such items had been like the Ancient God's children.

Shi Feng had only seen two Divine Artifacts' Attribute Panels in the War God's Temple due to a Legendary ranked Main Storyline Quest. The War God's Temple was one of the strongest powers in God's Domain; not a single kingdom or empire could rival it. And yet, despite such power, the War God's Temple only had two Divine Artifacts in its possession.

Before today, Shi Feng hadn't understood the true strength of Divine Artifacts. In fact, he had even wondered if players could actually get their hands on one.

Even after a decade in God's Domain, no one had ever heard of a player acquiring a Divine Artifact. The strongest items he had heard of players obtaining were Legendary rank.

A Legendary item could allow a player to transcend tiers. If a player stumbled across a Divine Artifact, they'd gain unimaginable strength.

Although the Tree of Life was neither a weapon nor a piece of equipment, it could produce valuable items, such as the Water of Life, Fruits of Life, and Nuclei of Life. The higher the Tree of Life's rank was, the more of these items it could produce, and the shorter its production cycles would be.

At the Fragmented Legendary rank, a Tree of Life had a one-month production cycle, which would only yield three of each item. A Tree of Life at Legendary rank could produce three to five items every fortnight.

Its Withered Rate is so high, at 94%. It's just 1% away from becoming useless. I'll have less than a 10% chance of restoring it to life. Shi Feng could not help but frown at the branch's Withered Rate.

He knew that a branch would be useless if it had a 95% or higher Withered Rate, but only one power had successfully nurtured a Tree of Life from a 94% Withered branch. Moreover, that had only been a side branch.

Of course, there was no difference between restoring a main branch or side branch. Both would need a steady supply of materials that contained high-purity Mana and life energy to restore the branch's life force, allowing it to grow naturally.

Not even the various superpowers were guaranteed to return life to a Fragmented Legendary ranked branch with a 94% Withered Rate.

Restoring life to the branch would require Legendary ranked materials with exceptional Mana and life energy. Such Legendary materials were painfully rare. One would have to rely on luck to obtain them.

After giving the matter some thought, Shi Feng found the situation reasonable. Compared to a Divine Artifact ranked Tree of Life, Legendary materials were insignificant.

It seems I'll have to prepare for my trip to the western continent properly, Shi Feng inwardly decided.

As far as he knew, there were only two Legendary materials that filled the criteria to restore the branch in his hand.

The first was the World Core, an item that would only appear when a world was destroyed. Only three World Cores had ever appeared during Shi Feng's previous life, and at least a dozen superpowers had fought desperately over each one.

The World Core was the best material for producing Legendary items. Players had even considered them Divine Artifact-level items back then.

The second material Shi Feng knew of was the Star of Light.

The Star of Light was a super-rare material that could only be found inside massive stars that fell on the western continent. Players had only found six Stars of Light in the past. Although they weren't as rare as World Cores, they were even more valuable than Fragmented Legendary items.

One could use a Star of Light as the core of a city's magic array. Not only would this substantially increase a city's defenses and Mana density, but the city's magic array would also absorb starlight at night, automatically replenishing its Mana reserves and reducing the city's Magic Crystal cost. Stars of Light were the ideal energy core for Guild Cities.

After inspecting the crystalline branch, Shi Feng parted ways with Heaven's Blade's members and left the Molten Ruin with Cola and his comrades. He didn't want to waste even a second more.

The Molten Ruin might have a lot of treasures and Flying Mount eggs, but they were nothing compared to the Tree of Life. Furthermore, Zero Wing already had the Crimson Dragon Flying Ship Design. As long as the Guild had enough materials, it could mass-produce flying ships for its members, which would be a much more reliable method of obtaining Flying Mounts.

Most importantly, if he could restore life to the main branch he now owned, he would have a source of Fruits of Life. Not only would he be able to increase the Growth Potential of the Guild's Personal Guards, but he could also increase their Flying Mounts' potential.

In God's Domain, a Flying Mount's rank made the difference in how much it could help players.

Shi Feng would also have a source for Nuclei of Life, a super-rare material that he could use to forge Epic Weapons and Equipment.

Just as Shi Feng was about to return to White River City with his party, however, he received a call request. The caller was none other than Phoenix Rain, whom Shi Feng hadn't been able to contact while the Molten Ruin was still sealed.

"Phoenix Pavilion Master, has something happened in the ruin?" Shi Feng asked.

He had initially planned to meet up with Fire Dance and Phoenix Rain's team to prevent War Blood and Starlink's members from ambushing them, but since his victory over Evil Qilin's team had come to light,

he was confident that his enemies wouldn't cause more trouble. Hence, he had decided there was no point in convening 她h 也em 抓d 1杖 continue exploring the Molten Ruin.

He had other concerns right now, and Fire Dance and Phoenix Rain's team should be strong enough to handle anything the Molten Ruin could throw at them.

"Nothing's wrong in the Molten Ruin. In fact, War Blood and Starlink's members have chosen to leave us alone," Phoenix Rain said, smiling. "We've also gotten quite lucky. So far, we've found two Horned Eagle Eggs."

"You've already found so many?" Shi Feng was surprised to hear it.

Although the Molten Ruin was a treasure trove, obtaining so many Flying Mounts in it shouldn't be possible. He figured the ruin would have, at most, 20 Horned Eagle Eggs. Otherwise, Flying Mounts would've been widely available in his previous life, not the luxury items they had been. With so few eggs available, Fire Dance and Phoenix Rain's group would be fortunate to find a single one.

And yet, after only spending a few hours in the Molten Ruin, they had already found two eggs. Even if luck played a role, their harvest was astounding. Moreover, Phoenix Rain and her team had only explored the outer corridor. They'd likely find even more abundant treasures in the inner corridor.

"We got lucky and stumbled across a hidden room," Phoenix Rain said, nodding. Jokingly, she continued, "However, I didn't call you just to brag. I've just received a message from headquarters stating that Mythology's representatives have visited the Dragon-Phoenix Pavilion's main Residence. The Great Pavilion Master has recalled both Pavilion Masters. I don't think Mythology is visiting with good intentions, so I'd like to invite Lord Peerless Monster to make the trip back with me. With you by my side, I'll have more leeway."

"Mythology?" Shi Feng frowned at the mention of the name. He hadn't expected Fang Shihan to act so soon and lock on to Phoenix Rain. "Alright, I'll head your way immediately!"

He wasn't sure if Mythology was trying to wound Zero Wing by pressuring the Dragon-Phoenix Pavilion, but he didn't mind using this opportunity to show off Zero Wing's strength.

After disconnecting the call, Shi Feng contacted Melancholic Smile.

"Melancholic, how is the production for the Crimson Dragon Flying Ships coming along?"

Chapter 2430 – Mythology

Dawn Ridge, Twilight City:

The Dawn Ridge was located right next to the Level 100 neutral map closest to the Apocalypse Empire, and it had long since become a hub for mainstream players. Many superpowers had established Guild Towns and Cities in the area, but of all the towns and cities in the map, the most popular was Twilight City. Twilight City had a player population of 3,000,000 and was in no way inferior to NPC cities.

The Dawn Ridge was located between a mountainous region and the sea, and Twilight City had been established on a hill near the shore. Not only did players have easy access to the sea from the city, but they could also reach a Level 100 neutral map quite quickly. The location was a convenience for players that occasionally operated on the ocean, which was why the city was so popular.

Aside from the city's convenient location, Twilight City was so popular because it was home to the Dragon-Phoenix Pavilion's main headquarters. It was the most well-developed Guild City the Dragon-Phoenix Pavilion owned, and it was far safer than any other Guild Towns or Cities in the Dawn Ridge.

Meanwhile, several flashes of light illuminated the Dragon-Phoenix Pavilion's Guild Hall as Phoenix Rain and her team returned to the Residence. The moment the idling Guild members noticed her group, they adopted a respectful attitude, particularly the young men and women who had recently joined the Pavilion. When they saw Phoenix Rain's alluring, mysterious figure clad in bright-red robes, they were mesmerized.

The Pavilion Master is amazing. Not only is she so charismatic, but she also completed her high-difficulty Tier 3 quest in one attempt. She's even Level 103 already. I wish I could join her personal security team. I'd get to play God's Domain with her every day," a Level 100 female Elementalist gushed, watching Phoenix Rain with starry eyes.

"Stop dreaming. You've just joined the Guild, yet you want to become the Pavilion Master's personal bodyguard? Only the top-ranked newcomers have a chance to earn such a position. You should've seen those monstrous players. Even if our Basic Attributes were equalized, they could single-handedly take out several dozen of us." A male Berserker, the Elementalist's team leader, rolled his eyes.

Once upon a time, he, too, had dreamed of earning such a high position in the Guild, but since he had begun to participate in the Dragon-Phoenix Pavilion's training sessions and began to grow stronger, he fell into even greater despair. The difference between him and the Guild's geniuses was more than just a matter of Basic Attributes.

In ordinary Guilds, a Refinement Realm expert would be considered a part of the Guild's backbone, but in the Dragon-Phoenix Pavilion, it was the minimum requirement to become a core member. Players would only become a pillar of strength once they reached the Void Realm.

Usually, only the top 10 players of the several thousand internal members the Pavilion recruited each year would have a chance of reaching the Void Realm.

The Dragon-Phoenix Pavilion was a veteran super-first-rate Guild, and it required much of its internal members. Experts who were well-known among the public meant nothing in the Pavilion.

While the Guild's members quietly conversed, another commotion erupted in the Guild Hall. A dozen or so players descended the stairs from the second floor, led by a beautiful woman. Beside the woman stood Nine Dragons Emperor.

The strange woman wore dark-blue leather armor and carried a crimson short sword, which hung from her waist toward her back. The sword's sheath was decorated with ancient ruins that attracted the ambient Mana.

As if the Mana in the first-floor hall had found its master, it fell under the strange woman's control as she appeared.

A special Bloodline Legacy? Surprise flashed in Phoenix Rain's gaze when she noticed the stranger.

As an Elementalist, Phoenix Rain's perception of Mana was keen, and she had gained a new-found understanding of Mana after she had reached Tier 3.

She could sense that, despite being a Tier 3 Assassin, the woman had just as strong Mana affinity as she did. It almost seemed like the beautiful Assassin was Mana's favored child.

The players behind the woman caused a similar phenomenon, only the ambient Mana's reaction to them wasn't as strong.

“Rain, you’re here. Let me introduce you. This is Mythology’s Vice Guild Leader, Cold Shadow,” Nine Dragons Emperor introduced with an exceptionally pleased expression as Phoenix Rain emerged from the teleportation hall.

He had been startled when he had heard that Mythology’s upper echelons intended to visit the Dragon-Phoenix Pavilion. He had assumed that the Pavilion was in major trouble.

Mythology was one of the virtual gaming world’s Five Great Super Guilds, all of which had maintained their positions for many years. No Guild could threaten their standings. There were even rumors that the Five Great Super Guilds were no longer on the same level as other Super Guilds.

“Greetings, I am the Phoenix Pavilion Master, Phoenix Rain,” Phoenix Rain introduced herself.

“I’ve heard of you before, Phoenix Pavilion Master,” Cold Shadow said, smiling. “Your efforts at sea are a large part of the reason that the Dragon-Phoenix Pavilion’s naval prowess is what it is today. You also secretly supported Zero Wing in exchange for a large percentage of the Candlelight Trading Firm’s shares. Now, Candlelight has influence in multiple kingdoms and empires and earns significant profits each day. Very few in God’s Domain can match your exceptional insight, Phoenix Pavilion Master.”

“Your praise is too generous,” Phoenix Rain calmly replied. “May I know what business you have with the Dragon-Phoenix Pavilion, Vice Guild Leader Shadow?”

Phoenix Rain was suspicious of Mythology’s visit and clueless about the Super Guild’s intentions. Mythology had focused its development on the western continent, yet it had come to visit the Dragon-Phoenix Pavilion, which was limited to the eastern continent, so suddenly. This was just as significant as an international corporation seeking out a small, domestic company, and Phoenix Rain didn’t know what to make of it.

However, based on the Great Pavilion Master's tone when he had requested her return to the main headquarters, it seemed that Mythology had come to find her. Something about the situation didn't feel right to Phoenix Rain, and seeing Nine Dragons Emperor's attitude, she was certain that Mythology wasn't here with good news.

"Oh, it's nothing major, really," Cold Shadow said, chuckling. "Mythology simply wishes to extend its reach to the eastern continent and wants to investigate the situation first. Zero Wing's Candlelight Trading Firm is one of the potential partners we'd like to consider, but everyone knows that Zero Wing almost never sells its shares. Hence, we wish to purchase your shares of the trading firm. We're willing to offer you double the market price, in addition to selling some of the western continent's unique materials and merchandise to the Dragon-Phoenix Pavilion. We believe the transaction will benefit all involved.

"I have already spoken with the Great Pavilion Master about this, but he insists that Candlelight's shares belong to you personally and that I'll have to speak with you about the situation. Of course, as long as you're willing to sell your shares of Candlelight, he'll be more than willing to ally with Mythology. Thus, I've come to negotiate with you, Phoenix Pavilion Master."

"Rain, this is the first time the Dragon-Phoenix Pavilion will get to cooperate with Mythology. Many of the Guild's Grand Elders are looking forward to this. You mustn't let this opportunity go and disappoint the Guild Elders and Great Pavilion Master," Nine Dragons Emperor earnestly advised.

Blue Phoenix gave Nine Dragons Emperor a cold glare from behind Phoenix Rain. She wanted nothing more than to strangle the bastard.

Whether or not Phoenix Rain sold her Candlelight shares was her problem, but Zero Wing must have a reason for being so stingy. If Phoenix Rain sold her shares, the decision would affect her relationship with Zero Wing.

