

Strongest

Chapter 1261 – Expert Companion

Although Shi Feng had sensed someone behind him, everything had happened too quickly. He couldn't use any of his Skills or tools, and it was too late to turn around and defend himself.

Instinctively, Shi Feng bent his knees and leaped forward in an attempt to avoid the swiftly approaching dagger.

However, no matter how hard Shi Feng tried to avoid it, the weapon tracked his movements. In the end, he could only watch as the dagger closed in.

Why is a Domain Realm expert here?

After attempting to dodge, Shi Feng realized that his attacker was an extraordinary expert; the discovery shocked him.

If his opponent were merely a Void Realm expert like himself, even without his Skills, he could avoid the sneak attack. However, his opponent could predict his movements and force him into a corner.

It wasn't the dagger itself that was so fast. Rather, it was his enemy's reaction speed.

Shi Feng had encountered a similar situation against Ouroboros's Soaring Snake. Due to his innate talent, Soaring Snake's reaction speed was far beyond ordinary people. Meanwhile, Shi Feng's current attacker was twice as fast as Soaring Snake...

Based on Shi Feng's understanding, only mysterious Domain Realm experts had such fast reaction speed.

When the silver dagger struck, Shi Feng's vision darkened as he fell into a Fainted state.

This move was none other than the Assassin class's Ambush Skill. It could force its target into a Fainted state for two to four seconds.

Immediately after, another dagger bit into Shi Feng's back.

Backstab!

-10,249!

What a tough nut. Uncle Li was slightly surprised when he saw the damage above Shi Feng's head.

Both of his daggers were Epic Weapons. He had already activated his Berserk Skill as well. Even against a Shield Warrior or Guardian Knight with high Defense, his Backstab could easily deal over -20,000 damage, yet this attack had dealt a little over -10,000 damage to the Swordsman before him.

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A short distance away, five cloaked players watched the fight.

“No matter how many times I see Uncle Li’s Vanishing Cloud or Agile Thunder God, they both feel so awe-inspiring,” the cloaked Ranger named Hungry Ghost said, sighing ruefully.

“That’s to be expected. They are Uncle Li’s trademark moves. They might not seem special, but even Domain Realm experts can’t sense Uncle Li’s presence when he uses Stealth and Vanishing Cloud. As for Agile Thunder God, the Secret Technique is exclusive to Uncle Li. With that technique, he can launch instinctive attacks without having to process his enemy’s actions on a conscious level, resulting in an inhuman reaction speed. How else do you think Uncle Li became the Guild’s number one assassination expert?” a petite Elementalist explained as she excitedly watched Uncle Li work.

Countless experts dreamed of grasping Agile Thunder God.

Unfortunately, even now, Uncle Li was the only player throughout the Sacred Temple that had learned the technique. Despite Uncle Li’s vigorous training, none of the Guild’s geniuses had learned it.

The Berserker wielding an aqua-blue spear said, “Ghost, it’s about time to make your move. We don’t have much time left.”

“Relax, Frostbite. That guy won’t be able to move for at least two seconds. I can kill him twice with that much time.” Hungry Ghost nodded, chuckling. Following which, he retrieved four Black Arrows from his bag, aiming for Shi Feng and firing. “With this, our mission is complete.”

Yet another explosion shook the district as the Black Arrows broke the sound barrier.

In the blink of an eye, the Black Arrows crossed the distance of 30 yards and reached their target. Hungry Ghost had aimed for Shi Feng’s blind spots; even if the Swordsman could move, he couldn’t avoid these four arrows.

“It’s finally over,” Scorpion, who was in Stealth, said, chuckling.

Although he was disappointed that he did not get to finish Shi Feng off personally, witnessing Uncle Li’s attack made the time he spent tracking Shi Feng worthwhile.

Uncle Li retreated to the side and took a silver Magic Scroll from his bag. This was the Rapid Teleportation Scroll that only peak Dark Players could obtain. Unlike Return Scrolls, which had a ten-second activation time, the Rapid Teleportation Scroll only required two seconds. Moreover, the activation process could not be disrupted. At the same time, the scroll would form a magic barrier around the user that could both protect the user and prevent NPCs from sensing them.

Right now, he needed to retrieve the items Shi Feng would drop on death and leave Stormwind Town as fast as he could.

As the four Black Arrows were about to slam into Shi Feng, however, a black figure appeared before him. This figure had taken the hits. Surprisingly, the Black Arrows hadn’t killed the figure instantly. Instead, they vanished upon coming into contact with them.

This black figure was none other than the cloaked Fire Dance.

Even before Shi Feng had picked a fight with the House of Seas, he had asked Fire Dance to return to Stormwind Town. He had instructed her to watch from stealth as he tested the Nightwalker’s Cape’s effects. Moreover, he didn’t want others to know that anyone else was related to the grocery store unless absolutely necessary.

Only, he hadn’t been expected to be ambushed by a Domain Realm expert.

What?! He has an Assassin companion?! Scorpion, who was in Stealth, could not help his surprise.

While the Black Arrows were frightening, Assassins possessed Wind Steps and Vanish. Both Skills provided momentary invulnerability. No matter what kind of attacks they faced, they would not receive any damage during the invulnerability period.

The Assassin had used those two exact Skills to protect Shi Feng from the Black Arrows.

“Damn that Scorpion! What has he been doing all this time?!” Hungry Ghost cursed. “Didn’t he say the target has been alone?!”

Now that this Assassin had disrupted their plans, it would become significantly harder to assassinate Shi Feng in the future.

Uncle Li, who stood a short distance away from Shi Feng, remained extremely calm despite the unexpected development. Without hesitation, he dashed forward, his daggers ready to end Shi Feng.

Although they had to change their plan, it did not change the fact that Shi Feng was still in a Fainted state and unable to move. Even without the Black Arrows, he had other means of taking Shi Feng’s life. After all, Shi Feng only had around a quarter of his HP remaining.

The Black Arrows were only overkill.

Meanwhile, Hungry Ghost and the others regained their composure and assaulted Shi Feng from all directions.

Although Shi Feng now had an Assassin protector, the Assassin class specialized in single targets; against so many attackers at once, she couldn't protect the Swordsman.

However, as Uncle Li and his teammate were about to reach Shi Feng, five more figures appeared around him.

"Why does he have so many companions?!" Hungry Ghost and the others were stunned.

Six players now surrounded Shi Feng—a full party. At this point, Scorpion's surveillance was a joke.

What Hungry Ghost and the others did not know was that this was one of Thousand Transformations's Additional Skills, Phantom. It allowed Fire Dance to create five copies of herself.

However, Fire Dance had not activated Phantom to shock her opponents. She used the Skill to cope with so many enemies.

Phantom allowed her to switch places with any of her doppelgangers without a Cooldown. Even without moving, Fire Dance could protect her Guild Leader from any direction. Moreover, thanks to Illusory Power and Thousand Transformations itself, Fire Dance's Strength was only inferior to Shi Feng's.

Dang! Dang! Dang!

Following which, Fire Dance easily blocked the incoming arrows and Spells. Against Uncle Li's lightning-quick Assassinate, Fire Dance countered with her Fragmented Legendary short sword.

Peng!

On her own, Fire Dance should not be capable of blocking Uncle Li's Assassinate, which he empowered with Agile Thunder God. However, thanks to Thousand Transformations's hidden effect, she parried the attack in time. Fire Dance had only been forced to retreat by half a step even after receiving the attack.

In contrast, Uncle Li had been forced two steps back, his HP falling by over 200.

Chapter 1262 – Fire Dance's Sword

"She blocked it?"

Hungry Ghost and the others were momentarily stunned.

Not only had Shi Feng's companions blocked all of their attacks, but one of his companions had even parried Uncle Li's Assassinate.

Even Domain Realm experts had a hard time against Agile Thunder God. After all, not only did the technique massively increase attack speed, but it also prevented the opponent from predicting the attack's trajectory. The technique was impossible to react to.

Throughout the Sacred Temple, there were only a handful of people that could block Uncle Li's Agile Thunder God. Moreover, that was only if their mental clarity were at its peak, yet this Assassin had blocked the old man's attack effortlessly. Why wouldn't they be surprised?

"Just who are these people?" Scorpion was flabbergasted as he watched from a safe distance.

It wouldn't have been terribly surprising to see an expert like Shi Feng in Sea's End, but he had been joined by an expert capable of blocking Uncle Li's attacks. No one would believe that these two weren't backed by some superpower. After all, experts of such standards were rare even in Super Guilds.

Meanwhile, Fire Dance focused on Uncle Li, who stood before her, her mind clear like never before. Her instincts constantly warned her that, against this expert, the slightest slip up would cost her life.

If not for Thousand Transformations's hidden effect, she would've fallen prey to Uncle Li's Assassinate.

"Interesting." Although Uncle Li was slightly surprised that Fire Dance had blocked his attack, his resolution to kill Shi Feng had not wavered in the slightest.

Immediately, Uncle Li used Shadow Steps and appeared behind Shi Feng, his dagger aiming for the Swordsman's kidneys.

Because he didn't use any Skills this time, he could attack with both daggers simultaneously. With this, he drastically reduced the likelihood of Fire Dance blocking the attacks.



Despicable! Although Fire Dance knew that Uncle Li had used Shadow Steps, she reacted a moment too late. By the time she switched places with one of the doppelgangers and arrived behind Shi Feng, neither her superior Attributes nor her speed could help her block the attacks.

With no other choice, Fire Dance twirled the dagger in her left hand and slashed downwards, activating one of the Petrified Thorn's Skill.

Petrification Domain!

Immediately, all enemies within 50 yards were dealt 500% weapon damage and had their Movement Speed reduced by 50%. At the same time, Fire Dance's Attributes rose based on the number of targets the Domain had affected.

However, as if Uncle Li had been prepared for this, he used Wind Steps, becoming momentarily invulnerable and negating Petrification Domain's damage. Meanwhile, his two daggers struck Shi Feng.

-2,718!

-2,259!

To Shi Feng, who still had over 50,000 HP remaining, those two attacks only took around 10% of his HP.

Sure enough, normal attacks are not enough to kill him. Uncle Li frowned, frustrated with Shi Feng's Defense and HP.

As Uncle Li was about to use the 5-star Eviscerate he had accumulated, Fire Dance, who was faster, slashed Thousand Transformations at the man.

Although Uncle Li sensed the attack coming, he didn't want to waste a Skill to block it. Quickly adjusting his footwork, he tilted his body slightly to dodge the incoming short sword.

However, Uncle Li's expression changed when Fire Dance swung her blade, multiple afterimages appearing around Thousand Transformations.

How?!

Uncle Li may have been surprised, but he was a Domain Realm expert. With the help of Agile Thunder God, he defended himself instinctively.

Dang!

A clang pierced the air when Uncle Li's daggers collided with Thousand Transformations. Meanwhile, Uncle Li was forced to retreat by three steps, a damage of over -500 appearing above his head.

After landing the first strike, Fire Dance brandished Thousand Transformations once more, giving Uncle Li no time to react.

Although Fire Dance's reaction speed was slower than the old man's, she had an absolute advantage when it came to Attack Speed.

Against countless sword lights, even Uncle Li had to be careful. As a result, Fire Dance forced him back farther. Uncle Li tried his best to counterattack, brandishing both daggers simultaneously, but Fire Dance simply responded by swinging Thousand Transformations. Innumerable sword lights flickered around the combatants, blocking the daggers.

Again, the resulting impact forced Uncle Li to retreat.

“Impossible!” Hungry Ghost and the others, who were about to launch another wave of attacks, were stunned.

To them, Uncle Li was an unparalleled expert, yet that expert was at a disadvantage against Fire Dance. If news of this reached the Sacred Temple, it would cause an uproar in the Guild.

While Fire Dance and Uncle Li clashed, Shi Feng finally recovered from his Fainted state.

Seeing Shi Feng regain consciousness, Uncle Li knew that it was no longer possible to kill the man. He abruptly retreated to a distance before turning to Fire Dance, saying, “Little missy, you really are astounding. Despite having not obtained a Domain, not only did you block my attacks, but you also suppressed me completely. Among the many non-Domain Realm experts I’ve fought thus far, you rank third. Might I ask if you are interested in joining us? If you do, I promise that you’ll become one of the best Assassins in God’s Domain. You’ll reach heights that you haven’t even imagined yet.”

Fire Dance was taken aback by Uncle Li’s sudden offer.

She could not figure out what the man before her was thinking. They were currently engaged in a battle, yet the latter had extended a recruitment offer.

Hungry Ghost and the others also heard Uncle Li's offer. Their jaws dropped, and they stared at Fire Dance with envy and admiration.

Uncle Li was a Domain Realm expert. He was also the Sacred Temple's number one expert. His evaluations were harsh. He only ever praised the Guild's geniuses for their potential, yet he had just claimed that Fire Dance could become one of the best Assassins in the game...

Not even the Sacred Temple's top genius had enjoyed such praise. One could see just how much Fire Dance had impressed Uncle Li.

"Forget it. I will never join you." Fire Dance rejected Uncle Li's offer without hesitation. "I doubt that I'll become God's Domain's number one Assassin by joining your measly Guild."

Fire Dance's words instantly infuriated and frustrated Hungry Ghost and his companions. They sorely wished they could take the woman's place.

They were talking about an offer for exclusive training under Uncle Li. The Sacred Temple's geniuses hungered for such an opportunity, yet Fire Dance treated the offer as if it were an insult.

"Alright. If you change your mind, you can contact me with this. We will welcome you at any time." Uncle Li could not help but sigh at Fire Dance's reply. He tossed her a Communication Scroll before turning to leave, vanishing.

The Communication Scroll was a common tool in God's Domain. Even if without being friends, they could communicate through the scroll. Only, it needed to be bound to someone first, then the wielder could contact the initial owner at any time. The scroll was mostly intended for players that wished to hide their identities.

In Uncle Li's opinion, Fire Dance was still too young. She had only replied in such a way because she had yet to understand just how powerful the experts at the top of the world were.

Only after Fire Dance had fought those experts would she learn how vast this world truly was. At that time, she would seek him out.

Meanwhile, upon realizing that Shi Feng had recovered, Hungry Ghost and his team used their Rapid Teleportation Scrolls and left Stormwind Town.

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Sea's End, Dark City Yasland:

After using the Rapid Teleportation Scroll, Hungry Ghost and the others arrived in Yasland, a lawless city. Even if one killed other players inside this city, the NPC guards paid no attention to the crime. The only reason these NPC patrols existed was to defend the city itself from those who sought to harm it.

"Uncle Li, the target is stronger than we expected. Moreover, he has companions following him in secret. Should we ask for the Punishment Legion's help during our next attempt? We'll have a greater chance of eliminating the target," Hungry Ghost asked Uncle Li, who had just teleported into the city.

The Punishment Legion was the Sacred Temple's assassination legion. The legion had specifically been formed to deal with other superpowers' key figures. Although the legion's members were weaker than their party members individually, they had the advantage of numbers. They also had gear that gave them an advantage against other players.

"No need. We're giving up on this mission," Uncle Li said, shaking his head. "As for the Guild Leader and Hundred Leaves, I'll explain the situation to them personally. You guys can go level up and upgrade your gear for now."

#### Chapter 1263 – Becoming Famous at Sea

The Reef Sea, famed for its coral reefs, pearls, and other precious materials, was a Level 40 to Level 55 high-resource map.

A short distance away from Reef Island, dozens of speedboats attacked a massive, Level 53 sea monster.

Unlike normal sea monsters, this was a Boss—a Chieftain rank sea monster. It was also one of Reef Sea's overloads.

Right now, this overlord had very little HP remaining.

"It's HP is at 20%! Advanced speedboats, back away! Let the Bronze Speedboats tank it!" Hundred Leaves commanded through the team chat.

After the Freedom Alliance redistributed the leveling maps, the Eighth Fleet's members traveled to the Reef Sea and Echo Canyon to level. The first thing they needed to do was kill the maps' Field Bosses.

The first reason was to guarantee their ships' safety when exploring these maps, allowing their members easy access to towns and leveling spots.

The second reason was to obtain the weapons and equipment these Bosses dropped.

Each map had a limited number of Field Bosses. Once these Bosses were killed, they could take anywhere from one to three days to respawn. Each time players killed these Bosses, they dropped fewer top-tier weapons and equipment when they respawned. Hence, when the area's major powers discovered a Field Boss, they swarmed to kill it immediately.

This was also why conflict was so common in leveling maps.

As independent players passed, they watched the Eighth Fleet with shock and envy.

"The Freedom Alliance's Eighth Fleet is so strong! They're actually challenging a Nineclaw Squid so soon after arriving! Even the Freedom Alliance's Second Fleet never dared to challenge this Boss!"

"Haven't you heard? There's been a huge shift in the Freedom Alliance's ranks. The Eighth Fleet currently ranks the second strongest. As for the Second Fleet, it's ranked tenth."

"We really got lucky this time. If they kill the Nineclaw squid, it'll be easier to get to Reef Island."

The passing players chatted as they watched the battle.

Not only was the Nineclaw Squid one of Reef Sea's overlords, but it was also Reef Island's gatekeeper. Reef Island was a valuable location due to its ancient ruins. One could obtain plenty of treasures and top-tier items in those ruins. However, players had to get past the Nineclaw Squid before they could reach Reef Island.

Some time later, the Nineclaw Squid shrieked as its body slammed into the water. A large number of items then dropped around its body.

The spectators drooled when they saw the loot. As this was the first time the Nineclaw Squid had been killed, it had dropped plenty of items. They could count at least 50 in total. Moreover, every item was top-tier. If put up for auction, the items would easily sell for large sums. Of course, the Eighth Fleet had also paid a considerable price for these items. In total, they had lost three advanced speedboats and eleven ordinary speedboats. The fleet's Bronze Speedboats also received varying amounts of damage. The repairs would be costly.

Repairing ships was far more expensive than repairing weapons and equipment. Even an ordinary speedboat with half of its durability would cost around 2 or 3 Gold to repair. Advanced Speedboats could cost anywhere from 10 to 20 Gold. Needless to say, Bronze Speedboats were even more expensive. Moreover, Advanced Ship Shipwright.

"Someone collect the loot. Everyone else, rest up. We'll dock on Reef Island soon," Hundred Leaves instructed. She then noticed the communication request from Uncle Li. Revealing an excited expression, she accepted the call and asked, "Uncle Li, have you dealt with the issue?"

As far as she was concerned, once she dispatched Uncle Li's party, Shi Feng had no hope of survival. Uncle Li must have contacted her to report his success.



“No. The assassination failed,” Uncle Li said, shaking his head.

“Failed?” Hundred Leaves was momentarily stunned. Quickly, she reacted and asked, “Is he that strong?”

Uncle Li was the Sacred Temple’s number one assassination expert.

Both Vanishing Cloud and Agile Thunder God were advanced techniques that even Domain Realm experts struggled to learn. Agile Thunder God, in particular, allowed one to become practically invincible in melee combat, giving the player the upper hand in every exchange.

“That’s not the case. When we attacked, his companions showed up to protect him.” When Uncle Li thought about Fire Dance, he was disappointed that he couldn’t recruit the woman.

