

Strongest

Chapter 1421 – Dragon’s Graveyard

As Zhao Yueru descended from the stage, the waiting participants instinctively stepped aside, opening a path for her.

They had heard that she had killed a Dark Player twice after some Dark Guild had provoked her, dealing a heavy blow to the Guild.

While experts like themselves had assumed that had been a joke, they’d have to rein in their courage to stop trembling if Zhao Yueru even glanced their way. They had to be careful around her. Should they accidentally annoy the woman, they might die the moment they left the city.

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“The Flame Witch is too awesome! She might even secure one of the top ten spots!”

“Top ten? More like top five! The combination of that Lord ranked monster and the large-scale destruction Spell is invincible in a duel! Only a handful of participants may be able to close in on the Flame Witch before she activates the combination attack. Aside from those few, she can likely blast everyone to smithereens.”

“The Frost Empress was pretty unlucky this time. If she hadn’t come across the Flame Witch, she might’ve ranked among the top 15, yet now she won’t even stand among the top 50...”

“With the Flame Witch on Zero Wing’s side, Zero Wing should get a spot among the top five Guild rankings.”

Unlike the participants below the stage, the audience in the stands fell into a heated discussion about Zhao Yueru. They were all curious to see what the woman’s rank would be in this competition. As for Yi Luofei, who had been defeated, they couldn’t help but lament for her misfortune.

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“Damn it! Why did things end up like this?!” Crimson Fox cursed as he watched Zhao Yueru step down from the main stage. “To think they’ve hidden a trump card like Zhao Yueru all this time! Zero Wing is quite cunning!”

“Guild Leader, what should we do now?” Lonely Castle, the Shield Warrior beside Crimson Fox, asked anxiously.

The higher one ranked in the competition, the more points they would receive. Moreover, the point scale was steep.

Players that ranked between 1,000th and 501st would receive 5 points. Players’ points would double if they ranked between 500th and 249th, increasing to 10 points.

Meanwhile, players that made it to the third round would be awarded 20 points, 50 points if they reached the fourth round and 100 points for the fifth round.

Although both experts Nine Dragons Emperor had sent to assist Crimson Castle had made it to the fifth round, Nine Dragons Emperor had stated that the two players would be lucky to make it into the top 16, the seventh round. Reaching the seventh round only awarded 300 points, yet if Zhao Yueru ranked among the top four players, she would receive 600 points. Her points alone were more than the total those two experts could earn. If Zhao Yueru were lucky and made it into the finals, she would be awarded 1,000 points. She could earn more points than Crimson Castle's five representatives together...

"For now, hand the Epic items Nine Dragons Emperor loaned us to those two experts. Our priority is to ensure that both reach the seventh round. As for Zero Wing, it is still unknown whether or not Zhao Yueru makes it to the semi-finals. If she encounters one of those few melee experts, she could lose. If she faces Yan Tianxing, her success will immediately come to a halt," Crimson Fox said as he glanced at Yan Tianxing, FFF's commander.

Before Yi Luofei had risen to prominence, the FFF adventurer team had stood at the top in the Black Dragon Empire due to Yan Tianxing. Even before God's Domain launched, Yan Tianxing had been a famous peak expert in the virtual gaming world for many years. Now, he was the number two Assassin in the Black Dragon Empire.

Hell Prison, who had attempted to assassinate Yi Luofei, only ranked fourth on the Black Dragon Empire's Assassin ranking list.

Hell Prison alone was capable of rendering the empire's various large Guilds helpless. Meanwhile, Yan Tianxing was even more powerful than the Assassin. Hence, the empire's Guilds feared and respected the FFF adventurer team.

"Understood." Lonely Castle saw the reasoning in Crimson Fox's words. Although it was possible that Zhao Yueru could rank among the top five, it was only a possibility. If she were unlucky, she might encounter an expert that could counter her combat method in the next round and eliminate her.

Unfortunately, while Crimson Fox's hope was nice, the reality was far from it. As the competition progressed, Zhao Yueru secured impressive victories during her sixth and seventh matches, making her way into the quarter-finals. She was only one round away from ranking among the top four competitors.

In contrast, Crimson Castle's progress halted in the seventh round. In the end, the Guild only racked up 630 points.

With that score, Crimson Castle could easily rank among the Black Dragon Empire's top ten Guilds. To Crimson Castle, it was a result worth celebrating. However, Crimson Fox, Crimson Castle's Guild Leader, felt no joy. After all, as long as Zhao Yueru won her next match, Crimson Castle's fate in Hidden Fog Town would meet its end.

If Crimson Castle couldn't take control of Hidden Fog Town, the threat it posed to Zero Wing would decrease drastically. If that happened, Nine Dragons Emperor would turn away from the Guild. Without Nine Dragons Emperor's support, Crimson Castle's dream of becoming a first-rate Guild would remain a dream. After all, Crimson Castle was relatively weak among the second-rate Guilds. A titan like the Dragon-Phoenix Pavilion only offered support due to its threat to Zero Wing.

Please, don't let her pass! Crimson Fox silently prayed as he watched the screen above the stage.

At the end of each round, the system would randomly generate pairings for the new fight.

Seeing the player IDs flicker on the virtual screen, Crimson Fox's heart began to pound.

Once the quarter-finals' pairings were determined, he was ecstatic.

"Wonderful! The heavens haven't forsaken Crimson Castle!" Crimson Fox was overjoyed when he saw that the first match was a fight between Zhao Yueru and Yan Tianxing.

As long as Crimson Castle won its bet with Zero Wing, its status as a first-rate Guild was guaranteed.

A first-rate Guild! Countless Guilds dreamed of achieving such glory.

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“The Flame Witch is in danger now. Yan Tianxing ranks second among Assassins and is known for his speed. The Flame Witch won’t be able to execute her combination attack so easily against him.”

“Even if the Flame Witch loses, she’ll have nothing to be ashamed of. After all, she has a class disadvantage.”

“But Yan Tianxing’s win isn’t certain. It isn’t so easy to close in on an Elementalist who can triple-casting. If his timing isn’t right when he closes in on the Flame Witch, he might die instantly. The Flame Witch’s damage is no laughing matter. She even instant-killed a Shield Warrior with full HP and Shield Wall active. Killing a glass cannon like Yan Tianxing would be a piece of cake for her.”

Everyone cheered and chatted as they watched Zhao Yueru and Yan Tianxing approach to the main stage.

As the timer above the main stage began to count down, Yan Tianxing turned towards Zero Wing’s VIP room and announced, “Guild Leader Black Flame, this humble man has heard that your Guild intends to auction adventure houses in Stone Forest Town! If I win this match, would you allocate a slot for the FFF adventurer team? Of course, if I lose, I will hand over 10,000 Magic Crystals and a treasure map for the Dragon’s Graveyard!”

When Yan Tianxing finished speaking, the venue fell silent, dumbfounded by his bet.

Everyone's first reaction was to question his intentions.

Shouldn't he be trying to avenge Yi Luofei? Shouldn't he have made some valiant remark about defeating Zhao Yueru?

Yet, the FFF's commander, one of the Black Dragon Empire's famous top adventurer teams, had just publicly declared his intention of garrisoning in Stone Forest Town...

Garrisoning in Stone Forest Town wouldn't have been overly surprising. A top adventurer team occupying a Guild Town was always good news for the Guild, yet based on Yan Tianxing's request, it seemed as if the right to garrison in Stone Forest Town was extremely precious. He had even bet 10,000 Magic Crystals and a treasure map for the right!. The treasure map he had gambled was even related to the Dragon's Graveyard! This was just ludicrous!

Chapter 1422 – Forbidden Land's Treasure

"What's going on?"

"Has Yan Tianxing lost his mind?"

“If I recall correctly, Stone Forest Town has a relatively effective Battle Arena. Some of the top ranking participants in the previous competition had gone there as well. But what’s so good about the town?”

“Does he really have to go this far? Isn’t it just a Guild town? FFF is one of the top five adventurer teams in our empire. Even first-rate Guilds would beg FFF to occupy their towns. I’m pretty sure FFF can gain access to Stone Forest Town just by asking.”

“What? Don’t you know? Many experts are trying to train in Stone Forest Town’s Battle Arena. I’ve heard that the advanced combat rooms are super amazing. They can create a perfect replica of the player that enters the room. The replica can even execute all of the player’s Skills and Spells at 100% Completion Rate. Those rooms are more effective than fighting an expert of the same caliber.”

“That’s right. Firecloud Fox’s Remnant Cloud and Graceful Moon visited Stone Forest Town’s Battle Arena and used the advanced combat rooms multiple times. Both managed to rank among the top 500 in this competition. Their performance was significantly more impressive than last time. Remnant Cloud’s combat power has improved so much that he even beat his old rivals.”

“Stone Forest Town doesn’t only have its Battle Arena. It also has an Advanced Auction House with a built-in bartering function. Due to the Battle Arena and the Advanced Auction House, Stone Forest Town has become Star-Moon Kingdom’s undisputed number one Guild town.”

“I’ve heard about that, too. Many top and well-known adventurer teams in Star-Moon Kingdom and several neighboring kingdoms are trying to garrison in Stone Forest Town. Unfortunately, Zero Wing only plans to open five adventurer houses to the public. The various adventurer teams are frantically collecting funds. When the time comes, the competition for those adventurer houses will be intense. Though, it is surprising that even an adventurer team like FFF is interested in the town.”

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For a time, many people, both in and outside of the arena, discussed Zero Wing's Stone Forest Town. Many of the empire's players began to gain some understanding of the Guild town.

When the advanced combat rooms, in particular, came up in conversation, many expert players' eyes shown with excitement.

Players were more interested in improving their Skill Completion Rates than fighting experts of the same caliber. Most layers of their standards plateaued around 80% Skill Completion Rates. Only after achieving an 85% Skill Completion Rate could they truly exert 100% of their Skill's power and effects.

Now that they knew they had an opportunity to improve their Skill Completion Rates, why would they ignore it?

While the players in the spectator stands discussed Stone Forest Town, the various Guilds' upper echelons in the VIP rooms glared at Yan Tianxing.

"Has Yan Tianxing lost his mind?! He's using the Dragon's Graveyard's treasure map as a wager! Doesn't he know what the Dragon's Graveyard is?!" When the upper echelons heard the proposed bet, their eyes became bloodshot with anger.

While the majority of the Black Dragon Empire's Guilds didn't know about the Dragon's Graveyard, first- and second-rate Guilds such as theirs had investigated the area. Naturally, they had some understanding of the treasure map.

One of the reasons for the Black Dragon Empire's names was the Dragon's Graveyard within its territory. According to legend, the Dragon's Graveyard had been home to the Black Dragon tribe. However, for some unknown reason, that location had become a Dragon graveyard.

Dragons were known for their love of treasure. Needless to say, Dragons' habitats would contain unimaginable treasures. Although the Black Dragon Empire had embarked on several expeditions into the Dragon's Graveyard, the empire had eventually given up on the map and labeled it a forbidden land due to the severe losses it suffered during such expeditions.

If one had a treasure map for the area, they could gain frightening wealth. To solidify this assumption, their Guilds had secured an astonishing bounty after exploring the Dragon's Graveyard's outer region.

Upon reaching Level 50, drop-rates from monsters decreased drastically. The quality of dropped weapons and equipment also decreased. When killing Level 50 Great Lords, players generally only obtained a single piece of Level 50 Mysterious-Iron Equipment. However, it was a different story in the Dragon's Graveyard as its Level 50 Great Lords dropped Level 50 Secret-Silver Equipment.

Meanwhile, a treasure map was akin to a Treasure Chest, but unlike Treasure Chests, players had to hunt down their prize after obtaining the map. Fortunately, the extra step meant greater rewards. Treasure maps weren't differentiated by rank, either. Rather, the value of a treasure map was based on the danger of its location.

As a forbidden land, the Dragon's Graveyard's treasure map would likely lead to more than one Epic item.

Why wouldn't they be jealous?

The only problem was the graveyard's severe environment. Upon entering the map, players' combat power would fall below 10%. Players would also find it difficult to activate Tier 1 Skills and Spells. Generally, they were limited to Tier 0 abilities. Players had to pay a hefty price to deal with a Level 50 Great Lord. Furthermore, Great Lord ranked monsters were common in the Dragon's Graveyard. There were also quite a few Grand Lords.

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Commander? Yi Luofei, who watched from below the main stage, stared at Yan Tianxing with confusion. *Did you really have to expose that item just for an adventurer house?*

The FFF adventurer team had been on many adventures. It had uncovered many opportunities as well. Among the various opportunities, the greatest had been their acquisition of an Epic ranked item called the True Orb from an ancient ruin. With this orb, Yan Tianxing even had a high chance of defeating the Black Dragon Empire's number one Assassin.

They had obtained the Dragon's Graveyard's treasure map from a Dark Gold Treasure Chest in the same ruin. One could just imagine how valuable it was.

Yi Luofei couldn't understand Yan Tianxing's decision. Even if their adventurer team wanted to occupy Stone Forest Town, they could compete for the opportunity in the auction. With the FFF adventurer team's financial strength, they were likely to win a slot. This gamble was just unnecessary.

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"Guild Leader, the Dragon's Graveyard is a super-large-scale map in the Black Dragon Empire with extremely abundant resources. The treasures in the area are extraordinary. However, due to the harsh environment, most large Guilds have struggled to pioneer the map," Gentle Snow explained.

“Yan Tianxing is quite generous.” Shi Feng could not help but laugh. “He must know that the competition for the garrison slots is going to be intense. But by using the treasure map as bait to convince me to agree to the bet, isn’t he worried about losing it?”

Naturally, no one in God’s Domain understood the Dragon’s Graveyard better than him.

According to his memories, there were a total of three treasure maps for the Dragon’s Graveyard, which corresponded to the outer region, the inner region, and the map’s core, respectively. Meanwhile, the treasures in each of these areas were better than the last. The wealth one could gain in the outer region was the equivalent of several Dark-Gold Treasure Chests.

It was rumored that the items one could find in the inner region were the equivalent of two or three Epic Treasure Chests. As for the core, the treasures there were the equivalent of one or two Inferior Legendary Treasure Chests.

Although Shi Feng had no idea of which treasure map Yan Tianxing possessed, the items in the outer region were already hard to come by, much less those in the inner and core regions.

“Since he wants to gamble, I have no reason to reject his offer.” Shi Feng then contacted Zhao Yueru and ordered, “Agree to the bet.”

“Understood.” Zhao Yueru nodded.

“This match is very important. You don’t need to hold back,” Shi Feng added.

“Can I really use that move?” Zhao Yueru was confused. However, a hint of anticipation flashed in her eyes. Before the competition had begun, Shi Feng had forbidden her from using all of her strength in

battle. His reasoning was very simple. Every additional trump card she had was an advantage. Their priorities in this competition were to defeat Crimson Castle and earn enough points to rank among the top three Guilds in the Black Dragon Empire.

“Yes. He is very strong. If you hold back, you might lose,” Shi Feng confirmed.

Hearing that she could go all-out, Zhao Yueru’s eyes sparkled with excitement as she shifted her gaze towards Yan Tianxing.