Meanwhile, Nine Dragons Emperor was trying to force Phoenix Rain's hand by using the excuse of 'Guild interest.' Regardless of what Phoenix Rain decided, it was clear that the Phoenix Pavilion wouldn't benefit.

Chapter 2431 – Commotion at the Dragon-Phoenix Pavilion

Nine Dragons Emperor didn't bother to keep his voice down, and the Dragon-Phoenix Pavilion members in the first- floor hall heard him. His statement immediately caused a commotion in the hall.

“What? That Mythology wants to work with our Guild?”

“Mythology is one of the Five Great Super Guilds. If we can form a partnership, our Guild will gain more strength and influence than ever before. Even Super Guilds will have to respect us.”

“That's not all. Many powers from the Otherworlds have begun to arrive in the Apocalypse Empire and are competing with us for resources. If news of our partnership with Mythology spreads, even those powers will fear us and won't dare to attack us in the fields so casually.”

Mythology was merely a famous Super Guild to most ordinary players, but the Pavilion's members, particularly its internal members, knew that Mythology wasn't that simple.

The virtual gaming world's Five Great Super Guilds had been established at the birth of virtual reality games. Every one of them had more than a century of history, and they were responsible for hosting many international virtual competitions.

Generally, players had to give an outstanding performance in these competitions to become an internal member in one of the Five Great Super Guilds. Ordinary experts had no hope of being recruited.

Although the Five Great Super Guilds had relaxed their recruitment requirements considerably since God's Domain's launch, one still had to be a Refinement Realm expert at the very least. It was easy to imagine how powerful those Super Guilds' foundations were.

The fact that Mythology was actively interested in forming a partnership with the Dragon-Phoenix Pavilion was unbelievable.

Every Pavilion member in the hall turned toward Phoenix Rain.

Nine Dragons Emperor had clearly stated that whether or not their Guild worked with Mythology depended entirely on Phoenix Rain's decision. Naturally, they all assumed they knew what her response would be.

"Big Sis Rain, Nine Dragons Emperor is doing this on purpose!" Blue Phoenix hissed, grinding her teeth when she saw everyone's anticipatory looks.

Although the Great Pavilion Master and Grand Elders were responsible for choosing the next Great Pavilion Master in the Dragon-Phoenix Pavilion, it was also incredibly important that the Guild's members approved of the candidate. If the majority of the Guild's members disliked the candidate, that individual would never become the next Great Pavilion Master.

The Pavilion's members had no doubt that partnering with Mythology was far more important than Candlelight's shares. Only a fool would turn down this opportunity. The benefits the Pavilion could gain from an alliance with Mythology were immeasurable. Just holding the Super Guild's banner would deter every superpower in the Apocalypse Empire from provoking the Dragon-Phoenix Pavilion.

Mythology could also supply plenty of precious materials and merchandise from the western continent. The Dragon- Phoenix Pavilion had far more to gain from an alliance with Mythology than from the Candlelight Trading Firm.

If Phoenix Rain decided against selling her shares of Candlelight, she would earn every Guild member's resentment.

Blue Phoenix was sure that Nine Dragons Emperor had deliberately publicized the matter because he knew Phoenix Rain's general disposition. She valued contracts and favors, and he knew that she wouldn't just give away her shares of the trading firm. Hence, he had intentionally led Cold Shadow to the first-floor hall the moment Phoenix Rain returned to the Residence. He might have pretended to lead their guest to the meeting room, but in truth, he wanted everyone to see the two women meet.

"If you think Mythology's offer is insufficient, Phoenix Pavilion Master, you may state your demands. As long as it is within my authority to do so, I will give them careful consideration," Cold Shadow added after Phoenix Rain hadn't said anything for a long moment. Smiling, she continued, "I'm even willing to sell some of the Combat Runes that are unique to the western continent."

With Cold Shadow's last statement, a tall, robust man behind her stepped forward. Silver runes flashed on his equipment, drawing in the surrounding Mana and increasing the intensity of his aura to a new level instantly. Even the Tier 2 peak experts in the hall took a step back, staring at the man with fear in their gazes.

How did he become so strong all of a sudden? Even Blue Phoenix, now a Tier 3 player, was shocked by the transformation.

Although she had sensed that the man was very dangerous, she had felt confident that she could hold her ground against him, but now, she felt powerless before him. However, she could tell that the difference between them wasn't one of Basic Attributes, but from their different mental capacities.

So, this is the western continent's rumored Combat Rune?

The situation even surprised Nine Dragons Emperor. Although the Dragon-Phoenix Pavilion had no power on the western continent, it had investigated it. The Pavilion had even dispatched quite a few internal members to the western continent, and although their efforts hadn't yielded many results, they had more than nothing.

According to the Pavilion's reports, Combat Runes were a special type of tool that was similar to enchantments found on the eastern continent. However, the Combat Runes offered stronger control over Mana.

The Combat Runes couldn't offer bonus Basic Attributes, but they could increase players' affinity with Mana. They could even improve a player's mental capacity.

In Nine Dragons Emperor's initial opinion, the Combat Runes weren't all that impressive. Basic Attributes and combat standards were far more important than Mana control and mental capacity.

However, he had realized how mistaken he was after reaching Tier 3.

Both Mana control and mental capacity were incredibly important for players' combat power because they influenced a player's ability to manipulate their Mana Body. The more control of one's Tier 3 Mana Body one had, the greater their overall combat power would be.

Now that he had seen the Combat Runes in action himself, he realized how horrific they were.

If he could secure a large collection of weapons and equipment with Combat Runes for him and his subordinates, no one on Dragonheart Island or in the Black Dragon Empire would have the power to threaten his position.

“The Combat Rune we’ve researched is quite impressive, isn’t it? It’s only at Tier 2 Advanced rank, which can’t compare to the Tier 3 Combat Runes we’ve researched, but it can double Tier 2 players’ combat power. It can also provide a significant boost to Tier 3 experts’ combat power,” Cold Shadow explained, grinning smugly when she saw everyone’s reactions.

This isn’t even the best they’ve got? Nine Dragons Emperor could not help but gasp.

This revelation was terrifying!

Although the robust man beside Cold Shadow had reached the Domain Realm, Nine Dragons Emperor could sense that he was only as strong as Martial Dragon, but after he activated his Combat Rune, not even Martial Dragon would last long against him.

And yet, Cold Shadow informed them that the robust man’s Combat Rune was only at Tier 3 Advanced Rank. Nine Dragons Emperor didn’t even want to fathom how powerful the robust man would become if he were armed with a Tier 3 Combat Rune.

It was at this moment that Nine Dragons Emperor, more or less, realized how Mythology had survived as one of the Five Great Super Guilds, even in a game like God’s Domain. On paper, the Dragon-Phoenix Pavilion might only be one rank weaker than Mythology, but the true difference was like the difference between an ant and a Dragon.

Naturally, the robust man’s display with his Combat Rune sent the Pavilion’s members into another uproar.

“This is amazing! If I could equip that Combat Rune, too, I might be able to contend with Tier 2 peak experts!”

“With that Combat Rune, I could complete a higher-difficulty Tier 3 Promotion Quest!”

Many of the Refinement and Flowing Water Realm’s experts glowed as they gazed at the robust man. They all waited eagerly for Phoenix Rain to agree to Cold Shadow’s offer.

However, as her comrade’s desire for Mythology’s Combat Runes grew, Phoenix Rain’s expression darkened. She had never dreamed that Mythology would be so desperate for Candlelight’s shares that they’d sell Guild treasures like the Combat Runes.

If she rejected Mythology’s offer now, she’d become the Guild’s number one enemy.

Just as she was about to speak, however, another commotion broke out outside of the Guild Hall. As the seconds passed, the players outside made even more noise. Curious, many of the members in the Guild Hall ran out of the building.

“What’s wrong with all of you? What’s going on outside?” Blue Phoenix demanded an answer from one of her nearby Guildmates.

“There are Flying Ships! Three Flying Ships have arrived above our Residence!” a Tier 2 Ranger close to the entrance shouted back.

Chapter 2432 – Frightening Foundations

“Flying Ships?”

“Could it be Zero Wing?”

When Nine Dragons Emperor and the Pavilion’s other members heard someone mention Flying Ships, they immediately thought of Zero Wing.

When Zero Wing’s Crimson Dragon Flying Ship had first appeared in God’s Domain, it had caused a huge commotion among the various powers. At that time, the name ‘Zero Wing’ had engraved itself in the superpowers’ minds.

In an era when Flying Mounts were still exceedingly rare, a Flying Ship could be immensely beneficial. Moreover, a Flying Ship would rule the skies with the combat power it possessed. If players didn’t have sufficiently powerful antiaircraft weapons, encountering an enemy Flying Ship could be devastating.

However, Nine Dragons Emperor and his comrades shook the thought away. This time, there were three Flying Ships at their door!

Obtaining a single Flying Ship was already incredible, but a Guild like Zero Wing could never secure three of them. When Phoenix Rain and Blue Phoenix heard the announcement, they were confused.

They had expected Zero Wing to make the trip to Twilight City, but they couldn’t have come with three Flying Ships, could they?

Is it not Zero Wing? Phoenix Rain frowned at the thought.

A force of three Flying Ships was no trivial matter. Based on the information the Dragon-Phoenix Pavilion had acquired thus far, one ship would be more than enough to give the ruler of a Guild City a headache. If three Flying Ships attacked a Guild City together, they'd likely destroy the city's infrastructure by the time they finished, even if they didn't capture the city.

Even the Dragon-Phoenix Pavilion's Twilight City would have a difficult time against three Flying Ships.

This was why the various superpowers were so desperately trying to obtain their own Flying Mounts.

Without an aerial unit, a Guild would be at an overwhelming disadvantage against a Flying Ship. Although Guild Towns and Cities had Defense Turrets and Arrow Towers, these defensive structures would struggle to land a hit on the highly-mobile Flying Ship. The battle would merely be a one-sided beating.

Three Flying Ships? Cold Shadow was also curious about the situation. The eastern continent already has a power that has developed to such a standard?

The western continent had Flying Ships as well, but they were exceptionally challenging to obtain. Although some of the western continent's powers had discovered clues that could lead to a Flying Ship, they'd still need a considerable amount of time before they actually got their hands on it. This was another reason for her decision to annex Zero Wing.

Phoenix Rain, Nine Dragons Emperor, and Cold Shadow left the Guild Hall with their subordinates in tow. They all wanted to know who owned these three Flying Ships.

Three steel giants hovered above the Residence's plaza, the roar of their Magic Engines blasting throughout the area. Even players outside of the Dragon-Phoenix Pavilion's Residence could feel the gale the ships stirred up.

The Pavilion's experts, who had fought in many large-scale battles, were shocked. Although the Flying Ships didn't seem aggressive and simply hovered in the air, the experts' instincts screamed at them to flee. Staring at those Flying Ships, they felt as if they stood before three colossal beasts.

This was why the Dragon-Phoenix Pavilion's legion, which was stationed in Twilight City, had allowed the Flying Ships to enter the city and rest above their Guild's Residence. They hadn't even bothered to warn the Flying Ships or try to chase them off. They had only been able to stare as the steel giants passed, wary and afraid.

When Phoenix Rain and her group emerged from the Guild Hall, the Flying Ship in the lead began to descend. The Pavilion's members in the plaza promptly made room for the ship to land, afraid of provoking whoever piloted the steel giant. Not a single player in the plaza could wait to find out who commanded these three Flying Ships. Not even Super Guilds had this kind of airpower.

While everyone wondered which superpower controlled the Flying Ships, the side hatch on the ship that had landed opened. A dozen figures then disembarked. Not only were they all Tier 3 players, but they had also reached Level 105, and most importantly, they all wore six-winged emblems.

"Zero Wing?!M

"How is this possible?!"

The revelations stunned every Pavilion member in sight.

The fact that Zero Wing had somehow procured one Flying Ship had already been astounding, yet now they discovered that the Guild had two more. Some of the crowd even wondered if their eyes were playing a trick on them.

But no matter how much they rubbed at their eyes, the fact that these dozen players wore six-winged emblems didn't change. There was no doubt that it was Zero Wing's Guild Emblem, and based on the information in the Dragon- Phoenix Pavilion's database, the cloaked man, who had disembarked last, was none other than Zero Wing's Guild Leader, Black Flame.

This is impossible! How can Zero Wing have three flying Ships?! Nine Dragons Emperor stared at Shi Feng, astonished.

Flying Ships were incredibly rare. Not even Super Guilds had one right now. So, how had Zero Wing obtained three Flying Ships?

Phoenix Rain was similarly dumbfounded. She had never thought these three Flying Ships would belong to Zero Wing. Those were three Flying Ships they were talking about!

With this kind of airpower, Zero Wing could move through God's Domain without contest, and transporting goods across the sea wouldn't be an issue.

When Zero Wing had only had one Flying Ship, it had only proven to be a deterrent to the various naval powers. The sea was large, and even with the Crimson Dragon Flying Ship's mobility, it couldn't protect

all of the naval routes Zero Wing used. However, with three Flying Ships, Zero Wing could safely deliver its merchandise wherever it needed to.

As long as Zero Wing had safe and reliable transportation at sea, it wouldn't have any issues earning money or resources.

The various superpowers knew this, or they wouldn't have invested astronomical sums of money and resources to increase their naval power. They did so precisely to ensure the safety of their transportation routes.

The ocean had far more resources to offer than the land, and a stable transportation route at sea meant that one would have a steady source of naval resources.

Once Phoenix Ran and Nine Dragons Emperor overcame their shock at seeing Zero Wing's Flying Ships, they noticed something else that gave them goosebumps.