“Uncle Li, whatever you need for the next assassination attempt, just ask. I can even hire other assassination experts to help you.” After hearing about Shi Feng’s companions, Hundred Leaves had a rough guess as to what had happened.

Usually, assassination attempts were carefully planned. An unexpected factor would significantly decrease the chances of success.

Unfortunately, now that the first attempt had failed, Shi Feng would be on guard, making it even more difficult to kill the Swordsman.

“I’ve already discussed this with the Guild Leader, and we have agreed to give up this mission for the moment,” Uncle Li said.

“Give up? Why?” Hundred Leaves demanded.

“The target and his companions are all extremely powerful. I believe that they are supported by some superpower. Although we still don’t know which superpower is moving in secret, our Sacred Temple has other matters to attend to. We don’t have enough energy to fight another superpower,” Uncle Li said seriously. “My Guild Leader had decided to ignore them temporarily. We’ll decide what to do after we take control of the Freedom Alliance.”

“The Guild Leader said that?” Although Hundred Leaves was hesitant, she had to obey the Guild Leader. “I understand. I’ll make sure to secure the First Fleet position in the next siege battle.”

“Ah, right. Also, the target has declared war on the House of Seas. Don’t poke your nose into this matter. Let them wear each other down,” Uncle Li warned her before disconnecting the call.

“He declared war on the House of Seas? Why? Has he lost his mind?” Hundred Leaves gaped, wondering if she had heard wrong.

The House of Seas was even stronger than the entire Freedom Alliance. It also had the support of a major corporation. It had both financial strength and manpower in abundance. Moreover, although it wasn’t as powerful as a super-first-rate Guilds, due to the situation in Sea’s End, it was much stronger than veteran first-rate Guilds.

Yet Shi Feng had openly declared war against the Guild...

She wasn’t sure if Shi Feng was brave or just foolish.

Immediately, Hundred Leaves launched an investigation into the matter.

Before, she had focused on commanding the battle against the Nineclaw Squid, so she had been oblivious about anything outside of the battle.

“Who is this guy?” When Hundred Leaves received the information her subordinates had collected, she was astonished.

Shi Feng was simply overbearing!

He actually intended to fight the House of Seas to the bitter end.

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Meanwhile, a storm brewed in the House of Seas’ main headquarters in Meteorite City.

“Great! A single player dares to declare war against the House of Seas! Now, we’re a laughingstock in Sea’s End! Pass the word! Use everything we have to take down Stormwind Town! I want him obliterated! Send the Blood Drinking Legion to keep an eye on him as well! If he sets foot outside of the town, kill him! I want everyone in Sea’s End to know that no one gets away with provoking the House of Seas!” Tyrant Serpent, the House of Seas’ Guild Leader, laughed in anger after watching the declaration of war video on the official forums. “Since he wants to sell the Sea God’s Blessing, I’ll give him a chance! From now on, sell our Sea God’s Blessings in our Shops! Sell them at 1 Gold per bottle! Didn’t he recently purchase a large stock? I want to see just how much money he can afford to lose!”

## Chapter 1264 – Number One at Sea

Inside the House of Seas' meeting room...

Tyrant Serpent's orders shocked the Guild's upper echelons in the room.

This was the first time they had seen their Guild Leader so enraged, angry enough to make rash decisions.

"Guild Leader, isn't that a little too far? We're already spending 1 Gold for each Sea God's Blessing we obtain. If we sell the potion for 1 Gold, won't we be working for nothing? Moreover, our stock is limited. If we don't sell enough potions, that player will continue to make a profit, yet if we sell too many, we might not have enough for our members. It could hurt our exploration of Death's Waterfall."

The House of Seas had stumbled upon the secret land, Death's Waterfall, by coincidence. The area's resources were beyond abundant. It was even home to quite a few ancient ruins. The small corner of Death's Waterfall they had explored thus far had already boosted the Guild's strength significantly. Among their initial harvest, they had obtained over a dozen Bronze Speedboats. They had also obtained a Mysterious-Iron Speedboat. There was even less need to mention the number of top-tier weapons and equipment they had found.

The areas of Death's Waterfall they had explored thus far were only the tip of the iceberg. The farther they ventured, the more frightening the treasures they encountered.

However, the secret land's environment was severe. If players did not possess sufficiently high Magic Resistance, survival was out of the question.

Hence, the House of Seas had purchased the Sea God's Blessing in bulk. Fortunately, the House of Seas had met an NPC Grandmaster Alchemist, which allowed them to synthesize Runic Crystals at a much higher success rate. However, while the cost of synthesizing the Runic Crystals had decreased significantly, it still wasn't cheap.

To explore Death's Waterfall, the House of Seas invested tons of Coins and resources each day. Moreover, the Guild increased its investments by the day. The more players they could send into the secret land, the faster they could explore the area. Naturally, they would send as many players as they could. This was also why their Guild was in short supply of Coins.

However, after seeing the popularity of the Sea God's Blessing in the various empires, they had found a solution to their money problem; they could sell some of their stock to fund the exploration. But selling the Sea God's Blessing at cost would gain them nothing.

"Don't worry. Previously, we only purchased Runic Fragments for 6 Silver per stack to prevent others from synthesizing Runic Crystals. If we purchase the fragments in bulk for 4 Silver per stack, that brat won't have any hope against us," Tyrant Serpent said, chuckling. "You just need to focus on finding an opportunity to kill that player."

Hearing this, realization dawned on the upper echelons.

After all was said and done, Stormwind Town was only a town. The teleportation fees to get there weren't cheap. Meanwhile, the House of Seas had Shops in all of the twelve major NPC cities as well as numerous NPC towns in Sea's End. If players only planned to sell a small number of fragments, they could earn far more by selling them for 4 Silver per stack rather than traveling to Stormwind Town to sell them for 5 Silver per stack.

By doing this, not only could they hinder Shi Feng's financial progress, but they could also lower their cost of obtaining the Sea God's Blessing, killing two birds with one stone.

They doubted that Shi Feng had the assistance of a Grandmaster Alchemist. If this competition persisted long-term, Shi Feng would eventually fail to make any money with the Sea God's Blessing, suffering losses instead.

"Guild Leader is the best. If that brat had agreed to cooperate from the very beginning, he could have kept 20% of his profits. Now, he'll be kicked out of the competition and hunted endlessly."

Following which, the House of Seas upper echelons left to fulfill Tyrant Serpent's orders.

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As the House of Seas had discussed Shi Feng's situation, players also discussed the matter on Sea's End's official forums.

Someone had long since uploaded Shi Feng's declaration video against the House of Seas. No one had ever expected this outcome.

Despite the House of Seas sending hundreds of experts at Shi Feng, the Guild suffered a miserable defeat, its experts either dying or running away with their tails between their legs.

Shi Feng's battle video had also mesmerized many independent players. Whether it was his positioning, dodges, or attacks, compared to the other expert battle videos they had seen, this video was worlds apart.

In prior battle videos, they had seen experts take on twenty opponents at most. Moreover, those crowds usually consisted of ordinary players with poor equipment and low levels.

The higher quality videos usually only recorded a single expert taking on three or four elite players. Even so, the videos were educational and helped them to learn many combat techniques.

However, Shi Feng's battle video showcased a fight against the House of Seas's 200-man expert team. Even if some were not true experts, they were not that far off from it, either. Just one of these players could easily overwhelm multiple independent players like themselves, yet Shi Feng had suppressed all 200.

If these players were distracted in the slightest while watching the battle video, they'd miss how the House of Seas members had died. Some of them had even opted to play the video in slow motion. Their eyes couldn't keep up with Shi Feng's speed, after all.

Such a mythical battle completely redefined their definition of "expert."

Compared to Shi Feng, the usual experts were nothing than a joke.

"The boss of this grocery store is invincible! He actually killed close to half of the House of Seas' 200 experts by himself! I wonder if he'd accept an apprentice? I have to ask him to teach me his ways!"

"I wonder if that shopkeeper plans to establish an adventurer team or Guild? If he does, I have to join even if I go bankrupt!"

“How can he move so fast? Is he even human?”

“He’s a monster! There isn’t a single player in Sea’s End that’s a match for him. Even those famous experts can’t block one of his attacks.”

“Hahaha! The House of Seas is in trouble this time. They’ve provoked such an expert. If this expert wants revenge, the House of Seas members will have to be careful.”

“The House of Seas has indeed knocked on the wrong door this time. However, it won’t be easy for this expert to cause trouble for the House of Seas. After all, the Guild has nearly a million members. Even if he can kill a player each second, it would take him days to annihilate the Guild. Even if he goes out of his way to hunt them down, what about his level and equipment? At the end of the day, one man’s power is limited. At most, this player can annoy the House of Seas and damage its reputation.”

“Even so, he’s still pretty impressive. The House of Seas is one of Sea’s End’s overlords. Have you ever seen the House of Seas suffer such a miserable defeat before?”

...

The forums buzzed with conversation regarding Shi Feng. The most debated topic was about who would emerge victorious. Would it be Shi Feng? Or would the House of Seas triumph? Although the outcome was unknown, everyone agreed on one thing: the grocery store’s proprietor was undoubtedly the number one expert in Sea’s End.

For a time, many players dreamed of being Shi Feng’s students.



Because of this, the grocery store's popularity skyrocketed. By now, practically everyone in Sea's End knew about it.

In just half an hour after Shi Feng's battle with the House of Seas experts, Stormwind Town was packed with players, the town's player population increasing by several times. Many had come out of admiration, while some had come to convince Shi Feng to teach them. There was also a portion that had come to sell their Runic Fragments.

Players swarmed the Shop. Even getting through the entrance was now a problem.

"Guild Leader, too many players are trying to sell their Runic Fragments. The grocery store's warehouse is nearly at full capacity. Why don't we start renovating the Shop? We can bring in some of Candlelight's products," Fire Dance excitedly suggested after entering the second-floor room.

While she had been out purchasing Sea God's Blessings, she had gained a general understanding of Sea's End.

She had to admit that the business standards here were significantly inferior to the Star-Moon Kingdom's. The area's Lifestyle players were also low-quality.

If they sold the Candlelight Trading Firm's merchandise here, the items would definitely be in high demand.

Promote Candlelight's merchandise? Fire Dance's sudden suggestion tempted even Shi Feng. However, he quickly came to a decision and shook his head, saying, "It's not time for that yet."

"Why?" Fire Dance was confused. "The House of Seas can't touch us in Stormwind Town for now. Even if we sell our merchandise here, all they can do is watch."

"They might not be able to touch us, but that's not the case for everyone," Shi Feng said as he glanced out the window. He pointed at the large group of players wearing the House of Seas' Guild Emblem that had appeared on the street below. "Speak of the devil."

Fire Dance curiously followed his gaze.

Immediately, she noticed 100 House of Seas members outside the grocery store. These players had blocked off the Shop's entrance, preventing anyone from getting close.

"From now on, anybody that enter this grocery store will be an enemy of the House of Seas! Anybody that ignores this warning will reap the consequences as soon as they leave the town! The House of Seas will also start purchasing Runic Fragments without limit for 5 Silver per stack!" the leading House of Seas member announced.

The representative instantly had the attention of every player in the business district.

They hadn't expected the Guild to adopt the stick-and-carrot approach. Rather than provoking the House of Seas, they'd be safest to sell their fragments to the Guild.

Fire Dance also realized what Shi Feng had meant.

The House of Seas might not be able to do attack them, but the Guild could easily deal with other players.

As Fire Dance considered the situation, several more groups appeared on the street. These players were all House of Seas members, and they were all Level 41 and above. They were decorated with excellent weapons and equipment, the most inferior of which was Level 40 Secret-Silver rank. After making their appearance, these players marched towards Stormwind Town's entrance. It was obvious they intended to grind in Stormwind Shelter.

"The House of Seas sure moves quickly." Shi Feng smiled faintly as he watched the House of Seas elite teams leave town to grind. "It seems we need to hurry."

"Guild Leader, leave this to me. Even if the House of Seas bars players from selling us their fragments in Stormwind Town, I can set up stalls in other towns and cities. I refuse to believe they can corner us completely," Fire Dance said confidently.

She was an Assassin. She was also incredibly strong. It would be very difficult for the House of Seas to keep track of and assassinate her.

Although it would be tiresome running about numerous towns and cities, and she could only carry so many Runic Fragments in her bag space, they could still purchase quite a few Sea God's Blessings with 4,000 fragment stacks.

The House of Seas was dreaming if it thought it could stop them from purchasing Runic Fragments.

“No. We’ll stop collecting Runic Fragments temporarily. Our priority is to secure ownership of Stormwind Town,” Shi Feng said, chuckling.

“Secure ownership?” Fire Dance was surprised.

“That’s right. The towns in Sea’s End are slightly special. If we want to develop a Shop here, we need to manage the town,” Shi Feng said, nodding. “The town managers wield powerful authority. Although they cannot banish players from the town, they can prevent players from setting up Shops. Players would have to sign a contract with the town manager before doing so. This is why there are so few shops in Sea’s End and why the business development here is so poor.

“Currently, Stormwind Town isn’t under any player’s control. If we want to establish a Shop, we need to take control of Stormwind Town quickly. If we let the House of Seas get there first, we’ll be doomed.”

This was also why the House of Seas had dispatched several elite teams to grind in Stormwind Shelter.

To become a town’s manager, one first needed to have the most Contribution points of any player in that town. They would then have to take the manager’s test and pass it. Only then could they become the town’s manager for a single month. Once the month ended, if the player still had the highest Contribution Points, they could continue to serve as the town’s manager. If not, they would be replaced. It was a brutal competition.

In contrast, the player towns on land did not have time limits. As long as no else conquered the town, they could hold the position.

“Should I summon the Dark Gods Legion to help?” Fire Dance asked.

If they wanted to obtain Contribution Points quickly, they needed more manpower.

Currently, the Dark Gods Legion was only second to Zero Wing's main force. Although the members were not as high-leveled as Sea's End's experts, when it came to combat standards, they could easily triumph.

If it came to a fight, the Dark Gods Legion members would have no problems taking on three of the House of Seas' experts.

"No need. We're more than enough for this," Shi Feng said, waving his hand. While having the Dark Gods Legion wasn't a bad idea, this problem couldn't be resolved with more manpower. After all, the requirement to become a town's manager depended on an individual player's Contribution Points, not the Contribution Points of a Guild or team.

Part of the reason that he had spent 10,000 Gold to purchase a Stormwind Emblem was to obtain Stormwind Town.

Only, the House of Seas had given him no choice but to accelerate his plans.

With the Stormwind Emblem, players were granted authority within Stormwind Town. With this authority, players could accept advanced town quests, which would allow them to gain Town Contribution Points far more quickly. After all, a large fraction of the TCPs players obtained came from quests. Moreover, the higher a quest's rank, the more TCP's it awarded.

This was why the various powers fought for town emblems.

“Synthesizing Runic Crystals is boring. Let’s pay a visit to the Sea God’s Temple,” Shi Feng said as he stood.

In the past, Stormwind Town had been a miniature holy land, which God’s Domain’s various superpowers had fought over. War had been common here, each conflict reaping easily over 500,000 lives.

To take control of the town, these powers first had to grind for Contribution Points.

Aside from the daily town quests, plenty of hidden advanced quests and rare quests were available. However, only players with the town emblem or a particular level of authority could accept these quests.

In the past, the Sacred Temple had obtained Stormwind Town in part due to a rare quest. Players could accept this quest repeatedly as long as they could pay the price. Every time players completed it, it awarded more Contribution Points.

Many players with authority had known about this quest. However, almost all of them had disregarded it as a waste of both time and manpower. To them, the Contribution Point reward wasn’t worth the price. For a while, no one had accepted it.

However, one player from the Sacred Temple had persevered and stubbornly completed the quest, again and again. After his ninth completion, he had more Contribution Points than any other player in Stormwind Town.

This was a shortcut to collecting Contribution Points. Although everyone eventually learned the truth about this quest, no one else had ever completed it nine times.

...

Stormwind Town's Sea God's Temple:

Shortly after Shi Feng entered the main hall, he noticed quite a few players following him. The crowd even included a stealthed Assassin.

Although none of these players wore a Guild Emblem, it was obvious that they were from the House of Seas.

They sure are diligent. Well, continue following, then. That is, if you can. Shi Feng simply smiled as he noticed the House of Seas members. He walked up to an NPC receptionist and said, "Hello. I wish to meet with Vice Temple Master Arnold."

"Sir, please follow me." Upon seeing the Stormwind Emblem on Shi Feng's chest, the NPC receptionist nodded before leading Shi Feng to the second floor. Fire Dance waited for him in the first-floor hall.

As Shi Feng saw to his business in the Sea God's Temple, a sudden discovery shook the various empires on land.

Some Shops were actually selling the Sea God's Blessing! Moreover, the potion only cost 1 Gold per bottle!

## Chapter 1266 – Dragon’s Blood

Apocalypse Empire, Deathwhisper Hill:

An army of over a hundred thousand Undead guarded the Deathwhisper Fortress. A legion of 1,000 players clashed with the constant stream of Undead.

These Undead wore tattered armor and wielded swords and shields. Their movements were organized, and even the weakest among them was a Level 42 Elite, while the strongest included Level 46 Lords.

If a normal, 1,000-man legion faced this army, they would be terrified. However, this 1,000-man legion killed the Undead with a militaristic efficiency, acting as if this situation were just a matter of course.

Several hundred MTs raised their shields as they held the Undead back, none of them even attacking the monsters as they focused on defense. With the limited space, the MTs maneuvered their shields and displayed impressive technique as they prevented the Undead from breaking past their line. As for the DPS players behind the shield wall, they launched an unrelenting assault. Occasionally, they used AOE attacks, dealing high amounts of damage to a cluster of monsters.

“Good. DPS, prioritize Chieftain rank and above monsters. Healers, keep an eye on your Mana. If it falls below 30%, retreat, switch players with a back-up healer, and recover.” Phoenix Rain commanded her legion while attacking a Lord ranked monster. She remained wholly unperturbed despite facing down an Undead army led by 100 Lords. It seemed as if this battle were completely under her control.

As Phoenix Rain was commanding the battle, Blue Phoenix, who wielded a dark blue crystal staff that radiated the Epic rank glow and wore a complete Level 45 Dark-Gold Set Equipment for Elementalists, walked up to her leader’s side. Blue Phoenix then reported quietly, “Big Sis Rain, we just received news



that a Shop in Chaos Rock City is selling the popular Sea God's Blessing. Moreover, the potion only costs 1 Gold per bottle."

"What? Why is it so cheap?" When Phoenix Rain heard Blue Phoenix's report, a hint of surprise slipped through her calm exterior. "Is the information reliable? Or is that Shop just trying to become famous, selling a small number for such a low price?"

The Sea God's Blessing had become a strategic resource, which God's Domain's superpowers competed over. Its effects were wondrous for exploring secret ruins and raiding Dungeons. Among the Sea God's Blessings sold in the Apocalypse Empire, Phoenix Rain had only obtained a little over 500 bottles. Miracle and Battle Wolves had snatched the majority of the potions. Meanwhile, she was saving these Sea God's Blessing as a trump card to raid large-scale Hell Mode Team Dungeons and the competition on Thunder Island.