“My Guild Leader has agreed to your conditions so long as you don’t regret making them later on,” Zhao Yueru said, smiling.

“I have never gone back on my word before. Besides, I made the bet in front of so many people,” Yan Tianxing responded, smiling. “Since we have an agreement, let us begin.”

Saying so, Yan Tianxing activated his Berserk Skill and vanished as if he had never existed in the first place.

Chapter 1423 – Flame Witch

The instant Yan Tianxing activated Stealth and disappeared, Zhao Yueru summoned the Lord ranked Frostflame Cheetah beside her. She then proceeded to double-speed-cast.

Tier 1 Spell, Flame Orb!

Tier 1 Spell, Flame Rain!

Both Spells were AOE attacks and among the best Zhao Yueru had to locate a stealthed Assassin.

As long as a player could reveal an Assassin, the stealthed player's combat power would decrease by half. An Assassin's most powerful advantage was its assassination capabilities. The first strike was particularly powerful. In a confrontation, however, they were even weaker than Berserkers and Swordsmen.

In the blink of an eye, a sea of fire swept across Yan Tianxing's previous location.

But even after the two Spells decimated the stage, the Assassin was nowhere to be seen.

"The Flame Witch reacted so quickly, but she still couldn't expose Yan Tianxing! How fast is he?!"

"As expected of the second-ranked Assassin in the empire. His concealment technique is amazing. Despite seeing him the moment he disappeared, I still can't lock onto his aura."

"I even activated Enhanced Five Senses, yet I can't detect him either."

The participants below the stage were shocked as they watched the sea of fire engulf the stage.

By the time the match began, Zhao Yueru had already begun casting her Spells. There had only been a two-second delay before her attacks struck Yan Tianxing's starting location, yet neither AOE had revealed the Assassin.

What shocked these players even more was the man's concealment technique.

The magic barrier around the main stage contained attacks within. Meanwhile, Observation and Perception Skills wouldn't be affected.

Despite the waiting participants activating their Perception Skills, no one could detect Yan Tianxing. This was the first time they had encountered such a situation. These Skill's specific purpose was to counter the Stealth Skill.

Zhao Yueru had also activated her own Perception Skill, which allowed her to detect all stealthed players within a 40-yard radius.

Generally, if magical-class player allowed a stealthed Assassin to ambush them, they'd die instantly. Only plate armor classes with high HP and Defense could survive an Assassin's first barrage.

She could not allow her opponent to close in.

"A futile struggle." Yi Luofei, who stood below the stage, smiled as she watched Zhao Yueru.

The True Orb Yan Tianxing had obtained improved Assassins' strength tremendously. The commander wouldn't have challenged Shadow Light, the number one Assassin in the Black Dragon Empire, without it. Not even the Dragon-Phoenix Pavilion could do anything against that man.

Meanwhile, one of the True Orb's effects increased stealth related Skills by 100%. This halved the effectiveness of other players' perception-related Skills. As a result, Perception Skills with a 40-yard range would only detect Yan Tianxing when he was within 20 yards.

Although the difference was only 20 yards, it could determine whether or not a player died. Within that range, Assassins could use Shadow Steps, appearing directly behind a player.

Yan Tianxiang quietly circled to 25 yards behind Zhao Yueru, but he didn't rush in to attack.

Although Shadow Steps allowed him to appear behind Zhao Yueru instantly, Zhao Yueru was an Elementalist. If she reacted quickly enough, she could use an Invulnerability Skill or Blink to escape. He needed to find her blind spot, leaving her no opportunity to defend herself.

However, Zhao Yueru was no greenhorn. Every player had weak points and blind spots, and it was especially true for their backs. Hence, Zhao Yueru had stationed the Frostflame Cheetah behind her. Not only would this hinder Yan Tianxing's vision and boost her defense, but she could also launch a powerful counterattack on the off chance Yan Tianxing attacked or stunned her.

For a time, all anyone could see was Zhao Yueru standing in the center of the stage with the Frostflame Cheetah watching her back as she launched one Tier 0 Spell after another.

Meanwhile, Yan Tianxing continued to circle his opponent, searching for an opportunity to strike.

After nearly three minutes, Yan Tianxing could not help but admire Zhao Yueru's tenacity. The Elementalist left him no openings. The Frostflame Cheetah, in particular, posed a huge problem.

It seems that I'll have to use that move. Yan Tianxing smiled bitterly as he examined Zhao Yueru's impeccable defense.

Suddenly, Yan Tianxing split into two identical copies with the same Attributes. The two clones were impossible to differentiate. Both copies remained Stealthed.

This move was one of the True Orb's Skills, True Phantom. It allowed the user to summon a doppelganger that had 100% of the player's Attributes and every skill the user had learned. The Skill had a three-minute duration. If either the doppelganger or the main body survived the duration, the user would as well.

When Yan Tianxing had activated True Phantom, Zhao Yueru had ceased her bombardment. Taking a deep breath, she examined her surroundings.

"Since you don't want to come out, I'll force you to!" Zhao Yueru waved Frostflame's Wrath.

With Zhao Yueru as the center, a translucent barrier ballooned outward. In the blink of an eye, the barrier enveloped a radius of 100 yards, half of the stage.

This was Frostflame's Wrath's second Active Skill, Frostflame Space. When activated, its effects would resemble that of a Domain.

Yan Tianxing immediately felt his Attributes decrease. In the blink of an eye, he only had 70% of his total Attributes remaining. In contrast, Zhao Yueru's aura had grown significantly more powerful.

“What?!” Yi Luofei stared at his enemy in shock.

Suddenly, two more Zhao Yueru appeared on the stage. One of them wore flaming-red robes, while the other was clad in icy-blue. These two doppelgangers possessed 100% of the caster’s Attributes, and both radiated a terrifying aura of their own.

“Die!”

Yan Tianxing quickly realized how severe his situation was. If Zhao Yueru and her two doppelgangers bombarded the stage randomly, they would find him. Immediately, Yan Tianxing responded with Shadow Steps, appearing behind Zhao Yueru’s real body. He thrust his silver daggers towards the woman’s head and back. His actions were utterly silent and without a hint of killing intent.

So fast! Despite her five senses pushed to their limits, the Flame Witch only noticed that she was under attack after the Assassin’s daggers were moving.

However, when Yan Tianxing’s daggers were only an inch away from reaching Zhao Yueru, the latter vanished and reappeared 15 yards away.

Close one! Zhao Yueru breathed a sigh of relief as she saw Yan Tianxing, whose figure had finally appeared. If not for this being a match and her heightened senses, she would’ve fallen prey to the man’s daggers.

However, as soon as relaxed her guard a little, another Yan Tianxing appeared behind her.

Tier 1 Taboo Skill, Hidden Blade!

The Yan Tianxing vanished again before immediately reappearing before the Elementalist. Before Zhao Yueru could react, six black shadows flew towards Zhao Yueru's heart, each attack dealing over -30,000 damage. The woman's HP instantly plummeted to zero.

"What?!" Everyone in the arena was dumbfounded when they saw Zhao Yueru hit the ground.

Who could possibly avoid such an attack?

Despite everyone's belief that the match was over, the bell never signified its end. Unexpectedly, Zhao Yueru's doppelgangers smiled from beside her 'real' body. Both responded by waving their staffs.

Chapter 1424 – Cataclysmic Spell

"She's not dead?!"

"This is a lie, right?! Didn't he kill her main body?!"

When the two Zhao Yueru's raised their staffs on the stage, the audience looked as if they had seen a ghost. When they saw the clones' smiles, chills crawled down their backs, and they couldn't help the thought that she really was a witch.

God's Domain had many Doppelganger Skills to offer, but they had never heard of one that allowed the doppelgangers to continue moving after the main body had died.

"Impossible! Could she also..." Yi Luofei's stared at the Elementalist clones in red and blue in shock.

The situation had also caught Yan Tianxing off guard.

Two magic arrays appeared behind each of the two Zhao Yuerus and immediately, the ice- and fire-type Mana on the stage went berserk as it formed a tornado of frost and flame. Like a whale inhaling water, the four magic arrays devoured the Mana.

Four walls of ice trapped the Assassin clone that had killed Zhao Yueru's original body. At the same time, flames emerged from the ground and swept down from the sky, completing Yan Tianxing's confinement.

Without warning, the Frostflame Cheetah pounced on the other Yan Tianxing. Since the man had already left Stealth, his combat power had decreased by half. Although the Frostflame Cheetah couldn't kill Yan Tianxing, it was more than enough to distract him for a moment.

Realizing the danger he was in, Yan Tianxing hurriedly controlled his copy within the walls of ice and used Wind Steps, taking advantage of the brief invulnerability effect the Skill provided to block Zhao Yueru's fire Spell. He then used Shadow Assault on an ice wall in an attempt to break free from the Frost Barrier.

Yet, before his two daggers could reach the Frost Barrier, an Ice Wall appeared and blocked his weapons' advance.

When his daggers struck on the Ice Wall, they merely cracked it; they did not shatter the barrier. If he wanted to shatter the Ice Wall, he would need to attack again.

Although Ice Wall was only a Tier 0 Spell, it was as strong as a Tier 1 Spell due to Frostflame's Wrath's buff. Ordinary players couldn't even shatter a Tier 0 Ice Wall easily, much less a Tier 1 Ice Wall. Although Yan Tianxing was a peak expert, at the end of the day, the Assassin class didn't specialize in Strength. If he were a peak Berserker expert, however, he might have a chance of shattering a Tier 1 Ice Wall with a single attack.

After Wind Steps' brief invulnerability ended, Yan Tianxing reluctantly activated Vanish before shattering the Ice Wall before him. But Zhao Yueru had no intention of letting the man escape. Without chants or runes, she cast another Ice Wall to block Yan Tianxing's path.

Vanish only provided 1 second of invulnerability. When that second ended, the flame-type Zhao Yueru threw two Tier 1 fire Spells into the Frost Barrier.

Without any Invulnerability Skills left and his Shadow Steps still on Cooldown, Yan Tianxing had nothing left to counter the incoming fire Spells. In addition, the Flame Witch's two Spells were AOE's and impossible to block with his weapons.

As a result, the two flame Spells, enhanced by Frostflame's Wrath to Tier 2 Spells, killed the Yan Tianxing in the Frost Barrier instantly. Now, only the Yan Tianxing the Frostflame Cheetah had pinned down remained.

"What a brutish way to fight!"

"Crap! Wouldn't this be considered quadruple-casting?!"

“The Flame Witch is invincible!”

The way Zhao Yueru fought stunned the audience. Her two doppelgangers could actually double-cast! It wasn't much different than if she had cast four Spells simultaneously. Moreover, all four Spells were under her full control. To make matters worse, all four Spells were overwhelmingly powerful.

“A doppelganger?” Zhao Yueru muttered as she watched the Yan Tianxing in the Frost Barrier disappear before turning to the Assassin retreating from her. Revealing a smile, she muttered, “Do you think you're safe just because you put some distance between us?”

Immediately, Zhao Yueru's ice- and fire-type doppelgangers began to double-cast again.

With Yuan Tianxing's speed, he'd be difficult to trap with Frost Barrier again. Hence, Zhao Yueru didn't use the same approach. Instead, she switched to Tier 1 Spells that focused on crowds.

In the next moment, over 70 fire arrows, fireballs, ice spears, and ice arrows formed behind the doppelgangers. These Spells then flew towards their target.

“This...” Everyone fell silent as they watched the ice- and fire-type Spells fill the sky.

Moreover, Zhao Yueru's control over these Spells was exceptionally precise. Despite Yan Tianxing moving so quickly that he left behind afterimages, most of the Elementalist's spells struck the Assassin. As a result, Yan Tianxing was forced to block the incoming attacks with his weapons and had no choice but to use Wind Steps to defend himself.

However, while Yan Tianxing's speed was astonishing to ordinary players, to Zhao Yueru, whose physique had improved by 50% thanks to Frostflame Space, Yan Tianxing wasn't particularly fast. At best, he was only as fast as an ordinary expert. She had no issues landing her attacks.

Meanwhile, the Agility-specialized Assassins couldn't easily block Spells with Tier 2 power. Yan Tianxing's HP fell with each hit he took. It was only a matter of time before his opponent carved it all away.

As they watched, the participants below the stage felt goosebumps cover their skin.

How was this a one-on-one fight? It wasn't any different than facing a 20-man magical team's bombardment.

Who could survive such ruthless attacks?

In the past, these players had assumed that the Assassin class countered magical classes, but Zhao Yueru had destroyed that idea.

She had actually hidden her strength during our fight? Frustration and rage burned in Yi Luofei's gaze as she glared at Zhao Yueru.

She wasn't particularly frustrated about her defeat. After all, she had suffered countless losses before becoming famous, but this was the first time she had met someone who could best her while hiding so much of their prowess. Moreover, she and her opponent were nearly the same age...

On the stage, Yan Tianxing struggled to hold on and was forced to use Vanish, disappearing again.

If Zhao Yueru discovered him before his Skills' Cooldowns finished, now that he had used his trump card, he'd be powerless against the woman's attacks. However, if he could stay hidden until his Skills were available again, he could turn the battle around.

"I've been waiting for you to use this move!" Despite her opponent vanishing, Zhao Yueru didn't panic. She licked her lips playfully as she said, "Let's put an end to this match!"

If the main body died after she used Frostflame Space, she wouldn't be able to use any of her weapon or equipment's Skills; she could only use the Skills and Spells she had learned. However, the ice- and fire-type doppelgangers didn't have that restriction. They even had Spells she didn't.

The most powerful of these Spells was the Combination Spell, Frostflame Oblivion. Frostflame Oblivion was a Curse that was one tier more powerful than its user, though its power could not exceed Tier 5. Upon using Frostflame Oblivion, the Frostflame Space would disappear.

As Zhao Yueru was a Tier 1 player, Frostflame Oblivion had the power of a Tier 2 Curse.

Zhao Yueru's doppelgangers chanted an incantation in unison while moving towards their target's previous location.

As they did, golden divine runes began to appear across Frostflame Space's translucent barrier, illuminating the arena. The area's ambient Mana decreased rapidly as it flowed into Frostflame Space. This increased the Mana density inside the barrier to a frightening level.

The spectators outside of the main stage squirmed uncomfortably as the venue's Mana density decreased.

“What kind of Spell is that?”

“What is she trying to do?”

Although the audience didn't understand the Elementalist's actions, goosebumps covered their bodies. It felt as if Armageddon were coming for them. Moreover, this feeling grew as time passed.

Meanwhile, Yan Tianxing felt the sensation intensely from inside the Frostflame Space.

“She couldn't be...” A possibility suddenly dawned on Yan Tianxing. Immediately, he dashed towards Zhao Yueru.

Sadly, he was already too late. The ice- and fire-type doppelgangers only needed two seconds to cast Frostflame Oblivion. By the time Yan Tianxing had felt that something was amiss, the two doppelgangers had channeled the Spell for over a second. The Assassin could never cross 50 yards and launch an attack in that time.

“Let's end this!”

Both doppelgangers pointed their Frostflame's Wraths towards the sky as a pillar of fire and a pillar of cold air shot upward, striking the magic barrier. Suddenly, the Frostflame Space cracked as the horrific power of ice and fire annihilated everything within the space.