All three Flying Ships looked exactly the same!

At first, they had been too shocked by the three ships to notice the Flying Ships' details. As they calmed down, they took the time to get a better look and realized that all three Flying Ships were identical.

This meant that Zero Wing had not simply gotten lucky and stumbled across three Flying Ships. How could the Guild have possibly found three identical ships by chance? Flying Ships were similar to speedboats found at sea; their designs would vary depending on where they were found.

Since Zero Wing's Flying Ships looked the same, the Guild must have obtained them through the same means, and the three Flying Ships before them hinted that as long as Zero Wing fulfilled whatever conditions there were, it could obtain even more...

A force of three Flying Ships was practically invincible at this stage of the game. If Zero Wing could construct a full fleet in the future...

Not a single player in the plaza could even imagine what kind of airpower Zero Wing could control in the future.

Phoenix Rain and Nine Dragons Emperor weren't the only players to realize this. Many of the Dragon-Phoenix Pavilion experts in the plaza thought of the possibility, as well. They all stared at Shi Feng as if he were a monster.

If Zero Wing could truly establish a full fleet of Flying Ships, no superpower would dare provoke the Guild.

"I apologize for being tardy, Phoenix Pavilion Master," Shi Feng said as he approached Phoenix Rain. He glanced at Cold Shadow and the players behind her before he continued with a smile, "I hope I'm not interrupting anything."

He had wanted to keep his Flying Ships a secret as Zero Wing continued to develop its airpower, but to ensure that Phoenix Rain continued to hold her position and influence in the Dragon-Phoenix Pavilion, he had been forced to change his plans.

Not only had Zero Wing exhausted all of its Coins to craft these three Flying Ships, but it had also borrowed money for materials from the Secret Pavilion. The Guild wouldn't be able to construct another ship anytime soon. Furthermore, the market didn't currently have enough materials to construct another Flying Ship.

Based on everyone's shocked expressions, Shi Feng decided that he had achieved his goal.

Chapter 2433 – Foundations Revealed One After Another

Nine Dragons Emperor responded to Shi Feng's statement with a hateful glare. The force Zero Wing had mobilized had sent Twilight City on high-alert. How could this be interpreted as anything other than an interruption?

Moreover, Shi Feng's grand arrival had ruined Nine Dragons Emperor's efforts to interest his Guild members in a partnership with Mythology. Not only had Zero Wing's show of strength shocked the Dragon-Phoenix Pavilion's members, but it had chased away any thoughts about Mythology.

"No, you haven't interrupted us, Guild Leader Black Flame. You're right on time," Phoenix Rain said, a rare smile gracing her lips at Shi Feng's greeting. She then turned toward Cold Shadow and firmly stated, "Vice Guild Leader Shadow, although I am very interested in a partnership with Mythology, I'm afraid that I cannot sell Candlelight's shares."

When Phoenix Rain rejected Mythology's offer, silence filled the plaza. Every member of the Dragon-Phoenix Pavilion turned to stare at Phoenix Rain, complex emotions flashing in their eyes. Surprisingly, however, no one stepped up to object.

If she had rejected Mythology's offer earlier, they would've fought her decision as illogical and doubted her ability to act as a Pavilion Master, but with Zero Wing's three Flying Ships before them, no one could find a reason to argue with her decision.

They were talking about Flying Ships, and it was clear that Zero Wing had some method to secure multiple ships. Now that Zero Wing ruled the skies, no superpower would dare offend the Guild.

With Zero Wing's help, the Dragon-Phoenix could ensure the safety of its transportation routes in the future. In fact, the Pavilion could even rely on Zero Wing's reputation to secure even more sea zones, which they could develop, and in turn, fuel the Guild's growth.

However, if Phoenix Rain sold her shares of the Candlelight Trading Firm to Mythology, the Dragon-Phoenix Pavilion would likely lose Zero Wing's assistance. The difference between an ally with shares and one without was massive, after all. Furthermore, everyone knew how stingy Zero Wing was with its shares. If Phoenix Rain sold Candlelight's shares without Zero Wing's consent, no one would be surprised if Zero Wing became an enemy.

"Rain, you should think this through carefully. You are aware of the Guild's situation in the Apocalypse Empire. Many Otherworld powers have already begun to set their sights on our Guild, and you know better than I why we took the risk of transferring Twilight City to the Dawn Ridge," Nine Dragons Emperor loudly proclaimed when none of his Guildmates spoke up. "If we can form a partnership with Mythology and obtain Combat Runes, the Dragon-Phoenix Pavilion can quickly establish a foothold in Level 100 neutral maps. With the resources and equipment we can acquire from those maps, we'll be able to stabilize our position in the empire. Are you really willing to throw this opportunity away?"

Before Zero Wing's Flying Ships had arrived, he had merely hoped to reduce Phoenix Rain's popularity within the Pavilion, but now, he steeled himself to tear her from Zero Wing, no matter what it took.

Phoenix Rain and Zero Wing had become firm allies long ago. Zero Wing's strength was Phoenix Rain's strength. But Mythology was a different story. The potential alliance with Mythology might drastically elevate Phoenix Rain's position, but it would be temporary. Mythology wasn't interested in a partnership with Phoenix Rain specifically; it wanted an alliance with the Dragon-Phoenix Pavilion. This would leave room for him to take advantage of plenty of opportunities, but if she stuck with Zero Wing, he'd have nothing.

Fortunately, Mythology had offered something that the Dragon-Phoenix Pavilion urgently needed. There was no way the Grand Elders could ignore the temptation of Mythology's Combat Runes.

Although the Dragon-Phoenix Pavilion was a super-first-rate Guild, its strength was only considered average among the many superpowers in God's Domain. Now powers from the various Otherworlds had begun to invade the main continent, the Dragon-Phoenix Pavilion's position in the game was under threat.

To alleviate some of the pressure the Guild faced, the Dragon-Phoenix Pavilion had decided to gamble and transfer Twilight City, the Guild's strongest city, to Dawn Ridge to secure its hold over the neighboring Level 100 neutral map. However, the other superpowers in the Apocalypse Empire weren't idiots. They had also invested plenty of resources and stationed their players in the Dawn Ridge.

If the Dragon-Phoenix Pavilion had a powerful tool like the Combat Runes, it would have a much easier time exploring Level 100 neutral maps. This was the Grand Elders' ultimate goal.

Hearing Nine Dragons Emperor's comment, several nearby Grand Elders frowned and turned toward Phoenix Rain, their expressions hinting that she needed to make her decision carefully.

The Combat Runes would be significantly helpful when the Guild's members explored Level 100 neutral maps. The benefits these Combat Runes offered were just as impactful as Zero Wing's Flying Ships could be. In fact, the Combat Runes might be even more beneficial to the Guild. Zero Wing owned those Flying Ships, after all; the Dragon-Phoenix Pavilion did not. Moreover, rejecting Cold Shadow's offer would be on par with slapping Mythology in the face.

Mythology was one of the virtual gaming world's Five Great Super Guilds, and it had already shown the Pavilion a lot of respect by approaching the smaller Guild for an alliance. If the Pavilion rejected Mythology, the Super Guild would offer nothing. It might even move against the Dragon-Phoenix

Pavilion. Although Mythology was focused on its development on the western continent, it was still one of the Five Great Super Guilds. Causing trouble for the Pavilion would be child's play.

Phoenix Rain's expression turned grim. She had never expected Nine Dragons Emperor to pander to the Guild's Grand Elders after failing to rouse their Guildmates. The Grand Elders didn't normally meddle in the competition for the position of Grand Pavilion Master, but they were from the same generation as Ku Rong. Their influence in the Guild couldn't be underestimated. Even Ku Rong had to weigh their words carefully.

What a smart move. It's no wonder how he maintained his hold on the Black Dragon Empire in the past.

Many Planar Passages were connected to the Black Dragon Empire, which led to intense competition in the empire. Normally, only Super Guilds were confident in stopping so many Otherworld powers from invading, but during Shi Feng's previous life, Nine Dragons Emperor's Branch Guild in the Black Dragon Empire had successfully defended the Dragon-Phoenix Pavilion's territories, only losing insignificant sections.

"Don't be in such a hurry to reject my offer, Phoenix Pavilion Master. Mythology is sincerely interested in an alliance. If we can negotiate a partnership, I can even speak with my Guild Leader about selling some of our Tier 3 Combat Runes to the Dragon-Phoenix Pavilion. Tier 3 Combat Runes will grant the Pavilion an absolute advantage when exploring Level 100 neutral maps," Cold Shadow said sweetly, smiling. As she spoke, she glanced at Shi Feng.

Cold Shadow was familiar with the predicament the Dragon-Phoenix Pavilion found itself in. As long as she could purchase Candlelight's shares, she didn't mind letting Nine Dragons Emperor borrow her power to suppress Phoenix Rain.

Naturally, Zero Wing couldn't hope to compete with the terms Mythology could offer.

When Cold Shadow finished speaking, the nearby Grand Elders watched with bated breath. Although they didn't know much about the western continent, they knew a thing or two about Tier 3 Combat Runes. Only three Super Guilds were capable of producing the tools, and they didn't sell them to outsiders. If the Dragon-Phoenix Pavilion's Tier 3 experts could equip Tier 3 Combat Runes, then the Guild would be unstoppable in the Hill of Ruins, the Level 100 neutral map neighboring the Dawn Ridge.

Moreover, these Combat Runes would ensure that the Pavilion had an easier time developing its navy.

Just as the several Grand Elders were about to step forward to persuade Phoenix Rain, Shi Feng retrieved an ancient Magic Array Scroll from his bag and handed it to her.

The moment Shi Feng revealed the scroll, it drew everyone's gaze. The Magic Array Scroll's Mana was extraordinarily dense, nothing like the scrolls players typically saw.

"This is the sample of what we spoke about earlier. If you find it acceptable, we can negotiate prices," Shi Feng calmly stated as he gestured to the Magic Array Scroll now in Phoenix Rain's hand.

Cold Shadow only grinned at Shi Feng's play. She found it simply laughable that he wanted to use a Magic Array Scroll to compete with her Guild's Tier 3 Combat Runes.

However, when one of the Dragon-Phoenix Pavilion's Grand Elders, who possessed a Master ranked Appraisal Skill, curiously appraised the scroll, he couldn't help but gasp.

"An Advanced...Ancient Barrier Scroll?!"

Chapter 2434 – Ascending to Heaven

When they heard the Grand Elder's exclamation, everyone stared at the scroll Phoenix Rain held, astonished.

"Zero Wing is actually selling such an item?"

Magic Barrier Scrolls were insanely rare on the market. The various powers even hoarded Basic Magic Barrier Scrolls, only allowing their main forces access to the tools.

Level 100-plus Grand Lords were simply too difficult to deal with for current players. If one of these Grand Lords possessed special Skills, not even Tier 3 MTs would be able to tank it, let alone Tier 2 MTs.

To help their main forces explore Level 100 neutral maps, the various powers relied on magic barriers to defeat these Level 100-plus Grand Lords.

Unfortunately, due to how scarce these scrolls were, the various powers didn't even have enough to arm their main forces sufficiently. As a result, the teams' exploration speed was still quite slow.

The best Magic Barrier Scrolls on the market were only Intermediate rank. There were practically never Advanced Magic Barrier Scrolls available. Although the various superpowers had even offered to trade Level 100 Dark-Gold Equipment for the Advanced ranked scrolls, no one was willing to sell what they had.

And yet, not only had Shi Feng revealed an Advanced Magic Barrier Scroll, but it was also an Ancient Barrier Scroll.

In God's Domain, Intermediate Magic Arrays could only affect Level 100-plus Grand Lords; they were nearly useless against Level 100 Mythics. Only Advanced Magic Arrays would prove effective against such high-ranked monsters.

With a complete set of Advanced Magic Barrier Scrolls, one could even slay a Level 100-plus Mythic monster. It was easy to imagine how much a set of those scrolls was worth.

Ancient Magic Arrays were generally stronger than ordinary magic arrays of the same rank, and fewer players were required to channel the magic arrays. This allowed more of the team to participate in the actual fight.

If a team used an Advanced Magic Barrier, they'd still need around 30 Tier 3 experts to take down a Level 100-plus Mythic monster. However, if the team had an Advanced Ancient Barrier, they'd be more than capable of slaying a Level 100-plus Mythic monster as long as they had a Tier 3 MT.

Advanced Ancient Barrier Scrolls?

The revelation even surprised Cold Shadow. She had never thought Shi Feng would be capable of obtaining such a treasure.

If what Shi Feng had suggested were true, and Zero Wing could sell large quantities of the Twelve Elemental Pillars, the Dragon-Phoenix Pavilion would easily be able to dominate the Hill of Ruins. No superpower in the Apocalypse Empire would be able to contend with the Pavilion.

All of the various superpowers were nursing headaches over the issue Level 100-plus Mythic monsters presented, including Mythology.

Although the Tier 3 Combat Rune was powerful, it could only help players exhibit more of their combat power; it didn't offer a boost to players' Basic Attributes. Unless players met the minimum Basic Attribute requirements to raid Level 100-plus Mythic monsters, the Tier 3 Combat Rune wouldn't be particularly useful.

Advanced Magic Barriers' on the other hand, would be. They might not increase players' combat power or Basic Attributes, but they could limit a monster's strength. With a set of such scrolls, a team that normally wouldn't have a chance against a Level 100-plus Mythic monster would have hope of defeating it.

With an Advanced Ancient Barrier like the Twelve Elemental Pillars, even a Tier 2 team could raid Level 100-plus Mythic monsters. Those scrolls were well worth several times more than ordinary Advanced Magic Barriers.