Previously, the cheapest Sea God's Blessings in the Apocalypse Empire's Auction House had sold for 6 Gold. Even after deducting the processing fees, the players selling the potion would get over 5 Gold per bottle, yet someone had decided to sell it for 1 Gold. No matter how she looked at it, this felt like fake news.

She had long since investigated the Sea God's Blessing. The potion could only be purchased from the Sea God's Temple. The only way to obtain a large quantity in a short time right now was to trade in Runic Crystals. However, Runic Crystals were even rarer than Magic Crystals. Other than defeating Boss-grade sea monsters, the only reliable way of obtaining them was to synthesize Runic Fragments. Unfortunately, the synthesis was expensive. Initial estimates put the cost of one bottle of Sea God's Blessing at a minimum of 1 Gold, 50 Silver. If unlucky, the potion might even cost 2 Gold.

Although her people had tried that method, the results had been disappointing. After all, they knew very few NPC Master Alchemists. Moreover, unless they achieved a certain level of Favorability with these NPCs, they would not receive any help. Most importantly, each Sea God's Temple had a limited number of Sea God's Blessings. By the time they had amassed a large number of Runic Crystals, the Sea God's Temple they had visited had run out of stock...

“I thought the same thing. But according to our reports, the Shop has already sold more than 1,000 bottles. Many large Guilds have given up on purchasing the potion in the Auction House. Only independent teams with flimsy information networks are bidding on the potions,” Blue Phoenix explained.

“This is interesting. Have you found out who runs that Shop yet?” Phoenix Rain asked, chuckling softly.

“Yes. The House of Seas owns the Shop. It is a warehouse-type Shop that the House of Seas operates to collect materials and potions that cannot be found at sea.” Blue Phoenix then sent Phoenix Rain the related information.

Chaos Rock City ranked in the 10s among the many NPC cities in the Apocalypse Empire. It was insignificant compared to the imperial capital. With enough money early in the game, anyone could obtain land in the NPC cities ranked beyond 10th place; none of the superpowers would pay any attention to these small cities.

Taking advantage of this fact, powers such as the House of Seas, that were not based in the Apocalypse Empire, had purchased the Lands. One of the reasons for doing so was to set up a foundation for any potential development. They could also set up a Shop to serve as their eyes in the empire while they used it as a warehouse of sorts.

“Their competitor must be quite strong to force the House of Seas to this,” Phoenix Rain chuckled. “Since the House of Seas wants to stomp its competition by lowering the potion’s price, we’ll use this opportunity to buy as many as we can. However, we cannot let the House of Seas’s competitor die off too quickly. Have someone contact the competitor and tell them that we wish to have a chat.”

“Understood.” Blue Phoenix promptly began to contact her subordinates.

While Phoenix Ran and Blue Phoenix had conversed, the other major powers had sent their people to investigate the situation. After all, they all knew that the House of Seas had a very strong backer. They were curious to know who was capable of forcing the House of Seas into this corner. Moreover, whoever was responsible was capable of securing a large quantity of Sea God's Blessings. If the other party were strong enough, they could consider forming a partnership. If not, all the better.

...

Stormwind Town, Sea God's Temple's second-floor reception room:

After waiting in the reception room for some time, Shi Feng watched a stern, gray-robed, old man nearing his 70s enter the room.

Although this old man's hair was fully white, he brimmed with spirit. Moreover, the instant this old man appeared, Shi Feng felt the space around him radiate an immense pressure. He felt as if he would be turned into meat paste if he made any sudden movements.

This old man was none other than Arnold, the Vice Temple Master of Stormwind Town's Sea God's Temple. On the surface, the NPC's information showed that he was a Level 160, Tier 3 Great Mage. In reality, however, he was a Tier 4 Great Wizard. Only, due to his last battle, he had fallen ill, falling a tier as a result.

This was the beginning of the rare quest chain.

"Young adventurer, what business do you have with me?" Arnold asked indifferently as he watched Shi Feng.

As the Sea God's Temple's Vice Temple Master, his status was extremely high. If not for Shi Feng's Stormwind Emblem, he would not be worth this NPC's time.

Arnold's cold greeting didn't particularly surprise Shi Feng. Smiling, he answered, "Lord Arnold, I've heard that, to protect this town in the past, you fought a desperate battle against an abyssal monster. In the end, you used a Curse to kill the monster. However, you suffered a backlash as a result. I have an Advanced Healing Potion with me. I hope that it can be of some help to your injuries."

Saying so, Shi Feng took an Advanced Healing Potion from his bag.

"Thank you, young adventurer," Arnold said, his tone no longer cold and indifferent. He then shook his head and said, "However, you are better off saving this Advanced Healing Potion for yourself. I know full well what kind of wound I suffer. It is not that easy to treat. Even the Water of Life cannot help me."

"May I know what may help you recover, Lord Arnold?" Shi Feng asked.

"Young adventurer, I do not wish to belittle your strength, but curing my wounds is too difficult. If you really wish to help me, you must first collect a drop of Dragon's Blood," Arnold said, chuckling. He then turned and left the reception room.

—

System: Rare Hidden Quest "Hero's Past" triggered. Do you wish to accept?

—

Shi Feng accepted the quest without hesitation.

Sure enough, the quest is the same as it was in the past. Shi Feng released a sigh of relief. After all, he did not have a deep understanding of Sea's End. Much of his information contained falsehoods.

Fortunately, the information regarding this quest had been true. The first item this chain quest required was the super-rare herb, Dragon's Blood. When consumed, players would permanently gain anywhere from 10 to 20 Strength. Very few players were willing to trade such a precious item for a few TCP.

Following which, Shi Feng left the reception room and headed downstairs.

Fire Dance, who was in Stealth, approached with an anxious expression and reported, "Guild Leader, this isn't good. The House of Seas is selling a large number of Sea God's Blessings in Shops throughout the various empires. Moreover, they are selling them for 1 Gold per bottle. Everyone has stopped buying the potion from the Auction House. In addition, the House of Seas is purchasing Runic Fragments without limit in the various towns and cities for 4 Silver per stack. I'm afraid that it won't be long before they buy out all of the Runic Fragments other players have accumulated. If that happens, it won't be easy to purchase fragments in bulk anymore."

## Chapter 1267 – Frightening Influence

"The House of Seas is quite bold," Shi Feng muttered, revealing a bitter smile when he read the information Fire Dance had given him. "Aren't they afraid that they'll go bankrupt?"

Selling the Sea God's Blessing for 1 Gold per bottle was simply foolish. It was the equivalent of harming oneself to damage the enemy. By doing so, neither side would profit.

While the House of Seas could recover from the losses if it endured, if it lost the competition, its efforts would go to waste.

Unlike the House of Seas, which could sell the potions in its Shops through the various empires, Shi Feng was at a disadvantage. He could only sell the Sea God's Blessing for a minimum of 1 Gold, 2 Silver in the Auction House. In this case, he only sold a very small number of Sea God's Blessings each day. He would make barely any money.

"Guild Leader, are we still going to sell the Sea God's Blessing?" Fire Dance asked.

"Of course, we are. Since the House of Seas wants to fight to the bitter end, I'd like to see how long they can keep this up," Shi Feng said, smiling nonchalantly. "Get a group of trustworthy Assassins from the Guild over here and have them sell our Sea God's Blessings in the various empires. We'll sell the potion for 60 Silver per bottle. Limit the sales volume to 3,000 bottles per empire per day. Have them work in three-man groups and rotate. Instruct a few others to split up and head to Sea's End's cities to purchase fragments in bulk. Since the House of Seas will buy the fragments at 4 Silver per stack, we'll buy the fragments at 5 Silver per stack. Keep our prices 1 Silver higher than the House of Seas."

To any other player, selling the Sea God's Blessing for 60 Silver per bottle would result in a loss. Fortunately, that wasn't the case for Shi Feng. If he purchased Runic Fragments at 5 Silver per stack, it would only cost him 12 Silver, 50 Copper for each bottle of Sea God's Blessing. By selling the potions at 60 Silver per bottle, he didn't get as much profit. Even so, profit was profit.

The House of Seas could only blame itself for picking a fight with the wrong player.

"Understood." Fire Dance smiled.

Had the House of Seas chosen to challenge them properly, both sides would've made a profit. Now, however, the House of Seas had shot itself in the leg.

Following which, Fire Dance contacted the Guild's elite Assassins and had them hurry to Stormwind Town. Meanwhile, Shi Feng brought 4,000 bottles of Sea God's Blessing back to White River City. He planned to store them in the Guild Warehouse and let the Guild's core members trade GCP for the potions. At the same time, he intended to search for Dragon's Blood.

Dragon's Blood was also known as Draconic Herb. It was extremely rare. Even if one scoured Sea's End, they wouldn't find it. Normally, it was a treasure that only bloomed in kingdoms and empires that produced herbs.

To obtain the herb, a player needed luck.

Even Shi Feng would have a hard time finding the herb. Hence, he would rely on the Candlelight Trading Firm to purchase it for a high price. Otherwise, he'd never move to the next part of the quest chain.

...

White River City's Teleportation Hall:

As soon as Shi Feng returned using the Return Scroll, he discovered a flood of players teleporting into the city. There were at least twice as many players than before.

Among them, there were members of large Guilds belonging to other kingdoms and empires. He easily counted members of 14 first-rate Guilds in the Teleportation Hall. There were also a large group of Battle Wolves' members. For a moment, Shi Feng wondered if he had mistakenly teleported to the Beast Empire's capital.

What's going on? Shi Feng was surprised as he observed the Teleportation Hall.

Before Shi Feng could figure out what was happening, he heard players discussing the Candlelight Auction.

"There sure are a lot of people going to the Candlelight Auction this time!"

"No kidding. Not only will the auction offer slots to enter the Holy City of Titan, but they're also selling Bronze Mounts and personal houses. The popularity of the Holy City's slots goes without saying. And every player wants a personal house. Not only can you train in a high Mana density environment, but you can also take advantage of the NPC Shops selling rare items. It'd be so convenient to travel to and from Stone Forest Town and the nearby leveling maps."

"That's right. Aside from large Guilds, plenty of famous adventurer teams have come to participate in the auction. I have heard that they are all here to get one of Stone Forest Town's personal houses."

"It's a pity that the starting bid for the houses is 300 Gold. I would've tried to buy one for myself if it were cheaper."

"That's already considerably cheap. Stone Forest Town is the number one player town throughout Star-Moon Kingdom and the neighboring kingdoms."



...

Practically every player in the Teleportation Hall chatted about the Candlelight Auction and Stone Forest Town. When they talked about Stone Forest Town, they wore yearning expressions.

Has Stone Forest Town become so popular? Shi Feng was slightly surprised.

While he acknowledged that Stone Forest Town was a valuable location, he hadn't thought that it would attract so many players from other kingdoms and empires. After all, Stone Forest Town's location was gradually growing less profitable. By the time mainstream players were over Level 50, the town would lose its competitive edge.

The only advantage the town would have at that time would be its Mana density and the NPC Shop's rare items.

...

White River City, Candlelight Trading Firm:

Players crowded the seven-story-tall building's entrance. Originally, only players with 10 Gold or more could enter the Shop. However, due to the high number of participants, the trading firm had been forced to raise the requirement to 100 Gold.

Even then, the designated auction venue, which could accommodate 10,000 people, was full to the brim. Even the VIP rooms were not enough. Originally, only those carrying over 2,000 Gold qualified to

use the VIP rooms. Now, only those with 10,000 Gold or those from superpowers could use the rooms. Most first-rate Guilds didn't have 10,000 Gold lying around, yet the 30 VIP rooms were occupied.

The Candlelight Auction was more popular than anyone had expected.

Melancholic Smile, the auction's host, was stupefied. She found it truly hard to imagine that a mere auction, held by a player-operated Shop, could attract so many superpowers and famous adventurer teams.

Melancholic Smile wasn't the only one surprised. Even the various powers that had come to attend the auction were shocked to discover so many competitors.

Normally, only superpowers' auctions attracted so much attention, yet an upstart Guild had achieved the same results. Moreover, these powers had all come of their own volition. None of them had been invited...

...

Meanwhile, in a VIP room on the second floor...

"Guild Leader, I've already checked. Seven Super Guilds and super-first-rate Guilds are in attendance. Practically every first-rate Guild from the neighboring kingdoms and empires are here as well," Purple Eye reported to Galaxy Past.

"There really is no competing with Zero Wing." Galaxy Past smiled bitterly as he watched the sea of players in the first-floor hall.

Only after many years had Galaxy Past developed the Star Alliance into a first-rate Guild. However, if the Star Alliance held an auction right now, they'd be lucky if even five or six first-rate Guilds attended.

In contrast, Zero Wing had only begun its development after God's Domain launched, yet it had surpassed his many years of effort.

Galaxy Past had to admit that the comparison was odious.

"What kind of reaction will Singular Burial have if he finds out about this?" Galaxy Past muttered.

Some time ago, Heaven's Burial had announced that it would hold an auction at the same time as the Candlelight Trading Firm. However, Heaven's Burial had become a laughingstock.

## Chapter 1268 – Foundation that Exceeds Expectations

The Candlelight Auction's turnout exceeded everyone's expectations.

As everyone waited quietly for the auction to begin...

A stalwart-looking man seated in a second-floor VIP room and carrying a greatsword across his back exclaimed, "Boss Sirius, the Candlelight Trading Firm is awesome! Despite this being its first auction, it can already compete with the Dark Auction."

“Indeed. Although the Candlelight Auction is no match for the Dark Auction, in terms of the number of major powers participating in this auction, I’m afraid that it is already nearing the level of Super Guild’s auctions.” Sirius, who sat beside the stalwart man, nodded. He, too, was surprised.

After his defeat against Shi Feng in the Dark Arena, he had investigated Zero Wing thoroughly. However, while he knew that Zero Wing’s overall strength could rival that of a first-rate Guild, he had never imagined that the Guild would be this powerful.

From the moment he had set foot in White River City, practically every one of his expectations had been surpassed.

Whether it was the business district or the standards of the players in the city, White River City was superior to many kingdom’s capital cities.

In God’s Domain, a Guild’s capabilities weren’t determined by its strength alone. The status of its main city was also important. Oftentimes, the prosperity of a city determined the development of a Guild.

Currently, White River City’s prosperity was not one bit inferior to Star-Moon City. If not for the new expansion pack, which caused Dark Cities to appear near various kingdom’s capitals, White River City’ would’ve most likely surpassed Star-Moon City by a large margin.

If not for the Candlelight Trading Firm’s intention of selling the slots to enter Titan City, he really wouldn’t have discovered that Zero Wing had already developed to such a degree.

Meanwhile, in another room, a handsome man glared, displeased, at the crowded first-floor hall.

“Pavilion Master, my people have finished the investigation into the situation. So many people are attending this auction to bid for Stone Forest Town’s personal housing and the Advanced Mana Armor Kits,” a dignified young man reported.

Although this young man simply stood there, he seemed like the center of the universe. Moreover, he radiated a terrifying aura. Even the man’s companions, who were Level 42 experts, wouldn’t get within 10 yards of him.

This young man was none other than the monster of the Dragon-Phoenix Pavilion that had grasped a Domain at a very young age—Martial Dragon!

“Zero Wing is actually capable of such a grand auction. No wonder why Rain has such an optimistic view of this Guild. It’s a pity that, even after attracting so many customers with the Holy City’s slots, Zero Wing only has such pitiful items to sell,” Nine Dragons Emperor sneered when he saw Melancholic Smile walking up to the stage.

If this auction were organized properly, it could attract so many more major powers in the future. It would massively boost Zero Wing’s development. After all, these major powers had money. Anyone else would only have spare change.

Zero Wing would never have attracted the true major powers if not for the Holy City’s slots.

As Nine Dragons Emperor fell silent, the auction officially began.

Under the crowd's attentive gaze, Melancholic Smile, who wore a luxurious, blue dress, approached the front of the stage.

"Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to the Candlelight Auction. This auction will have two phases. During the first phase, we will sell items that have been carefully selected by our own auction house. The second stage will be a bartering session with the auction house as an intermediary. However, to ensure the quality of the items offered for trade, we will collect a processing fee of ten Magic Crystals or 3 Gold Coins for each item. For materials specifically, we will charge 15 Magic Crystals or 4 Gold Coins per stack."

As Melancholic Smile finished explaining the auction's flow, a commotion swept through the crowd.

"Crap! This is fraud! Even a first-rate Guild's auction wouldn't dare charge ten Magic Crystals for every item!"

"That's right! How can you be this greedy?!"

...

Players in the first-floor hall shouted their indignation. Although many of the major powers present had attended the Dark Auction before and knew about these bartering sessions, Candlelight's high price was ludicrous.

The Dark Auction only dared to charge a high price because it was the best auction throughout God's Domain. Only extraordinary existences were invited.

“Hahaha! Zero Wing sure is interesting!” Nine Dragons Emperor could not help but laugh when he heard Melancholic Smile’s explanation. “However, this is a good opportunity to earn some money from the major powers. After all, a few of the superpowers here have come to bid for the Holy City’s slots. Whether it is the adventurer teams, independent players, or Guilds, none would miss such a golden opportunity to trade high-value items.”

Such a shameful behavior would earn the various major powers’ ire. Needless to say, the Candlelight Auction wouldn’t happen again. Even Phoenix Rain’s reputation in the Dragon-Phoenix Pavilion would be soiled for supporting Zero Wing.

...

“Just what is Black Flame thinking?” Yuan Tiexin stared at Melancholic Smile in confusion. “Is he so desperate for money that he’s willing to abandon his reputation?”

The first auction was always the most important.

Asking for such an unreasonable price would only incur the wrath of the various major powers. None of these powers would likely visit the auction house in the future.

Purple Jade, who sat beside Yuan Tiexin, was also confused.

Based on her understanding of Black Flame, he wouldn’t make such a noobie mistake.

...

Meanwhile, as Melancholic Smile saw the attendees' reactions, she revealed an expression that seemed to say, "As expected."

Originally, she had planned to set the processing fees at one Magic Crystal or 30 Silver Coins per item. This way, they could more or less guarantee the quality of the items while avoiding such a negative reaction. After all, the Candlelight Auction was relatively small compared to something like the Dark Auction. Players weren't likely to offer high-quality items for trade. The Candlelight Auction had only attracted so many superpowers and first-rate Guilds due to the Holy City's slots.

Yet, Shi Feng had insisted on increasing the price. It was obvious he was treating the various attendees like fools.

However, now that things had already developed to this point, Melancholic Smile could only endure the complains while starting the auction.

"We will now begin the auction. The first item we are offering is a Magic Whale Skin!" Melancholic Smile said as she gestured to the semi-transparent screen above the stage.

The screen displayed an image of the Magic Whale Skin as well as its Attribute Panel.

Suddenly, the venue fell silent.

"What?!" Everyone was stunned after reading the item's introduction.



The various major powers, particularly the superpowers, had already begun to develop their naval forces. Hence, they understood just how important ships were and were madly investing manpower and resources into obtaining high-ranking ships.

These major powers wanted to upgrade their high-ranking ships to ease the fights against sea monsters.

These organizations were even purchasing Bronze rank strengthening items at astronomical prices. However, such strengthening items were extremely rare, no less than the high-ranking ships themselves. Even if one obtained such an item, they'd refuse to sell it. After all, if one could strengthen their own ships, their power at sea would increase by a large margin.