Yan Tianxing was obliterated.

Cracks continued to spread across the barrier. The area within Frostflame Space only calmed after five seconds. Nothing was left. Yan Tianxing, the Frostflame Cheetah, and Zhao Yueru's doppelgangers... They all disappeared.

However, after the Frostflame Space faded, Zhao Yueru's main body reformed on the stage.

At the same time, the bell signifying the end of the match rang, while the large screen above the stage displayed the victor.

Zhao Yueru!

Chapter 1425 – Number One Elementalist

When Zhao Yueru's name appeared on the screen above the main stage, the venue fell silent as everyone turned to the Elementalist incredulously.

They wouldn't have been so shocked if Zhao Yueru had simply defeated Yan Tianxing.

But the woman had displayed overwhelmingly destructive power. If she were capable of disintegrating everything within a 100-yard radius of herself, who could ever challenge her in a one-on-one PvP match?

“With that terrifying Spell, who could possibly stand up against the Flame Witch?!”

“Crap! She beat the second-ranked Assassin just like that? Is she an NPC?”

“With such frightening strength and Spells, the Flame Witch won’t have any issues winning the championship.”

“That’s right! Even if she doesn’t win, she should rank first on the empire’s Elementalist ranking list. I never thought that Zero Wing had an expert like this. No wonder Zero Wing had become Star-Moon Kingdom’s overlord. I’m sure it won’t be long before Zero Wing joins the ranks of first-rate Guilds in the Black Dragon Empire.”

...

Zhao Yueru had inspired shock and awe in the crowd. With such an AOE powerhouse, other Guilds would have to think twice before starting a war with Zero Wing in the fields.

Zhao Yueru’s firepower alone could likely rival that of a 100-man expert team.

...

“We lost?” Crimson Fox stared at Zhao Yueru in a daze. At this point, he truly regretted challenging Shi Feng to a bet. He hadn’t imagined that Zero Wing had hidden a trump card like Zhao Yueru.

Now, Crimson Castle had lost all hope of obtaining Hidden Fog Town. Meanwhile, Zero Wing would become Lake Heart City's undisputed overlord once it secured the town. Even with Nine Dragons Emperor's support, Crimson Castle could never compete with Zero Wing.

"Guild Leader, are we really going to give up on Hidden Fog Town?" Lonely Castle asked, reluctance coloring his face.

"Give up?" Crimson Fox shook his head as he suddenly thought of an idea. Sneering, he said, "While it is true that Crimson Castle has to give up on capturing Hidden Fog Town, that doesn't mean that other Guilds cannot try. Notify the other Guilds immediately and tell them to prepare the necessary manpower. Although we cannot offer any of our forces, we can supply information, weapons, equipment, and siege tools."

"Understood." Lonely Castle smiled as he listened to Crimson Fox's plan.

Hidden Fog Town wouldn't be easy to raid. Even if Crimson Castle couldn't act, they could keep the town out of Zero Wing's hands if several third-rate Guilds worked together with the support of Crimson Castle's items and information. If they succeeded, Nine Dragons Empire wouldn't forsake their Guild.

As long as they retained the man's support, Crimson Castle could develop into a first-rate Guild eventually.

...

After resurrecting below the stage, Yan Tianxing glanced at Zero Wing's VIP room.

“Commander...” Yi Luofei was at a loss for words as she looked at Yan Tianxing, who wore a bitter smile. It was obvious that he had valued Stone Forest Town’s garrison rights. Unfortunately, not only had he failed to obtain that right, but he had also lost 10,000 Magic Crystals and the Dragon’s Graveyard’s treasure map.

“I had thought that this was an opportunity, but Zero Wing really is as unfathomable as the rumors say,” Yan Tianxing said as he shook his head dejectedly. He then smiled as he continued, “It seems that we’ll have to see to some more preparations.”

“Commander, why is Zero Wing’s Stone Forest Town so important to you? It is just a town in a small kingdom. How could it possibly be any better than Super Guilds’ towns? With our team’s strength, we shouldn’t have any problems occupying one of their towns. Why should we bother with Stone Forest Town’s five garrison slots?” Yi Luofei was astonished. She had been flabbergasted when he had sent her to compete for a private house in Stone Forest Town. Now, Yan Tianxing was adamant of obtaining Stone Forest Town’s adventurer houses...

“It is only natural that you don’t have a great opinion of Stone Forest Town. I only found out the truth from a friend. When the time comes, adventure teams like ours won’t be the only ones competing for those slots. Some superpowers are preparing for the auction as well,” Yan Tianxing quietly explained.

He had fought in the virtual gaming world for many years now, so he had many expert acquaintances. Among them, a few were upper echelons in certain superpowers. Their information networks far surpassed any first-rate Guild’s.

“How is that possible?! Isn’t it just a kingdom’s town? How could it even tempt superpowers?” Yi Luofei exclaimed.

“Stone Forest Town might not have attracted their attention in the past, but times have changed. Zero Wing now has the Advanced Auction House and the advanced combat rooms. The Auction House offers items that are usually very difficult to find on the market, while the combat rooms can even help peak experts grow stronger. Why wouldn’t these benefits tempt superpowers?” Yan Tianxing explained. “If

not for Stone Forest Town's nigh-impenetrable defenses and the support from the Dragon-Phoenix Pavilion, the various superpowers would've likely sent their forces to capture it.

"Now that Zero Wing intends to auction off five adventurer houses, these various superpowers cannot miss the opportunity. Furthermore, the adventurer teams that set up in Stone Forest Town will be required to sign a contract with Zero Wing. There is no doubt that the contracted adventurer teams will receive exclusive benefits.

"If these superpowers join the competition, the auction will be unimaginably intense. So, we'll have to begin preparing right away."

Realization dawned on Yi Luofei as she listened to her commander's explanation. She was stunned.

She hadn't expected a recently-established Guild to be capable of nurturing a town that could elicit the various superpowers' desire.

Although it was hard to believe, she trusted her commander fully.

After all, Yan Tianxing was the one who had introduced her to the Flower of Seven Sins. The fact that Yan Tianxing knew upper echelons of a transcendental power like the Flower of Seven Sins proved how amazing the man was.

...

Meanwhile, in one of the VIP rooms on the second floor, Nine Dragons Emperor wore an exceedingly ugly expression. In contrast, Phoenix Rain's group celebrated.

“Big Sis Rain, Zero Wing is so full of surprises. With an expert Elementalist like Zhao Yueru, we’ll have a much greater advantage in the contest for Thunder Island. Having her defend a tower will be far more effective than sending three to five peak experts,” Blue Phoenix said.

“No wonder Ye Feng was so confident. Zero Wing had this trump card hidden.” Zhao Yueru’s power surprised Phoenix Rain as well.

Due to the limited number of slots for Thunder Island’s contest, it was very important that they brought experts who were strong individually. This was especially true for strategic experts like Zhao Yueru. A powerhouse like her would be much more effective than ten top-tier experts.

...

While the various large Guilds recovered from their shock of watching Zhao Yueru fight, Shi Feng received 10,000 Magic Crystals in Zero Wing’s VIP room and the Dragon’s Graveyard’s treasure map from Yan Tianxing.

Upon receiving his winnings, Shi Feng opened the treasure map.

He was very eager to learn which area Yan Tianxing’s treasure map covered.

He had never heard of the FFF adventurer team obtaining treasure from the Dragon’s Graveyard in the past. Rather, the first-rate Guild, Fantasy Shrine, and the super-first-rate Dragon-Phoenix Pavilion had secured the map’s treasures. Hence, Shi Feng was surprised to hear that the FFF adventurer team had obtained a treasure map for the area so soon.

Treasure maps in God's Domain were generally unique items. Each hidden treasure would only have a single corresponding treasure map. Without the corresponding treasure map, no one would find the hidden goods. These treasures were hidden in special spaces, and the map was the key to accessing them.

Chapter 1426 – Instant Fame

After unfurling the treasure map, Shi Feng inspected its Attribute Panel.

"This...." The information displayed confused Shi Feng.

Aside from the words 'Dragon's Graveyard,' the treasure map didn't have any information to display. There wasn't even a general map for the Dragon's Graveyard.

"Guild Leader, is there a problem with the treasure map?" Gentle Snow asked curiously when she noticed the strange expression on Shi Feng's face.

"There is indeed a problem," Shi Feng said, chuckling. "This treasure map requires a Master ranked appraisal."

When he tried to inspect the treasure map forcefully, the system notified him of the requirement.

“Master ranked?” Gentle Snow was astonished.

Although one could easily find appraisal shops in NPC cities, the NPCs working in these stores were, at best, Advanced Appraisers. It was impossible to find a Master Appraiser in these shops.

Although a lot of players had taken on the Appraiser subclass, their progress was extremely slow. After all, players had to appraise a large number of top-tier items to gain Proficiency. Even the various large Guilds had only nurtured a few Advanced Appraisers.

As for Master Appraisers...

It was very difficult for every subclass in God’s Domain to reach the Master rank.

However, what truly surprised Shi Feng was not the fact that the treasure map needed a Master Appraiser, but that it had to be appraised to begin with. Based on what he had heard in the past, the maps leading to the Dragon’s Graveyard’s Three Great Treasures hadn’t needed appraisals; one could just inspect them.

Could this treasure map lead to something other than the Three Great Treasures? Shi Feng’s curiosity grew. Immediately, he activated Omniscient Eyes to inspect the treasure map.

Fortunately, Omniscient Eyes could rival a Master ranked appraisal.

After 20 seconds, the treasure map’s information began to reveal itself.

What!? Shi Feng was dumbfounded when he saw the displayed information.

As he had guessed, the treasure map Yan Tianxing had given him didn't lead to one of the Three Great Treasures.

This map wasn't even a treasure map...

It was a map to the Dragon's Graveyard's secret land, the Dragon's Nest!

This secret land was far more valuable than the Three Great Treasures. Unlike the treasures, which would disappear once someone claimed them, players could periodically enter the secret land an indefinite number of times. Like the Sea Dragon Secret Land, one could obtain all sorts of precious items in the Dragon's Nest.

Yet, funny enough, Yan Tianxing had treated this item like a typical treasure map.

After giving the matter some thought, Shi Feng realized that it was to be expected. After all, secret lands were incredibly rare. On the other hand, treasure was common in large maps like the Dragon's Graveyard. If a player obtained a map with the words 'Dragon's Graveyard,' it wouldn't be unusual for them to assume it was just a treasure map.

"Guild Leader, it couldn't be a fake, could it?" Gentle Snow thought of a possibility when she saw Shi Feng's surprise.

There were many treasures in God's Domain. However, there was also a large number of fakes. In fact, a large majority of the treasure maps players obtained weren't real.

“It is.” Shi Feng nodded.

“I knew Yan Tianxing couldn’t be that generous.” Gentle Snow sighed, somewhat disappointed.

If Zero Wing could obtain the Dragon’s Graveyard’s treasures, it would significantly help the Guild’s development. If an adventurer team like FFF used the treasure, it might even elevate the team’s overall strength to a whole new level. How could he have been willing to gamble such a precious item?

“This isn’t a treasure map. It’s a map to a secret land in the Dragon’s Graveyard,” Shi Feng said, smiling when he saw Gentle Snow’s dejected expression.

“What?! It’s a map to the Dragon’s Graveyard’s secret land?! How is that possible?!” Gentle Snow’s eyes widened in shock. For a moment, she even thought Shi Feng was playing a trick.

“Take a look for yourself,” Shi Feng said, chuckling. He then passed the secret land map to Gentle Snow.

“It’s real! If Yan Tianxing finds this out, he’ll lose his mind.” Gentle Snow’s eyes sparkled as she looked at the map.

Needless to say, a secret land in a forbidden area like the Dragon’s Graveyard would be high-quality. Moreover, the reward for clearing a secret land for the first time would most likely rival, or even surpass, the Dragon’s Graveyard’s treasure. Although subsequent visits wouldn’t yield as many benefits as the first, the secret land could be raided indefinitely. In the long term, the income from exploring the secret land would exceed the Three Great Treasures.

However, this map had a flaw; the secret land would be very challenging to reach. The Dragon's Nest was located in the Dragon's Graveyard's inner region. Moreover, it was very close to its core. Currently, the Black Dragon Empire's various large Guilds were struggling to explore the outer region, much less the inner area.

Before they could reach the secret land, the monsters in the inner region would likely wipe them out.

However, Gentle Snow did not know that Shi Feng had already prepared to visit the Dragon's Nest.

While the other large Guilds might have trouble reaching the inner region, the same could not be said for Shi Feng. After all, he had the All-rounded Device. He didn't need to worry about the low Mana density in the Dragon's Graveyard. Moreover, the Dragon's Nest only opened once a week. They still had two days until the next reset. It would be a huge waste not to visit the secret land.

The only problem was that he needed more All-rounded Devices.

...

After Zhao Yueru's match with Yan Tianxing, the competition proceeded as usual. With each match, the audience's passion grew. After all, aside from Zhao Yueru, the weakest players who made it to the quarter-finals had reached the Flowing Water Realm.

However, faced with Zhao Yueru's unreasonable Frostflame Space, even peak experts would succumb to death.

In this competition, players' Cooldowns would reset upon finishing a match, and this included their weapons and equipment's Skills. As a result, Zhao Yueru could use Frostflame Space and Frostflame Oblivion in every one of her matches. If her main body remained alive, she could use Frostflame Hell as well. With the stage's limited amount of space to move around, her opponents had no hope of dodging both of her large-scale destruction Spells.

In the end, Zhao Yueru had won the championship, becoming the greatest dark horse in the competition this time around. At the same time, the Flame Witch's name resounded throughout the Black Dragon Empire as Zhao Yueru became the empire's number one Elementalist.

As for this uproar's main perpetrator, Zhao Yueru found this situation somewhat unbelievable. If this had been a competition of combat standards, she wouldn't have made it into the top 30, yet she had won the competition with the help of the Frostflame's Wrath.

The strength of a Fragmented Legendary Weapon had her mesmerized.

Unsurprisingly, Zero Wing had become the number one Guild in this ranking competition and obtained the invitation to participate in the Secret Pavilion's upcoming internal auction.

The Black Dragon Empire's official forums were ablaze with activity. Nobody could've imagined that a previously unknown Guild would rise to become the competition's top Guild. Zhao Yueru's astonishing prowess fascinated the empire's players. She was the perfect combination of beauty and violence.

"Zero Wing will definitely rise in the Black Dragon Empire now!"

"I heard that Zero Wing has been recruiting members in Lake Heart City. I'm going to apply when I have time."

For a time, players swarmed Zero Wing's Residence in Lake Heart City.

Far more players wanted to join the Guild than Gentle Snow had anticipated. To accommodate more members in the Branch Guild, she began her preparations to capture Hidden Fog Town, using this opportunity to develop her corner of Zero Wing.

"Big Sis Snow, over 10,000 third-rate Guild members, who are allied with Crimson Castle, have secretly gathered at the Guild's residence in Lake Heart City. Moreover, this number is rapidly climbing. By the looks of it, it seems as if they intend to rush towards Hidden Fog Town. Unknown players have also ambushed many of our members grinding near the town. I suspect that this is Crimson Castle's doing."