At this stage of the game, superpowers still didn't have enough Tier 3 players to form a full team, but forming a Tier 2 team was a piece of cake.

Of course, not only was Level 100-plus Mythic monsters' loot bountiful, but it was also the foundation necessary to raid Level 100 Team Dungeons. If even Tier 2 expert teams could slay Level 100-plus Mythic monsters, their power could prepare to raid Level 100 Team Dungeons much sooner than others.

If the Dragon-Phoenix Pavilion could secure a large stock of Twelve Elemental Pillars Scrolls, its development speed regarding Tier 3 players and equipment standards would reach new highs. The Pavilion would easily be able to surpass the Apocalypse Empire's various superpowers.

Meanwhile, Phoenix Rain stared at the scroll in her hands, dazed.

Nine Dragons Emperor broke the silence with a laugh, saying, "Guild Leader Black Flame, this is an Advanced Ancient Barrier Scroll we're talking about, yet you're suggesting that you can sell them in bulk? Do you take us for fools?"

Nine Dragons Emperor instinctively denied Shi Feng's claim. The Swordsman must've gone to great lengths to secure a single Twelve Elemental Pillars Scroll and was lying about Zero Wing's interest in selling Phoenix Rain a bulk order just to make her look good in front of the Pavilion's Grand Elders.

The strongest magic barriers the various superpowers could craft were Intermediate rank. Furthermore, not only were the required materials incredibly valuable, but no more than five superpowers were actually capable of crafting Intermediate Magic Barrier Scrolls.

How, exactly, was Zero Wing supposedly capable of mass-producing Advanced Ancient Barrier Scroll?

"Is that so?" Shi Feng chuckled, pulling 10 sets of Twelve Elemental Pillars, the scrolls he had found in the Magic Temple, from his bag.

Shi Feng tossed one scroll after another on the ground, quickly forming a small mound. As he did, everyone sensed the Mana density around them increase considerably...

Nine Dragons Emperor had been prepared to mock Shi Feng further, but seeing the Magic Array Scrolls, he turned deathly pale and couldn't bring himself to utter a single word.

Everyone in the plaza fell silent, and the Pavilion's members gazed at Shi Feng with admiration.

Nine Dragons Emperor was a true hero in the Dragon-Phoenix Pavilion. Not only was he individually powerful, but he was also an excellent commander. He had even led the Pavilion's Branch Guild in the Black Dragon Empire to prosper, despite the various Otherworld powers' invasion.

But the moment he had accused Shi Feng of lying, the Swordsman had revealed 10 sets of the Twelve Elemental Pillars. Moreover, Zero Wing's Guild Leader tossed them on the ground as if they were worthless pebbles. This was a slap in the face to Nine Dragons Emperor and had been done before the Pavilion's members. To top it off, Nine Dragons Emperor couldn't find anything kind of rebuttal. He wouldn't dare. The only thing coming out of his mouth should be compliments for Shi Feng. If he said anything else, he might even lose his position as a Pavilion Master, not to mention his chance to become the Great Pavilion Master.

Not even superpowers' Guild Leaders could subject Nine Dragons Emperor to such humiliation.

"So, that's the case." Cold Shadow grit her teeth. When Nine Dragons Emperor said nothing more, she knew that the situation was no longer in her favor. She then turned to look at Phoenix Rain and said, "Phoenix Pavilion Master, your insight truly is impressive. Since it seems that a partnership between our Guilds is no longer possible, I won't interrupt your discussions with Guild Leader Black Flame. I have other matters to attend to, so I'll take my leave."

Cold Shadow decisively led her subordinates away from the Dragon-Phoenix Pavilion's Residence. She didn't show the slightest hint of anger or disappointment as if her negotiations with the Pavilion had meant nothing to her.

Meanwhile, none of the Dragon-Phoenix Pavilion's members were surprised by the outcome. It was clear that Zero Wing had more to offer than Mythology, which was based on the western continent. Even a fool would recognize the stronger potential ally. Cold Shadow wouldn't linger to suffer further embarrassment.

“Rain, Guild Leader Black Flame has taken time out of his busy schedule to visit our main headquarters! As a Pavilion Master, how can you leave him standing out here for so long? You are being impolite!” a white-haired Grand Elder berated Phoenix Rain after Cold Shadow had left the Guild Residence.

The old man had been loud, but everyone could tell that he wasn't angry in the least. Rather, his tone contained joy and excitement. He had obviously chosen to support Phoenix Rain's side.

The Grand Elder's comments shook Phoenix Rain from her daze, and she addressed Shi Feng, “My mistake. Guild Leader Black Flame, please come in.”

Phoenix Rain had never dreamed that Shi Feng would be so powerful as to reveal one trump card after another. Not only had he sent Mythology's Cold Shadow packing, but he had also managed to drag the entire Dragon-Phoenix Pavilion to her side. The situation had developed so quickly that she was at a loss.

Once Phoenix Rain led Shi Feng and his entourage into the Guild Hall, the Grand Elders in the plaza shot Nine Dragons Emperor piteous looks. After expressing their helplessness, they, too, returned to the Guild Hall, dismissing the other Pavilion Master.

“We're in trouble now, Pavilion Master. Thanks to Black Flame, the Grand Elders now support Phoenix Rain,” Martial Dragon said, frowning as he watched the Grand Elders walk away without a word. After today, Nine Dragons Emperor's chances of becoming the next Great Pavilion Master were non-existent.

“Trouble?” Nine Dragons Emperor shot back with a sinister sneer. “Wrong! This is our chance! Phoenix Rain might've ascended to heaven thanks to Zero Wing's potential and foundations, but possessing wealth without the strength to protect it is a crime! Zero Wing shouldn't have revealed its Flying Ships and Advanced Ancient Barrier Scrolls so early. What do you think the various superpowers will do if they find this out?”

“Approach Zero Wing in hopes of cooperation?” Martial Dragon guessed after considering the question.

“And if that fails?” Nine Dragons Emperor asked, smiling at Shi Feng’s departing figure.

“They’ll do everything in their power to destroy Zero Wing!” Martial Dragon exclaimed as realization dawned on him. He also realized why Cold Shadow had left so quickly.

Zero Wing might be fine with its Flying Ships, but the Advanced Ancient Barrier Scrolls could change the status quo in God’s Domain. If the various superpowers couldn’t get their hands on the Twelve Elemental Pillars Scrolls, they wouldn’t be content to let a pseudo-superpower like Zero Wing hold on to them. Today’s events would certainly reach the various superpowers, and once it did, they would take action.

Even if Zero Wing allied with a few superpowers, they couldn’t protect the Guild. The Twelve Elemental Pillars Scrolls touched on the foundations and futures of every superpower. Unless the various superpowers were willing to bow to Zero Wing in the future, they would try to destroy the smaller Guild now, ensuring that the status quo remained the same.

While Nine Dragons Emperor and Martial Dragon whispered amongst themselves, news of Zero Wing’s three Flying Ships and its ability to mass-produce Advanced Ancient Barrier Scrolls spread like wildfire, soon reaching the various superpowers’ upper echelons.

Chapter 2435 – Structural Change

On the top floor of the Dragon-Phoenix Pavilion’s Guild Hall, three people were sitting inside the luxurious reception hall, which could easily accommodate 50 people.

Aside from Phoenix Rain and Shi Feng, only Blue Phoenix was present. The degree of privacy for the meeting was even greater than that for the Dragon-Phoenix Pavilion's Grand Elder meetings.

As for the Dragon-Phoenix Pavilion's Grand Elders who had been in the plaza before, they wisely stayed away, having no intention of participating in the discussions between Shi Feng and Phoenix Rain. Moreover, with Cola, Yan Tianxing, and Zero Wing's other Tier 3 experts standing guard outside the reception hall, anyone who wished to spy on the meeting couldn't do so.

"Guild Leader Black Flame, I really have to thank you this time. If not for your help, those Grand Elders would've sided with Nine Dragons Emperor," Phoenix Rain said as she looked at the 10 sets of Twelve Elemental Pillars on the table. "These Advanced Ancient Barrier Scrolls are extremely precious, so you should quickly store them. Although Magic Array Scrolls won't suffer any damage from exposure, these scrolls are quite ancient. If you don't store them properly, the magic arrays drawn on them might deteriorate. If that happens, it'll be a huge loss."

In God's Domain, Magic Array Scrolls normally wouldn't deteriorate. However, some ancient Magic Array Scrolls were a different story. The march of time would compromise the durability of some ancient Magic Array Scrolls. When durability fell to a certain point, it would affect the performance of the Magic Array Scroll itself. Meanwhile, moving the scrolls could reduce their durability by a certain amount.

Previously, Shi Feng had nonchalantly tossed these Ancient Barrier Scrolls on the ground to humiliate Nine Dragons Emperor. Now, he had even casually placed them on the table. These actions would undoubtedly affect the Ancient Barrier Scrolls' durability.

As for selling these Ancient Barrier Scrolls, in Phoenix Rain's opinion, he had said those words just to take control of the situation.

After all, Advanced Ancient Barriers were not ordinary Advanced Barriers. Collecting even one complete set of scrolls for an Advanced Ancient Barrier was extremely difficult. Even now, the Dragon-Phoenix Pavilion had yet to collect a complete set, much less 10 sets.

Meanwhile, at this stage of the game, 10 sets of Twelve Elemental Pillars would be extremely helpful to any superpower. If Zero Wing actually sold these Ancient Barrier Scrolls, it would suffer an immense loss.

“No need. I originally planned to sell these 10 sets of Twelve Elemental Pillars to you, Phoenix Pavilion Master,” Shi Feng said, shaking his head.

“You really plan on selling them?” Phoenix Rain was a little surprised at the serious expression on Shi Feng’s face. She then tried to dissuade him, saying, “These are 10 sets of Advanced Ancient Barrier Scrolls we are talking about. You can kill a minimum of 10 Level 100 Mythics with them. If you properly locate these Bosses, Zero Wing’s main force will receive a huge improvement in strength. If you’re worried about Nine Dragons Emperor’s side, you can rest assured. I still have a few sets of Advanced Barrier Scrolls. With them, I should be able to head him off.”

The entire Dragon-Phoenix Pavilion could easily tell that Shi Feng was only conducting the transaction this time out of respect for Phoenix Rain. As for how many she purchased and how she used them, outsiders wouldn’t have a say. She could simply sell the few precious sets of Advanced Barrier Scrolls she had to the Guild to buy herself some time. Once she hatched the Homed Eagle Egg from the Molten Ruin, she would be able to secure much more resources from Level 100 neutral maps.

As for the 10 sets of Twelve Elemental Pillars, nobody would really know if she had used the scrolls or not. She didn’t need to worry about the secret getting out as her main force consisted solely of her trusted aides. With the resources she could gain with the help of a Flying Mount, tricking the Guild’s Grand Elders should be feasible.

Standing at a side, Blue Phoenix nodded in agreement with Phoenix Rain’s words. She felt that Shi Feng had already helped them a great deal this time. They naturally couldn’t let him suffer any more losses.

“Phoenix Pavilion Master, you’re overthinking things. I’m really here to do business,” Shi Feng said, a bitter smile forming on his face when he saw Phoenix Rain’s and Blue Phoenix’s reactions.

From the very beginning, he had intended to sell the Twelve Elemental Pillars, though not on such a large scale.

Instead, he merely planned to sell it to Zero Wing’s partners to ensure that the Ancient Barrier would not land in the hands of outsiders and aid his enemies. At the same time, it would also earn his Guild a large amount of resources and Coins.

The production of Twelve Elemental Pillars’ scrolls required a large number of Elemental Crystals and Magic Cores, which were treated as strategic resources by Guilds; Guilds normally wouldn’t sell them. As a result, it was impossible to purchase these materials in bulk.

Hence, if Zero Wing wished to mass-produce the Twelve Elemental Pillars, it would have to exchange for these materials with the various powers. Moreover, Shi Feng was currently in extreme need of Magic Crystals and Coins.

This was especially true for Magic Crystals. Even though he had two ore veins capable of producing Magic Crystals, his demand for Magic Crystals was still far above what the two ore veins and Zero Wing could supply.

As to why he was in dire need of Magic Crystals, it was because the teleportation gate linking the eastern and western continents cost a lot of Magic Crystals to operate. Moreover, Magic Crystals were far rarer and more valuable on the western continent. Hence, Magic Crystals could be considered a very powerful currency there. To purchase the rare materials over there in bulk, he had to have a large number of Magic Crystals.

Of course, there was also the option of selling the eastern continent's unique materials on the western continent. However, these unique materials were similarly precious on the eastern continent. Moreover, the various superpowers had a monopoly on them, and Zero Wing could get its hands on only a limited amount. After all, superpowers capable of traveling between the two main continents generally traded with superpowers that possessed these unique materials.

In the end, Shi Feng had concluded that he could only conduct transactions using Magic Crystals.

"Guild Leader Black Flame, can you really supply these Twelve Elemental Pillars in bulk?" Blue Phoenix blurted out in surprise when she saw the bitter smile on Shi Feng's face.

These were Advanced Ancient Barrier Scrolls they were talking about. If the Dragon-Phoenix Pavilion could purchase them in bulk, then the Pavilion's development would definitely skyrocket.

"Of course. However, you should know how precious the Twelve Elemental Pillars are. I cannot sell them too cheaply. In fact, they can't even be weighed using Coins," Shi Feng said, chuckling when he saw Blue Phoenix's excited expression. "A complete set of Twelve Elemental Pillars will cost 5,000 Magic Crystals, 500 Gold, 500 Elemental Crystals, and 500 Magic Cores."