Yet, the Candlelight Trading Firm was actually auctioning off a Dark-Gold ranked strengthening item...

## Chapter 1269 – Crazy Start

“The Candlelight Auction has even obtained a Dark-Gold strengthening item?!”

“These Attributes are ridiculous! I’ve heard that Bronze strengthening items can only increase a ship’s durability by 2 points, yet the Magic Whale Skin can increase a ship’s defense by 10% and durability by 10 points. It can even increase Movement Speed by 3%!”

The various Guilds’ upper echelons in the first-floor hall panted as they stared at the Magic Whale Skin.

Ordinary players might not yet understand the game's ships, but the various large Guilds present understood them very clearly.

If an item like the Magic Whale Skin were used to strengthen a Bronze Speedboat, it could improve the speedboat's performance significantly. Meanwhile, a speedboat could be enhanced to a total of five times. If one fully enhanced a Bronze Speedboat with Magic Whale Skins, the speedboat's performance might even exceed Mysterious-Iron Speedboats.

However, strengthening a Bronze Speedboat with a Magic Whale Skin would be the epitome of luxury. At the very least, only Mysterious-Iron ships would qualify for such a powerful strengthening item.

...

"Black Flame is quite generous. He has decided to use such a valuable item to open the auction." Yuan Tiexin was slightly astonished when he saw the Magic Whale Skin.

The various major powers had spared no effort to get ahead of others at sea, yet Zero Wing was giving such a wondrous item away.

In another VIP room, Nine Dragons Emperor's eyes shone as he stared at the Magic Whale Skin.

There were still a few days until the contest on Thunder Island began. If he could purchase the Magic Whale Skin, he could upgrade one of his Bronze Speedboats. With this, he would have an easier time killing Boss-grade sea monsters and obtaining Thunder Passes.

When Melancholic Smile saw the crowd's excitement, she quietly released a sigh of relief.

“Now that everyone has seen the Magic Whale Skin’s Attributes, let us proceed to the bidding. We will sell three sheets at a time. The starting price is 10,000 Magic Crystals, and each increment must not be lower than 500. Let us begin!”

As soon as Melancholic Smile announced the starting price, many players gasped.

According to the current market price, 10,000 Magic Crystals was the equivalent of 2,500 Gold. With that amount of money, one could purchase a relatively good plot of Land in an NPC city.

Moreover, Magic Crystals were far more precious than Coins as they were more difficult to obtain.

However, the high price wasn’t the only reason these players were shocked. What surprised them more was Candlelight’s ability to offer three Magic Whale Skin sheets at a time.

After all, a single sheet could not qualitatively transform a ship. However, three sheets could.

“What a ruthless price.” Sirius chuckled as he shook his head. “It seems Candlelight is going to take our money today.”

The competition at sea grew more intense with each passing day. If his Guild could increase a high-ranking ship’s performance by a rank, it would raise the Guild’s naval strength to new heights.

While Sirius sighed, the price of the Magic Whale Skins rose rapidly.

“Ten thousand five hundred crystals!”

“Eleven thousand crystals!”

“Twelve thousand crystals!”

...

In just ten seconds, the price had soared to 15,000 Magic Crystals. One could purchase Epic Equipment with that kind of money.

“Big Sis Rain, what should we do? We have already lent our Magic Crystals to Zero Wing. We have less than 5,000 crystals on hand,” Blue Phoenix asked anxiously as she watched the price of the Magic Whale Skin continuously increase.

She also felt that Zero Wing was too insincere.

Rather than offering such a valuable item to them, Zero Wing had chosen to auction it.

Phoenix Rain could only reveal a bitter smile in response.

She had been wracking her mind to figure out a way to increase her fleet’s strength. She had even led a team of experts to the Deathwhisper Fortress personally to obtain ship-strengthening items. Only after

many sacrifices had she gotten her hands on a Mysterious-Iron strengthening item. On the other hand, without anybody noticing, Zero Wing had Dark-Gold strengthening items.

Immediately, Phoenix Rain called up her Friends List and contacted Shi Feng.

“Team Leader Ye Feng, I wish to use the Magic Crystals I lent you to purchase the Magic Whale Skins that are currently on auction. Will that be possible?” Phoenix Rain asked.

“Of course! That won’t be a problem. I’ll notify the auctioneer right away. However, your maximum limit will be the 250,000 Magic Crystals you lent our Guild. I can’t make the decision if the price is higher than that,” Shi Feng said earnestly.

One of the reasons that he had generously offered the Magic Whale Skins for auction was to show everyone Zero Wing’s foundations. In any case, he had eight sheets in total. He only needed five to strengthen the Hurricane Sailboat. Using the remaining three on speedboats or Common Small Sailboats would be a waste. It would be more beneficial to sell them.

The second reason was to pay back his debt. After all, he had yet to return the 250,000 Magic Crystals he had borrowed from Phoenix Rain. If he tried to offer her the top-tier Dark-Gold Weapons or Equipment that he had obtained from the Dark Arena, it was unlikely that Phoenix Rain would be interested. Only something like the Magic Whale Skin, which could increase one’s naval strength, would garner Phoenix Rain’s attention.

Hearing Shi Feng saying so, Phoenix Rain relaxed.

There were still five days until the debt was due. Zero Wing could easily reject her request.

“Twenty thousand crystals!” Phoenix Rain instantly placed a frightening bid.

“As expected of the players in the VIP rooms. They can afford to place such insane bids casually.” Both independent players and Guilds in the first-floor hall were astonished by Phoenix Rain’s bid.

Even first-rate Guilds were fortunate if they had a stockpile of 60,000 Magic Crystals. After all, there were too few sources. Moreover, their daily consumption was considerably high. It was impossible to stockpile so many.

Spending 20,000 Magic Crystals just to strengthen a single ship was simply too much of a luxury.

Only super-first-rate Guilds and Super Guilds were capable of such a thing.

“Twenty-one thousand crystals!” Nine Dragons Emperor frowned as he placed a new bid.

The Holy City slots were his main goal. Hence, he hadn’t prepared many Magic Crystals. He currently had 24,000 crystals on hand. After all, a small Guild like Zero Wing should not be capable of offering anything worth his while.

Now, however, it was too late for him to send his subordinates to collect more Magic Crystals.

“Hahaha! It seems the other powers haven’t come prepared.” Yuan Tiexin chuckled. Following which, he shouted, “Thirty thousand crystals!”

The Secret Pavilion had prepared plenty of Coins and Magic Crystals for the Candlelight Auction. After all, the Secret Pavilion had done business with Zero Wing many times before, so they knew that Zero Wing possessed strong foundations and had many items that could even tempt the Secret Pavilion. However, Yuan Tiexin had never expected to find such an opportunity.

“Thirty-one thousand crystals!” Phoenix Rain placed a new bid, but she didn’t raise it by much.

While the Magic Whale Skin was valuable, its price was already high. Any higher and one could afford a Bronze Speedboat.

“Thirty-five thousand crystals!” Yuan Tiexin said without hesitation.

“Thirty-six thousand crystals!” Phoenix Rain frowned as she glanced at Yuan Tiexin’s room a short distance away. This was the highest she was willing to go. Although she had plenty of Magic Crystals, she could not waste them.

The other audience members were stupefied.

The cost of three Magic Whale Skins could already rival half of a first-rate Guild’s Magic Crystals.

“It seems that they have reached their limit.” Yuan Tiexin smiled. “Forty thousand crystals!”

They other superpowers might only want the Magic Whale Skin to fortify a Bronze Speedboat. However, the Secret Pavilion was in possession of a Mysterious-Iron Speedboat. Three Magic Whale Skins could almost put their ship on par with a Secret-Silver Speedboat.

A Secret-Silver Speedboat!

He wouldn't even blink at spending 100,000 Magic Crystals on such a ship, much less 40,000.

The instant he placed his 40,000 crystal bid, the venue fell silent. After Melancholic Smile knocked the gavel three times and confirmed the sale, a gasp echoed throughout the auction house.

The major powers that had scolded the Candlelight Trading Firm for fraud had run out of comments.

The first auction item had sold for 40,000 Magic Crystals. They had to admit that the Candlelight Auction was high-quality. Only, they still thought that the processing fees for the bartering session were somewhat expensive.

However, not long after these major powers had such thoughts, the second auction item was revealed above the stage. Every one of these major powers stared in silence. Even the various superpowers were no exception.

The reason for such a reaction was that the second item was none other than the Thunder Pass!

Chapter 1270 – The Cost of Arrogance

Thunder Island was no longer a secret among the various major powers.



Even some second-rate Guilds with powerful information networks knew about the island.

Various superpowers were frantically collecting Thunder Passes, but these weren't easily obtainable, requiring a lot of manpower and resources.

Each additional Thunder Pass would allow them to bring ten more experts to Thunder Island. When the contest for Thunder Island's authority began, the superpower with the most Thunder Passes would have a greater advantage.

Hence, the various superpowers constantly offered to purchase Thunder Passes at a high price, attracting plenty of adventurer teams to sail the Sea of Death and kill sea monsters. Only, there had been no news of any adventurer team obtaining passes even now.

Nevertheless, the Candlelight Trading Firm was selling a Thunder Pass.

It was truly hard to imagine that an upstart Guild's auction could consecutively offer two treasures that could tempt the various superpowers. Moreover, they had already announced the final item: the Holy City's slots. How could these major powers not be shocked?

"Now that everyone has seen our second auction item, without further ado, we will begin the bidding at 3,000 Magic Crystals. Each increment cannot be lower than 100 crystals! Begin!" Melancholic Smile announced the starting price.

This price surprised many of the players in the first-floor hall. They all thought it was outrageously high. However, the various superpowers on the second floor made nothing of it. On the contrary, they all felt it was considerably cheap. After all, they normally offered 1,000 Gold per pass.

“Four thousand crystals!”

“Four thousand, three hundred crystals!”

“Five thousand crystals!”

...

As soon as Melancholic Smile opened the floor for bids, the various superpowers, which initially had little interest in the Candlelight Auction, contested madly for the Thunder Pass. These superpowers gave the players in the first-floor hall no opportunities to intervene, raising the price again and again.

Even the participating second-rate Guilds felt out of their league in this auction.

As for the players and Guilds that had scolded the Candlelight Trading Firm for being fraudulent, none of them dared to make a peep.

Eventually, Phoenix Rain won the Thunder Pass for 8,300 Magic Crystals.

“Pavilion Master, are we letting Phoenix Rain have the pass just like that?” Martial Dragon asked curiously.

“It doesn’t matter. Any higher and the pass wouldn’t be worth it. In any case, Rain has ten extra slots. They’re not enough to make a difference,” Nine Dragons Emperor growled, sneering.

After giving the matter some thought, Martial Dragon agreed with his Guild Leader. They had far more slots than Phoenix Rain. Even if she had ten more, the increase wouldn't be enough to affect the big picture.

Following the end of the second item's bidding, Melancholic Smile gestured to the image above the stage once more. However, the image remained the same as before. Smiling, she said, "Let's begin the auction for the third item! The third item is another Thunder Pass! Like before, the starting price is 3,000 Magic Crystals! Begin!"

"What?! There's more!?"

Gasps echoed throughout the venue.

Thunder Passes were extremely difficult to obtain. Obtaining one was already an amazing feat, yet Zero Wing had another to offer.

Even Phoenix Rain was surprised. Of course, she was also elated.

Although it was only one more entry pass, there was a huge difference between ten and twenty. Fortunately, among the superpowers present, she had the most Magic Crystals to spend.

As soon as the auction began, the Thunder Pass's price instantly rose to 8,000 Magic Crystals.

Unlike before, the various superpowers paid more attention to the Thunder Pass this time. They, too, realized what kind of consequences they would suffer if another power had twenty additional slots. The competition for the second Thunder Pass intensified.

Eventually, however, Phoenix Rain obtained the second Thunder Pass for 15,400 Magic Crystals. Although the price was astoundingly high, Phoenix Rain felt that the money had been well spent.

Just when everyone believed that the competition for the Thunder Passes had ended, Melancholic Smile pointed at the Thunder Pass's image once again.

"This is insane! Just how many Thunder Passes do they have?!" The players in the auction venue involuntarily shuddered. This was especially true for the various superpowers in the second-floor VIP rooms.

They could tolerate a single power obtaining one or two passes as it wouldn't significantly impact the outcome.

However, if the Candlelight Trading Firm sold too many Thunder Passes, the balance would change, affecting the contest.

Contrary to everyone's expectations, Melancholic Smile did not immediately start the next round of bids. Instead, she took three Thunder Passes from her bag, stupefying everyone present.

"How?! How do they have so many passes?!" Nine Dragons Emperor shook as he stared at the three Thunder Passes in Melancholic Smile's hand.

He found it truly unbelievable that Zero Wing had obtained so many passes. Despite the scarcity of Thunder Passes in the Sea of Death, Zero Wing had five.

The Dragon Pavilion Master previously had only 60 slots more than Phoenix Rain. He could ignore losing the two Thunder Passes, as he still had a considerable advantage over Phoenix Rain even then.

However, if Phoenix Rain won these three Thunder Passes as well, the difference between their teams would be negligible.

This won't do! I must obtain these passes! Nine Dragons Emperor commanded, "Notify Bell and have him send all our Magic Crystals immediately!"

"Pavilion Master, I've already notified him. However, it will take at least ten minutes before they arrive," Martial Dragon reported.

"Ten minutes?! Damn it! Why so long?!" Regret and anger filled Nine Dragons Emperor's eyes as he stared at the three Thunder Passes. "Notify Zero Wing's auctioneer. Tell her that we request a delay!"

Had the Candlelight Trading Firm stated beforehand that such items would be sold, he never would have been caught off-guard.

In reality, Nine Dragons Emperor wasn't the only person to react that way. Even Guilds such as Pantheon, Miracle, King's Return, Battle Wolves, and Sacred Temple were caught flat-footed. After all, nobody would've imagined that there would be such frightening items offered at the Candlelight Auction. They had prepared only the Lands required to purchase the Holy City slots.

Almost at the same time, the representatives of the various superpowers all reported back to the upper echelons of their respective Guilds, having their Guilds send Magic Crystals over. Aside from this, they also contacted the Candlelight Trading Firm asking for a delay in the auctioning of the Thunder Passes or permission to use other items as collateral.

This scene stunned the various major powers and adventurer teams present.

After all, asking for a delay in the auctioning of an item was a relatively humiliating thing to do, as this would show that one had insufficient funds.

Despite that, the various superpowers of God's Domain were actually willing to cast away their reputation. It was truly inconceivable.

"Guild Leader, are we going to delay the auction of the Thunder Passes?" Melancholic Smile asked after contacting Shi Feng.

Currently, five superpowers had requested a delay, something not commonly seen. If it were any other first-rate Guild holding this auction right now, they would definitely acquiesce without hesitation.

"We can delay the auction, but tell them that they need to compensate us for the time lost. Every minute's delay will cost them 300 Gold. They are welcome to delay the auction for as long as they want," Shi Feng replied nonchalantly.

"Guild Leader, this..." Melancholic Smile's heart skipped a beat when she heard his answer.

"Don't worry about it. Just tell them as is," Shi Feng said, chuckling.

There were only a few days left until the contest over Thunder Island. At this point, practically all Boss-grade sea monsters that could be killed had already been killed once before. Even if one killed the Boss-grade sea monsters that respawned, the likelihood of a Thunder Pass dropping would be very low. After all, only a limited number of Thunder Passes could drop during each contest cycle. The only reason he had managed to obtain so many Thunder Passes was the King-class sea monster he had killed.

If he did not make a killing off these superpowers now, he would be doing that King-class sea monster a disservice.

Melancholic Smile fell speechless at Shi Feng's words. Her Guild Leader was a little too good at earning money.

However, since it was a command from her Guild Leader, Melancholic Smile had no choice but to repeat Shi Feng's words to the five superpowers.

## Chapter 1271 – Frantic Struggle

"Pavilion Master, Candlelight is clearly trying to extort us." Martial Dragon's expression darkened when he heard Melancholic Smile's reply.

They would have to pay 3,000 Gold if they wanted to delay the auction of the Thunder Passes for ten minutes. Such a sum was enough to purchase a considerably good plot of Land in an ordinary NPC city.

Although 3,000 Gold was nothing to the Heavenly Dragon Pavilion, they would be fools to accept this offer.

At this moment, Nine Dragons Emperor also had an ugly expression on his face.

“This damnable Zero Wing!” Nine Dragons Emperor pounded his fist on the armrest of his chair. In a chilling tone, he said, “Let them have it! Isn’t it just 3,000 Gold? I’ll have Phoenix Rain and Zero Wing pay it back a hundredfold in the future!”

If he did not stop Phoenix Rain from obtaining the remaining three Thunder Passes, the struggle on Thunder Island would undoubtedly become more troublesome.

Meanwhile, the other four superpowers also paid the 3,000 Gold without hesitation.

After all, acquiring the three Thunder Passes would greatly bolster the forces they could send to Thunder Island.

In just a brief moment, Shi Feng earned 15,000 Gold—enough money for him to buy a golden Land in a major NPC city.

While the bidding for the Thunder Passes was on hold, Melancholic Smile continued auctioning one item after another. Meanwhile, every one of these items was highly contested by the players in the first-floor hall.

Some of these items were on commission from other players, while some were Dark-Gold Weapons and Equipment from Zero Wing’s Warehouse.



The Fine-Gold rank Magic Light Set Equipment that was auctioned managed to garner the attention of those on the second floor.

The various major powers knew full well how difficult it was to obtain such high-level set equipment. Despite all their efforts in challenging Level 50-plus monsters, they had yet to get even a piece of Level 50 Fine-Gold Equipment, much less Fine-Gold Set Equipment.

In the end, the Secret Pavilion bought the Magic Light Set Equipment for 4,000 Gold.

Meanwhile, each one of the 100 Advanced Mana Armor Kits offered sold for roughly 150 Gold.

After the auction of the Advanced Mana Armor Kits came to an end, the sale of the Bronze Engineering Locomotives began.

Nowadays, the various major powers in God's Domain were frantically collecting high-ranking Mounts as well as equipping their elite members with Common Mounts. They all understood that the era of Mounts had already arrived. If they did not quickly equip their Guild members with Mounts, they would end up trailing the other Guilds before long.

After all, once players had Mounts, they could save up on plenty of travel time. High-ranking Mounts even possessed combat capabilities.

Now that the Candlelight Trading Firm was selling Bronze Mounts, the various major powers naturally wouldn't let this opportunity get away.

“I believe everyone has seen the Bronze Engineering Locomotive’s Attributes already. The starting price will be 150 Gold, and each increment must not be lower than 10 Gold! Begin!”

The moment Melancholic Smile announced the start of the auction, whether it was the various large Guilds or adventurer teams, they all began placing bids fervently.

“One hundred and sixty Gold!”

“One hundred and seventy Gold!”

“One hundred and eighty Gold!”

...

In the blink of an eye, the price of the Bronze Engineering Locomotive reached 350 Gold.

Just as everyone believed that the price of the Mount would stop at 400 Gold, a new bid came from one of the second-floor rooms.