"Crimson Fox is quite persistent. Since he can't take action openly, he's moving against us in secret?" Gentle Snow frowned as she listened to her subordinate's report. Clearly, their previous agreement with Crimson Castle had been a farce.

"They're moving in secret?" Revealing a faint smile, Shi Feng reasoned, "It seems that if we don't teach these Guilds a proper lesson, they'll assume that Zero Wing is easy to bully. Since Crimson Fox has gone back on his word, he can't blame me for refusing to show mercy."

Chapter 1427 – Causing a Storm with One Sentence

"Snow, have someone compile a report on Crimson Castle for me. To be precise, I want information on the towns the Guild controls. The more detail, the better," Shi Feng ordered.

"Detailed information on Crimson Castle's Guild towns?" Gentle Snow couldn't help her growing confusion. Very quickly, however, she thought of a possibility. Shocked, she asked, "Guild Leader, do you intend to raid one of their Guild towns?"

“Raid one of Crimson Castle’s towns?” Shi Feng shook his head. Chuckling, he said, “No. I want to raid them all!”

If this had happened earlier, Shi Feng wouldn’t have many options to deal with Crimson Castle. At most, he’d be able to weather a battle of attrition.

However, things had changed.

Now, he was rich!

Not only had he make a killing from the Zero Wing Auction, but he had also obtained a frightening profit from Stone Forest Town’s Battle Arena and Auction House. Right now, players were almost always signing up to join the Battle Arena and Auction House.

Including the 10,000 Magic Crystals he had won from Yan Tianxing, he had over 190,000 on hand.

During the war with Heaven’s Burial and the monster army, he only had around 50,000 Magic Crystals prepared. It had been impossible to maximize his war weapons’ power. If he had had enough Magic Crystals during those battles, he would’ve easily won the war.

Now that he had over 190,000 Magic Crystals, Crimson Castle was simply trying to get itself killed by daring to provoke him.

He was even confident of capturing a first-rate Guild’s town with the resources he had available, let alone a second-rate Guild like Crimson Castle.

“Raid all of Crimson Castle’s towns?!” Shi Feng’s declaration shocked everyone in the VIP room.

A Guild town was vital to a Guild’s development. Hence, Guild towns were generally heavily fortified with static defenses and many players, making them very difficult to capture. One would need to prepare quite a bit to capture a Guild Town, yet Shi Feng had decided to take all of the towns under Crimson Castle’s control...

This was insane!

“Snow, get the Branch Guild’s main force members ready. And spread the news. I want every Guild in the Black Dragon Empire to know. We’ll take action as soon as you’ve gathered the information I requested!” Shi Feng instructed.

“We’re not hiding our intentions?” Gentle Snow was dazed for a long moment after listening to Shi Feng’s command.

When raiding an enemy Guild town, one generally kept their operations a secret. It would give a force the greatest chance of success, yet Shi Feng wanted to declare his intentions publicly. It was no different than saying, ‘I’m going to raid you, so you best get ready.’

However, since her Guild Leader had given her the order, she had no choice but to follow through.

Although Nine Dragons Emperor quietly backed Crimson Castle, taking over the Guild’s towns would be a piece of cake if Zero Wing got serious and mobilized all of its elite and expert players. After all, Zero

Wing had an overwhelming advantage over Crimson Castle in terms of both quality and quantity. Only, doing so would strain Zero Wing's funds.

Meanwhile, before the players in the arena left the venue, Gentle Snow had tasked her subordinates to make the announcement, stating Zero Wing's plans to raid Crimson Castle's Guild towns in the Lake Heart City region.

The news caused an uproar throughout the Black Dragon Empire.

"What's going on?! Zero Wing plans to attack Crimson Castle?!"

"Didn't Crimson Castle lose its bet to Zero Wing? Does the Guild have to be so ruthless?"

"No. I've heard that a few third-rate Guilds allied with Crimson Castle have mobilized their forces to cause trouble around Hidden Fog Town. It is clear that they are trying to keep the town out of Zero Wing's hands. Zero Wing's likely infuriated."

"Even so, isn't this unwise? Guild towns aren't that easy to raid. The majority of Zero Wing's forces are stationed in Star-Moon Kingdom. With them so far away, it'll be even more difficult to capture Crimson Castle's towns."

...

The players on the forums discussed the matter heatedly. Almost nobody was optimistic about Zero Wing's chances.

Although Zero Wing had a Branch Guild in Lake Heart City, it lacked strength in the Black Dragon Empire. The Branch Guild simply wasn't on the same level as the main branch in Star-Moon Kingdom. Teleporting players from Star-Moon Kingdom to Lake Heart City was costly. In addition, Crimson Castle was allied with four other second-rate Guilds. Those Guilds would lend Crimson Castle aid if it were attacked.

Even the empire's first-rate Guilds would struggle to raid one of Crimson Castle's towns. And even if success were possible, none of these Guilds would be willing to pay the price.

"Hahaha! Zero Wing must've lost its mind! Do they think that our towns' defenses are just for display?" Crimson Fox, who had long since returned to his Guild's Residence, laughed when he heard the news.

He had planned to fight it out with Zero Wing slowly, but it would seem that preparing for such had been a waste.

Although the two towns Crimson Castle controlled were not particularly popular among the general populace, both were close to ore- and herb-rich maps, and the Guild and its four allies used them as resource warehouses. Naturally, he had invested plenty of resources in the town's defenses.

Each town had eight Defense Turrets, magic barriers, and other war weapons. Even a 200,000-man elite army wouldn't pose a threat to the towns. Furthermore, the four second-rate Guilds had constructed temporary Guild Residences in both. Their members could reinforce the towns at a moment's notice.

Even if Zero Wing mobilized all of its elite members, it could never capture their towns.

"Guild Leader, we've just received a message from Nine Dragons Emperor's people. He said that he will send a 200-man expert team to protect both towns. Each team will also have six Gnome Cannons,"

Lonely Castle reported. "Nine Dragons Emperor has also offered to ignore our previous failure, allowing Crimson Castle to remain the five Guilds' leader if we give Zero Wing a good beating."

"Go to the Dragon-Phoenix Pavilion's messengers, and let Nine Dragons Emperor know that he can rest assured. Unless the sun rises from the west, Zero Wing's members should not even think about setting foot in Crimson Castle's towns, much less capture them," Crimson Fox responded confidently.

...

Meanwhile, in the Dragon-Phoenix Pavilion's Residence in the Black Dragon Empire, Phoenix Rain nearly jumped in surprise when she received the news. She had never expected such insanity from Zero Wing. She immediately contacted Shi Feng.

"Guild Leader Black Flame, do you really plan to raid Crimson Castle's Guild towns?" Phoenix Raid asked seriously.

"That's right." Shi Feng nodded.

"I beg of you to discard the idea. Nine Dragons Emperor is Crimson Castle's backer. Moreover, he instructed his subordinates to create resource warehouses in both towns. He's already stationed his personal Shadow Dragon Legion in the towns long-term, as well," Phoenix Rain explained.

The Shadow Dragon Legion was one of the three trump card legions under Nine Dragons Emperor's command. Among the three legions, Martial Dragon's War Dragon Legion was the strongest. Although the Shadow Dragon Legion's overall strength was weaker than the War Dragon Legion, it was fond of large-scale battles. Hence, Nine Dragons Emperor had sent his men to protect Crimson Castle's two towns.

Zero Wing had just made a name for itself in the Black Dragon Empire. Before accumulating sufficient strength, it was unwise to raid these two towns.

“The Shadow Dragon Legion?” Shi Feng had heard of the legion before. In response, however, he simply chuckled and thanked the woman, “Thank you for your warning, Phoenix Pavilion Master. I will be careful. I still have much to tend to, so if there’s nothing else, I’ll be disconnecting the call now.”

Saying so, Shi Feng ended their conversation.

“What is this man thinking...” When Phoenix Rain had seen Shi Feng’s calm expression, she wondered if Shi Feng actually understood how powerful the Dragon-Phoenix Pavilion’s trump card legions were.

Any superpower’s trump card legions could annihilate an elite army of tens of thousands. Furthermore, the Shadow Dragon Legion specialized in large-scale combat.

Meanwhile, Gentle Snow finished gathering information on Crimson Castle’s Guild towns and handed the report to her Guild Leader.

Chapter 1428 – Aqua Rose’s Class-change

“Guild Leader, both towns have been heavily fortified. Each town has eight Defense Turrets. Normally, each town also has over 15,000 players. Including the other four second-rate Guilds’ members, there should be over 20,000 players residing in the towns. Crimson Castle has also employed high-quality NPC guards. Of the 1,000 NPCs in each town, over 60 are Tier 2. Capturing these towns won’t be easy.

“Moreover, as soon as we attack, the other Guilds will send reinforcements. Based on our estimates, each town should have over 100,000 players. We’ll likely have to use everything Zero Wing has to capture them.”

Gentle Snow briefly explained the situation in the towns. She had been shocked to learn about their defenses.

First-rate Guilds’ towns usually only had half a dozen or so Defense Turrets. After all, these defensive structures were expensive to build. Hiring high-tiered NPC guards wasn’t cheap either. Generally, a town had a mix of Tier 1 and Tier 0 NPCs. Guilds only hired stronger guards if the town were particularly important.

Yet, both of Crimson Castle’s towns had impressive defenses. Zero Wing couldn’t even strike the weaker town first, using its success to damage Crimson Castle’s morale.

“Good. Instruct both the main force and the Dark Gods Legion to set out. Since its closer to Lake Heart City, we’ll target Green Rain Town first,” Shi Feng said and nodded after glancing through the information.

“We’re only mobilizing our main force and the Dark Gods Legion?” Gentle Snow was stunned.

Was this a joke?

Together, Zero Wing’s main force and the Dark Gods Legion only had over 1,000 members. Even if they were experts, sending 1,000-plus players to raid a Guild town was reaching for the impossible.

“Of course. Why would we need so many people just to raid a town?” Shi Feng asked Gentle Snow curiously.

The woman was speechless.

They were going to raid a town protected by tens of thousands of players, Yet in Shi Feng’s eyes, they were just heading out to exterminate a bunch of Common monsters...

However, once Shi Feng had given the order, Gentle Snow had no choice but to dispatch the two forces.

As Shi Feng prepared to lead his army to Green Rain Town, he received a communication request from Aqua Rose.

“Why are you out so soon?” Shi Feng asked.

It had only been a few days since Aqua Rose and the others had begun to challenge the Sea God’s Legacy; none of them should’ve returned this soon.

“I’m not fast. Time in the Legacy space is different from God’s Domain. Four days inside is the equivalent of one in God’s Domain,” Aqua Rose explained.

After entering the Legacy space, the time flow difference had shocked her. If not for the lack of EXP from the monsters inside, she would’ve leveled up a few times. Instead, she was still Level 50.

“Well? How did it go?” Shi Feng asked.

The Sea God’s Legacy contained ten individual Legacies. Any one of them could improve a player’s strength tremendously.

“Hehe! Take a look at this!” Aqua Rose said as she waved an icy-blue crystalline staff. Streams of water rotated around it, and the staff itself radiated a faint trace of Divine Might.

“Could you have...” Shi Feng could not help his shock as he stared at the staff.

“That’s right. I’ve obtained the Sea God’s Legacy and have officially become a Tier 2 player,” Aqua Rose announced in delight.

She had gone through a lot of trouble to obtain the Sea God’s Legacy. Fortunately, she had consumed the Moonlight Fruits before entering the Legacy space, slightly increasing her physique. With Refinement Realm combat standards, she was able to clear the Legacy Trial. Not only had she obtained the Sea God’s Legacy, but she had also acquired the Sea Dragon Staff, a Growth-type Weapon specifically made to amplify the Sea God’s Legacy’s strengths.

Unlike ordinary Growth-type Weapons, the Sea Dragon Staff could reach Fragmented Legendary rank. It would help Aqua Rose display the full potential of the Sea God’s Legacy.

Shi Feng was dazed for a moment.

The Sea God’s Legacy!

He had only hoped that Aqua Rose or one of the others would obtain the Sea God's Guard Legacy. He hadn't been terribly optimistic that one of them would actually obtain the Sea God's Legacy. After all, the Sea God's Legacy even surpassed Peak Legacies. It was extremely difficult to obtain.

"Guild Leader, you're going to raid a town, right? Can I join you?" Aqua Rose asked.

"Of course you can," Shi Feng said, laughing.

Even if she hadn't asked, he would've summoned her to join the battle.

He was not certain of exactly how powerful the Sea God's Legacy was. He only knew that the Legacy's owner would be an absolute overlord at sea, invincible among opponents of the same tier and level in naval combat. Naturally, he was curious to see how powerful Aqua Rose could become with the Sea God's Legacy at her command.

"Wonderful! I'll head over right away!" Aqua Rose said, smiling.

...

Lake Heart City region, Green Rain Town:

Since Zero Wing had announced its intention of raiding Crimson Castle's Guild towns, the normally lackluster Green Rain Town brimmed with players. Crimson Castle and its allies weren't the only players in the town. A large number of independent players and members of the various major powers in the Black Dragon Empire had made the trip to watch the upcoming Guild war.

The reason these spectators had gathered here instead of in Black Horn Town—Crimson Castle's other town— was Zero Wing's announcement that it would raid Green Rain Town before moving on.

"Zero Wing is really bold. When others try to raid a town, they try to keep their movements secret, yet Zero Wing publicly declared its plan to raid Crimson Castle's towns and which town it'd hit first!"

"It's likely that Zero Wing wants to show off its strength and frighten the other Guilds by ensuring that players are here to watch. However, doing so will make raiding Crimson Castle's towns much more difficult."

"Zero Wing is trying too hard to appear powerful. Even if Zero Wing is Star-Moon Kingdom's overlord, it has only recently started to develop its Branch Guild in the Black Dragon Empire. The Branch Guild still lacks various aspects. Waging a war against Crimson Castle right now is foolish."

"I've heard that the other four second-rate Guilds allied with Crimson Castle have dispatched 150,000 elite members to Green Rain Town. Including Crimson Castle's 30,000 elite members, there are 180,000 elite players fortifying the town. Taking into account their terrain advantage, Zero Wing isn't likely to succeed even if it sends every one of its members in the empire. In the end, Zero Wing will embarrass itself by attacking Crimson Castle."

...

The players resting in Green Rain Town's bars merrily discussed the upcoming war.

Zero Wing had already become the center of attention in the Black Dragon Empire after winning the ranking competition. Following its declaration of war, even more players began to watch the Guild.

Although the empire's various Guilds frequently clashed, very few were willing to raid an enemy Guild town.

After all, Guild towns were easy to defend but difficult to attack. Without an absolute advantage, no Guild would be foolish enough to raid an enemy's town.

...

Meanwhile, Crimson Castle and its allies' upper echelons had gathered in a captivating room within the Guild's Green Rain Town Residence.

"Guild Leader Fox, our Guilds' members have arrived. They will be at your command," a dignified Level 45 Shield Warrior reported to Crimson Fox, who lounged in the Guild Leader's throne. "If that is not enough, our four Guilds can still mobilize an additional 60,000 elite members. We'll put Zero Wing through the wringer."