"That much?" Blue Phoenix gasped when she heard Shi Feng's words, her excitement dimming considerably.

Based on the price he quoted, the Dragon-Phoenix Pavilion wouldn't be capable of purchasing that many sets, not when the total value of each set of scrolls exceeded 4,000 Gold.

Moreover, Magic Crystals, Elemental Crystals, and Magic Cores were all strategic resources. Obtaining these items in large numbers wasn't easy. After taking into consideration the Guild's own use, the

Dragon-Phoenix Pavilion would be able to take out only a small number of these items for exchange. This would also be the case for other superpowers.

“Sure enough, the price really isn’t low.” Phoenix Rain also revealed a bitter smile as she gazed at the 10 sets of Twelve Elemental Pillars on the table. “I’ll buy 30 sets first, then.”

Although she had long since prepared herself for a high price, when she heard Shi Feng’s quote, she still could not help a little heartache.

However, the Twelve Elemental Pillars were an Advanced Ancient Barrier. Compared to the barrier’s value, the price wasn’t particularly high. After all, Intermediate Barrier Scrolls normally sold for roughly 800 Gold per set. Most importantly, these things rarely appeared on the market, as no power would be willing to sell them.

Moreover, so long as she properly chose which Mythic Bosses to raid and her luck wasn’t too bad, she would still be able to profit a lot. Not to mention, she would also get a lead on the other superpowers. This could be considered the greatest benefit of the Twelve Elemental Pillars.

That won’t be a problem. I’ll have someone deliver the remaining 20 sets by tomorrow,” Shi Feng said. He was not at all surprised to see a pained expression appear on Phoenix Rain’s face. On the contrary, he very much understood her feelings.

This was also the reason why he wanted to seek a partnership with several superpowers.

The Mana Stones required weren’t much of a problem. A set of 12 scrolls required only 12 Mana Stones. Even a Master Alchemist would need only 1,200 Magic Crystals to synthesize the Mana Stones. However, it was a different story for the Elemental Crystals and Magic Cores. Producing one set of Twelve Elemental Pillars consumed 144 Elemental Crystals and Magic Cores.

With Zero Wing's current stockpile, it couldn't create many sets at all. Needless to say, it definitely couldn't supply the scrolls to the Guild's Tier 2 teams.

After Phoenix Rain confirmed her transaction with Shi Feng and Blue Phoenix was about to head to the Guild's Warehouse to retrieve the necessary materials, Phoenix Rain's expression suddenly turned grim.

"Guild Leader Black Flame, why don't we just forget about the transaction for now? We caused a huge commotion in the Residence's plaza this time. Not to mention, Mythology's Vice Guild Leader was present as well. News of this matter will definitely reach the ears of the various superpowers. To make matters worse, you really are capable of mass-producing the Twelve Elemental Pillars. If the various superpowers find out about this, they won't let Zero Wing off the hook. They might even cooperate to force you to hand over the method for obtaining the Twelve Elemental Pillars," Phoenix Rain said. After giving the matter some thought, she still concluded that it wouldn't be wise to purchase the Twelve Elemental Pillars.

In God's Domain, the various superpowers would always plant spies in other superpowers. The Dragon-Phoenix Pavilion was no exception. Hence, news of today's matter had most likely reached the ears of the various superpowers already.

It might be fine if Shi Feng had simply been using the Twelve Elemental Pillars to trick Nine Dragons Emperor. At worst, her reputation in the Guild would plummet, and many of the Guild's Grand Elders would switch to Nine Dragons Emperor's side.

However, since this matter was true, things had become troublesome.

There would be no problem if the Twelve Elemental Pillars' transaction involved only a small amount of materials. With her status as a Pavilion Master, she could secretly conduct the transaction without anybody finding out about it. However, the amount of materials the Twelve Elemental Pillars required was simply too much. If she took out that many materials from the Guild Warehouse, people would

definitely notice. If she used the Twelve Elemental Pillars, the likelihood of discovery would be even greater.

The various superpowers might be able to ignore the fact that Zero Wing had a reliable method for obtaining Flying Ships, as Flying Ships could, at most, allow Zero Wing to stabilize its rule over the territories it currently possessed; these Flying Ships wouldn't budge the various superpowers' foundations at all.

However, the Twelve Elemental Pillars were a different story. If Zero Wing supplied the Advanced Ancient Barrier Scrolls in bulk, the structure of the current God's Domain would change drastically. The various superpowers definitely wouldn't cotton to Zero Wing restraining them or a pseudo-superpower deciding their future. Even the Five Great Super Guilds wouldn't sit still and watch this happen.

In that case, there would only be two possible outcomes to this situation. The first would be the various superpowers joining hands to annihilate Zero Wing and maintain the status quo. The second outcome would be Zero Wing being forced to hand over its method for obtaining the Twelve Elemental Pillars and submit itself to the various superpowers. Both of these outcomes would be fatal to Zero Wing's development.

Hence, Phoenix Rain decided that it was best to treat today's incident as Shi Feng tricking Nine Dragons Emperor. That way, Zero Wing would be able to avoid destruction.

Chapter 2436 – Zero Wing's Craziest

Upon hearing Phoenix Rain's words, Blue Phoenix, who had just stood up from her seat, immediately came to a realization.

“Big Sis Rain, does this mean that Nine Dragons Emperor and that Vice Guild Leader from Mythology understood that something like this would happen from the very start, and that’s why they gave up and left so peacefully?” Blue Phoenix felt a sense of dread when she recalled how calm Nine Dragons Emperor and Cold Shadow had been after failing to force Phoenix Rain to sell her Candlelight shares.

Previously, when Shi Feng stated that he could supply Advanced Ancient Barrier Scrolls in large quantities, the benefits the Twelve Elemental Pillars could bring had occupied Blue Phoenix’s thoughts. She had failed to consider the potential problems that the Twelve Elemental Pillars would bring. She also never imagined that Nine Dragons Emperor and Cold Shadow would think of this problem so quickly.

Meanwhile, judging by how decisively Cold Shadow had left the Dragon-Phoenix Pavilion’s Residence, she might’ve already started planning how she could capitalize on this matter.

“That’s most likely the case,” Phoenix Rain said, nodding. “However, we can still salvage this situation. So long as we can falsify this matter, the two of them won’t be able to take action even if they want to.”

Although Shi Feng had publicly revealed that he possessed 10 sets of Twelve Elemental Pillars, he didn’t actually prove that he was capable of supplying the Ancient Barrier in bulk. At the very least, none of the people that knew about his ability to do so was an outsider. Hence, it wouldn’t be difficult to convince the various superpowers that he couldn’t.

If those superpowers discovered that this matter was fake, then Nine Dragons Emperor and Cold Shadow’s plan to target Zero Wing would naturally fall through. After all, the strength Nine Dragons Emperor and Cold Shadow possessed on the eastern continent couldn’t shake the current Zero Wing’s foundations.

“You really don’t need to hide this matter. If they wish to take action, they are free to do so. If they are capable of doing so, that is,” Shi Feng said, chuckling when he saw Phoenix Rain and Blue Phoenix worrying about the problems that the Twelve Elemental Pillars would bring Zero Wing.

In the current God's Domain, nobody knew better than Shi Feng what influence the Twelve Elemental Pillars would have.

Compared to the benefits the Twelve Elemental Pillars could bring Zero Wing, the consequences of publicizing it were insignificant. After all, the current Zero Wing was no longer as weak as it was before.

In God's Domain, the period when players were transitioning from Level 100 to Tier 3 was the longest and most difficult for players to get through. In the past, a massive gap had formed between the various powers because of this period. Some unknown Guilds had become superpowers, and some superpowers had faded out of existence as a result of this period.

Although Zero Wing currently had a tremendous advantage when producing Tier 3 players, the Guild's lack of experts prevented it from capitalizing on this advantage. Meanwhile, it was only a matter of time before the various superpowers caught up to Zero Wing in this regard.

Hence, what Shi Feng needed to do now was expand Zero Wing's advantages and utilize these advantages to allow Zero Wing's experts to break free from this problem.

"This..." Phoenix Rain hesitated when she saw Shi Feng's confident expression.

Zero Wing's current strength indeed could not be underestimated, especially with it having three Flying Ships. The presence of these three Flying Ships made it practically impossible for anybody to threaten Zero Wing's air superiority. However, the various superpowers were not easy opponents, either. If the various superpowers banded together, even the Five Great Super Guilds would have to compromise.

Moreover, this matter was all because of her. In reality, Shi Feng could've conducted this transaction in secret and slowly developed Zero Wing's strength in God's Domain. There wouldn't have been any need for Zero Wing to become enemies with the various superpowers at all.

“Actually, before I came here, I had Aqua contact a few other Guilds and arrange for a meeting with them three hours later. At that time, I’ll be selling the Twelve Elemental Pillars to them as well,” Shi Feng said, smiling. “So, even if the incident just now hadn’t happened, the various superpowers would still find out about this matter. There is no need to blame yourself, Phoenix Pavilion Master.”

So long as he started selling something like the Twelve Elemental Pillars, he would definitely draw the attention of all superpowers. Hence, he had not hesitated to use the Twelve Elemental Pillars to humiliate Nine Dragons Emperor and Cold Shadow.

By doing so, not only would he elevate Phoenix Rain’s position in the Dragon-Phoenix Pavilion, but it would also serve as a small promotion to the several Guilds he had invited. At that time, he could save himself the trouble of proving that he was capable of supplying the Twelve Elemental Pillars in bulk. After all, the madness of the various superpowers was the best proof.

After hearing Shi Feng’s explanation, both Phoenix Rain and Blue Phoenix felt that he was simply crazy.

Shi Feng was basically forsaking his life for money!

Selling the Twelve Elemental Pillars might bring him a lot of benefits, but even Super Guilds would not dare risk becoming enemies with the various superpowers just for this much profit.

After all, the current era was different. Tier 2 experts were no longer as useful as before. Only Tier 3 experts could be considered a Guild’s true combat power.

Meanwhile, the various Super Guilds might have a lot more Tier 3 experts than an ordinary super-first-rate Guild, but the total number of Tier 3 experts of just three or five super-first-rate Guilds could easily surpass that of a Super Guild, what more all of the eastern continent’s superpowers.

“Since you have already said so, then I’ll represent the Dragon-Phoenix Pavilion in purchasing 100 sets of Twelve Elemental Pillars from Zero Wing. Guild Leader Black Flame, may I know if you can supply this many?” Phoenix Rain asked seriously after taking a deep breath.

After seeing how crazy Shi Feng was behaving, she decided to take a leap of faith.

The current Dragon-Phoenix Pavilion was in a very awkward position, ranking neither very highly nor lowly among the various superpowers. Since Zero Wing was already doing its best, she naturally had to try her best as well and gamble all of the Dragon-Phoenix Pavilion’s available materials and Magic Crystals.

The Twelve Elemental Pillars were very expensive. In the off chance that the loot of the Level 100-plus Mythic monsters the Guild hunted was not ideal and failed to allow the Guild to recoup its investment, the other superpowers in the Apocalypse Empire were likely to surpass the Dragon-Phoenix Pavilion. After all, a Guild’s development required plenty of resources. This was especially true for Magic Crystals.

However, if her gamble paid off and the Dragon-Phoenix Pavilion managed to secure enough top-tier equipment to arm a 100-man raid team within a short period, at that time, not only would the Dragon-Phoenix Pavilion attain absolute dominance over the Hill of Ruins, but it could also start raiding Level 100 Team Dungeons much sooner than other superpowers. With these advantages, the losses the Dragon-Phoenix Pavilion would suffer from expending so many resources would no longer be a problem.

“Big Sis Rain?” Blue Phoenix gaped in shock upon hearing Phoenix Rain’s words. She never thought that Phoenix Rain would take such decisive action.

With the invasion of the Otherworld powers having greatly intensified the competition in the Apocalypse Empire, just purchasing 30 sets of Twelve Elemental Pillars would have already put a heavy

strain on the Dragon-Phoenix Pavilion's resources. Purchasing 100 sets would basically empty the Guild's stockpile.

If the Dragon-Phoenix Pavilion failed to secure dominance over the Hill of Ruins with the 100 sets of Twelve Elemental Pillars, then the Guild would suffer immense losses. At that time, Phoenix Rain would lose all hope of becoming the next Great Pavilion Master.

"That won't be a problem. However, I'm afraid you'll have to wait until tomorrow for all 100 sets to be delivered," Shi Feng said. He, too, was surprised at the amount that Phoenix Rain requested.

Purchasing 100 sets of Twelve Elemental Pillars would cost 500,000 Magic Crystals, 50,000 Gold, 50,000 Elemental Crystals, and 50,000 Elemental Cores. This was no trivial amount of resources. There was no superpower that would not feel strained from spending so many resources.

"Blue, start making the necessary preparations." Once Phoenix Rain received Shi Feng's confirmation, she immediately had Blue Phoenix collect the required materials from the Guild Warehouse.

When Blue Phoenix visited the Residence's Warehouse, her actions immediately created an uproar among the Dragon-Phoenix Pavilion's upper echelons.

The request for 50,000 Gold was fine, as that wasn't a significant amount of money for the Dragon-Phoenix Pavilion. However, the number of Magic Crystals, Elemental Crystals, and Magic Cores that Blue Phoenix requested was another matter altogether. These were all materials necessary to produce potions needed for exploration, yet Blue Phoenix had put in a request for more than 90% of the Guild's stockpile for these materials.