“Six hundred Gold!” Yuan Tiexin declared.

“It’s just a Bronze Mount, yet the guy in that room is actually offering 600 Gold? He might as well use the money to buy a top-tier Dark-Gold Weapon.” Everyone was astonished by Yuan Tiexin’s bid.

While they understood that Bronze Mounts were extremely rare, they were definitely unwilling to spend 600 Gold to obtain one.

“Uncle Yuan, we could’ve gotten the Mount for just 500 Gold. Why did you offer 600?” Purple Jade asked curiously.

After the price reached 400 Gold, the representatives of first-rate Guilds no longer showed much interest. It would have even been possible to obtain the Engineering Locomotive for just 460 or 470 Gold, yet Yuan Tiexin had offered 600 Gold. Even if the Secret Pavilion was rich, they should not be wasting their money in such a way.

“This is an order from the Guild Leader. He has tasked us with purchasing every Engineering Locomotive that comes up. If I only bid 500 Gold this time, other people will still harbor some hope of purchasing it later on. If I offer 600 Gold at once, they will give up on trying for the Mounts that come up later on in the auction,” Yuan Tiexin explained, chuckling.

“What? Didn’t we already obtain plenty of Engineering Locomotives from Zero Wing before? Moreover, many of our experts frequently raid ancient ruins to collect high-ranking Mounts. We shouldn’t be lacking in Bronze Mounts, right?” Purple Jade asked, confused.

“It is precisely because we have obtained so many Engineering Locomotives from Zero Wing that we have even more reason to purchase every one of them that appears today,” Yuan Tiexin replied, smiling. “Originally, I also thought that there was nothing special about the Bronze Engineering Locomotives. Their base Attributes are even weaker than those of other Bronze Mounts. However, when 50 Engineering Locomotives are gathered within a certain range, they will gain a buff called Mechanical Heart. The buff increases the Mount’s Movement Speed by 15% and both the rider’s and Mount’s Defense by 20%. This buff will greatly assist teams in both travel and battle.”

“They actually have such an effect?” Purple Jade was shocked. She immediately understood why the Guild Leader wanted to purchase all of the Bronze Engineering Locomotives.

Large Guilds often conducted team operations. If they could fully equip a 50-man team with Bronze Engineering Locomotives, the team’s efficiency would increase considerably.

Following which, the Secret Pavilion instantly purchased every Bronze Engineering Locomotive that went up on auction.

Although some first-rate Guilds tried to compete for the Mount, the Secret Pavilion shut them down with a significantly higher bid. None of them got any chance whatsoever. In the end, the Secret Pavilion purchased all ten Mounts that were offered.

Consequently, people also started recognizing the standard of the Candlelight Auction. At the same time, the atmosphere in the auction venue grew increasingly heated. When Melancholic Smile revealed the three Thunder Passes before everyone once again, the entire hall went into an uproar.

The reason for such a reaction was everyone’s desire to see the various superpowers going all-out in bidding for the passes.

“Let us begin bidding for the next auction item! The starting price for these three Thunder Passes will be 10,000 Magic Crystals! Each increment may not be lower than 1,000 crystals! Begin!”

As soon as Melancholic Smile finished speaking, the struggle between the various superpowers present began.

Only, before the crowd on the first floor could enjoy the pleasure of watching this auction, they heard a bid that made even the various first-rate Guilds present shudder involuntarily.

“Fifty thousand crystals!” Nine Dragons Emperor shouted.

With the bid rising to 50,000 crystals right off the bat, the first-rate Guilds present that were entertaining thoughts of competing for the Thunder Passes were immediately disqualified. Meanwhile, everyone present was also shocked by Nine Dragons Emperor’s wealth.

Just to obtain three entry passes, Nine Dragons Emperor had bid the equivalent of a first-rate Guild’s entire stockpile of Magic Crystals.

“Fifty-three thousand crystals!”

“Fifty-five thousand crystals!”

“Sixty thousand crystals!”

Phoenix Rain called out a new price. Now, just one Thunder Pass cost 20,000 Magic Crystals.

“Have these superpowers lost their minds?” The players on the first-floor hall were stupefied.

Melancholic Smile was also shocked. She could not comprehend why the various superpowers were going so crazy over a few entry passes.

However, Melancholic Smile and the others did not realize Shi Feng's intent in selling three Thunder Passes at once.

The difference in the number of Thunder Island slots each superpower currently possessed was not particularly large. At this point, the number of slots each superpower wielded also wouldn't undergo any massive changes. The addition of these 30 slots might very well become the straw that broke the camel's back. Hence, the various superpowers naturally wouldn't give up on competing for them so close to the contest for Thunder Island's authority. Otherwise, wouldn't all their previous efforts in obtaining Thunder Passes go to waste?

#### Chapter 1272 – Growth of the Guild

Just as everyone was feeling shocked at the wealth of the various superpowers, a new bid appeared once again.

“Seventy thousand crystals!”

“Are Magic Crystals rocks?!” The players in the first-floor hall felt their minds going numb when they heard this price.

The bids were actually rising in increments of 10,000 Magic Crystals.

In the past, they only knew that the superpowers of the virtual gaming world were existences that should not be provoked, as the disparity was simply too big. Now, however, it would seem that the gap between both sides was far larger than they imagined it to be.

“Eighty thousand crystals!” Sirius shouted without hesitation.

Too much profit was at stake on Thunder Island. At this crucial moment, the Battle Wolves naturally could not afford to fall behind. Hence, the Guild had mailed 300,000 Magic Crystals to Sirius in order to obtain the last three Thunder Passes.

In reality, though, obtaining the additional 30 slots was only secondary to the Battle Wolves Guild. The crucial point was that these 30 slots must not fall into the hands of another power.

Shortly after Sirius placed his bid, the representative from Miracle raised the price by another 10,000 crystals.

In less than a minute, the price for the three Thunder Passes had already reached an astronomical sum of 250,000 Magic Crystals.

They sure are desperate. Shi Feng was greatly surprised when he heard this figure.

Although he had long since known that the Thunder Passes would fetch a high price, he had never imagined that they would be this valuable. Just three Thunder Passes would already allow him to settle his debt with Phoenix Rain.

“Big Sis Rain, what should we do? We don’t have that many Magic Crystals left anymore,” Blue Phoenix said anxiously.

The person who placed the 250,000-crystal bid was Nine Dragons Emperor. If Nine Dragons Emperor obtained the three passes, he would definitely suppress their side during the contest on Thunder Island.

Phoenix Rain also frowned at this scene.

She never thought that the situation would develop in this manner.

If it were the other powers that obtained the passes, she wouldn't have minded it that much. However, if Nine Dragons Emperor got the passes, she would lose her chance to become the Great Pavilion Master.

After a moment of silence, Phoenix Rain's lips curled up into a bright smile. However, her smile also carried a hint of bitterness. She immediately contacted Shi Feng once again.

"Team Leader Ye Feng, I wish to borrow 300,000 Magic Crystals from Zero Wing," Phoenix Rain said, smiling. "Of course, I won't be borrowing it for nothing. I will use two golden Shops in two of the Apocalypse Empire's top three NPC cities as collateral. If I cannot return 400,000 Magic Crystals in seven days, those two golden Shops will become the Candlelight Trading Firm's possession."

"Big Sis Rain!" Blue Phoenix jumped up in fright when she heard Phoenix Rain's words. "Those two golden Shops are the foundations of the Phoenix Pavilion!"

Although the Apocalypse Empire was very large with a high player population, it had only eight NPC cities that had a player population of over five million. Meanwhile, the two golden Shops Phoenix Rain mentioned were located in two of the seven other major NPC cities, aside from the imperial capital.



Currently, the value of these two golden Shops was not one bit inferior to the Candlelight Trading Firm in White River City. How could they possibly use such important assets as collateral?

“I understand what I’m doing,” Phoenix Rain said determinedly.

Hearing this response, Blue Phoenix fell speechless. With the Phoenix Pavilion’s current state, how could they possibly collect 400,000 Magic Crystals in just seven days?

As expected of the Demon Queen. The actions she takes are truly flawless. Shi Feng was inwardly surprised by Phoenix Rain’s offer.

Although using the two golden Shops as collateral might seem greatly disadvantageous to Phoenix Rain, in reality, that wasn’t entirely the case. After all, whether Phoenix Rain managed to repay her debt or not, she would not make a loss.

If she succeeded in redeeming her debt, she could simply retrieve her Shops. Even if she failed, the Shops would become the Candlelight Trading Firm’s possessions, not Zero Wing’s. There was a huge difference between the Shops falling into the Candlelight Trading Firm’s hands and Zero Wing’s. After all, Phoenix Rain owned 20% of the Candlelight Trading Firm’s shares. If the Candlelight Trading Firm grew stronger through the addition of those two Shops, the profits Phoenix Rain received from her shares would increase as well.

Moreover, if converted to Coins, 300,000 Magic Crystals would be equivalent to 75,000 Gold, a sum that already exceeded the startup costs of those two Shops. While this might seem like a risky deal for Phoenix Rain, in reality, the loss she would make would be minimal.

“Team Leader Ye Feng, what is your decision?” Phoenix Rain asked, smiling.

When Shi Feng looked at Phoenix Rain in the screen, he suddenly felt as if he was the one borrowing money from her. From beginning to end, it was as if the initiative in this trade was in her hands, not his.

“Alright, you have a deal. However, the Magic Crystals will be left with the Candlelight Trading Firm for now. Once the auction is over, I’ll hand over the remainder to you.” Shi Feng nodded. Phoenix Rain’s conditions were indeed difficult to refuse.

If the Candlelight Trading Firm could branch out to two cities with populations rivaling that of White River City, the potential profits were simply frightening, particularly now that the various large Guilds were placing more focus towards exploring ancient ruins. He had even more need for the golden Shops of the Apocalypse Empire’s major NPC cities, to sell the Lunar Potion.

Following which, Shi Feng and Phoenix Rain signed a contract through the system.

When Blue Phoenix watched Phoenix Rain signing the contract, she suddenly realized an extremely important matter.

Despite its extreme importance, her mind had in fact automatically forgotten about this matter every time it occurred, treating it as if it was only natural.

Before coming into contact with Zero Wing, the latter had been only a small Guild that received help from them secretly. Yet, after some time, the Guild was now a source of significant income. Zero Wing had even become a Guild that could actually be of help to them.

When Blue Phoenix thought of Zero Wing’s growth speed, she could not help but have goosebumps. Even a Guild supported by a major corporation could not compete with Zero Wing in development speed.

Meanwhile, during this time, the price for the three Thunder Passes had already reached 280,000 Magic Crystals.

This price caused many superpowers to give up on bidding.

Of course, if powers like Miracle, Sacred Temple, King's Return, and Battle Wolves wanted to, they could still compete for the Thunder Passes. However, letting Nine Dragons Emperor obtain the three Thunder Passes would not have any effect on their performance on Thunder Island.

Hence, rather than waste a ton of Magic Crystals, these superpowers came to a silent agreement not to increase the bid any further.

"Pavilion Master, with this, we will definitely have a huge lead over Phoenix Rain on Thunder Island. Not only will we be able to send more men to harass her group, but we can also dispatch more men to carry out our original plans." Hearing Melancholic Smile's gavel land for the second time, Martial Dragon sneered as he looked towards Phoenix Rain's room.

"Although I've spent quite a lot this time, as long as I can surpass Phoenix Rain on Thunder Island, all of this will be worth it." A smile appeared on Nine Dragons Emperor's face.

Although he had prepared quite a lot, he only had a total of 330,000 Magic Crystals on hand. If the other powers continued contesting for the Thunder Passes, he would not be able to put up a struggle.

Just as the gavel was about to land for the third time, however, a new bid appeared in the auction venue.

“Three hundred thousand!”

“Didn’t she run out of Magic Crystals already?” Nine Dragons Emperor was confused as he looked at Phoenix Rain’s room. However, a possibility very quickly occurred to him. “Damn that Zero Wing! They actually lent Magic Crystals to her!”

“Three hundred and ten thousand!”

However, Nine Dragons Emperor was also helpless to do anything about this situation. He had no choice but to continue bidding. As for the other superpowers, they had already given up on fighting over this bottomless pit, because regardless if Phoenix Rain or Nine Dragons Emperor obtained these three Thunder Passes, the two of them would not be able to affect their results on Thunder Island at all.

“Three hundred and twenty thousand!”

“Three hundred and thirty thousand!”

“Three hundred and forty thousand!”

Phoenix Rain continued increasing her bid without hesitation. When the price reached 340,000 crystals, Nine Dragons Emperor was thoroughly defeated. He could only watch as the gavel in Melancholic Smile’s hand landed one time after another. In the end, the three Thunder Passes fell into Phoenix Rain’s hands.

Seeing this outcome, the various major powers grew exceedingly envious of Zero Wing.

Zero Wing had managed to earn 340,000 Magic Crystals just by selling three Thunder Passes. This was practically even more profitable than robbing a bank.

After the auction for the Thunder Passes came to an end, the remaining items that came up did not garner much interest from the various superpowers. Only the players seated in the first-floor hall bid for them. Although the prices of the items were not particularly high, the quantity was much higher.

Time passed quickly. As one item after another sold for a high price, one of the highly anticipated finale items finally appeared before everyone.

The personal houses of Stone Forest Town!

Chapter 1273 – Envious Zero Wing

The moment the image of Stone Forest Town's personal houses appeared, the players in the first-floor hall grew restless.

Apart from the Holy City slots, these players had come to the Candlelight Auction to see Stone Forest Town's personal housing.

The various major powers might ignore the personal houses, but to independent players, these houses were extremely important.

“If I can get a house, I can easily travel to Stone Forest Town’s Battle Arena! I can definitely surpass those other experts!”

“Using the houses in Stone Forest Town as a training ground isn’t a bad idea, either.”

...

Many independent experts and adventurer teams’ eyes shone with excitement when they saw the personal houses’ introduction.

Stone Forest Town had undergone a qualitative transformation since the last war. Not only was the town’s Mana density much higher, but the number of wandering merchant NPCs visiting the town continued to increase. Most importantly, more expert players had been attracted to the town.

Every day, Stone Forest Town hosted hundreds of duels between experts, and anyone was free to watch. One could also participate in the Battle Arena’s tournaments, fighting for the chance to learn the rumored combat techniques and enjoy more benefits in the establishment.

However, traveling to and from Stone Forest Town was somewhat inconvenient as the town didn’t have any teleportation arrays for public use. If they could purchase a personal house, traveling to and from Stone Forest Town would be a lot easier.

“Now that everyone has seen the personal houses, the starting price is 300 Gold per unit, and each increment must not be lower than 10 Gold. Begin!”

As Melancholic Smile finished speaking, the first-floor's players shouted one bid after another.

"Three hundred and ten Gold!"

"Three hundred and twenty Gold!"

...

"Five hundred Gold!"

The price's rise was simply staggering.

With 500 Gold, one could purchase a considerably good house in an NPC town. However, it was obvious that the price had yet to reach its limit.

Only after the price reached 610 Gold did it finally stop.

After watching the first house sell, the various major powers grew envious.

Constructing a house in a player town was extremely cheap, with the cheapest only costing 20 Gold and the pricey houses costing up to 100 Gold. However, the more expensive a house was, the more space it occupied. Needless to say, to maximize their land use, Zero Wing would've constructed the 20-Gold houses rather than the 100-Gold houses.

Now, every one of these 20-Gold houses sold for more than 600 Gold.

The Candlelight Auction sold a total of 50 houses, but it was nothing compared to the number of adventurer teams and independent players present.

The following houses sold for much higher prices than the first. Among the 50 houses, the most expensive had sold for 740 Gold. On average, the houses had sold for 650 Gold. By auctioning the 50 houses, Zero Wing had made 32,500 Gold.

Although this was spare change to superpowers, to first-rate Guilds, it was a massive sum of money. It was enough to equip many of their elite members with Common Mounts.

“Guild Leader, this is a rare opportunity; why don’t we sell a few more units?” Melancholic Smile contacted Shi Feng and suggested after seeing the players’ disappointment. It was clear that the number of houses they had offered was far from enough to satisfy the demand.

“No. We’ll stick with our original plan. We want them to learn about the benefit of Stone Forest Town’s houses first. In the future, we’ll be able to sell the houses for a higher price.” Shi Feng instantly rejected the proposal.

Although Stone Forest Town could accommodate many more houses, he had other plans for the town, Stone Forest Town’s migration plan in particular. By the time that plan came to fruition, they would attract far more players, and the houses would fetch a much higher price.

He had simply offered these 50 units to introduce everyone to the benefits of owning a house in Stone Forest Town.



When the auction for the personal houses came to an end, the various superpowers in the second-floor rooms focused on the stage.

The next auction item was the reason they had come to the Candlelight Auction.

The slots to enter the Holy City of Titan!

To ordinary Guilds, these slots were not of much use. However, it was a different story for superpowers like themselves. The slots could help some of their famous Lifestyle players become true Masters.

A Master Lifestyle player had the power to transform their trading firms.

Their trading firms would earn ample profits. Naturally, this would increase their Guilds' development as well.

"So, this is the Holy City of Titan?" a white-bearded, old man muttered, his eyes glowing as he read Titan City's introduction. "Sirius, you must get me a slot to the Holy City as per our agreement."

The screen above the stage did not explain the Holy City slots. Rather, it displayed information about the Holy City itself.

One such detail was the Titan Lifestyle Association. The information revealed that the establishment's workshops, which players could rent, had a Mana density far greater than the Basic Meditation Rooms'.

Moreover, the floating island contained Research Rooms, and players could use these rooms to study various materials. There were also plenty of Master-rank production videos. There were even Grandmaster-rank production videos available. However, players were required to enter the Advanced Research Room to gain access.

Only, entering these Research Rooms was very costly. The Basic Research Room alone cost 200 Gold per day, the Intermediate versions costing 500 Gold per day, and the Advanced versions costing 1,200 Gold per day. The various superpowers gasped when they saw these prices.

Moreover, both the Intermediate and Advanced versions required a certain amount of Reputation in Titan City to rent.

“Master Fire, rest assured; the Battle Wolves always stick to our word. We will definitely obtain a slot for you,” Sirius responded respectfully.

At the same time, the other powers’ fighting spirit roared to life as they swore to obtain slots for themselves.

“Now that everyone has seen the Holy City slots, the starting price is 500 Gold, and each increment must be no lower than 100 Gold. If you don’t have enough money, you may offer cities’ Lands as collateral. However, we will only evaluate the Lands at market price. Begin!”

After Melancholic Smile announced the next round’s rules, the venue’s atmosphere reached its boiling point.

“Five hundred Gold!”

“Six hundred Gold!”

“Eight hundred Gold!”

...

In the blink of an eye, the price had reached 3,000 Gold, shocking every player present. The first-rate Guilds soon gave up on the Holy City slots. They could already purchase a relatively good plot of Land in an ordinary NPC city with that kind of money. The only players remaining in the competition were the second-floor superpowers.

The Holy City slots were similar to the Thunder Passes. To those who needed them, they were worth a ton of money. To those who didn't, however, they were utterly worthless. Every superpower had a batch of Lifestyle players who were so close to their Master ranks. Unfortunately, these Lifestyle players weren't familiar enough with God's Domain's materials and production techniques, unable to cross that final hurdle.