"Good! As long as we injure the Guild and make Nine Dragons Emperor happy, we'll all receive even more resources in the future," Crimson Fox said, smiling.

With over 180,000 elite players fortifying Green Rain Town, not even a superpower had any hope of a successful raid, much less Zero Wing.

As long as they devastated Zero Wing's army, the Guild's development in Lake Heart City would suffer.

“Guild Leader, our scouts have reported that Zero Wing’s members are on the way,” Lonely Castle, who stood behind Crimson Fox, whispered in the man’s ear.

“They’re finally here?” Crimson Fox smiled. He then asked, “How many are there?”

“There seems to be only...a little over 1,000 players,” Lonely Castle replied, uncertain.

Chapter 1429 – Give It a Thorough Beating

When Lonely Castle finished speaking, the meeting room fell silent.

Everyone stared at Lonely Castle with astonished expressions. They all thought that the Shield Warrior had to be joking.

“What did you say?” Thinking he had heard wrong, Crimson Fox asked for confirmation, “They only sent 1,000-plus members?”

“Mhm. The several hundred Assassins we’ve sent out to scout have confirmed this. Zero Wing hasn’t dispatched anyone beyond those 1,000-plus members. However, all of those members are rapidly approaching Green Rain Town on Mounts. They’ll likely arrive in a little over ten minutes.” Lonely Castle understood that he could not convince Crimson Fox with words alone, so he played the video his subordinates had sent him on the virtual screen above the table.

The recording displayed over 1,000 players atop their Mounts. However, unlike other Guilds, the majority of Zero Wing’s members rode Thunder Wolves; their charge was impeccable. Moreover, every

player's level on the team was very high. The lowest-leveled among them was Level 45. Furthermore, their weapons and equipment weren't the least bit inferior to the upper echelons' in the meeting room.

A single one-horned, black tiger lead this team of players. Black flames and arcs of blue electricity danced around the tiger's paws. Despite only watching a video of the creature, every one of these powerful players felt an indescribable pressure weigh them down.

As for the man atop this black tiger, he was none other than Zero Wing's famous Guild Leader, Black Flame.

Crimson Fox stared at the screen, dazed for a long moment.

While he had seen arrogant Guilds before, he had never seen a Guild as arrogant as Zero Wing. They treated the 180,000 elite players fortifying Green Rain Town as nothing more than a paper tiger.

"How is this possible? Zero Wing only sent 1,000-plus members?"

"Has Zero Wing lost its mind?"

"This is the siege battle that Zero Wing promised us? They dare come at us with such a small force? Are they tired of living?"

These players couldn't help but laugh as they watched the video.

The contingent Zero Wing had dispatched might consist of nothing but expert players, but siege battles were different from field battles. The power an expert could exert was considerably limited. Not to mention, every Guild town had a large number of NPC guards.

NPC guards weren't monsters. If an ordinary expert player tried to take on a Tier 1 NPC, they'd suffer a one-sided beating. Furthermore, Green Rain Town's NPCs were all Level 70 and above. The town even had Level 70, Tier 2 NPCs.

Even without the 180,000 elite players and the town's defensive structures, the 1,000 NPC guards could easily annihilate Zero Wing's small force.

"Zero Wing is pretty bold. They dare to attack Green Rain Town with just so few players. Don't they know what 'death' means?"

At this moment, a burly man wearing silver armor stood up and said, "Guild Leader Fox, leave this to Immortal Dynasty! There's no need for Crimson Castle to bother with this small group from Zero Wing. It's about time we teach Zero Wing that the Black Dragon Empire and Star-Moon Kingdom are not the same!"

"Brother Bright House doesn't need to dirty his hands! Let the Shadowlight Tribe deal with this! We'll finish Zero Wing's members off before they even get close to Green Rain Town," the handsome man beside Bright House said, laughing.

...

Before Crimson Fox could comment, the four second-rate Guilds' upper echelons voiced their enthusiasm to take the lead against Zero Wing's force.

As Crimson Fox attempted to reply, a black-clad man beside him spoke up, "None of you need to get involved. Leave these people to the Shadow Dragon Legion."

The moment this black-clad man spoke, the upper echelons fell silent.

On the surface, Crimson Castle was in charge of this war. In reality, however, this black-clad man was in command. The man was none other than Shadowtooth, the commander of the Dragon-Phoenix Pavilion's Shadow Dragon Legion. He was also known as the War Dragon.

Not only had Shadowtooth risen to fame much earlier than Martial Dragon, but he had also left plenty of intense battle records in multiple large-scale virtual reality games.

This man had participated in hundreds of Guild wars, and every time he took the field, he secured overwhelming victories. Hence, he had earned the nickname 'War Dragon.' Individually, he wasn't any weaker than Martial Dragon, although the latter was more well-known due to his status as an up-and-coming monster in the virtual gaming world.

Since Shadowtooth had declared his intentions, the upper echelons surrendered the fight for the prestige of defeating Zero Wing.

"I'll have to trouble Brother Shadowtooth, then." Crimson Fox repeatedly expressed gratitude after listening to the commander's declaration.

The Shadow Dragon Legion was very famous in the virtual gaming world. The legion's experts had fought in countless battles alongside Shadowtooth. Although these players were only top-tier experts individually, they could exert tremendous power on the battlefield. With only a handful working together, they could easily take down peak experts.

This was also the reason that the virtual gaming world's various superpowers disliked dealing with the 1,000-man legion.

...

Meanwhile, news of Shi Feng's 1,000-plus contingent quickly spread throughout Green Rain Town, causing an uproar.

"Is Zero Wing trying to be funny?"

"And to think they made such arrogant claims earlier! Now that they realized that Green Rain Town is impossible to raid, they've only sent 1,000 members to try to gloss over their insults..."

"I had thought that Zero Wing was some awesomely powerful Guild, but it seems that it has nothing more than this."

"This could be their wisest move. If Zero Wing truly tried to raid Green Rain Town, it'd suffer heavy losses."

"How boring. I'm heading back to level up."

The spectating players in the town were disappointed. They had hoped to watch an interesting battle, but this was just a farce. At the same time, Zero Wing lost the prestige it had earned in the Black Dragon Empire.

...

As players prepared to leave Green Rain Town, Shi Feng's group reached a hilltop 15,000 yards away.

"Snow, have the main force members guard the mountain pass below us. Everyone else, secure this area. Do not let anybody reach this position. You have my permission to kill any disobedient players," Shi Feng instructed as he gazed down at the distant town.

Shi Feng's instructions confused his party members. They were still so far away from Green Rain Town. What was the point in securing such a distant location?

Once Zero Wing's members spread out and surrounded the hill, Shi Feng took two Intermediate Mana Pulse Cannons and a movement-type defensive magic array from his bag and began to set them up.

"Guild Leader, you're not thinking of...decimating Green Rain Town?" Aqua Rose could not help her surprise when she saw the two Intermediate Mana Pulse Cannons.

Abundant resources were available near the town, but if they turned these massive cannons against it, they'd cripple Green Rain Town.

"Although Green Rain Town is a strategic location, Zero Wing does not have much use for it. Moreover, with the town's powerful defenses, this is the perfect opportunity to test how effective the Intermediate

Mana Pulse Cannons are in a siege. Why else would I have deliberately announced our intention to attack Green Rain Town?" Shi Feng asked seriously.

Hearing Shi Feng's explanation, Gentle Snow was speechless. The reason behind his announcement had been to test the Intermediate Mana Pulse Cannon's effects... If Crimson Castle's upper echelons knew about this, they'd likely have a heart attack.

A moment later, Shi Feng finished setting up the two Intermediate Mana Pulse Cannons and the movement-type defensive magic array, filling them with Magic Crystals.

Once he had confirmed that everything was in place, Shi Feng issued his command, "Aim for Green Forest Town and beat the hell out of them!"

Chapter 1430 – Destroying the Town's Defenses in One Hit

A large number of Guild players had been stationed atop Green Rain Town's ramparts. At the base of the walls, the Shadow Dragon Legion stood in neat, orderly rows.

"As expected of the Dragon-Phoenix Pavilion's trump card legion. Its members are so strong. Just looking at them makes me shudder."

"Guild Leader Fox, with them here, you won't have to lift a finger. The Shadow Dragon Legion will bring a swift end to Zero Wing's force."

“That’s right! It’s a pity that we won’t get to join in. I’d like to show Zero Wing how powerful our Guilds truly are!”

The various upper echelons on the ramparts chatted merrily as they gazed down at the Shadow Dragon Legion.

Even if there weren’t 180,000 elite players protecting Green Rain Town, Zero Wing’s 1,000-man army would fail. After all, the NPC guards weren’t just for display.

Unfortunately, since the Shadow Dragon Legion had wanted the frontline, their Guilds had lost the chance to use Zero Wing as a stepping stone to improve their reputations in the empire.

Suddenly, Lonely Castle walked up to Crimson Fox and reported, “Guild Leader, a report just came in. For some reason, Zero Wing’s members have stopped their advance and fortified a hill some distance away from the town. They’ve locked down the area around the hill. We sent several Assassins to investigate, but they’ve all died.”

Hearing this, Crimson Fox and the other upper echelons were stunned.

“Why are they fortifying that hill?”

The same question floated in everyone’s minds. This was the first time they had encountered such a shameless Guild. Zero Wing had boldly announced its plan to raid Green Rain Town, yet after such claims, it had only dispatched a little over 1,000 members. Now, for some unknown reason, Zero Wing’s members had decided to halt their advance halfway.

“They’re not approaching?” Crimson Fox’s lips curled. “It seems Zero Wing’s upper echelons still have some brainpower. They realized that charging into the town would be suicidal, so they’ve decided to wait for us to come to them?”

“Guild Leader, should we send some of our people?” Lonely Castle asked.

“No need. We’ll let the Shadow Dragon Legion deal with it. We can save ourselves from the trouble of being called out for bullying,” Crimson Fox said, laughing.

Although he did not know what Zero Wing was trying to do, in front of absolute strength, all trickery was useless. At the end of the day, Crimson Castle would win this war, and Zero Wing’s reputation in the Black Dragon Empire would be ruined.

However, as the Shadow Dragon Legion prepared to set off for the hill, two spiraling, black and white beams appeared in the distance. Both beams struck the magic barrier around Green Rain Town a split second after they appeared, tearing through it as if it were paper.

Boom!

In the end, the two massive beams plowed through the town’s center. Two towering pillars of light rose from the craters, expanding until each covered a 500-yard radius.

One could see these pillars even from tens of thousands of yards away.

Both pillars gradually dissipated, leaving two 40-meter-deep craters. Everything that had been caught within the light pillars had disappeared.

“What...” For a moment, every player in Green Rain Town was dumbfounded as they stared at the void the light pillars had left.

The various Guild upper echelons stared with wide eyes.

What had happened?

Was the sky falling?

Not even Crimson Fox knew what had just transpired.

Although the defensive magic array protecting Green Rain Town was only Basic rank, it could survive Tier 3 attacks, yet it failed to resist the two beam attacks.

“I-Investigate that attack immediately!” Crimson Fox bellowed.

Crimson Fox’s heart bled over the buildings the attacks had just destroyed, not to mention the number of players that had died.

Crimson Castle’s members exploded into action.

“Guild Leader... it seems that those two beams came from the hilltop Zero Wing occupies,” Lonely Castle said as he pointed towards the hill.

“So you’re saying...that is Zero Wing’s doing?” A chill ran down Crimson Fox’s spine as he stared at the hilltop, astonishment flashing in his eyes as he muttered, “How is this possible?”

He had investigated Zero Wing thoroughly, so he knew that Zero Wing possessed powerful war weapons. However, the hill Zero Wing occupied was over 10,000 yards away from Green Rain Town. According to the reports, Zero Wing’s war weapons should only have a maximum range of around 3,000 yards.

What Crimson Fox did not know was that the Intermediate Mana Pulse Cannons’ range was actually 20,000 yards. However, although the cannons could cover so much distance, the beams were straight-line attacks. Hence, the height of these cannons’ location would determine their actual range.

From the top of Stone Forest Town’s Magic Tower, they could cover around 3,000 yards.

Meanwhile, the hill Shi Feng had chosen was far taller than his Magic Tower, increasing the cannon’s range significantly.

“Guild Leader, what should we do?” Lonely Castle could not help but shudder when he learned that Zero Wing was responsible for the attack.

With that kind of range and destructive power, the Intermediate Mana Pulse Cannons were a Guild town’s nightmare. If they allowed Zero Wing to fire those weapons a few more times, Green Rain Town would fall.

“Kill them... Send everyone to slaughter Zero Wing’s members! Do not let Zero Wing fire those cannons again!” Crimson Fox shouted, paling with anger. Regret tore at his heart. Had he known that Zero Wing possessed such frightening tools of destruction, he would never have let things go this far.

With such weapons, destroying a town would be a piece of cake for Zero Wing.

“Understood!” Lonely Castle immediately organized Crimson Castle’s forces to set out towards Zero Wing’s position.

When the other upper echelons saw the two craters that defiled Green Rain Town and thought about Zero Wing directing those weapons towards their own towns, they shuddered with fear.

“This... Guild Leader Fox, something urgent has come up in our Guild that requires our immediate attention; I’m afraid we must go.”

“Guild Leader Fox, our Guild Leader has found a rare Boss and is in need of manpower. Since you have things under control here, we’ll be taking our leave.”

Immediately, the four second-rate Guilds’ upper echelons took out Return Scrolls and fled.

A moment later, all of the allied Guilds’ members vanished from Green Rain Town, leaving only Crimson Castle’s members and a bunch of confused independent players.

“You ...” Crimson Fox nearly had a stroke as he watched the crowd disappear.

Hadn't they declared that he wouldn't have to take action himself?

Chapter 1431 – Aqua Rose Takes Action

When the Intermediate Mana Pulse Cannons had struck Green Rain Town, the resulting devastation hadn't only shocked the various second-rate Guilds' members. The spectating players retrieved their own Return Scrolls to flee the town as well.

Everyone was afraid that the Intermediate Mana Pulse Cannons would strike again. They might not be so lucky in the next assault. None of them were willing to throw their lives away just to watch a battle.

“Active the Guild War Order! Seal off that hill! I don't want to see any of Zero Wing's members leave this place alive!” Crimson Fox lost his composure as he glared at the distant hilltop.

In the next moment, Crimson Castle locked down Green Rain Town's map. Return Scrolls were rendered ineffective, and players were forced to rely on other means to escape.

Once Crimson Fox had issued his orders, he led an army of 10,000 players in a charge towards their enemy.

This was his only option left.

If he continued to do nothing, he would be slaughtered. With the Intermediate Mana Pulse Cannons' power, Green Rain Town would only last a few more hits, yet the town's Defense Turrets couldn't reach Zero Wing. He had no choice but to lead his own forces to stop Zero Wing.

However, the Shadow Dragon Legion had reacted long before Crimson Fox.

Shortly after the Intermediate Mana Pulse Cannons had attacked, Shadowtooth had led the Shadow Dragon Legion in its own charge.

...