However, neither Ku Rong nor the Grand Elders of the Guild tried to stop Blue Phoenix. On the contrary, they immediately approved Blue Phoenix's request and instructed the warehouse manager to supply Blue Phoenix with all of the requested materials. They also didn't bother questioning her purpose for these materials. After all, in the current Dragon-Phoenix Pavilion, Phoenix Rain could already be

considered the pseudo-Great Pavilion Master. She was well within her authority to make use of these materials.

Meanwhile, this shocking piece of news also entered the various superpowers' ears immediately.

Chapter 2437 – Shocking All Sides

Black Dragon Empire, Black Dragon City, Dragon-Phoenix Pavilion's Residence:

Currently, over 50 players were seated inside the spacious top-floor reception room. Close observation would reveal that every one of these players had reached Tier 3. Even a superpower's Guild Leader would turn grim upon seeing this scene.

After all, at this stage of the game, only a few superpowers had more than 50 Tier 3 players under their command.

"Dragon Pavilion Master, why did you call us here today?" a Level 104, Tier 3 male Shield Warrior with a thin and short body asked, frowning. He showed not the slightest bit of respect for Nine Dragons Emperor.

Meanwhile, no one in the reception room found the Shield Warrior's attitude surprising. On the contrary, everyone considered it completely reasonable because this thin and short, middle-aged man was Stubborn Heart. Not only was Stubborn Heart the Guild Leader of Grim Reaper, the Black Dragon Empire's number one Dark Guild, but he was also nicknamed "Steel Hammer."

Although Grim Reaper was not a superpower, it still wasn't an existence ordinary first-rate Guilds could go up against. In addition, Dark Players were a bunch of lunatics with only slaughter on their minds, and Dark Guilds had a completely different development path from ordinary Guilds. Hence, Grim Reaper did not fear any of the superpowers operating in the Black Dragon Empire. Naturally, Stubborn Heart wouldn't bother behaving politely around Nine Dragons Emperor.

Upon hearing Stubborn Heart's question, everyone present turned to look at Nine Dragons Emperor curiously. After all, this was also the question they all wished to ask.

Everyone in the room was a person of respectable standing in the Black Dragon Empire. They were either the Guild Leaders of Dark Guilds or the commanders of top adventurer teams. There were even a few Guild Leaders of first-rate Guilds present. This was basically a gathering of the Black Dragon Empire's top brass.

"Naturally, it's good news," Nine Dragons Emperor replied with a calm smile. "Haven't you all been wishing to develop in the Cold Spring Forest? Your chance has come!"

Cold Spring Forest was the Level 100 neutral map closest to the Black Dragon Empire. However, due to Zero Wing's Stone Forest City, the Black Dragon Empire's various major powers could only watch helplessly as Zero Wing and its partners monopolized the entire map. After all, if even superpowers were helpless against Stone Forest City, how could the various major powers do anything against it?

"What are you trying to say?" Stubborn Heart asked, somewhat tempted by Nine Dragons Emperor's words.

Cold Spring Forest was a Level 100 neutral map. Even Dark Guilds like Grim Reaper could not avoid grinding in such maps. If Grim Reaper could gain some benefits from Cold Spring Forest' then the Guild's development would definitely take a leap forward.

“I believe you more or less know about the matter that happened over at the Dragon-Phoenix Pavilion recently,” Nine Dragons Emperor said. “To be precise, I’m referring to Zero Wing taking out Advanced Ancient Barrier Scrolls.”

“That’s right. We know a little about that, but what of it? Is Zero Wing willing to sell us some?” Stubborn Heart asked, chuckling. “Not to mention, nobody knows if that information is actually true or not.”

At this stage of the game, any power would consider the Twelve Elemental Pillars an absolute treasure. Nobody would not be tempted by it.

However, how could Zero Wing possibly sell such a precious treasure to outsiders?

Moreover, that was an Advanced Ancient Barrier they were talking about—technology passed down from ancient times. It shouldn’t be possible to procure many of it.

“I can tell you now that Zero Wing is indeed capable of supplying a large number of those Ancient Barrier Scrolls,” Nine Dragons Emperor said with some excitement. “Moreover, I have solid proof of this matter.”

“How is that possible?!”

“The technology necessary to produce Ancient Barrier Scrolls should’ve been lost in ancient times!”

Everyone reacted in surprise when they heard Nine Dragons Emperor’s confident reply. They had never thought that this piece of information was true. As for Nine Dragons Emperor lying to them, the chances

of that happening were close to zero. After all, Nine Dragons Emperor wouldn't gain any benefits from doing so.

"What does this have to do with us? Even if we make a fuss about this, we still won't get our hands on those scrolls," Stubborn Heart stated.

While it was indeed frightening that Zero Wing could supply Advanced Ancient Barrier Scrolls in bulk, that was a matter that concerned only the various superpowers. Major powers like theirs weren't qualified to interfere in this matter at all.

"That's why I have gathered you all here," Nine Dragons Emperor said as he swept a glance around the room. Smiling, he continued, "You might not be strong on your own, but combined, even current Super Guilds cannot ignore your strength. Meanwhile, because of the Ancient Barrier Scrolls, the various superpowers definitely won't let Zero Wing off the hook this time. It won't matter even if Zero Wing possesses Stone Forest City. Under the might of a Tier 3 army, only destruction awaits Zero Wing!

"At that time, if we form an alliance, we might not be able to obtain those Ancient Barrier Scrolls, but we can get a share of Stone Forest City's benefits.

"Are you all not interested in Stone Forest City?"

Nine Dragons Emperor's words seemed replete with infinite temptation since everyone's breathing quickened after listening to his speech. The eyes of some of those present even started glowing.

Who wouldn't be interested in the current Stone Forest City?

Even now, Stone Forest City was still the only city established in a Level 100 neutral map on the eastern continent. It allowed players to not only recover from exhaustion rapidly but also save up on plenty of travel time. Many Tier 3 experts were willing to spend astronomical amounts of money just to rent a house there. Even then, actually renting a house in the city remained an extremely difficult proposition.

If they became the rulers of Stone Forest City, the profits they could rake in would be unimaginable.

Everyone present immediately signed a contract with Nine Dragons Emperor and formed a powerful alliance of interests. Meanwhile, the purpose of this alliance was to provide its members with greater authority when negotiating with the various superpowers.

At the same time, inside one of the VIP rooms of an Advanced Restaurant in Star-Moon Kingdom's White River City...

Vice Guild Leader, we have already verified Black Flame's words. In order to purchase a large number of those Ancient Barrier Scrolls, Phoenix Rain has gone as far as to empty out the Dragon-Phoenix Pavilion's stockpile of materials and Magic Crystals," a tall and robust man 2.4 meters tall reported respectfully to the beautiful, short-haired woman before him.

This short-haired woman was none other than Cold Shadow, one of Mythology's Vice Guild Leaders.

After leaving Twilight City, she had immediately made her way to White River City. At the same time, she had also tasked her spies with monitoring the Dragon-Phoenix Pavilion's every action.

"I never thought that Zero Wing would actually possess such a foundation. It seems I really underestimated it before." When Cold Shadow heard her subordinate's report, her lips curled up into a smile, as if she had just found an interesting toy.

“In addition, we have also received news that Zero Wing has invited the Secret Pavilion, Thirteen Thrones, Giant’s Heart, and Unyielding Soul for a meeting. By the looks of it, Zero Wing is planning to rope these Guilds in, using the Ancient Barrier Scrolls to form a common front.”

“Not a bad decision. If Zero Wing has the full support of these Guilds, things will indeed become more troublesome,” Cold Shadow said, smiling. “Unfortunately, it is useless, even if these Guilds band together. Proceed according to the plan. Whether it is those Ancient Barrier Scrolls or Zero Wing’s secret, we must obtain them all!”

In her opinion, Shi Feng’s action of using the Twelve Elemental Pillars to suppress Mythology was simply too immature. He just wasn’t aware of the consequences of distributing the Twelve Elemental Pillars in bulk.

Let alone the Secret Pavilion, even if the Five Great Super Guilds worked together, they still wouldn’t be able to stop an army of several thousand Tier 3 experts.

At the same time, inside a lush, green, primeval forest, a 100-man team consisting of more than 40 Tier 3 experts was resting below a large tree. Meanwhile, lying around this team were the corpses of Level 105-plus monsters. Many among them were at the Great Lord rank, and one of them was even a Grand Lord ranked Archaic Species.

Meanwhile, the leader of this team was none other than the Secret Pavilion’s Yuan Tiexin.

“Black Flame must be insane! How can he possibly do this?!” Yuan Tiexin’s complexion paled after he read the report his subordinate sent him. “He is making an enemy out of every superpower on the eastern continent!”

Originally, Yuan Tiexin thought that Shi Feng was inviting the Secret Pavilion for a meeting because of some good news. He never imagined that Shi Feng would pull such a huge stunt.

“Uncle Yuan, are we still attending the meeting?” Purple Jade asked, a gloomy expression forming on her face after she read the report.

Zero Wing had truly gone overboard this time!

Previously, the matter regarding Stone Forest City’s transfer to the Bottomless Abyss was still acceptable. After all, back then, even the strongest player was at Tier 2. At worst, Stone Forest City’s transfer would make a few superpowers envious. No superpower would choose to go for broke.

However, Zero Wing’s actions this time touched upon the foundations of the various superpowers. To protect themselves, the superpowers would definitely do everything they could to destroy Zero Wing. This time, even the Secret Pavilion would not be capable of shielding Zero Wing.

“Of course! Moreover, we need to hurry over immediately! If we wait until the various superpowers form an alliance, everything will be too late!” Yuan Tiexin said. Immediately, he organized his team and made his way to White River City, planning to persuade Shi Feng to hand over the Twelve Elemental Pillars’ acquisition method. After that, the Secret Pavilion would take responsibility for negotiating with the various superpowers. Otherwise, only death awaited Zero Wing.

Elsewhere, after Shi Feng received the payment from Phoenix Rain, he promptly returned to White River City as well.

However, he did not start production of the Twelve Elemental Pillars. Instead, he made a trip to the Adventurer’s Association in order to register his Knight Division’s members for their Tier 3 Promotion Quest.

Originally, he should've conducted these registration procedures long ago.

A Knight Division's members were considered the private soldiers of players. They were not exactly the same as Personal Guards. Although Knights would still automatically challenge their Tier 3 Promotion Quests once they reached Level 100, after succeeding in their Promotion Quest, they still needed their Lord to pay a procedural fee to the Adventurer's Association to complete their promotion.

Previously, as Shi Feng had been tied up with one problem after another, he had not had the time to take care of this matter. Now that all his affairs were settled, he naturally had to get this matter done. Otherwise, he wouldn't be able to open Stone Forest City to the public and turn the city into a true goldmine. After all, if a Guild City wished to earn money, it needed a large player population.

After transferring Stone Forest City to the Cold Spring Forest, in order to ensure Zero Wing's advantage, Shi Feng had decided to give access only to Zero Wing's allies and a small number of outsiders. However, now that the number of Tier 3 players in the game was increasing, Stone Forest City's advantages were continuously shrinking. In addition, it cost an enormous amount of money to maintain Stone Forest City's daily operations. There was also the economic war with Starlink. Due to these factors, Zero Wing was currently barely making ends meet.

Hence, it became necessary for Zero Wing to open Stone Forest City to the public.

Previously, with Zero Wing's current strength, Shi Feng wouldn't have dared open Stone Forest City to the public. Fortunately, however, he was a Lord and possessed a 5,000-man Knight Division, which was the reason why he dared to publicize the Twelve Elemental Pillars.

Although he felt that only 200 or so of his 5,000 Knights were capable of reaching Tier 3 this soon, NPCs were far stronger than players. Given those Tier 3 NPCs, in combination with the strength of the Tier 2 Knights and Stone Forest City's defenses, current superpowers would have a very difficult time threatening Stone Forest City.

Meanwhile, if the various superpowers didn't pose a threat to Stone Forest City, they naturally couldn't deal Zero Wing a heavy blow.

"Lord Bronze Legatee, how may I be of service?" Administrator Lorrain asked with a smile after walking into the VIP room Shi Feng occupied.

"I wish to see the list of my Knights that have completed their Promotion Quest," Shi Feng said.

"Very well." Lorrain nodded before leaving to search for the necessary information. A short moment later, she returned and handed a list to Shi Feng, saying, "Currently, 556 of your Knights have completed their Promotion Quest. Do you wish to conduct the registration procedures for all of them?"

Chapter 2438 – Frightening Knight Division

Five hundred and fifty-six?! Why are there so many?!

Shi Feng stared at the list in his hands in disbelief.

By his estimates, even though the Knights he recruited were of high quality, not that many of them should have been able to complete their Tier 3 Promotion Quest this soon. After all, Tier 3 was a significant turning point, even for NPCs.

Normally, Bronze Tier 2 Knights would have less than a 5% chance of completing their Tier 3 Promotion Quest, while Mysterious-Iron Knights' odds would be less than 10%. Only after reaching the Secret-Silver rank would Knights have an 80% chance of completing their Tier 3 Promotion Quest. This was also the reason why players had treated Knights at the Secret-Silver rank or above as treasures in his past life. Hence, of the 5,000 Knights he recruited, he would be fortunate if even 200 of them had succeeded in their Tier 3 Promotion Quest.

Now, however, the actual number was more than double his estimates.

Those were 556 Tier 3 NPCs they were talking about. Normally, only 2-star Lords had so many Tier 3 Knights.

In order to become a 2-star Lord, players needed to possess 200 Lord Popularity Points—twice the amount required to become a 1-star Lord. Meanwhile, after becoming a 2-star Lord, players could command an additional 2,000 Knights, raising the total to 7,000. Compared to 1-star Lords, 2-star Lords would be much more attractive to NPCs.