As long as they obtained the Holy City slots, these superpowers were confident in nurturing a Master Lifestyle player and improving their respective trading firms. They would easily rake in far more than this investment.

“Five thousand Gold!” Sirius instantly increased the price by 2,000 Gold.

“That lunatic! It seems he's hellbent on getting this slot.” The other superpowers shook their heads and gave when they heard this price. While they could afford it, it had exceeded their initial expectations. Although they were rich, their money did not grow on trees. Moreover, the various superpowers were preparing for the contest on Thunder Island. They did not have that much money to waste. Hence, they decided to let Sirius have the first slot.

In any case, there were ten slots up for grabs. Even if split equally among their seven superpowers, they could each obtain at least one slot. They didn't have to rush. They could watch the Battle Wolves whittle away their funds and wait until they dropped out of the competition.

Following which, the bidding for the second slot began.

"Five thousand Gold!" Sirius shouted once more.

#### Chapter 1274 – Frightening Wealth

Sirius's bid silenced the venue.

"Is that guy nuts? Wasting 5,000 Gold once isn't enough for him?" Sirius's generosity stunned the players in the first-floor hall.

With 5,000 Gold, one could purchase considerably high-quality Epic Equipment...

Meanwhile, Melancholic Smile, who stood above the stage, revealed an excited smile. She had never expected the Holy City slots to sell for such a high price. Although she wouldn't receive a single Coin from the sales, Zero Wing could earn so more money. They would have enough for the Guild's development, reconstructing Stone Forest Town, and purchasing Diamond Wood.

Like the first round of bidding for the Holy City slots, none of the superpowers contested for the second. Following which, Melancholic Smile started the bidding for the third slot.

“Five thousand Gold!” Sirius shouted yet again.

“Have the Battle Wolves gone mad?” Nine Dragons Emperor frowned. “Do they really think we won’t challenge them?”

This time, the superpowers refused to let Sirius have his way.

“Five thousand, one hundred Gold!”

“Five thousand, three hundred Gold!”

“Five thousand, five hundred Gold!”

Both Nine Dragons Emperor and Phoenix Rain raised the price again and again. In the end, however, Sirius still won the third Holy City slot for 6,500 Gold.

As another purchased the first three slots, the various superpowers began to grow anxious, bidding even more fervently.

In the end, among the seven remaining slots, the cheapest had sold for 6,100 Gold, while the final slot sold for 7,000 Gold. The players in the venue were stunned.

Meanwhile, the various first-rate Guilds turned green with envy.

“Zero Wing made 62,400 Gold by selling ten slots... If Singular Burial knew about this, he would go mad.” Galaxy Past smiled bitterly as he watched the Candlelight Auction’s first phase come to an end. “I’m afraid that it won’t be long before Zero Wing becomes Star-Moon Kingdom’s overlord. It seems we’ll still have to shift the Star Alliance’s development to other kingdoms.”

A Guild’s strength was reflected not only in its expert and elite players, but also in its financial prowess.

Although Zero Wing had been acknowledged the number one Guild in Star-Moon Kingdom, it had far fewer elite players than first-rate Guilds. Zero Wing was only superior regarding tools of war and peak experts. In terms of management and deterrence force, wasn’t in the same league. The Guild’s range of influence, in particular, couldn’t compare to Blackwater’s, for example.

After Blackwater’s withdraw from Star-Moon Kingdom, Heaven’s Burial and the kingdom’s second-rate Guilds had rushed to take control of the abandoned territory. Even the Star Alliance had gotten in on the action in hopes of replacing Zero Wing as the kingdom’s overlord.

The Dark Guilds in Star-Moon Kingdom had also harbored such thoughts as they frequently killed Zero Wing’s members and the players heading into Stone Forest Town.

Zero Wing had always walked the path of the elite and as a result, lacked manpower.

However, now that the Guild had obtained so much funding during the Candlelight Auction, it wouldn't be long before the Guild could recruit a large number of high-quality elite members, compensating for its flaws.

If any Guild wanted to challenge Zero Wing Star-Moon Kingdom, they had to think twice. After all, with so much money, Zero Wing would not fear a battle of attrition.

Once the auction's first phase ended, the second phase quickly began. Fortunately, no one had anything more to say about Zero Wing's processing fees, obediently retrieving their prepared treasures and putting them up for trade.

Due to the 10-Magic-Crystal or 3-Gold processing fees, only items worth at least 10 Gold were accepted for trade. This guaranteed the item's quality and made it easy for players to find what they wanted. Even the various major powers on the second floor found quite a few items they needed.

As the event died down, everyone's final evaluation of the Candlelight Auction was quite high. The Candlelight Auction could definitely stand on the same stage as superpowers' auctions.

Shi Feng similarly browsed the trade list in the hopes of finding the Draconic Herb.

Players from numerous countries had attended the Candlelight Auction. Among those present, many were either major powers' representatives or independent experts. The likelihood of finding the Draconic Herb here was much higher than searching for the herb elsewhere.

After all, to obtain the Draconic Herb, one needed both sufficient luck and sufficient strength. Players of this caliber weren't necessarily willing to sell the Draconic Herb they obtained. Instead, they usually traded such super-rare herbs for items that could benefit their development.

What?! Is this for real?! Shi Feng suddenly discovered a very familiar item as he read through the list.

The Hero's Chapter!

Although this item was a tattered piece of parchment, not particularly useful to ordinary players, it was a treasure highly sought after by the various large Guilds.

Moreover, the Hero's Chapter did not consist of a single page. Rumors had it that if one completed the Hero's Chapter, it would be more valuable than a Legendary item. In reality, a single page was already worth more than an Epic item.

In the past, one page easily sold for 15,000 Gold.

The Hero's Chapter had only one purpose—to summon a Hero to defend a town or city. The summoned Hero functioned like Guardian NPCs in an NPC city.

In the past, Shi Feng had obtained a page and summoned a Hero to defend Shadow's main city.

Shi Feng had never imagined that the Hero's Chapter would show up in the Candlelight Auction.

The owner sure knows how to drive a hard bargain. Shi Feng was astonished when he saw the players' price.

The other party requested a top-tier, Level 45 Dark-Gold greatsword and top-tier, Level 40 Dark Gold plate gauntlets and boots.



Aside from Epic and Growth-type Weapons, Level 45 Dark-Gold Weapons were the best available. As the various large Guilds' players had yet to reach Level 45, it was very difficult to obtain Level 45 weapons, not to mention top-tier, Level 45 Dark-Gold Weapons.

Such a weapon could easily fetch over 1,000 Gold on the market.

As for the Level 40 Dark-Gold Equipment, each piece could easily fetch over 400 Gold.

Shi Feng even began to wonder if the seller knew the Hero's Chapter's true value.

The Hero's Chapter's introductory text was very simple. It only stated that one could recruit a Hero that was Tier 3 and ten levels higher than the summoner to defend a town or city.

From the introduction, one could surmise that the Hero's Chapter was on par with a Tier 3 Summoning Scroll. Only, this Summoning Scroll did not have a duration. However, it could only help protect towns or cities, not help players grind or raid Dungeons. Hence, the chapter's value should be limited. At this stage of the game, it'd be surprising if it could sell for 600 Gold. If it were an actual Tier 3 Summoning Scroll, though, it could go for a little more as it could help fight powerful Bosses.

What the introductory text had not mentioned was the fact that the Tier 3 Hero could grow. The introductory text only revealed the Hero's base Attributes. Moreover, unlike Personal Guards, it was much easier to level Heroes. Even the weakest among them could grow to Level 180, Tier 4, while the more powerful Heroes could grow to Level 200, Tier 5.

Forget it. I'll just have Melancholic smile trade for it. Shi Feng then contacted Melancholic Smile.

Shortly after, Shi Feng found the Draconic Herb. Similarly, the other party had asked for the high price of a piece of Level 45 top-tier Dark-Gold Equipment. Fortunately, this wasn't an issue for Shi Feng. There was plenty of Level 45 Dark-Gold Equipment in Zero Wing's Guild Warehouse.

Time passed quickly. Soon, the auction's second phase ended as well.

Although each player had not put up many items for trade, a lot of players had attended. Shi Feng earned over 2,000 Gold and 150,000 Magic Crystals during the second phase.

Only, as Phoenix Rain had borrowed quite a bit, he hadn't earned as much as he would have liked.

After the auction ended, news of Candlelight Auction's wealth spread to the various major powers.

...

"Damn it! How could this have happened?!" Singular Burial, in the distant Star-Moon City, felt himself age by several years when he read the report. He hadn't thought that the Candlelight Auction would be such a huge success. Star-Moon City's auction was a joke in comparison. Moreover, now that Zero Wing had earned a fortune, Heaven's Burial's development was at risk. Following which, Singular Burial contacted Flame Blood and asked, "Blood, how are things going on your side?"

"Guild Leader, I've tried my best to lure the small Guilds and adventurer teams over. Although some of them have started to wise up and grow suspicious, things on Abandoned Wave's side are developing smoothly. I don't believe it will be long before Heaven's Burial owns Star-Moon Kingdom," Flame Blood said excitedly.

“Notify Abandoned Wave that Zero Wing has secured a lot of funding. If we don’t hurry, the Guild will be even more difficult to deal with in the future,” Singular Burial commanded sternly. “Also, think of a way to help Abandoned Wave hasten his progress. I don’t care if you’re exposed in the process.”

“Understood.” Hearing Singular Burial saying so, Flame Blood could not help his surprise. Just how far has Zero Wing developed to make the Guild Leader so nervous?

...

Meanwhile, Shi Feng had stealthily reached White River City’s city hall.

“Sir, how may I be of service to you today?” the female receptionist asked as she approached Shi Feng.

“I’d like to construct a city,” Shi Feng responded.

## Chapter 1275 – Building a City

In a VIP reception room on the city hall’s second floor...

A middle-aged man in exquisite clothing slowly opened the door and entered the room. A high-ranking Identification Skill would tell someone that this butler-like man was actually a Level 180, Tier 3 NPC named Jarvis.

“Lord Protector, I hear that you’d like to build a city. May I see your City Building Order?” Jarvis asked.

“Here.” Shi Feng took out a tattered parchment.

“This is indeed a City Building Order that the royal family gave out over a century ago. May I know where you wish to construct your city to give you an accurate estimate, my lord? However, I have to remind you that the high-level locations require higher construction fees,” Jarvis explained. He then presented a Magic Scroll and allowed Shi Feng to choose the location for his city.

“Understood. I wish to construct it in Witch’s Hill.” Shi Feng pointed to Witch’s Hill on the scroll.

The Witch’s Hill could definitely lure plenty of players as a Level 50 to 70 large map. It was also close to the Mournful Ruins.

The Mournful Ruins was a Hell Mode Regional Dungeon, and like the Stoneclaw Mountains, it produced an abundance of Magic Crystals.

Witch’s Hill itself had the entrance to an Otherworld. Witch’s Hill had still been popular among players even a decade after the game launched.

“Alright. May I know exactly where you want to build your city?” Jarvis asked. He tapped on the Magic Scroll, and a miniature 3D model of Witch’s Hill appeared before him.

“The exact location?” Shi Feng carefully examined the model before him.

He had only asked about the cost to construct a city during his last visit. Even if he had decided to construct his city then, his map choices had been limited due to his status. The system would have randomly decided the city's exact location. Now that he had the City Protector title, not only did Jarvis, the third most powerful NPC in the city hall, serve him, but he could also choose his city's exact location.

This privilege also had its own downsides. The construction fees would fluctuate depending on the terrain of the location he chose. If the system decided the location, however, ease of construction was generally prioritized over surrounding scenery.

"I'll pick this location." Shi Feng pointed to the top of a mountain that was near a large waterfall.

Sightseeing players would enjoy the wonderful scenery, and the terrain made the city difficult to attack. The only inconvenience one would face was ascending and descending the mountain. Level 50 players and above, however, generally had their own Mounts, so traveling the distance would not be a problem.

"Lord Protector, you've chosen a location with complicated terrain. The manpower and resources required will cost at least 60% more to build here. It will also take longer to construct. Are you sure you wish to build here?" Jarvis asked.

"Mhm. Build it there." Shi Feng nodded.

He would save a lot of money by building the city on a flat plain, but it would be a lot harder to defend as enemies could attack from all sides. He couldn't afford to be stingy.

“Alright. I’ll calculate the total cost. Please wait a moment.” After Jarvis confirmed that there were no issues, he calculated the construction costs. A short moment later, he handed Shi Feng a list and said, “Initial estimates put the price at 152,000 Gold. We will charge additional fees if the city is attacked. You’ll also need to pay an additional 30,000-Gold registration fee. As a second-generation city, a monthly 30,000-Gold management fee will also be required. Do you wish to dispatch additional guards? You can ensure the city’s security after its constructed. You may hire guards to defend your city for up to 21 days. Every group of 100 Tier 1 guards will cost 100 Gold per three days, while each group of 10 Tier 2 guards will cost 100 Gold per three days.”

Sure enough, building a city is quite expensive. Shi Feng was astonished as he read the quote.

He had only received a general price during his previous visit. Now that he was constructing his city, including the guards, the final price was over 190,000 Gold. This excluded the fees that he would incur when monsters attacked the city...

Originally, he had planned to build the city after he finished collecting the required Seven Luminaries Crystals to construct the Four Towers of Elements. Now that he had the Hero’s Chapter, he could repel possible invaders even without the Four Towers of Elements. Naturally, he had to construct the city as soon as possible.

“I wish to hire 1,000 Tier 1 guards, and 100 Tier 2 guards for 21 days,” Shi Feng said.

“Alright. Your total bill comes to 192,000 Gold!” Jarvis excitedly announced. This was his first large transaction. “It will take roughly six to ten days to construct the city depending on the local situation.”

Shi Feng handed over 196,000 Gold.

He had earned quite a bit with the Sea God’s Blessings, but he had only decided to take 30,000 Gold with him. He had left the remaining funds with Fire Dance for purchasing Runic Fragments and teleportation fees.

Meanwhile, Shi Feng made a fortune during the Candlelight Auction. After deducting the various costs, he had earned over 210,000 Gold.

The major powers in Star-Moon Kingdom felt as if a noose had been placed around their necks. Even a first-rate Guild couldn't compete with Zero Wing with such abundant funds. Trying to fight Zero Wing would be a death wish.

"Lord Protector, here is the deed to your land. From now on, you are one of Star-Moon Kingdom's lords and will enjoy the status of Count," Jarvis said respectfully.

—

System: Congratulations! You are the first player to become a lord in Star-Moon Kingdom. Rewarding 30,000 Guild Popularity, one City Teleportation Magic Array Design, and "Star-Moon Kingdom's Count" title.

—

The position of Star-Moon Kingdom's Count was completely different from a cities Count. The difference was like the difference between heaven and earth as one could possess land of their own, while the other could not.

With this, I'm broke again. Shi Feng sighed as he looked at the deed in his hands.

He only had a little over 40,000 Gold on hand now. He would barely have enough to purchase Diamond Wood and reconstruct Stone Forest Town after deducting the funds for his promotion quest. He had nothing left for the Guild's development right now.

However, Shi Feng didn't mind.

At the moment, it was far more important to obtain a city than to focus on Zero Wing's development.

Earning enough money wouldn't be a concern if Zero Wing had a city. The city could provide far more profits than Stone Forest Town.

The rewards are astounding. There's actually a City Teleportation Magic Array Design. Shi Feng was shocked as he looked at the design in his bag.

The City Teleportation Magic Array was far more advanced than the Teleportation Magic Array he possessed. It could accommodate more people at a time with a significantly lower operating cost. Its only flaw was that it only allowed one to teleport between Guild towns and cities. It wasn't possible to teleport to NPC cities.

Even so, the City Teleportation Magic Array Design was a treasure worth tens of thousands of Gold.

Normally, one could only obtain the design from super-large-scale Hell Mode Team Dungeons. However, the drop-rate was only 2%. Moreover, the design only dropped from the Dungeon's Final Boss.

Getting the design now saved him a lot of trouble.



He could link the city directly to Stone Forest Town once it was constructed. This would drastically increase the value of both the town and city.

Now that I've dealt with everything, it's about time to challenge my promotion quest, Shi Feng thought as he gazed at the Soul Orb in his bag. It was practically a ticking time-bomb. He needed to deal with it as soon as possible

## Chapter 1276 – Upgrading the Magic Sword

### Star-Moon City, Shadowblade Ruins:

The Shadowblade Ruins was the nearest Level 40 to Level 50 high-resource map to Star-Moon City. Every day, tons of players would travel to this map. However, the players currently there were in a panic.

The reason for this was the sudden assaults of powerful monsters all over the map. Moreover, among these monsters' numbers were the highly intelligent one-horned humanoid monsters, whose combat standards were significantly higher than elite players and whose Attributes were likewise high. These humanoid monsters were like wolves ravaging a flock of sheep as they charged into the various elite teams in the map. Every one of their attacks easily bypassed the defenses of players, directly landing on vital points on the latter's bodies. Even healers could not keep up with the damage.

Only the experts leading these elite teams could keep up against these humanoid monsters—and just barely at that.

“Leader, our Instantaneous Movement Magic Scrolls aren't working!” a Level 40 Swordsman wearing light-blue armor reported anxiously.

“How can this be? Weren’t there a few guys that used the scroll to escape from danger an hour ago?”  
The robust Level 41 Shield Warrior holding back a humanoid monster frowned when he saw the number of monsters attacking his team increasing.

Currently, the Shadowblade Ruins was still a very dangerous map for players. Hence, when exploring it, every team would prepare some Tier 0 Instantaneous Movement Magic Scrolls in order to escape any traps or monster encirclements they encountered.

Meanwhile, hundreds of monsters had already surrounded their 100-man team right now.

If the team were up against only several hundred Elite monsters led by Chieftains, they could still manage somehow. Now, however, the monster army they faced had three Level 50-plus Lords and over a dozen Level 50-plus Chieftains.

In addition, there was a Level 51 one-horned humanoid monster—a greater threat than even the Lord ranked monsters.

Meanwhile, standing on high ground a short distance away from this elite team, two players were observing the entire battle. One of these players was an Assassin wielding a pitch-black crystal. This Assassin’s skin was entirely gray, save for a blood-red mark imprinted between his eyebrows, his body giving off a dark aura. If Shi Feng were present, he would definitely recognize this Assassin to be Abandoned Wave, Blackwater Guild’s ex-Guild Leader.

Meanwhile, the cloaked Cleric with a white-jade staff, who was standing beside Abandoned Wave, was Flame Blood.

“These Evil Beasts sure are terrifying. Just one of them is already enough to force an expert Level 41 Shield Warrior to activate both his Lifesaving Skill and Berserk Skill just to cope with it,” Flame Blood exclaimed in astonishment as he looked at the distant Shield Warrior being pushed back by the one-horned humanoid monster.

“This is nothing,” Abandoned Wave said, smirking. “That’s just a recently created Evil Beast. Since we now have the entire Shadowblade Ruins locked down, let’s stop toying around with these people.”