“Guild Leader, a team of 1,000 players are approaching. They’re less than 1,000 yards away. They are very well-equipped, and although they aren’t wearing a Guild Emblem, they don’t look like independent players,” a Ranger, Negative Life, reported as he used Eagle Eyes to scout.

“A strong 1,000-man team without a Guild Emblem? Could it be the Shadow Dragon Legion?” Shi Feng suddenly recalled Phoenix Rain’s warning.

The Shadow Dragon Legion might not be as strong as Nine Dragon’s Emperor’s War Dragon Legion, but it was far more famous.

The Dragon-Phoenix Pavilion had once dispatched the Shadow Dragon Legion to capture an Intermediate City under a top-tier, first-rate Guild’s control. Naturally, said Guild had the support of powerful corporations and plenty of powerful experts. Although it hadn’t been a super-first-rate Guild, it had been beyond ordinary first-rate Guilds’ reach.

Yet, the Shadow Dragon Legion had single-handedly captured the Intermediate Town.

Cities and towns were different. Both Basic and Advanced towns lacked defenses, but as soon as they became cities, their defenses would undergo a qualitative transformation. With a Core Magic Array, not only could Guilds suppress their enemies, but they could also enhance their own forces. The Core Magic Array's buff was even more powerful than the Magic Towers.

Moreover, the various large Guilds generally put everything into their cities' development. The defensive structures one could build in an Intermediate City were far beyond that of a town. A Guild could construct hundreds of Defense Turrets in its city, as well as all sorts of advanced defensive structures.

Furthermore, well-funded, first-rate Guilds generally protected their Intermediate Cities with powerful magic arrays. It would take several shots from an Advanced Mana Pulse Cannon to break such a barrier. If the magic array had adequate energy, it might even be beyond an Advanced Mana Pulse Cannon's power.

Yet, the Shadow Dragon Legion had captured the Intermediate City. News of the successful siege had shocked the various large Guilds. During that time, only a few of God's Domain's first-rate Guilds had Intermediate Cities, while most Guild cities were Basic rank. As a result, the various first-rate Guilds had been terrified of the Shadow Dragon Legion.

"The Shadow Dragon Legion? Isn't that one of the Dragon-Phoenix Pavilion's trump card legions?" Gentle Snow asked curiously when she heard Shi Feng's comment.

"Nine Dragons Emperor has been secretly using Green Rain Town as a resource warehouse, so he has probably stationed the force there to protect the town," Shi Feng explained.

"Guild Leader, I don't think it'll be easy to take on the Shadow Dragon Legion and Crimson Castle's forces at the same time. Shadowtooth, the Shadow Dragon Legion's commander, is the Dragon-Phoenix Pavilion's number one Assassin. Based on our information on him, he has a top-tier Epic short sword called Magic Breaker. It can cut through magic barriers like a hot knife through butter. Our magic array isn't likely to hold the legion back," Gentle Snow said worriedly.

They had considered the possibility of Crimson Castle's forces charging to meet them, but as long as they had enough Magic Crystals, their movement-type defensive magic array shouldn't have any issues holding back Tier 4 attacks. Unfortunately, it was a different story if Shadowtooth's Magic Breaker got involved.

Without the defensive magic array's protection, they wouldn't survive an army of tens of thousands of elite players.

"Guild Leader, leave Shadowtooth to me," Aqua Rose suddenly suggested. "As long as I take him down, we can proceed with activating the defensive magic array."

"But..."

Although Gentle Snow tried to argue, Shi Feng beat her to it, saying, "Alright. I'll leave him to you. Send everyone else to stop the Shadow Dragon Legion's advanced. Don't let anyone near the cannons."

The Intermediate Mana Pulse Cannons might be powerful, but they had obvious weaknesses. First, they could be moved freely. Second, like all war weapons, their Defense was paper-thin. Even a Tier 0 player could easily destroy them. Hence, the various large Guilds usually avoided using war weapons offensively.

"Guild Leader, this..."

Shi Feng's decision astonished Gentle Snow.

Shadowtooth was an old monster with many years of fame. Even Nine Dragons Emperor treated the man with respect. His title as the Dragon-Phoenix Pavilion's number one Assassin wasn't just for show, either. Even a peak expert like Yan Tianxing would struggle to survive a handful of moves against Shadowtooth.

Yet, Shi Feng had just sent Aqua Rose to deal with the Assassin alone. She'd be lucky to survive, much less kill the man. They'd only have a small possibility of defeating Shadowtooth if she, Aqua Rose, and Zhao Yueru worked together.

"Relax. If Shadowtooth reveals himself, leave him to Aqua. You all should focus on the Shadow Dragon Legion's other experts. At the end of the day, that is still one of the Dragon-Phoenix Pavilion's trump card legions. The force has plenty of Refinement Realm experts. Even with our Berserk Skills, we don't have much of an advantage," Shi Feng said, chuckling.

Not only was Aqua Rose a Tier 2 player now, but she also had the Sea God's Legacy. Since she had offered to take on Shadowtooth, she was confident in defeating him. If her victory weren't possible, it wouldn't be too late to send Gentle Snow and Zhao Yueru as reinforcements.

Suddenly, Negative Life announced, "Guild Leader, Crimson Castle has sent an army of over 10,000 players. The Shadow Dragon Legion's members are also spreading out. By the looks of it, they plan to split into four groups."

"They sure reacted quickly. Alright, let's fire a round at Crimson Castle's members first," Shi Feng ordered when he noticed the Intermediate Mana Pulse Cannon's Cooldown coming to an end. "Aqua, Snow, Yueru, Negative, lead teams of 200 players and intercept the Shadow Dragon Legion. It's about time we teach this legion that Zero Wing's shouldn't be provoked!"

"Understood!"

Zero Wing's members couldn't help their growing excitement. Fighting a trump card legion from a super-first-rate Guild would be far more fun than fighting a bunch of elite players.

...

The Shadow Dragon Legion soon reached the foot of the hill after splitting into four groups. In the next moment, a black-clad man dashed ahead of the groups towards the magic barrier protecting the hill. Upon reaching his target, the man swung the dull-gray short sword at the barrier.

Peng!

Instantly, he shattered the movement-type defensive magic array, the stored energy within dissipating. In addition, the magic array was forced into a five-minute Cooldown.

"The commander's Magic Breaker really is impressive. Zero Wing's members must be stunned. Not only will they die here, but we'll also claim their two war weapons."

As the Shadow Dragon Legion members discussed the vanishing barrier, a mesmerizing beauty appeared on the opposite side. This woman stood alone on the path leading up the hill. She wielded a dark-blue crystal staff and radiated an incredible aura.

This woman was none other than Aqua Rose.

Chapter 1432 – Aqua Rose VS Shadowtooth

“Is she from Zero Wing?”

“She dares to come alone? She must be tired of living in this world.”

...

The Shadow Dragon Legion members revealed wicked smiles when they saw Aqua Rose on the hillside path.

There were over 200 players in their group, and any one of these players would be the strongest expert in a normal, large Guild.

Yet, Aqua Rose thought she could hold them off on her own. In their opinion, such an action was foolish and suicidal.

“We don’t have time to waste. A few of you go and finish her off. Everyone else, get to the hilltop. We must get our hands on those war weapons!” Shadowtooth shouted as he stared at Aqua Rose. Although she radiated an intense aura, a party from the Shadow Dragon Legion would be more than enough to deal with her.

“Understood!”

As soon as Shadowtooth issued his command, a six-man party split away from the group and dashed towards Aqua Rose.

This party consisted of an MT, one healer, and four DPS.

The Level 45 Shield Warrior leading the party used Charge at Aqua Rose. A moment after the Shield Warrior activated his Skill, the Berserker used Charge as well. At the same time, the Cleric cast a Truth Shield and Minor Recovery on the Shield Warrior, while two magical-class experts and one Ranger attacked Aqua Rose from a distance, aiming to cut off her path of retreat.

In seconds, three different attack methods closed in on Aqua Rose. The six Shadow Dragon Legion members' coordination and timing were even beyond most expert parties.

However, Aqua Rose showed no intentions of fleeing. Instead, she lightly tapped the butt of her staff on the ground. Immediately, a wall of water rose up before her. The water wall continued to grow taller, and soon, an eight-meter-tall wave protected Aqua Rose. This tidal wave then surged to meet the approaching Shield Warrior and Berserker.

The tidal wave had enough range that it blocked the incoming ranged attacks from the enemy rear; it was the perfect combination of offense and defense.

Meanwhile, the Shield Warrior and Berserker were too close to the tidal wave's origin to dodge in time, and the massive wave devoured them both.

After the tidal wave passed, the Berserker, who had close to 40,000 HP, transformed into particles of white light and disappeared from the battlefield, a piece of equipment taking his place. As for the Shield Warrior, due to his quick reactions and activating Shield Wall in time, he survived Aqua Rose's attack.

However, less than one-third of his HP remained. Moreover, this was after Truth Shield had absorbed part of the attack's damage.

"Just how high is her magic damage?" The magical class players were astonished as they stared at the surviving Shield Warrior.

It was obvious that the tidal wave had been the result of a channeled Spell. Channeled Spells were usually mini AOE attacks. With their magic damage, they'd be lucky to drop the Shield Warrior's HP by one-third with a Tier 1 mini AOE Spell. Of course, that was if he didn't activate Shield War and without Truth Shield's protection.

"You're still alive?" Aqua Rose was slightly surprised to see the MT standing. "It seems your Magic Resistance is quite high."

She had used a Tier 1 Legacy Spell called Water Wave. However, despite being only a Tier 1 Spell, the Sea Dragon Staff had enhanced her attack's power significantly. Overall, it should've rivaled a Tier 1 large-scale destruction Spell.

"Her magic damage is too high! Switch to range attacks!" the surviving Shield Warrior shouted as he gave Aqua Rose a cautious look.

The other party members nodded in agreement. Against magical-class players with high magic damage, a Shield Warrior with limited mobility was a sitting duck. Defeating such a target would be a piece of cake.

However, before the Shield Warrior could regret his hasty Charge, thorny, pitch-black vines bound his feet.

And before anyone had realized it, Aqua Rose had finished chanting another incantation as the surrounding Mana surged towards the Sea Dragon Staff.

Tier 2 Spell, Rising Flow!

Aqua Rose waved her staff at the Shield Warrior and magical-class players before her.

Over a dozen jets of water streaked away from her, dancing and intertwining across 50 yards; it was beautiful.

These jets' speed could even rival that of Shi Feng's swords. Even the Shield Warrior, who had kept his guard up against Aqua Rose's attacks, only managed to block three jets of water before five other struck. The magical-class players, the Ranger, and the Cleric didn't have time to attack since they had assumed the Shield Warrior had been the woman's only target.

By the time they reacted, it was too late. Even the Cleric, who had only been struck once, had died instantly.

With a single move, Aqua Rose had killed five experts from the Shadow Dragon Legion.

"Impossible!" The Shadow Dragon Legion members that had planned to circle Aqua Rose to get up the hill were stupefied.

After the brief exchange, a party from the Shadow Dragon Legion had been defeated...

Aqua Rose had taken less time than a peak expert to eliminate one of the Shadow Dragon Legion's parties.

Her Spells were terrifying. Not only were they extremely fast, but they also contained horrific power. The Cleric had lost all of his 30,000-plus HP to a single water jet.

However, Aqua Rose didn't seem particularly surprised. Even if a non-MT player successfully blocked one of her water jets, they'd be either dead or close to it.

Rising Flow was a Tier 2 Spell, but with the Sea Dragon Staff's buff, it had the power of a Tier 3 Spell.

"So, Zero Wing had another expert of this caliber?" Shadowtooth glared at Aqua Rose. A moment later, he revealed a playful smile as he muttered, "It's no wonder why she dared to block our path by herself. I guess I can play with you for a bit."

The hillside path was very narrow, making it easily defensible. And with such powerful Spells, they'd be little more than moving targets for the woman if they charged up the path. If they took an alternative route, climbing the hill's steep slopes, they'd still be targets. Only, rather than Aqua Rose, the entirety of Zero Wing's forces would use them as target practice. Hence, if they wanted to ascend this hill, they had to defeat Aqua Rose.

Suddenly, Shadowtooth vanished. He then began to approach the woman.

Although Shadowtooth didn't have Yan Tianxing's True Orb, a Domain realm expert like him knew his environment like the back of his hand. Not only could he move quickly, but he could also prevent others from noticing his presence. Only players with active Observation or Perception Skills could catch a glimpse of him.

However, whether or not the opponent discovered his presence didn't make a difference to an expert of Shadowtooth's caliber. He was simply too fast. He was extremely difficult to pin down with ranged attacks.

Indeed, while Aqua Rose had detected the Assassin, none of her Spells found their target. It was as if Shadowtooth had grasped her Spells' trajectory long before she had launched them, always moving out of their paths.

Sure enough, the Dragon-Phoenix Pavilion's number one Assassin is truly powerful! Although Aqua Rose was double-speed-casting, she couldn't hinder Shadowtooth's approach. Despite predicting the Assassin's movements thanks to her enhanced physique, Shadowtooth predicted hers as well. As a result, she could only watch as the enemy Assassin closed in on her.

Aqua Rose hadn't expected to encounter such a situation so soon after obtaining the Sea God's Legacy. She controlled over a dozen projectile attacks, yet she couldn't hit her target. If she allowed Shadowtooth to come within melee range, she was dead meat.

When Shadowtooth was only 20 yards away, he used Shadow Steps and appeared behind Aqua Rose. His Magic Breaker left an arc of gray light as it descended on the Cursemaner.

Suddenly, Aqua Rose shouted, "Bloom! Aqua Precinct!"

Just before Shadowtooth's Magic Breaker bit into Aqua Rose's back, layers of water began to peel away from the woman like a blooming lotus flower.

When Magic Breaker encountered the flower petals, not only did its advanced halt, but it also bounced off.

She blocked it? Shadowtooth was slightly surprised to see the water curtain before him.

Magic Breaker was designed to do just that, destroy magic barriers. It also weakened Spells by 50%. Even an Elementalist's strongest Tier 1 Defensive Spell, Frost Barrier, would only last one hit against his weapon.

Yet, when he slashed at the thin layer of water, it felt as if he had hit rubber. He couldn't pierce the water curtain no matter how hard he tried.

With Aqua Rose in the center, the Spell formed a pool of water with a 70-yard radius. Although the water was only knee-deep, Shadowtooth could feel it restricting his movements. Although he struggled, he couldn't adapt to the watery environment. It was as if the pool rejected his existence.

Not only did his Basic Attributes immediately decrease by 30%, but his physique also visibly weakened.

This move was none other than Aqua Precinct, a Tier 2 Legacy Domain Spell Aqua Rose had learned. However, since she was using the Spell on land, it couldn't display its full potential. Even so, the Spell would reduce all enemies' Basic Attributes by 30%, physique by 20%, and Movement Speed by 30%.

However, the truly impressive effect wasn't its ability to weaken enemies. Rather, it was perfectly suited to both offense and defense.

Unlike Ice Wall or Frost Barrier, which required incantations, Aqua Rose could easily form a maximum of three water curtains to protect herself with just a thought. Each water curtain had the properties of a Tier 2 defensive Spell. With all three layers, the water curtains could even block Tier 3 Spells.