However, even under such a situation, 2-star Lords would generally have around 600 Tier 3 Knights. Moreover, achieving this number required the investment of a lot of time and resources. Developing Knights couldn't be accomplished within just a few days or weeks.

After all, in God's Domain, many ordinary players couldn't even reach Tier 3; those that reached Tier 3 would only be considered subpar among Tier 3 existences. Even Bronze Tier 3 Knights could suppress them easily.

Normally, a team of 200 Bronze Tier 3 Knights would be more than sufficient for maintaining the security of a Guild City with a player population of around 3,000,000. In fact, such a Guild City might even be much safer than NPC cities.

In minor NPC cities, Tier 3 players were fully capable of killing players in the city and then fleeing with their lives. After all, minor NPC cities were generally guarded by high-level Tier 2 NPCs at most. However, it was a different story with Tier 3 Knights. Even Tier 3 peak experts couldn't outrun a Bronze Tier 3 Knight.

Hence, during Shi Feng's previous life, very few experts had dared to cause trouble inside cities guarded by Tier 3 Knights unless they were prepared to suffer mutual destruction or worse, failing to kill their targets and losing their lives.

This was the amazing aspect of 1-star Lords. If a Guild were to rely on its members to defend its Guild City, the Guild wouldn't achieve such a deterrent effect.

Meanwhile, now that Shi Feng had 556 Tier 3 Knights, let alone safeguarding a Guild City with a player population of 3,000,000, he wouldn't have any problems protecting two such cities. In fact, with this number of Tier 3 Knights, he could even guarantee the safety of an Advanced City.

Could my Knights' Growth Potentials be very high because I am the first 1-star Lord to draft NPCs from the various kingdoms and empires? After giving the matter some thought, Shi Feng found this to be the only possible explanation.

Back then, he had spent a lot of money to recruit Knights in various major NPC cities. Both the quantity and quality of the Knights that answered his draft had exceeded his expectations.

He suspected that the Knights he recruited had considerably high Growth Potentials as well. For example, a Bronze Knight's Growth Potential was generally between 31 and 50. However, a Bronze Knight with 50 Growth Potential would have a considerably better chance of reaching Tier 3 than a Bronze Knight with 31 Growth Potential.

If his speculation was correct and the Knights he recruited all possessed very high Growth Potential, then it wasn't unreasonable that so many of them had succeeded in their Tier 3 Promotion Quests.

"Lord Bronze Legatee, do you wish to conduct the procedures now?" Lorrain prompted once more as she looked at Shi Feng's dazed expression.

Yes! Of course!" Shi Feng replied hurriedly.

These were 556 Tier 3s they were talking about. Moreover, they were Tier 3 NPCs.

Currently, a superpower would be fortunate to have even 50 Tier 3 experts under their command; 500 would definitely be an astronomical amount for the various superpowers. Not to mention, Tier 3 NPCs were generally much stronger than Tier 3 players.

If he revealed these Tier 3 Knights to the public, he would scare a lot of people to death!

Unfortunately, unlike Personal Guards, Knights could operate only within their Lord's territories. Otherwise, with over 500 Tier 3 NPCs under his command, he could easily trample any of the current superpowers in God's Domain.

Very well. The Tier 3 registration procedures cost 10 Gold per person. The total bill is 5,560 Gold," Lorrain said.

"Alright." Shi Feng nodded. He then added, "I also wish to replace the equipment of these people. Please upgrade the equipment of all those that aren't equipped in Fine-Gold Equipment to the Fine-Gold rank."

The registration fee was a small price to pay. If he could upgrade all 5,000 of his Knights to Tier 3, let alone 10 Gold per person, he would be willing to pay even 100 Gold each.

However, that was only a dream. After all, Knights at the Secret-Silver rank or above were far too rare. Being able to recruit even one was already a fortunate matter. Take the current situation, for example. Even now, Shi Feng was still issuing draft orders in the various major NPC cities and replacing his weaker Knights with better ones. However, even after so many days, he had only managed to get some new Mysterious-Iron Knights. He still hadn't recruited any new Secret-Silver Knights. One could see just how difficult it was to come across Secret-Silver Knights.

Meanwhile, after reaching Tier 3, although the Basic Attributes of Knights would vary, depending on their Growth Potential, their overall combat power was still contingent on their weapons and equipment.

There was a massive difference in combat power between a Knight geared in Bronze Equipment and a Knight geared in Epic Equipment.

Moreover, unlike players, NPCs were much easier to gear. One just needed sufficient funds. Of course, there was a limit to the weapons and equipment Lords could purchase for their Knights, and that limit was the Epic rank. Gearing Knights in Fragmented Legendary or Legendary items required special means.

Currently, Shi Feng's greatest wish was to gear every one of his Knights in a full set of Epic Equipment. However, this was something he only dared dream of. After all, one set of Level 100 to Level 150 Epic Equipment cost 4,000 Gold. If he wanted to arm his entire Knight Division in Epic Equipment, it would cost him 20,000,000 Gold.

Twenty million!

This was an astronomical amount even for superpowers, let alone Zero Wing.

Currently, the best he could do was to gear his Secret-Silver and Fine-Gold Knights in Epic Equipment and the remaining Tier 3 Knights in Fine-Gold Equipment. As for the Tier 2 Knights, most of them still used Secret-Silver Equipment.

Although Zero Wing had constantly been upgrading the Knights' weapons and equipment, the amount invested wasn't a lot, and the upgrades were generally done in very small batches. Shi Feng only dared to upgrade the equipment of more than 500 people because he had some spare funds on hand.

"Of the 556 people in question, 478 require a change in equipment. Each set of Level 100 Fine-Gold Equipment is priced at 100 Gold. Including the registration fee, your total comes to 53,360 Gold," Lorrain said, smiling after taking a look at the list.

When Shi Feng heard the price Lorrain quoted, he involuntarily winced slightly as he took out most of the Coins he had on hand.

It seems I'll have to earn even more money now. Otherwise, I won't be able to nurture these Tier 3 Knights. Shi Feng revealed a bitter smile when he saw that he had only around 400 Gold left in his bag.

He had gone to great lengths to earn 50,000 Gold from Phoenix Rain. Just when he thought he had become slightly rich again, all of his money disappeared in the blink of an eye. If not for him having close to 4,000 Gold before his transaction with Phoenix Rain, he wouldn't have been able to afford to replace the equipment of his Tier 3 Knights.

Although 400 Gold was a huge sum of money to expert players, Shi Feng was the Guild Leader of Zero Wing. Having just 400 Gold on him was extremely shabby.

Moreover, after his Knights officially reached Tier 3, their weekly salaries and nurturing fees had also increased.

As an example, Bronze Tier 3 Knights demanded a weekly salary of 200 Gold and cost 100 Gold per week to nurture. These numbers could basically rival those of Fine-Gold Tier 2 Knights.

Meanwhile, nearly 300 of the 556 Tier 3 Knights were Bronze Knights. Just nurturing these Bronze Knights would cost almost 90,000 Gold per week. After including the Tier 3 Knights that were at the Mysterious-Iron rank and above, nurturing these 556 Tier 3 Knights would cost more than 200,000 Gold per week.

After Shi Feng footed the bill, Aqua Rose suddenly contacted him.

“Guild Leader, Yuan Tiexin and his entourage have arrived at Stone Forest City. Yuan Tiexin has quite an ugly expression on his face and says that he has urgent business to discuss with you,” Aqua Rose said.

“They’re here so soon? Have them wait in the City Lord’s Mansion. I’ll head over right away,” Shi Feng said, chuckling. He then took out a Guild Transfer Scroll for Stone Forest City and disappeared from the VIP room.

Chapter 2439 – Commotion at Cold Spring Cold Spring

Canyon, Stone Forest City:

Under Aqua Rose's lead, Yuan Tiexin and Purple Jade reached the City Lord's Mansion. Just as they were about to enter it, a group of Level 100 players, who had just arrived at Stone Forest City, happened to walk by, their eyes filled with shock and wonder as they took in the players around them.

"Are there so many Tier 3 experts here normally? Isn't Stone Forest City a little too amazing?!" a Level 100 female Elementalist exclaimed.

Tier 3 experts were currently the strongest combatants in the game. Even first-rate Guilds would be fortunate to have a dozen Tier 3 experts under their command. Since there were only a few first-rate Guilds in every kingdom and empire, it was incredibly difficult to come across Tier 3 players.

Normally, it would be rare to encounter a handful of Tier 3 players even on the main street of an empire's capital. Now, however, there were easily more than two dozen Tier 3 players walking along Stone Forest City's main street.

However, the resident players of Stone Forest City were behaving as if this situation was normal. Everyone was doing their own thing and paid no attention to the Tier 3 players.

"There's nothing to get surprised about. Do you know what kind of place Stone Forest City is?" the level 102, Tier 3 Shield Warrior, who was the female Elementalist's team leader, said. In a low tone, he continued, "Remember to be extra careful when you're here in the future! Even if the Hundred Flowers Palace is a first-rate Guild in the Dark Night Empire, it still can't ensure your safety here! You can only let your guard down after you have reached Tier 3 as well!"

Currently, Stone Forest City was the only Guild City established in a Level 100 neutral map, so it held a powerful attraction for players. However, aside from Zero Wing's partner Guilds, other players and powers that wished to enter the city could do so only by renting the city's private houses.

Meanwhile, Stone Forest City's private houses were both incomparably rare and expensive. Ordinary experts couldn't afford them at all. One could say that every player residing in Stone Forest City either possessed powerful backing or was an extremely powerful individual.

Due to this reason, if one accidentally offended someone in Stone Forest City, particularly the Tier 3 players of the city, then one would be in for an absolute nightmare.

Players might be safe inside Stone Forest City, as there were NPC Knights and Zero Wing's experts patrolling it. However, once players left the city, it was a different story. Tier 3 players ruled the fields outside. One would not receive any respect even if they originated from a first-rate Guild.

Upon hearing this Level 102, Tier 3 Shield Warrior's words, the Hundred Flowers Palace's dozen or so talented newcomers promptly nodded their heads and no longer dared to speak casually. Right now, they could clearly sense the attention and auras coming from the people around them. The gazes of the Tier 3 experts, in particular, carried a hint of killing intent. It was as if these people were hunters that had just found their prey.

Fortunately, there were Level 115-plus, Tier 2 NPC Knights, as well as Zero Wing and Secret Pavilion experts, maintaining order in the city. There was also the fact that their team leader was a Tier 3 Shield Warrior. Otherwise, these Tier 3 experts would no doubt find opportunities to kill them in the city and plunder the Level 100 top-tier weapons and equipment their Guild had prepared for them.

"It seems the situation in Stone Forest City is becoming increasingly unstable." Yuan Tiexin frowned grimly as he looked at the Tier 3 experts roaming the main street. He felt that he had still underestimated the difficulty of developing and managing Stone Forest City.

Although Zero Wing already had more than 50 players that had reached Tier 3, that number was still far from comparable to the total number of Tier 3 experts in a single kingdom or empire. Moreover, as more time passed, the number of Tier 3 players in the various kingdoms and empires would only increase at a pace that far outstripped Zero Wing's.

Take the current Stone Forest City, for example. Previously, Zero Wing was capable of suppressing all of the Tier 3 players operating within the city with just two dozen Tier 3 experts. Now, however...

It was no exaggeration to say that the total number of Tier 3 experts Zero Wing commanded couldn't even rival the number of Tier 3 experts dwelling in the city. As more time passed, this gap would only widen. After all, Cold Spring Forest was a leveling heaven for players. More and more Tier 3 experts would seek to develop here in the future.

Meanwhile, as Stone Forest City's Tier 3 expert population increased, the city's security would also become a big problem. Although the Secret Pavilion had garrisoned plenty of its own Tier 3 experts in the city, security remained a problem. After all, Tier 3 experts were powerhouses capable of committing crimes and escaping from even major NPC cities, let alone a Guild City like Stone Forest City.

Take the current situation, for example. The Tier 3 experts operating in Stone Forest City no longer bothered to hide their killing intent. After all, they understood that managing them was already a challenge for Zero Wing. The Guild no longer possessed absolute might and authority in the city. At this rate, it was only a matter of time before Tier 3 experts started secretly taking action within city limits.

Yet, despite Stone Forest City falling into such a predicament, not only did Shi Feng not try to think of ways to stabilize the city's situation and properly develop Zero Wing in secret, but he had even gone and aggravated the various superpowers, leaving the superpowers with no choice but to annihilate Zero Wing.

Now that the situation had come to this, even the Secret Pavilion would have a very difficult time guaranteeing Zero Wing's safety.

However, Yuan Tiexin did not put too much thought into the matter. Instead, he promptly followed Aqua Rose through the City Lord's Mansion's entrance. Right now, his priority was to persuade Shi Feng

to hand over the Twelve Elemental Pillars' benefits. Otherwise, the Secret Pavilion would have nothing to negotiate with to fend off the various superpowers.

However, just as the trio were about to enter the inner courtyard of the City Lord's Mansion, a regional system announcement suddenly sounded in their ears.

Cold Spring Forest Region System Announcement: The seal on Stone Forest City has been lifted, and the city is now officially open to the public. All players may now enter the city to rest after paying an entrance fee.

The system announcement repeated three times. Although the Main God System's mechanical voice contained no emotions, its words thoroughly stunned Yuan Tiexin.

"Is he insane?" Looking at the system announcement, Yuan Tiexin even wondered if he had heard and seen wrong.

Even when Stone Forest City was sealed, Zero Wing was already having difficulties managing the city. If the city was opened to the public, Yuan Tiexin did not dare to imagine what it would become.

After all, the various superpowers were keeping a close eye on Zero Wing. They might have even started forming alliances already. Opening Stone Forest City to the public now would be no different from gifting the city to the various superpowers.