Saying so, Abandoned Wave tapped on the pitch-black crystal he wielded. Immediately, five Level 55, Lord ranked Evil Beasts appeared before him. Compared to the Level 51, Chieftain ranked Evil Beast, these five Evil Beasts were not only larger in size but also had a trace of cunning in their eyes. It was clear that these Lord ranked Evil Beasts were much more intelligent.

*So strong!* Flame Blood shuddered involuntarily as he looked at the five Lord ranked Evil Beasts.

He was one of the peak experts of Heaven’s Burial, and his senses were telling him very clearly that just one of these Evil Beasts could kill him in two or three moves.

Meanwhile, five such monsters in total were present.

If such a force charged into a group of elite players, the consequences would be unimaginable.

“Get rid of them all!” Abandoned Wave commanded as he pointed towards the 100-man elite team ahead.

In the blink of an eye, all five Evil Beasts disappeared before Abandoned Wave as they charged at the elite team currently locked in bitter combat.

When the five Evil Beasts entered the battlefield, the leading Level 41 Shield Warrior gasped.

“We’re doomed...” The Shield Warrior despaired when he saw one of the Lord ranked Evil Beasts killing a teammate with one blow.

After just a short moment, the 100-man elite team led by an expert was annihilated. Not a single player managed to escape alive. Abandoned Wave walked over to the battlefield and began a ritual.

Suddenly, the corpses of these elite players started transforming into monsters one after another. The expert Shield Warrior’s corpse became a thinly built Special Elite ranked Evil Beast. Aside from this expert Shield Warrior, two other players’ corpses turned into one-horned Evil Beasts. Only, they were Elite ranked Evil Beasts.

“Hahaha! Guild elite teams really are great! I managed to obtain three Evil Beasts from annihilating a team! Zero Wing, just you wait. It won’t be long before I make you all taste despair.” Abandoned Wave laughed in satisfaction as he looked at the three newly created Evil Beasts. “Alright, let’s head to the next location. The battle there should be ending soon as well.”

The difference between killing an adventurer team and a Guild elite team was simply massive. Previously, he had managed to create only one Evil Beast, despite killing three adventurer teams. Now, however, one Guild elite team had given him three new Evil Beasts. Among them, one was even an Evil Beast with high potential.

After a few more days at this rate, not to mention flattening Stone Forest Town, even raiding an NPC town would be a piece of cake for him.

...

Elsewhere, after Shi Feng finished dealing with the construction of his city, he contacted Melancholic Smile and had her find five trustworthy Advanced Enchanters to become the Candlelight Trading Firm's core enchanters as well as have them sign a strict contract.

His Tier 2 promotion quest was extraordinary and would definitely take a long time to complete.

Hence, Shi Feng wanted to deal with all Guild and trading firm-related matters first. Only then would he be able to focus on his quest.

At this point, the Candlelight Trading Firm was already the publicly acknowledged number one trading firm in Star-Moon Kingdom. It also possessed a 3-star Shop. As a result, plenty of Lifestyle players were applying to join the trading firm every day. Even Basic and Intermediate Lifestyle players did not have much of an advantage when they sought to join the trading firm; they could only become reserve members after passing the trading firm's test. Only Advanced Lifestyle players got to become official members immediately upon passing the test. Despite such strict requirements, a flood of applicants would still come to the trading firm.

Hence, while it might be difficult to find Advanced Enchanters in other trading firms, the Candlelight Trading Firm boasted quite a few.

...

“Whichever one of you is willing to become a core Enchanter of the Candlelight Trading Firm, come register with me!” Melancholic Smile shouted in the lounge for Advanced Lifestyle players.

Immediately, the various Advanced Lifestyle players inside the lounge perked up their ears in interest. However, when they heard that the offer was only for Enchanters, many of the Lifestyle players present turned to look at the Enchanters among them with envy.

“Hah... it’s actually Enchanters this time. I wonder when it will be us Forgers’ turn?” an Advanced Forger said, sighing dejectedly.

Silent Wonder, who was also resting in the lounge, grew confused when she saw the downcast expressions the crowd in the room was wearing.

What was there to feel envious about?

Becoming a core member of the trading firm meant signing a strict contract and losing much of their freedom. On the other hand, non-core members only needed to make a certain amount of items each day. Once they hit their daily quotas, they could do whatever they wanted. If they decided to quit the Candlelight Trading Firm, they only needed to pay a small severance fee as well as forget all the recipes and designs they learned from Candlelight. As for core members, if they wished to leave the trading firm, they had to not only pay a massive severance fee but also clear their Masteries to zero and forget all the recipes they had learned before. They would have to start all over again from scratch.

“Silent, you might not know this since you’re new, but the Candlelight Trading Firm has the precious slots to enter the Holy City of Titan. That is a great opportunity for us to become Masters. However, only core members and Advanced members may contest for those slots, with the majority of the slots allocated to core members. Hence, everyone here hopes to become a core member of Candlelight. Unfortunately, that depends heavily on luck,” the female Alchemist seated beside Silent Wonder explained patiently when she saw the dazed look on Silent Wonder’s face.

“Candlelight still has more Holy City slots?” Silent Wonder could not help but be surprised by this revelation.

She had already gained an understanding regarding the Holy City slots through the recent auction. She knew that the Holy City could greatly help Lifestyle players in reaching the Master rank. However, she had thought that Candlelight had already sold all of the Holy City slots it had during the previous auction.

This revelation tempted Silent Wonder. However, when she remembered the words Shi Feng had said to her before, she quickly dismissed the notion from her mind. She had very nearly reacted the way Shi Feng had said she would. Inwardly, she thought to herself, *Hmph! With my abilities, I refuse to believe that I won't be able to earn a Holy City slot myself! Just you wait! You will definitely be the one begging me to stay in Candlelight later on!*

...

Inside a Special Forging Room on the Candlelight Trading Firm's sixth floor:

Five Advanced Alchemists followed Melancholic Smile into the room and immediately grew nervous. Seated before them was a legendary existence who was both the Guild Leader of Star-Moon Kingdom's number one Guild as well as the kingdom's number one expert.

“I've asked you to come here for a very simple reason. Learn this Basic Enchantment Design. Afterwards, focus on making Basic Runestones. Don't worry about the materials. In addition, the one who manages to make the most Runestones within a certain period will have a Holy City slot with their name on it.” Shi Feng then placed the Basic Enchantment Design he obtained from the Sea God's Temple on the table.

The Basic Runestone was something none of the current major powers possessed. However, it was a common consumable in God's Domain. Not only was it cheap, but its effects were prominent as well. As

long as the Candlelight Trading Firm could produce it, there would be no need to fear a lack of demand for it.

Currently, he had already spent most of the income from the Candlelight Auction. Meanwhile, he needed a lot more money to develop his future city. Hence, he needed to plan for the future right away.

Now that the Candlelight Trading Firm had obtained the twenty Shops from the Secret Pavilion as well as the two golden Shops mortgaged by Phoenix Rain, he definitely had a good opportunity to sell the Basic Runestones and increase Candlelight's fame in God's Domain.

Upon hearing Shi Feng's words, the five Advanced Enchanters immediately grew excited at the opportunity to learn the design for such a precious item as well as the chance to visit Titan City. Without hesitation, the five players clicked to learn the design and promptly left the Special Forging Room to research the production method of the Basic Runestone in the hopes of increasing their success rate.

Meanwhile, after Melancholic Smile and the others left the room, Shi Feng took out thirty Level 45 Fine-Gold Weapons and ten Level 45 Dark-Gold Weapons.

The Tier 2 promotion quest was already a tough challenge in the first place, all the more the promotion quest for one of the Ten Great Saint Legacies. Even if he possessed frightening combat power, he still needed to further improve himself in order to be certain of completing his promotion. Hence, he naturally could not leave the Abyssal Blade sitting at Level 40. After all, he had already reached Level 50. A Level 40 weapon was no longer suitable for him.

"Start devouring!"



Inside the quiet forging room, the entire space started trembling as soon as Shi Feng had the Abyssal Blade devour the weapons on the table.

His heart ached as he watched the top-tier weapons turn into dust one after another.

Currently, Level 45 weapons were extremely rare in God's Domain. With many expert players only at Level 41 or Level 42, Level 45 weapons were worth a lot of money.

A Level 45 Fine-Gold Weapon could easily sell for over 400 Gold at the moment, just slightly cheaper than a Level 40 Dark-Gold Weapon. As for Level 45 Dark-Gold Weapons, even one with average Attributes could sell for more than 1,000 Gold. However, even at such a price, nobody was willing to sell these weapons.

Yet, now, Shi Feng had sacrificed thirty Fine-Gold Weapons and ten Dark-Gold Weapons. Their total value easily exceeded 20,000 Gold.

Even the upper echelons of Super Guilds would not dare to carry out such an extravagant upgrade. They would definitely choose to do so only after mainstream players had passed Level 45.

However, Shi Feng could not care less right now. His Tier 2 promotion was of utmost importance. Just challenging the promotion quest once would already cost him 188 Mana Stones and 10,000 Gold. With the funds Zero Wing currently had, he could not afford to fail.

When the Abyssal Blade was done devouring the essence of the weapons, Shi Feng felt an unprecedented pressure descend on him, preventing him from moving at all. Meanwhile, the space around the newly transformed Abyssal Blade also began to crack as if the surrounding space couldn't support the Abyssal Blade's existence.

“Roar!”

A dragon’s roar resounded throughout the room. Immediately, the space inside the room disappeared into the void as darkness enveloped Shi Feng’s surroundings.

Shortly after, streams of pitch-black smoke started flowing out from the dark void and into the Abyssal Blade. Then, as if the black dragon carved onto the hilt of the sword had gained life, the carving actually climbed up the blade, leaving blood-red runes in its wake.

Once the entire blade of the sword was covered in runes, the miniature black dragon returned to its original position at the hilt and stopped moving.

Although the surrounding space had also calmed down, the Abyssal Blade, which was hovering before Shi Feng, had an extraordinarily evil presence. The entire sword emitted a faint, black fog. The runes shone with a bloody radiance as well, lending the weapon an extra hint of eeriness.

*The Abyssal Blade really is getting increasingly dangerous. If I’m not absolutely confident, I definitely must not upgrade it to Level 50.* When Shi Feng held the hovering Abyssal Blade, he could distinctly feel it pulsating as if he gripped a living creature. He could not help but shudder at this sensation.

Level 50 was a major turning point. Although he was unsure if a Backlash would occur if he upgraded the Abyssal Blade to Level 50, he still needed to be extra careful about it. Otherwise, he might lose his life without even knowing how he died at that time.

Meanwhile, after being upgraded to Level 45, the Abyssal Blade received a significant improvement to its various Basic Attributes. Upon seeing the Magic Weapon’s Attributes, Shi Feng felt even more confident in tackling his promotion quest.

—

[Abyssal Blade] (One-handed Sword, Magic Weapon)

Attack Power +1,510

All Attributes +105

Attack Speed +22

Ignore Levels +15

Attacks have:

65% chance to cause 200% damage.

35% chance to cause 300% damage.

Every attack increases damage by 2% to a maximum of 20%.

If wielder belongs to a Swordsman-related class, all Skill Levels +4.

Increase Free Ability Points received for every increase in Level by 2 points.

Equipment Level 45. Can be upgraded (Devour fifty Level 50 Fine-Gold Weapons and twenty Level 50 Dark-Gold Weapons to upgrade to Level 45).

Equipment Tier 1. Can be evolved (Devour ten Mana Crystals to evolve to Tier 2).

Additional Active Skill 1: Phantom Kill (Tier 1). Instantly creates a doppelganger under the wielder's control. Doppelganger has 80% of the wielder's Attributes and all Skills. The wielder can swap positions with the doppelganger at any time.

Duration: 1 minute, 10 seconds

Cooldown: 5 minutes

Additional Active Skill 2: Abyssal Bind (Tier 1). Binds enemies and prevents movement, reducing Defense by 100%.

Duration: 4 seconds

Cooldown: 50 seconds

Additional Active Skill 3: Nine Dragons Slash (Tier 1). Instantly creates twelve phantoms of the Abyssal Blade for wielder's use; each phantom sword deals up to 60% damage.

Duration: 30 seconds

Cooldown: 5 minutes

Additional Active Skill 4: Abyssal Curse (Tier 1). Prevents all targets within a radius of 30 yards from moving or attacking for 6 seconds and reduces their Attributes by 20% for 10 minutes. Effect doubles if there is only one target within range.

Cooldown: 30 minutes

Additional Passive Skill: Abyssal Will. Improves wielder's physique, depending on the surrounding Mana density. The higher the surrounding Mana density, the greater the improvement provided.

Additional Profound Inheritance: Black Emperor (Tier 1). When activated, every critical hit will accumulate one stack of Death Aura. Each stack can be used to increase all Attributes by 2% and Attack Speed and Movement Speed by 1% for 10 seconds or to reduce the Cooldown of a skill by 3 seconds. Maximum of 33 stacks of Death Aura.

Duration: 10 minutes

Cooldown: 10 hours

The Famed Smith Olysses personally created the Abyssal Blade using the Black Dragon King's fangs as material. It is one of thirty-six Famed Swords, ranking 31st. However, the Black Dragon King himself has cursed this sword. Beyond the immense strength the blade offers, the wielder must face a Backlash after a certain amount of time. However, after Jack had remodeled the Abyssal Blade with a Star Crystal, the strength of the Backlash has been reduced greatly. If the wielder is unable to suppress the Backlash, the wielder will receive the Black Dragon King's curse, permanently reducing all Attributes by 50%.

Unable to be dropped.

Unable to be traded.

Unable to be destroyed.

—

*Its Basic Attributes sure have increased significantly. Just its Attack Power can already rival that of an Epic two-handed weapon. Its heavy weight is also amazing.* Shi Feng was inwardly astonished as he casually swung the Abyssal Blade a few times.

Compared to a lightweight one-handed sword like Killing Ray, Shi Feng personally preferred one-handed swords that were heavy.

In his previous battles, due to his constantly rising level, he had gradually relied more on Killing Ray, which dealt more damage. As a result, he had mostly kept the Abyssal Blade, which had a higher compatibility with him, on reserve.

Now that the Abyssal Blade had risen to Level 45, he could now use it as his main weapon again.

Following which, Shi Feng went to his Warehouse and stored some items that he would not need for the promotion quest, clearing out the clutter in his bag. At the same time, he also retrieved some Magic Scrolls and necessary potions from the Guild Warehouse. After that, he hurried to the library.

On his way to the library, Shi Feng suddenly received a call from Aqua Rose.

“Guild Leader, quickly take a look at the official forums! Something big has happened over at Star-Moon City!” Aqua Rose said urgently. “Just a while ago, the Shadowblade Ruins got sealed, and none of the players that entered the map managed to escape. They can’t even be contacted. Many Guilds have already sent out their own teams to investigate this incident. Moreover, aside from the Shadowblade Ruins, a few Level 30-plus high-resource maps were also sealed.”

“A field map was sealed? And even communications have been blocked?” Shi Feng grew a little confused. He then opened Star-Moon Kingdom’s official forums.

Normally, sealing a map only prevented players from using teleportation-type scrolls. Meanwhile, such large-scale sealings were only possible with a Guild War Order. However, if the seal was capable of blocking even communication methods, it was definitely something extraordinary.

Based on Shi Feng’s knowledge, there were only three ways to carry out this kind of seal.

After opening the official forums, he found that discussions regarding the sealed field maps dominated the entire forum.

Shadowblade Ruins sealed! Over 100,000 players cannot be contacted!

Large groups of Chieftains and Lords suddenly appearing in Bloodmaul Camp!

Unable to teleport to Red Ridge Town!

Every post was about the sealed field maps or missing players.

Chapter 1278 – Tier 2 Promotion Quest

“This seems like a good opportunity.” Shi Feng’s lips hooked up after he finished reading through the related posts on the forum.

“An opportunity?” Aqua Rose looked at Shi Feng in the screen in confusion.

Currently, the entire Star-Moon City had already fallen into turmoil with many large Guilds wrestling with this matter. After all, nobody was sure whether this weird phenomenon would spread to the surrounding areas.

If it did, Stone Forest Town might even get dragged into the mess.



“That’s right. This is a good opportunity—an opportunity to upgrade White River City,” Shi Feng said, smiling.

NPC cities did not remain static. They could similarly be upgraded. However, this depended on the population and standard of the players residing in the city.

Star-Moon Kingdom had only so many players. Meanwhile, Star-Moon City was generally a player’s first choice when choosing a city to develop themselves in. Hence, despite White River City’s various advantages, it just barely surpassed Star-Moon City to become the most populous NPC city in the kingdom. As for the other NPC cities within the kingdom, the player population there would mostly remain constant for the foreseeable future. It would be very difficult to attract players from other cities and countries to migrate to White River City. After all, everyone had long since familiarized themselves with the towns and cities they started in.

Now that a problem had occurred at Star-Moon City, if this problem continued festering, many players would no doubt consider developing elsewhere.

If they could lure these players to White River City, they might be able to upgrade White River City.

Upgrading an NPC city brought with it many benefits. One such example was the flying transportation feature, which enabled players to gain additional leveling spots.

In White River City’s case, the additional leveling spot was the Eclipse Gate.

Not only did the Eclipse Gate have plenty of advanced and military quests, but the leveling speed and resources available there were also extraordinary. Moreover, the Eclipse Gate was a Level 40 to Level 70 leveling spot.

If White River City could activate the flying transportation feature, the leveling speed of Zero Wing's members would undoubtedly increase. They could also start collecting the Energy Essence required to nurture their Guild Mounts.

"Upgrade the city?" Aqua Rose could not help but grow excited.

She understood, more or less, the ramifications of upgrading NPC cities. If they could upgrade White River City, not only would it allow Zero Wing's members to accelerate their leveling speed, but it would also lure more players from other cities to develop in White River City. This situation would greatly benefit both the Guild's and trading firm's development.

"Immediately announce to the public that we are recruiting members. Also, during this time, discount all daily consumable items sold at White River City's Candlelight Trading Firm by 20%," Shi Feng instructed.

Regeneration and Mana Recovery Potions were a must for all players that wanted to level up in the fields. Certain Magic Scrolls were also necessary as these items could save one's life during a crucial moment. However, purchasing these consumable items was a large expenditure.

Normally, offering discounts on such items would have minimal effect in luring players to White River City. Now, however, it would definitely yield excellent results. After all, it was now extremely dangerous to go out and level up at Star-Moon City. After considering safety, as well as the reduced cost of consumables, players of Star-Moon City would naturally choose to develop in White River City.

"A 20% discount? Guild Leader, isn't this a little too much?" Aqua Rose frowned. Basic consumable items were originally fiercely competitive and had a small profit margin. If they sold them at a discounted price now, they would only break even.

"Relax. We'll earn it back sooner or later," Shi Feng laughed. He understood Aqua Rose's worries.

However, she did not know what kind of effects would accrue with White River City's upgrade. Compared to the benefits they could gain when White River City was upgraded, a small loss like this was not worth mentioning whatsoever.

"Understood. I'll get it done right away." Aqua Rose could not help but sigh. Most likely, only Shi Feng would be crazy enough to use his own Guild's money to spur the upgrade of a city.