Aqua Precinct's offensive capabilities were even more impressive. Although the attacks weren't AOE's, Aqua Rose could control a maximum of 12 water snakes to strike her opponents. Each water snake's Strength was the equivalent of 140% of the caster's Intelligence.

"Let's take this fight seriously." Standing on the water's surface, Aqua Rose smiled at Shadowtooth.

As she spoke, 12 eight-meter-long water snakes manifested around the caster.

From afar, it looked as if Shadowtooth were facing twelve Great Lords.

Aqua Rose's Intelligence Attribute had already been extremely high, but after obtaining the Sea God's Legacy and the Sea Dragon Staff, each of her water snakes possessed Strength on par with a Great Lord of the same level. Moreover, unlike a Great Lord, the water snakes didn't have HP. As long as Aqua Rose was alive and her Aqua Precinct was in place, they would fight.

If this were a naval battle, the twelve water snakes would have double the Strength. Even a Tier 2 player with an active Berserk Skill would struggle to defeat one.

"Impossible?!"

“What kind of Spell is that?!”

“Just who is she?!”

The watching Shadow Dragon Legion members were stupefied. The sight of these twelve serpents was petrifying.

How was this a PvP fight? Shadowtooth was practically trying to solo a Boss!

“Die!” Aqua Rose showed no mercy as she controlled the twelve snakes to strike at Shadowtooth.

As the water snakes flew towards him, Shadowtooth felt as if he were watching a massive waterfall pour down on his head. Immediately, Shadowtooth activated his Berserk Skill and tried to avoid the approaching attacks. However, the water snakes were astonishingly fast. They crossed a dozen yards and reached the Assassin almost instantly.

As a Domain Realm expert, Shadowtooth had a perfect grasp of the snake’s trajectories, but he wasn’t fast enough to move out of harm’s way in time. In the end, one of the snakes slipped past his defenses. Fortunately, Shadowtooth reacted quickly enough to block the attack with Magic Breaker.

Due to Magic Breaker’s passive, Spell-weakening effect, the water snake’s attack wasn’t nearly as powerful. In the end, its attack was slightly weaker than a High Lord’s of the same level.

Although Shadowtooth’s Basic Attributes had diminished, his Strength after activating his Berserk Skill could still rival that of a Lord ranked monster of the same level. He didn’t have much of an issue blocking the attack. Though the impact had slid him backward, he had only lost around 400 HP. It wasn’t a considerable amount to an Assassin with 44,000 HP in total.

For a time, the two combatants engaged in a battle of attrition. Aqua Precinct was unlike other Spells, where one only needed to invest Mana when they cast the Spell. Rather, the Domain spell fed off of the user's Mana to sustain itself. In exchange, the Spell did not have a Cooldown or duration. Players could turn it on and off freely.

That wasn't to say that Aqua Rose could maintain the Aqua Precinct indefinitely or a long time. The Spell consumed a frightening amount of Mana every second. Based on her remaining Mana, Aqua Rose had about three more minutes with the Spell. Of course, she could drink an Advanced Mana Recovery Potion to restore her Mana during the battle.

Shadowtooth was in a similar situation. Although he continued to lose HP throughout the battle, each attack only devoured three or four hundred HP. He could easily replenish the lost HP with an Advanced Regeneration Potion.

As a result, the battle was locked in a temporary stalemate.

"I didn't expect to find an expert like you in Zero Wing as well. No wonder that little girl is trying to recruit your Guild." Shadowtooth constantly tried to close in on his opponent.

...

While the battle raged between Aqua Rose and Shadowtooth, the fight stunned Zero Wing's members atop the hill. In their eyes, both players were absolute monsters. If any one of them had to face Aqua Rose or Shadowtooth, they'd likely die in an instant.

“Sure enough, a Domain Realm expert isn’t easy to deal with.” Shadowtooth’s prowess even surprised Shi Feng. Aqua Rose was a Tier 2 player and wielded the Sea God’s Legacy, yet the Assassin bridged the gap between their levels, tiers, and classes with his techniques. Aqua Rose only had a minor advantage. “However, Aqua should’ve exhausted a lot of Mana by now. It’s about time she took things seriously.”

Unfortunately for Shadowtooth, while techniques could supplement for one’s flaws, there was a limit to how much they could help. Not even Domain Realm experts were an exception.

“Take things seriously? The Vice Guild Leader isn’t fighting with everything she’s got?” Fierce Snake was confused when he overheard Shi Feng’s muttering.

He had only ever witnessed a fight of this level when Zhao Yueru had faced Yan Tianxing. In fact, Shadowtooth was much stronger than Yan Tianxing. The fact that Aqua Rose, who didn’t have a cataclysmic Spell like Zhao Yueru’s Frostflame Oblivion, could suppress a monster like Shadowtooth was astounding.

Yet, Shi Feng had indicated that she wasn’t using her full strength.

Even if he heard it from Shi Feng, Fierce Snake found it hard to believe.

As Fierce Snake struggled over the revelation, Aqua Rose took a deep breath. Suddenly, dark fog began to surround her body. The intensity of her aura skyrocketed.

“Could it be... She hasn’t activated a Berserk Skill?” Shadowtooth’s expression darkened when he sensed Aqua Rose’s rampaging aura.

During Shadowtooth's brief moment of surprise, a water snake managed to slip his notice. By the time Shadowtooth snapped out of it, he had no choice but to block the attack with Magic Breaker.

Boom!

The impact threw the Assassin over a dozen yards away, his HP decreasing by over 4,600. The water snake's Attack Power had exceeded the limit he could block.

In God's Domain, players could reduce incoming damage by blocking the attack, but one the opponent's Strength was significantly higher than one's one, it could break through one's block threshold. If that happened, players would receive a considerable amount of damage despite their defense.

Chapter 1434 – Power of a Tier 2 Class

After the water snake had sent him flying, Shadowtooth had been forced to take six steps back when he landed even after readjusting his posture in the air. His Magic Breaker hummed as it vibrated.

From that one attack, Shadowtooth had lost over 10% of his HP on the spot. The snakes' Strength had clearly increased.

"Commander!"

"How is she suddenly so strong?!"

“Has she been hiding her strength!?”

The Shadow Dragon Legion members were shocked as they watched Aqua Rose approach Shadowtooth. Despite having activated his Berserk Skill, Shadowtooth had failed to block an attack. If they told the other members from the Dragon-Phoenix Pavilion, they’d be called raving lunatics.

Yet, it had just happened...

“Is this the difference between tiers?” Gentle Snow was slightly surprised to see Shadowtooth in such a miserable state.

Although she had known that there was a fairly large gap between Tier 1 and 2, she had never imagined that the gap would be this large.

With Tier 2 Attributes and Spells, in addition to a Legacy that even surpassed Peak Legacies, Aqua Rose overwhelmed the Dragon-Phoenix Pavilion’s number one Assassin, rendering the latter utterly powerless.

However, Aqua Rose had no intention of giving Shadowtooth time to catch his breath. Immediately, she controlled the twelve water snakes to continue their assault.

“Shit!” Seeing the incoming water snakes, Shadowtooth felt his scalp tingle. Previously, he had been able to defend himself with Magic Breaker, but now, he couldn’t even block an attack. Dodging the snakes was also impossible.

After another brief exchange, Shadowtooth lost over 9,000 HP to two more water snakes. Now, he had less than 50% remaining. It would only take a few more hits to send him to the afterlife.

“Everyone, charge!” Shadowtooth gnashed his teeth and issued the command. He turned to a slim Assassin in dark-gray leather armor and shouted, “Speeches, find a way to silence her!”

At this point, he knew that he was no match for Aqua Rose. But this wasn’t a competition; it was a real battle. He couldn’t order a retreat just because he couldn’t defeat the woman. Since one player wasn’t enough to deal with Aqua Rose, they needed to fight as a unit.

When Shadowtooth ordered the attack, the Shadow Dragon Legion members were shocked.

Although this was not the first time their commander had asked for help dealing with a lone opponent, he generally only did so when they faced monster-level existences. This was the first time he has requested assistance against an unknown expert.

In other words, Shadowtooth had acknowledged Aqua Rose’s strength.

While the Shadow Dragon Legion members were shocked, they still joined the fight without hesitation. The healers in the back immediately responded by casting Truth Shield on their commander. They sent a couple of Healing Spells at the same time, raising Shadowtooth’s HP to full.

Meanwhile, over a dozen Assassins snuck around to Aqua Rose’s back. The remaining ranged classes began to launch their attacks.

Although the hillside path was narrow, there was enough room for dozens of ranged players to move within range while maintaining some distance from the Cursemancer.

“You’re finally sick of watching?” Rather than panic as dozens of Spells and arrows rained down on her, Aqua Rose revealed a calm smile as she said, “Unfortunately, you are too late.”

Before anyone knew it, Aqua Rose had finished drawing several dozen lines of runes in the air. She then stabbed her staff into the ground and twisted it. Responding to her command, a massive magic array covered the ground, covering a 100-yard radius.

During her fight with Shadowtooth, she had subtly moved closer to the other Shadow Dragon Legion members. However, she hadn’t expected Shadowtooth to help her out, calling his allies to join him within her attack range.

After gaining the Sea God’s Legacy, she had learned three Tier 2 Spells.

The strongest among them was Aqua Precinct. Aside from that, she had the Tier 2 Curse, Annihilation Torrent. With the Sea Dragon Staff’s buff, Annihilation Torrent could rival a Tier 3 large-scale destruction Spell.

“Crap! Everyone, retreat!” Shadowtooth had a bad feeling when he saw the magic array under his feet.

Unfortunately, it was too late.

Suddenly, a torrent of water descended from the sky. Not only did the waterfall shatter all of the attacks against Aqua Rose, but it also formed a massive tidal wave once it crashed to the ground. The tidal wave

spread out in a ring, devouring everything in range. In the blink of an eye, the wave swallowed Shadowtooth and his allies. Although some players had reacted quickly enough to activate Invulnerability Skills, Annihilation Torrent lasted for ten seconds. Not even those Skills could save them.

After ten seconds, none of the 200-plus Shadow Dragon Legion members were anywhere to be seen. Instead, weapons and pieces of equipment, which could even tempt top-tier experts, had taken their place.

“Is the Vice Guild Leader also a monster?” The Zero Wing members watching from the hilltop stared in shock as they watched Aqua Rose wipe out a quarter of the Shadow Dragon Legion by herself.

Originally, they thought that Zhao Yueru was the strongest trump card Zero Wing had hidden. They hadn’t expected Aqua Rose’s power. Not only had she killed over 200 of the Dragon-Phoenix Pavilion’s experts, but she had also claimed the life of its number one Assassin. With such an impressive battle record, she could easily rank among the top 100 of the God’s Domain Experts List.

While these players cheered for their Vice Guild Leader, a figure suddenly appeared in the devastation her Annihilation Torrent had left. This figure was none other than the Shadow Dragon Legion’s commander, Shadowtooth.

“What?! He’s still alive?!” Everyone was astonished to see the man.

They had all seen Aqua Rose’s large-scale destruction Spell hit Shadowtooth, and they had watched the attack take his life, yet he stood before them.

“I never expected to find an expert like you in Zero Wing. I give up. The Shadow Dragon Legion will withdraw. However, you won’t be so lucky next time,” Shadowtooth declared as he glanced at Aqua Rose. Immediately, he activated Vanish and disappeared.

Aqua Rose's Annihilation Torrent had, in fact, killed him. However, he carried a super-rare Resuscitation Scroll, a treasure he had obtained in an ancient ruin. The scroll would automatically revive a player and restore their HP to full upon death. The Scroll also spared the player from the typical death penalty.

He had hoped to save the Scroll for the contest on Thunder Island. He had never thought that he would have to waste it in a place like this.

He only had a total of three Resuscitation Scrolls. Among them, he had given one to Nine Dragons Emperor. Now that he had used one here, he only had one left. He couldn't afford to continue this battle with Aqua Rose. After all, the Resuscitation Scroll activated passively. It would activate as soon as the player carrying it died. It would not care about the player's desires. If she killed him a second time, he would lose this lifesaving trump card.

Shortly after Shadowtooth fled, the rest of the Shadow Dragon Legion followed. It was obvious that they had given up on this siege.

When Crimson Fox and his army, who had just reached the battlefield, saw the Shadow Dragon Legion's retreat, confusion flashed in their eyes.

What was happening?

Chapter 1435 – Slaughter

"Why is the Shadow Dragon Legion retreating?"

“Look! The Shadow Dragon Legion is missing a lot of members!”

“What?! The Shadow Dragon Legion actually lost to Zero Wing!?”

Crimson Castle’s members were stupefied as they watched the fleeing Shadow Dragon Legion. After all was said and done, the Shadow Dragon Legion was one of the Dragon-Phoenix Pavilion’s trump card legions. Although it only had 1,000 members, even a 10,000-man army from a first-rate Guild would be powerless against the legion. Particularly in narrow terrains such as this, a 1,000-man legion could exert its strength to its full potential.

Yet, Zero Wing’s 1,000-plus army had defeated this legion...

“Guild Leader, the Shadow Dragon Legion has retreated. What should we do?” An indescribable sense of shock gripped Lonely Castle’s heart.

“Useless garbage! Didn’t they tell us to leave everything to them?!” Crimson Fox ground his teeth as he glared at the distant Shadow Dragon Legion. “Since we can’t rely on the Shadow Dragon Legion, we’ll deal with this problem ourselves! I refuse to believe that Zero Wing can take on an army of 10,000 elites!”

There were always rumors in the virtual gaming world about superpowers’ trump card legions of 1,000 men slaughtering 10,000-men armies from first-rate Guilds. But they were just that, rumors. When it really came down to a fight, the victor was never guaranteed until the end.

“Advance! Surround the hill! Do not let a single Zero Wing player leave this place alive!” Crimson Fox commanded.

Immediately, all 15,000-plus Crimson Castle elites surged towards Zero Wing's hill.

However, when Crimson Castle's army was only 1,000 yards away from the hill, two beams of light descended from above.

Before these players could react, the black-and-white beams slammed into Crimson Castle's army. Following which, two pillars of light rose into the sky. Even Green Rain Town's players could see the spectacle.

When the two light pillars faded, they revealed two large, empty clearings in the middle of the army.

Despite the fact that Crimson Castle's members had spread out, the two attacks had claimed over 6,000 lives...

Although these two shots had cost Shi Feng 4,000 Magic Crystals, he considered the exchange worthwhile since he had killed so many players.

"Zero...Wing!" Crimson Fox's eyes turned bloodshot when he realized how many of his Guild members had vanished.

However, although Crimson Fox was furious, his companions didn't share the same sentiment. Rather than rage, fear flashed in these players' eyes.

With just two shots, Zero Wing had annihilated one-third of their forces. If Zero Wing fired the cannons a few more times, their army would be devastated.

...

Elsewhere, when the Shadow Dragon Legion saw the fading light pillars, they were relieved to escape the attacks.

If not for their commander ordering the retreat when he had, the Intermediate Mana Pulse Cannons would've claimed their lives.