Vice Guild Leader Aqua, what is Guild Leader Black Flame trying to do? Is he really planning to forsake his life for money?" Purple Jade could not help asking Aqua Rose after seeing the system announcement.

In Purple Jade's opinion, Shi Feng was already plenty crazy for selling a treasure like the Twelve Elemental Pillars in bulk.

Now, he had actually gone a step further and opened the insecure Stone Forest City to the public. At this rate, even if the various superpowers did not take action, Stone Forest City would still fall into ruin from the large number of experts that would swarm into the city.

At this moment, let alone Yuan Tiexin and Purple Jade, even the players operating within the Cold Spring Forest were stunned by this announcement. None of them had thought that Zero Wing would actually allow the public into Stone Forest City.

After all, current Tier 3 players were no longer the same as before, no longer existences that ordinary NPC soldiers could suppress. If a large number of Tier 3 experts swarmed into Stone Forest City, the city might still belong to Zero Wing, but the Guild would no longer be its absolute ruler.

Following a brief moment of surprise, the players operating within the Cold Spring Forest were ecstatic at this piece of news.

Stone Forest City's opening meant that they could operate freely in the Cold Spring Forest in the future. They no longer had to waste time traveling between the neutral map and an NPC city. They would also have a much easier time challenging their Tier 3 Promotion Quest. Meanwhile, all they had to pay in exchange for these conveniences was a small entrance fee.

"No, I definitely cannot let him mess around like this! The Secret Pavilion is also a shareholder in Stone Forest City! We need to seal Stone Forest City again right away! If we wait until all of Cold Spring Forest's experts enter the city, then the entire city will fall into ruin!"

Yuan Tiexin felt that Shi Feng had truly gone insane this time. After saying so, he immediately dashed toward the City Lord's Mansion's inner courtyard, planning to make his way to the City Lord's Office, as players could choose to open or seal the entire city only in the office.

However, as soon as he opened the doors to the inner courtyard, a tsunami-like aura immediately struck him, driving an overwhelming sense of fear and helplessness into him.

Both Yuan Tiexin and Purple Jade abruptly jumped back, instantly putting a huge distance between themselves and the inner courtyard's entrance. They wore extremely grim expressions as they looked warily at the inner courtyard's plaza, which rivaled the size of a football field.

"Tier 3...NPCS?"

"What is going on here?"

When Yuan Tiexin and Purple Jade first arrived at the small plaza, confusion had momentarily overwhelmed them. Afterward, they gasped reflexively.

Their reaction was because the plaza was filled with Level 115-plus NPCs—all of whom had actually reached Tier 3. Moreover, these NPCs radiated incredibly powerful auras, with the strongest NPCs inspiring despair even in experts like Yuan Tiexin and Purple Jade.

At this moment, Yuan Tiexin and Purple Jade felt as if he had just opened Pandora's Box.

Meanwhile, the most frightening thing was that all of these Tier 3 NPCs were staring at them right now.

Chapter 2440 – Yuan Tiexin’s Shock

Being the focus of attention from hundreds of Tier 3 NPCs placed immense pressure on Yuan Tiexin and Purple Jade. For a moment, they even felt the urge to turn around and flee.

Although both of them had reached Tier 3 already, they were still far from comparable to Tier 3 NPCs in terms of strength. This difference wasn’t only in Basic Attributes. Recently promoted Tier 3 players like them had no way of competing against Tier 3 NPCs in this regard.

Moreover, Tier 3 NPCs were existences capable of serving as the Magistrate of minor NPC cities. At this point, there was no player in God’s Domain that did not fear the might of an NPC city’s Magistrate. This remained the case even after Tier 3 players came into existence.

Meanwhile, several hundred Magistrate-level NPCs were staring at Yuan Tiexin and Purple Jade. One could easily imagine how much pressure they were under.

Have the dark forces’ NPCs occupied Stone Forest City already? Yuan Tiexin’s mind gave birth to such a thought as he gazed at the Tier 3 NPCs before him.

Since the launch of God’s Domain until now, many instances of the dark forces’ NPCs occupying neutral maps had already occurred. These situations were similar to events triggered by players. If players managed to resolve this crisis in time, then they were rewarded handsomely. If not, then the dark forces would take over the neutral map completely.

At this moment, Stone Forest City might have come across a similar event. There was no explanation for why so many Tier 3 NPCs had suddenly appeared in Stone Forest City, otherwise. It would also explain why Stone Forest City was suddenly opened to the public.

“Uncle Yuan, what should we do? These NPCs have already locked on to our auras,” Purple Jade asked anxiously.

At this moment, she did not have the slightest intention whatsoever of conquering this event. After all, this situation could no longer be considered an event; this was practically a natural disaster.

Escaping from just one Level 100, Tier 3 NPC would already be difficult for her. Now, however, there were hundreds of Level 115-plus, Tier 3 NPCs standing inside the plaza. How was she to escape in such a situation?

“We don’t have any other options. I’ll try to block them in a moment. Use that chance to activate a Tier 3 Instantaneous Movement Scroll and leave this place. Be quick. These Tier 3 NPCs have reaction speeds and combat standards far superior to those Great Lords and Grand Lords we’ve faced. They won’t give us any opportunities to take advantage of,” Yuan Tiexin said. At this moment, he understood that it was impossible for both of them to escape. They could only sacrifice one person to create an opportunity for the other.

In God’s Domain, NPCs were far more intelligent than monsters. They were also much more experienced and sharper than players when it came to combat. Moreover, the higher their tier, the more intelligent NPCs became. After reaching Tier 3, NPCs basically wouldn’t give players a chance to use magic tools.

In a situation where NPCs had the advantage in combat power, even Tier 3 peak experts like them would have a very difficult time retrieving a magic tool from their bags, much less activating it. This was because the brief lapse in defense this action would create would be more than enough for Tier 3 NPCs to instantly kill them.

Meanwhile, as a Tier 3 MT, if Yuan Tiexin activated all his Lifesaving Skills, he could more or less hold off these NPCs for a brief period. However, it was a different story for Purple Jade, who was a Tier 3 Sword King. If she tried to block these Tier 3 NPCs, she would most likely end up vaporized in an instant. After all, their opponents weren't just two or three Tier 3 NPCs, but several hundred Tier 3 NPCs instead.

"I understand." Purple Jade nodded. Although she felt reluctant, she understood that this was their best option. Otherwise, both of them would die here. Losing a level might not be a huge deal for Tier 3 players like them, but the top-tier equipment they would lose as a result of death was.

Once Purple Jade nodded, Yuan Tiexin immediately raised his shield and prepared to activate his Lifesaving Skills.

However, just as Yuan Tiexin was about to charge into the inner courtyard and attract the NPCs' attention, a familiar voice suddenly came from the inner courtyard.

"Elder Yuan, why are you here? Didn't Aqua lead you to the reception room?"

This voice stunned both Yuan Tiexin and Purple Jade—because it sounded incredibly familiar. However, they also felt that it should be impossible for them to hear this voice at this place. Both of them reflexively turned toward this voice.

In the next moment, the rows of Tier 3 NPCs suddenly parted, opening up a path for a cloaked man standing in the middle of the inner courtyard's plaza. At the same time, every one of these NPCs assumed a respectful pose, their actions suggestive of vassals welcoming their ruler.

When Yuan Tiexin and Purple Jade saw the cloaked man, they were again stunned.

“You... Are you really Guild Leader Black Flame?” Purple Jade asked in an astonished tone as she looked at Shi Feng.

Tier 3 NPCs were existences that players like herself viewed with dread. After reaching Tier 3, she became even more aware of just how powerful Tier 3 NPCs were.

Now, however, the several hundred Tier 3 NPCs standing in the plaza were actually acting subservient to Shi Feng.

In such a situation, how could Shi Feng still be considered a player? He was basically the king of a country.

“Of course I am Black Flame,” Shi Feng replied, chuckling. “If not, who do you think I am?”

Shi Feng found Yuan Tiexin and Purple Jade’s shock completely understandable. After all, there were over 500 Tier 3 NPCs standing before them.

Even an NPC kingdom did not boast of so many Tier 3 NPCs under its command. Now that all of these NPCs were assembled, it was no exaggeration to call them an unstoppable force.

At this moment, let alone Tier 3 experts like Yuan Tiexin and Purple Jade, even Tier 4 experts would have to flee for their lives when facing such an army. After all, Tier 3 NPCs were different from monsters. When working together, they could boost their combat power exponentially. If they used large-scale Combination Spells and Skills, the combat power they could exhibit would far exceed what was apparent on the surface.

This was also the reason why the Ten Saints Empire's Seven Mythic Knight Divisions were capable of pacifying the neighboring kingdoms and empires.

Meanwhile, upon hearing Shi Feng's teasing, both Yuan Tiexin and Purple Jade relaxed visibly.

"Guild Leader Black Flame, who are these NPCs behind you?" Yuan Tiexin asked.

Although he now understood that these Tier 3 NPCs were not hostile, he still couldn't ignore the fact that so many Tier 3 NPCs were gathered in a single place.

"Them?" Meeting Yuan Tiexin's fearful and curious gaze, Shi Feng pointed at the Tier 3 NPCs behind him and said,

"They belong to my personal Knight Division. They're similar to the Tier 2 Knights you see patrolling outside. Only, the ones behind me have just been promoted to Tier 3."

"They belong to your Knight Division?!"

Although Shi Feng had spoken very casually, both Yuan Tiexin and Purple Jade were flabbergasted by his words.

They might not have a clear idea of what a Knight Division was, but judging by Shi Feng's tone, they could tell that these Tier 3 NPCs were under Shi Feng's command.

These were several hundred Tier 3 NPCs they were talking about!

The various superpowers did not have a lot of Personal Guards that had been promoted to Tier 3 even now. Normally, only Personal Guards at the Secret-Silver rank or above had a 100% chance of completing their Tier 3 Promotion Quest. As for Personal Guards of a lower rank, their chances were very low. However, Secret-Silver Personal Guards and better were incredibly rare; most superpowers had less than a handful of them.

Meanwhile, from what Yuan Tiexin could tell, there should be at least 500 Tier 3 NPCs standing inside the inner courtyard. With such a force, Zero Wing could annihilate any power it wished.

“Right, Elder Yuan, why were you in such a hurry to find me? Do you have some urgent business to discuss?” Shi Feng asked when Yuan Tiexin remained in a daze even after some time had passed.

“I did, originally.” Looking at the Tier 3 Knights filling the courtyard, Yuan Tiexin revealed a bitter smile and said, “But now, it seems I don’t anymore.”

What a joke!

Right now, Stone Forest City’s defenses were even more frightening than those of a kingdom’s capital city. Even if all of the eastern continent’s superpowers worked together and formed an army of several thousand Tier 3 experts, they would still be far from capable of capturing a kingdom’s capital city. Needless to say, they wouldn’t be capable of capturing Stone Forest City, either.

Meanwhile, if the various superpowers couldn't do anything against Stone Forest City, then Zero Wing's foundations would not be affected no matter what. If the various superpowers still insisted on attacking Stone Forest City, the only ones that would suffer would be them.

Right now, Yuan Tiexin was even hoping that the various superpowers would come and attack Stone Forest City quickly.

Following which, Shi Feng conducted a transaction for the Twelve Elemental Pillars with Yuan Tiexin. Afterward, Shi Feng had to admit that the Secret Pavilion was indeed rich, as Yuan Tiexin had purchased 200 sets just to "test" the magic barrier's efficiency. This transaction had instantly turned Shi Feng into a wealthy man again.

During the time Shi Feng and Yuan Tiexin were doing business, the various superpowers received news of Stone Forest City being opened to the public. For a time, the superpowers were surprised by this situation. They never anticipated such a crazy stunt from Zero Wing.

Meanwhile, inside the Dragon-Phoenix Pavilion's Residence in Black Dragon City...

"Pavilion Master, what do you think Black Flame is trying to do?" Martial Dragon asked, his face filled with confusion as he read the report in his hand. "Is he really trying to make a quick buck, now that he knows that he is going to lose Stone Forest City?"

In Martial Dragon's opinion, this was the only explanation for this situation. After all, as soon as the various superpowers finished negotiating a partnership with each other, an army of several thousand Tier 3 experts would march on Stone Forest City.

Moreover, once the superpowers allied with each other, they definitely wouldn't be satisfied with just obtaining the Twelve Elemental Pillars. They would surely aim for Stone Forest City and even possibly the entirety of Zero Wing. At that time, it would be useless even if the Secret Pavilion tried to protect Zero Wing.

“I don’t know, but everything is already over. I received news that quite a few superpowers have started negotiating with each other in secret. There is nothing Zero Wing can do to salvage this situation now,” Nine Dragons Emperor said, shaking his head. Although he was similarly confused by Shi Feng’s actions, he deemed this matter no longer important. “How are things coming along on Stubborn Heart’s side?”

“They are already making their way to Stone Forest City. They have close to 100 Tier 3 experts on their side, and it won’t be long before they sneak into the city. Once the various superpowers’ army arrives, they will coordinate their attacks with the army’s, and Stone Forest City should fall very easily,” Martial Dragon reported.

“Good. Your side should get ready, as well. We’ll be meeting with Lu Xingluo in a moment. At that time, we’ll have to discuss with him how we are going to distribute Stone Forest City’s spoils,” Nine Dragons Emperor said.

“Understood!” Martial Dragon responded, a rare smile appearing on his face.

Meanwhile, as Nine Dragons Emperor was paying Lu Xingluo a visit, Stubborn Heart’s group arrived before Stone Forest City’s entrance and queued up to enter the city.