Following which, many posts relating to Zero Wing's recruitment appeared on Star-Moon Kingdom's official forums. At the same time, everyone also discovered a shocking matter: White River City's Candlelight Trading Firm was actually selling daily consumables at a 20% discount.

"Crap! This is insane! With this 20% discount, I'll be able to save up enough money to get a Mount much more quickly!"

"A 20% discount? If this is true, developing at White River City might not be a bad idea."

...

Previously, the players of Star-Moon Kingdom kept discussing the sealed maps. Now, however, these players all talked about Zero Wing, instead. Many independent players also showed great interest in the 20% discount on daily consumables.

...

“Damn this Zero Wing! They’re actually using this opportunity to poach our population!” Singular Burial gnashed his teeth in anger when he browsed the various discussion threads on the official forums. However, he very quickly calmed down. Sneering, he said, “I’ll let you all feel joyful for now. When the time comes, both Stone Forest Town and White River City will become mine!”

Currently, the various large Guilds still did not know that Abandoned Wave was slaughtering the players inside the sealed maps. Meanwhile, the Evil Beasts and monsters under Abandoned Wave’s command were also growing at a rapid pace. As long as they managed to wipe out the players inside these maps and were further trained for a certain period, Stone Forest Town would eventually change ownership.

“Guild Leader, are we just going to let them continue poaching the players here?” Daybreak Fog asked.

“Of course not.” Chuckling, Singular Burial said, “Since everyone feels that Star-Moon City is in chaos, we can’t let White River City remain peaceful, either. Immediately notify all the Dark Guilds. Tell them to stop killing players around Stone Forest Town and shift to White River City, instead. They can kill however many players they want. Just make sure to make a mess over at White River City. I want to see just how long Zero Wing can continue poaching players.

“Understood.” Daybreak Fog then bowed and left the room.

...

White River City’s library:

As soon as Shi Feng stepped into the Star-Moon Hall, he immediately felt as if he had stepped into a muddy swamp, his movements becoming extremely sluggish.

“You’ve come.” Sharlyn’s gaze shifted from her book to Shi Feng. Smiling, she said, “It seems you’ve made quite a lot of preparations. Have you decided to challenge your promotion?”

“Mhm.” Shi Feng then took out 188 Mana Stones and 10,000 Gold from his bag.

Seeing this, Sharlyn waved her hand. By the time Shi Feng reacted, the Mana Stones and the bag of 10,000 Gold in his hands had already disappeared, reappearing in Sharlyn’s hands, instead.

Meanwhile, the sound of a system notification also entered Shi Feng’s ears.

—

System: Congratulations, you have accepted the Blade Saint class’s Tier 2 Promotion Quest.

—

“Alright, since you’ve already decided to take the challenge, I’ll tell you some of the risks,” Sharlyn said as she jiggled the bag of money in her hand a few times. Smiling, she continued, “Your promotion is somewhat special. If you fail, it won’t be as simple as dying once. You also won’t be able to challenge it again for another twenty days. Most importantly, I can only send you there. I cannot guarantee whether you can return or not.”

Sharlyn’s words rendered Shi Feng speechless.

Something like this should have been explained before he accepted the quest, yet Sharlyn actually did so only now, after he had accepted.

“I’m helpless about this as well. After all, the location you are heading to is the former residence of a God. Due to the disturbance caused by the magic arrays there, Return Scrolls also cannot be used. This could also be considered a very normal situation.” Sharlyn rolled her eyes at Shi Feng when she noticed the ugly look on his face. She then smiled and continued, “Right, I forgot to ask which place you wish to go. You have three options, each of which has its own difficulties: Hell, Asura, and God. Which one do you plan on choosing?”

Upon hearing Sharlyn’s words, Shi Feng was momentarily stunned.

From what he remembered of the past, the difficulty options for promotion quests for Tier 2 and above were only Normal, Hard, and Hell Modes. There were no Asura and God Modes. This was the same even for peak classes.

As long as one was an expert player, they had a high chance of clearing a Normal Mode Tier 2 Promotion Quest as long as they had made sufficient preparations.

However, even expert players would have trouble clearing Hard Mode. Needless to say, Hell Mode was even more difficult. Shi Feng had never heard of anyone in Star-Moon Kingdom successfully conquering a Hell Mode Tier 2 promotion.

Moreover, this was only in the case of ordinary classes. The promotion quests for hidden classes were far more challenging.

Yet, now, even the lowest grade was Hell Mode.

## Chapter 1279 – Selecting Difficulty

*Sure enough, the Blade Saint class's promotion quest is quite extraordinary.* Shi Feng pondered his options.

He had attempted his Hell Mode Tier 2 promotion in the past. After all, he had been one of Shadow's top-class experts. He had been very confident in his abilities back then.

Moreover, to increase his chances of success, he had spent a lot of time collecting top-tier equipment. By the time he had challenged his Tier 2 promotion, even his most inferior piece of equipment had been Level 50 Fine-Gold rank. He had even worn two pieces of Level 50 Dark-Gold Equipment. That wasn't an easy feat. After all, after reaching Level 50, players were lucky to get their hands on Level 50 Secret-Silver Equipment, much less Level 50 Fine-Gold and Dark-Gold Equipment.

However, he hadn't expected his challenge's outcome. He hadn't even past the starting area before failing, much less completing his promotion. The Hell Mode Promotion Quest's difficulty was simply inhuman.

In this life, though, both his combat standards and his items were more powerful than they had been in the past. Hence, Shi Feng was confident in conquering Hell Mode. However, the same could not be said for Asura and God Mode. After all, he had only attempted Hell Mode before. He did not know how difficult these two modes were.

*Should I challenge God Mode?* Shi Feng wondered.

After all, he was already a Void Realm expert. He also possessed two Fragmented Legendary items and numerous Epic items. He even dared to challenge Legendary Quests. A God Mode Promotion Quest should not be a problem.

Sharlyn smiled as she watched Shi Feng and said, "You're considering challenging God Mode, right?"

Shi Feng nodded.

"Lady Sharlyn, may I know what my chances are of clearing God Mode?" Shi Feng tried asking.

He was utterly unfamiliar with the God Mode difficulty, but that wasn't the case for an NPC like Sharlyn. She might be able to offer clues that would help him prepare for what was to come.

"You really are brave. You dare ask if you have a chance of passing it." Sharlyn cast him an admiring look. Slowly, she said, "If you ask me, with your current power, you will die. It won't matter how many times you try. Just like its name suggests, God Mode is not a realm for mortals. This trial catered to the Ancient Gods. If you think that you can defeat a new God, you might have a chance of clearing God Mode."

"Defeat a new God?" Shi Feng gasped.

There were two types of Gods in God's Domain. The first was born naturally, while the second ascended to Godhood of its own power. The majority of the Gods in God's Domain consisted of the latter. As for natural-born Gods, they did not start out at Tier 6; they had to ascend from Tier 0. Only, they would not encounter a bottleneck in their growth. Even if they did nothing but breathe, they would reach Tier 6 eventually.



Moreover, even at Tier 0, natural-born Gods had extraordinary combat power. In terms of Life Rating, natural-born Gods were even superior to Dragons. Not even a Domain Realm expert could stand against such an immensely powerful being, even if both had the same level, tier, and Attributes...

Fighting any Tier 6 God required at least a full party of Tier 6 players.

“Then, what about Asura Mode?” Shi Feng asked.

“Asura Mode?” Sharlyn carefully evaluated Shi Feng. After pondering for some time, she said, “Asura Mode represents mortals’ limits. Unfortunately, you still have some time before you reach that standard. However, you might have a fighting chance with such high-quality weapons and equipment. Unfortunately, that chance isn’t very high. I’d say that you’d die nine out of ten attempts. In my opinion, you’re better off challenging Hell Mode. The trials the Ancient Gods left behind are outstanding. Passing even the easiest trial is already an impressive feat.”

*So 10%?* Shi Feng smiled bitterly.

He was 100% confident in clearing the Hell Mode promotional quest. Otherwise, he wouldn’t have challenged his promotion quest so soon. However, he never imagined that there would be such a massive gap between Hell Mode and the other two.

“Consider this carefully. You know that the more difficult your quest is, the more severe the punishments for failure will be,” Sharlyn somberly reminded Shi Feng.

“I’ve decided. I want to challenge Asura Mode!” After weighing his options for some time, Shi Feng gave his answer.

Developing in God's Domain was akin to sailing against the current; if one were not moving forward, they would drift backward.

He had already reached his limit. If he wished to improve, he needed to take risks. Challenging Hell Mode wasn't a risk; it wouldn't help him. But he couldn't choose God Mode either, as that was beyond a challenge. By choosing God Mode, he'd just be asking for a beating.

If he cleared Asura Mode, he would be handsomely rewarded. The rewards would certainly boost his development. This was why so many expert players were adamant about challenging Hard Mode and risking failure. Some experts had even gone as far as to delay their progress, challenging Hell Mode until they passed it. Otherwise, they would have a more difficult path after their promotion.

"Fine. Don't regret your decision." Sharlyn sighed. She then used the Mana Stones to form a magic array.

All 188 Mana Stones hovered in the air, creating an artificial star-scape. However, while the scene was beautiful, the pressure the seven-colored magic array radiated was terrifying. Moreover, this pressure grew as time passed.

As Sharlyn chanted her incantation's final verse, a black hole manifested in the middle of the hall. Arcs of silver lightning circled the black hole's edges, crackling. Suddenly, a pair of golden doors descended from the black hole.

Although the doors were not particularly large, roughly six meters tall, they radiated powerful Divine Might, instantly rendering Shi Feng immobile. The floor started to crack beneath the doors as if it couldn't withstand the weight. The doors began to sink.

*Impossible! This is the library!* Shi Feng was stunned.

Powerful magic arrays strengthened the library. Even Tier 4 NPCs couldn't damage the building, yet a pair of doors crushed the floor. It was clear that the floor wouldn't last long as it began to give out and crumble.

"Divine Strengthening!" Seeing this, Sharlyn quickly started to write divine runes in the air.

The divine runes merged with the ground, creating a magic array. Only after the magic array appeared did the doors stop sinking. The Divine Might filling the hall also weakened, allowing Shi Feng some freedom of movement.

However, after summoning the golden doors, Sharlyn had significantly paled. Sweat beaded on her forehead. As Sharlyn had said, it was not easy to summon these doors. This task normally required three Tier 5 magical classes to accomplish.

Once the doors stabilized, Sharlyn started chanting another incantation while she drew more divine runes. After writing over a hundred lines, she opened her eyes. Two golden magic arrays then surfaced from her eyes.

"Space-time Connection!" Sharlyn sent one line of golden runes into the doors after another.

After a minute, the doors finally started to open. Through the gap between them, Shi Feng could see a path through a silver vortex. The path itself radiated Divine Might, while the rest of the space was pitch-black. He could not see the path's end.

Shi Feng finally understood why Sharlyn had said that she could not guarantee his return once he entered the trial.

“Go, quickly. I can’t maintain it for long,” Sharlyn hurriedly commanded. Her complexion was deathly pale, and sweat covered her face.

Not daring to delay a moment longer, Shi Feng dashed into the silver vortex, vanishing.

Sharlyn slowly closed off the path. As she watched the golden doors fade, she whispered tiredly, “I pray for your success.”

Chapter 1280 – Super Treasury

*What’s going on?*

*Am I trapped inside this spatial tear?*

As Shi Feng entered the silver vortex, his surroundings remained dark. However, due to the Divine Might radiating from the path, he couldn’t move.

Normally, when he teleported to another location, even with the Seven Luminaries Ring’s Space Movement, he would reach his target two or three seconds after entering the spatial pathway.

However, looking at the system clock, Shi Feng noticed that three minutes had already passed since he stepped through the doors. He could have traveled across God’s Domain a dozen times with a spatial path by now.

“This...”

After another five minutes, Shi Feng noticed a light at the end of the path. Soon, he could faintly see mountains and rivers. He could also see beasts wandering on the ground and flying through the blue sky.

A short moment later, Shi Feng found himself on the top of a mountain.

—

System: You have discovered the Dark Canyon. While you are here, you cannot use the system communication function or Return Scrolls.

System: Asura Mode Promotion Quest activated.

Quest content: Collect Seven Luminaries Source Stones and seal Demon King Storas. Rewards unknown.

—

“Sealing a Demon King?” Shi Feng’s face twitched when he heard the system’s expressionless explanation.

Although he had known that this quest would be difficult, he hadn’t expected it to be quite *this* hard...

A Demon King was the equivalent of a Tier 5 Legendary monster. It could wipe out entire cities. Current players were no match for such power.

If Asura Mode was this difficult, it was no wonder Sharlyn had said that he would die if he challenged the God Mode Promotion Quest. If he had chosen God Mode, he would have likely died the instant he entered the quest area. However, after seeing Asura Mode with his own eyes, he knew he had no chance of completing the quest.

He was only a Tier 1 Swordsman. Even if he had a thousand copies of himself, he would be no match against a Tier 5 Demon King.

This was how God's Domain worked. The higher the tier, the greater the gap. Hence, the various large Guilds in the past had come up with all sorts of method to nurture powerful experts. During the game's later stages, quality was far more important than quantity.

A Tier 5 player was more useful to a Guild than 100,000 Tier 2 players. Not only could the Tier 5 player defend a city without help, but they could also lead teams to raid Tier 5 Legendary monsters.

Normally, one needed at least a 100-man team of Tier 3 players to raid Tier 5 monsters. Moreover, the players needed to know the monster's weak points and target them appropriately with various tools and items. Otherwise, such monsters were impossible to raid.

Asking him to deal with a Tier 5 Demon King alone was asking for the impossible.

*Fortunately, the quest content mentioned something about gathering Seven Luminaries Source Stones. Shi Feng breathed a sigh of relief after he read the quest content again carefully.*

Shi Feng knew a little about the Seven Luminaries Source Stone.

It was even more precious than the Seven Luminaries Crystal. The stored Mana was much more refined. However, unlike the Seven Luminaries Crystal, which contained every type of elemental Mana, the Seven Luminaries Source Stone was limited to one type. As a result, its usage was limited. It could only be used for special situations such as powering up certain sealing magic arrays.

*Since I've confirmed the quest contents, next up will be the search for the Seven Luminaries Source Stones.*

Shi Feng gazed down at the massive canyon below him. The canyon was poorly illuminated. However, he could hear faint roaring and sounds of battle. A tall tower had been erected in the canyon's center. This tower reached into the clouds, and it was several times taller than the mountain he currently stood on.

A large number of flying monsters circled the tower.

—

[Nine-headed Vulture] (Demonic Beast, High Lord)

Level 60

HP 30,000,000/30,000,000

—

With so many Nine-headed Vultures circling the tower, it was impossible to approach the building from above.

*Since flying isn't possible, I'll have to head down the mountain and investigate the canyon.* Shi Feng then activated Wind Rider and rapidly descended the mountain.

The mountain path leading to the peak was very narrow. There were also plenty of powerful Demonic Beasts lying in wait, hoping to ambush unsuspecting prey. Seeing this, Shi Feng sighed in relief. Fortunately, he hadn't chosen to walk down the mountain path. Otherwise, he would have fallen into these Demonic Beasts' trap and died.

After Shi Feng dove into the canyon's depths, silence and darkness wrapped around him.

Although he hadn't seen it from the mountaintop, the darkness hid a large courtyard, in the heart of which stood the tower. From above, Shi Feng spotted all kinds of high-tiered Demonic Beasts roaming the courtyard. Some of these Demonic Beasts even fought each other for territory.

"Hm?"

As soon as Shi Feng entered the massive courtyard shrouded in darkness, he felt his body grow heavy. At the same time, Wind Rider's effect was forcefully removed, and he plummeted. The gravity acting on his body grew stronger as he neared the ground.



Fortunately, Shi Feng had the Ring of Gravity. Activating Gravity Liberation, he freed himself from the pull. The speed of his fall also decreased. In the end, he landed on the courtyard's stone tiles safely without attracting the surrounding monsters' attention.

—

System: You have discovered the Moonlight Courtyard.

—

"The Moonlight Courtyard?" Shi Feng was stunned when he heard the system notification. "So, this is where the rumored Moonlight Courtyard is located."

The Moon God had built this courtyard. The Moon God loved gardening, as well as alchemical and magic array research. For example, the Moon Drip magic array was one of the Moon God's creations. It could break any curse in the world.

Meanwhile, the Moon God had frequently used the Moonlight Courtyard to conduct research.

"Sure enough, Sharlyn did not trick me. I should be able to find a few God Crystals." A hint of excitement flashed in Shi Feng's eyes as he read the system notification.

As the Moon God's favored research location, there were bound to be many items the Moon God had left behind. Regardless of how powerful these items were, they would contain divine power if the Moon God had used them frequently, and could be used in place of God Crystals. In any case, he needed the

God Crystals to feed to the Soul Orb. If he came across a powerful treasure, he would reluctantly absorb it with the Soul Orb.

Following which, Shi Feng stealthily moved through the courtyard.

There were plenty of powerful monsters in the courtyard, and even the weakest among them was a Level 60 Chieftain. To avoid trouble, Shi Feng activated Omniscient Eyes to deal with his visibility problem and an Invisibility Potion to remain undetected.

With his current strength, Shi Feng had no problems against a Level 60-plus Chieftain in a one-on-one fight.

However, as soon as the battle began, the commotion would attract the attention of nearby monsters. If that happened, only death would await him. As for using Instantaneous Movement Magic Scrolls and Skills like Space Movement, Shi Feng had already tested them and found that he had access to none of them. In addition, this area barred flight. If he were surrounded, he would die. He needed to be very careful.

After wandering around the courtyard for over two hours, Shi Feng finally got through the courtyard's outer area and entered the middle ground between the outer and inner areas.

*The inner area is so luxurious!* Shi Feng wore a wistful expression as he gazed at the distant inner area.

He could spot a herb garden in the inner area. Although the herb garden had existed since ancient times, due to magic arrays and divine ruins bolstering the garden, all of the herbs were healthy.

Unfortunately, the Demonic Beasts were eating these herbs. Shi Feng noticed that many of the plants had already been devoured. Furious, Shi Feng even considered cooking these Demonic Beasts for his own meal.

It would've been fine if the beasts had only devoured the ordinary herbs, but the garden also contained super-rare herbs such as the Flower of Life. The Flower of Life had a similar effect to the Water of Life and could heal an NPC of all their injuries. Shi Feng could also see Exotic Grass, which could dispel the majority of God's Domain's curses.

Even in herb-rich kingdoms and empires, one would be hard-pressed to find these kinds of herbs, and unfortunately, no one knew how to grow them either.

Yet, these extraordinarily precious herbs were nothing but food for the area's Demonic Beasts. It was no wonder why the Demonic Beasts here were so fat.

"Hm? Moonlight Fruit?!" Shi Feng suddenly noticed a tree that was roughly 30 meters tall. Hanging from the silver tree's branches, Shi Feng noticed a translucent fruit. When he saw this translucent fruit, his heart began to pound.

In the past, the Moonlight Fruit had sold at one of the superpowers' auctions. After that auction, not a single player throughout God's Domain had forgotten the fruit's name. However, this wasn't because the fruit had sold for an astronomical price. Rather, it was due to the fruit's effects. When consumed, the Moonlight Fruit would permanently improve a player's physique.