They finally understood how pointless it was for a Guild to focus on quantity over quality. Collecting war weapons was far more important.

"Commander, are we really abandoning Green Rain Town?" a Shadow Dragon Legion member asked Shadowtooth.

Nine Dragons Emperor had personally tasked them with Green Rain Town's protection. If they packed up and left now, they would most likely have to face the man's wrath.

"What else are we supposed to do? Fight them?" Angrily, Shadowtooth snapped, "The only person to blame here is that fool, Crimson Fox! If he hadn't resorted to petty tricks to stop Zero Wing from capturing Hidden Fog Town, Zero Wing wouldn't have decided to make an example of Crimson Castle. Zero Wing isn't what it was in the past. Notify the other Guilds under our control; tell them that unless they have a way to deal with those cannons, they should keep their heads down."

He hadn't wanted to interfere with the arrangement between Zero Wing and Crimson Castle in the first place, but since the Guild had come knocking on Green Rain Town's door, it had forced his hand. In the end, not only had he failed to stop Zero Wing, but he also lost over 300 Shadow Dragon Legion members in a few minutes. It had been a heavy blow to the legion.

...

"What are you all afraid of?! These kinds of attacks have a long Cooldown! Zero Wing only has 1,000 players. If we finish them off quickly enough, they won't have a chance to fire those cannons again!" Crimson Fox bellowed.

Although the Intermediate Mana Pulse Cannons were powerful, he had a rough estimate of their Cooldown. Four minutes and thirty seconds had passed between the first attack and the second. In other words, the Intermediate Mana Pulse Cannons' Cooldown should be four to five minutes long. This was more than enough time for a 10,000-man army to wipe out 1,000 players.

Crimson Fox's reasoning shook his players from their frightened daze. Reclaiming their confidence, they dashed for the hillside paths.

...

"Guild Leader, they're advancing again," Negative Life reported through the team chat.

"Good. Everyone, maintain your positions! Hold the enemy off for as long as possible!" Crimson Fox's determination didn't particularly surprise Shi Feng. The man had no more paths of retreat. If he let Zero Wing attack unhindered, he'd lose Green Rain Town and his army. The Guild Leader had to fight.

However, climbing the hill wasn't so simple. Zero Wing's main force and Dark Gods Legion members were stationed around the hillside paths. With the terrain, they had the advantage. As for trading the established paths for the steep slopes, doing so was suicide.

This was also Zero Wing's main reason for choosing this hill. Otherwise, he would've chosen a farther location. After all, the Intermediate Mana Pulse Cannons had a maximum range of 20,000 yards.

With Aqua Rose and the others guarding the four available hillside paths, the hill was like an impenetrable fortress.

The path Zhao Yueru's team guarded was especially atrocious. With MTs at the forefront, Zhao Yueru could attack freely. Even when Crimson Castle's MTs activated their Lifesaving Skills, receiving all sorts of damage absorption buffs, the Flame Witch's powerful fire-type Spells killed them instantly, giving Crimson Castle's healers no time to help their companions. With each volley, Zhao Yueru claimed two or three dozen lives.

All Crimson Castle's members could do at this point was trade blow for blow.

However, both Zero Wing's main force and the Dark Gods Legion had consumed Sea God's Blessings, increasing all of their Resistances by 100 points. With their inherent Defense and Magic Resistance, they didn't even lose more than 4,000 HP from a direct hit. Furthermore, the MTs blocked the majority of the incoming attacks with their shields. The blocked attacks were lucky to deal over -100 damage to Zero Wing's MTs.

Meanwhile, Gentle Snow fought like a literal war goddess as she faced Crimson Castle's members. After receiving a Truth Shield from one of the Clerics in the rear, she dashed into the group of MTs on her path and started a massacre. With Whirlwind Slash, she sent over a dozen MTs flying. Although Crimson Castle's ranged players tried to bombard the Snow Goddess, she dodged the majority of their attacks. Even if she failed to dodge an attack, none of them dealt more than -2,000 damage thanks to her Seven

Luminaries Battle Army and the Sea God's Blessing. After activating Seven Luminaries Domain, she was even more of a juggernaut.

Aqua Rose's path was a simpler scene. The twelve water snakes she summoned with Aqua Precinct were practically invincible. No matter how many Crimson Castle members came at her, she sent them all flying. Her Mana was the only problem, but the Guild's Oracles and Druids easily solved the problem, supporting Aqua Rose by replenishing her Mana. Including the Advanced Mana Recovery Potions, she should have no problems maintaining Aqua Precinct until the Intermediate Mana Pulse Cannons' Cooldown completed.

Time passed very quickly. After a few minutes, Crimson Castle had lost nearly 3,000 members, with 80% of the army's MTs dead. With most of its meat shields gone, Crimson Castle had to rely on their melee players to break Zero Wing's blockades. In contrast, Zero Wing had only suffered around 20 casualties thus far.

"It's about time we give Crimson Castle a taste of Zero Wing's true power." When Shi Feng saw more reinforcements from Crimson Castle coming from Green Rain Town, he retrieved the Bible of Darkness and a large number of Miniature Ballistas.

Chapter 1436 – Everlasting Moment

"Charge! Keep moving forward! Their healers should be running out of Mana! Once they run out, we'll take the hill!" Crimson Fox shouted, his eyes bloodshot. At this point, he had completely disregarded the potential losses.

However, as Crimson Fox had said, Crimson Castle's ruthless charge was a huge burden on Zero Wing's healers. The healers relentlessly cast every Healing Spell they had available. Their Mana consumption rate was even greater than during a Boss raid.

In a normal Boss fight, they only needed to focus on the team's MTs. Now, however, they had to heal everyone. If they lost their focus, their companions could die. In fact, the 20-plus casualties Zero Wing suffered so far were the result of something distracting the healers.

Seeing Zero Wing's healers running low on Mana, Crimson Castle's members grew even more fervent with their attacks.

Zero Wing's members struggled. Fighting 10,000 pigs would be a challenge, not to mention 10,000 players with Skills. If not for their superior combat techniques, weapons, and equipment, Crimson Castle's members would've already overrun the hill.

"Guild Leader, although we have 20,000 more members on the way, are we really going to duke it out with Zero Wing?" Lonely Castle asked. His heart ached as he watched his guildmates die in droves.

These players were all elite members from the Guild. Even if they defeated Zero Wing, Crimson Castle would likely suffer grievous losses. It would be utterly helpless if Zero Wing decided to attack again.

"We don't have a choice. If we lose Green Rain Town, Crimson Castle will be in an even worse position," Crimson Fox said as he looked towards the hilltop, helplessness gripping his heart. If he had known that Zero Wing was capable of this level of warfare, he would never have played such petty tricks. Unfortunately, it was too late for his regret.

If Crimson Castle won this battle, although it would damage the Guild's morale, it would still have a chance to make a comeback.

In contrast, if Crimson Castle lost, the Guild would forever lose its position in Lake Heart City. It wouldn't even be surprising if the Guild disbanded as a result of losing Green Rain Town.

He was certain that Zero Wing wouldn't last much longer. After all, their enemy had only dispatched a 1,000-man team. Zero Wing must be dreaming if it thought it could triumph over an elite army of tens of thousands with such a small force.

However, as soon as Crimson Fox finished speaking, two more black-white beams of light descended from the hilltop. With the chaos of battle as a distraction, the two Intermediate Mana Pulse Cannons had finished their Cooldowns before anyone had realized it.

The two beams struck Crimson Castle's army once again. Although the attacks weren't as effective as last time, the two beams still erased nearly 3,000 Crimson Castle members. The rampaging survivors instantly fell silent.

Compared to the cannons' physical destruction, the mental blow was devastating.

"Endure it! More reinforcements will arrive soon!" Crimson Fox tried to placate his Guild members. "Once they're here, we'll prepare Zero Wing for its funeral! None of the drops from their members need to be reported or handed over to the Guild! And I'll award any player who kills a Zero Wing member 1,000 GCPs! Killing an upper echelon will earn you 50,000 GCPs!"

Crimson Castle's members cheered when they heard the potential rewards. Although Crimson Castle's GCPs weren't particularly valuable, 1,000 points were still the equivalent of a little over 1 Gold. Fifty-thousand points were worth around 50-plus Gold. It was enough money to purchase a Common Mount or a piece or two of top-tier equipment.

However, following the Intermediate Mana Pulse Cannons' attacks, dozens of flaming arrows cascaded down from the hilltop. These were the Exploding Arrows from the Miniature Ballistas.

Although the Exploding Arrows were much weaker than the Intermediate Mana Pulse Cannons, there were far more of them, and they had a shorter Cooldown.

To ensure the fall of Green Rain Town, Shi Feng had prepared 50 Miniature Ballistas.

Following which, explosions shook the ground amid Crimson Castle's army. The Guild's members transformed into streaks of light. A single volley had claimed over 500 lives. As they watched their comrades die, the survivors also noticed a magic barrier spread out from the hilltop. The barrier blocked every attack from Crimson Castle's members, protecting Zero Wing. In contrast, Zero Wing's members easily attacked the players beyond the barrier.

However, this wasn't the worst part. Without warning, a Level 72, Tier 3 Demon with fiery wings had appeared over Crimson Castle's army. Gathering Mana in its palms, the Demon created a fireball the size of a small mountain before hurling it at unsuspecting players. Instantly, over a hundred players vanished.

"Impossible!" Crimson Fox couldn't believe his eyes. "How could Zero Wing be so strong?"

With such overwhelming offensive and defensive capabilities, not even a 100,000-man army could defeat Zero Wing's 1,000 players, much less his 10,000 players.

The last attack had shocked Crimson Castle's members so badly that they had forgotten to continue their attacks.

They all knew how powerful magic barriers were. As long as a magic barrier had enough Mana, and none of the attacks exceeded its endurance limit, it would remain in place indefinitely...

...

“Zero Wing dares to take the Shadow Dragon Legion so lightly!” Watching from afar, fear and rage flashed in Shadowtooth’s eyes.

He had led one of the Dragon-Phoenix Pavilion’s bona fide trump card legions against the Guild, yet Zero Wing hadn’t even bothered to use everything it had during their fight. It felt as if their enemy had only been playing with them.

...

“It’s about time we end this battle.” Shi Feng smiled when he saw Crimson Fox in the distance. He then activated Phantom Kill and Space Movement. He stepped into the spatial tear.

In the blink of an eye, Shi Feng appeared above Crimson Fox.

“The sky split?”

“That’s...Black Flame!”

“What is he trying to do?”

Crimson Castle's members were surprised to see the figure emerge from the spatial tear. They couldn't help but gasp when they got a clear view of the man.

"Black Flame!" Although Shi Feng's appearance surprised Crimson Fox, he reacted quickly and retrieved two Tier 3 Magic Scrolls from his bag. Sneering, he growled, "You dare stand before me?! You must be trying to die!"

Over 15 yards separated the two Guild Leaders. Crimson Castle's top-tier experts surrounded them. He even had a Tier 3 defensive Scroll and Tier 3 single-target attack Scroll. Killing a peak expert should be a piece of cake.

"Die!" Crimson Fox unfurled the Tier 3 single-target attack Scroll.

However, Shi Feng responded immediately by using Instant Strike, appearing before his enemy and brandishing Killing Ray.

Shadow Blade!

Suddenly, a single streak of blue light, surrounded by nine streaks of black light, shot through Crimson Fox, who still wore his sinister smile, and devoured all of the man's HP. Crimson Fox hadn't even activated the unfurled Magic Scroll. Everyone who saw Shi Feng's Attack Speed gasped.

As Crimson Fox collapsed to the ground, he dropped a pair of gloves and a stone fragment that emitted a faint pressure. Without hesitation, Shi Feng pocketed both items. He then switched position with his doppelganger and canceled Phantom Kill, disappearing as if he had never existed in the first place. Meanwhile, Crimson Castle's nearby experts stood there in a daze. It was as if time had frozen for these experts.

Chapter 1437 – Black Dragon Empire Shocked

“This is a lie, right?!”

“He actually disappeared?!”

“Is he a ghost?!”

Crimson Castle’s members stared in shock at their Guild Leader’s motionless body.

Everything had happened too quickly!

Shi Feng had appeared and taken Crimson Fox’s life before anyone had realized it. He then vanished without a trace.

After Shi Feng had left, these players were silent for a long moment. When they finally snapped out of their daze, their complexions turned deathly pale as they looked towards Shi Feng, who had returned to the hilltop.

Fear dominated Crimson Castle’s members.

They had stood over 1,000 yards away from the mountain to avoid getting caught in the shockwaves from the Intermediate Mana Pulse Cannons' attacks. Originally, they had assumed that they were safe. However, Shi Feng only needed a moment to teach them how foolish that hope was.

If Shi Feng could easily kill an expert like their Guild Leader despite over a thousand yards between them, killing them all would be child's play.

Today, they finally learned what a real expert was. They could never use numbers to overwhelm this level of strength.

"Vice Guild Leader, do we continue the battle?" The Guild's experts turned to the Shield Warrior, Lonely Castle.

Now that Crimson Fox, their commander and Guild Leader, was dead, the army fell into disarray. They still hadn't destroyed Zero Wing's magic barrier, and a constant stream of Exploding Arrows still rained down. Even with 20,000 reinforcements, they would be marching to their deaths.

"We...retreat," Lonely Castle said, shaking his head dejectedly as he stared at Shi Feng, who stood at the top of the hill.

The strength Zero Wing had displayed was simply mind-boggling, and with their Guild Leader dead, Lonely Castle wasn't confident of defeating the enemy Guild.

Hearing Lonely Castle's order to retreat, Crimson Castle's members breathed a sigh of relief. They abruptly scattered, fleeing the battlefield like madmen. When Crimson Castle's reinforcements caught wind of the order, they, too, fled into the surrounding wilderness, not daring to set foot in Green Rain Town again.

The Guild members in Green Rain Town began to evacuate, afraid that the Intermediate Mana Pulse Cannons would obliterate them if they weren't fast enough.

Meanwhile, news of Zero Wing's victory spread throughout the Black Dragon Empire.

Although Guilds fought each other every day in the empire, large-scale siege wars were rare. After all, no Guild wanted to lose an advantage. These Guilds avoided all-out wars unless absolutely necessary.

Many of the empire's players had been watching the battle between Zero Wing and Crimson Castle. Not even the latter's tens of thousands of elite members in Green Rain Town were a match for Zero Wing's 1,000-man team. No matter how they looked at it, the outcome was incomprehensible. Hence, news of the war had spread much quicker than usual.

"Did you hear? Crimson Castle was defeated."

"What's going on? Crimson Castle actually lost? Didn't Zero Wing only dispatch 1,000 players?"

"That can't be possible, right? After all, Crimson Castle has an elite army of tens of thousands. They weren't a match for Zero Wing's 1,000-man team? Are Crimson Castle's members idiots?"

"You guys might not realize it since you weren't there, but I watched the battle personally. Zero Wing had used some kind of war weapon to shatter the town's defensive magic array in a single hit and kill several thousand players instantly. The second-rate Guilds that had allied with Crimson Castle pulled their forces from the town on the spot. Although Crimson Castle sent its army to meet its enemy, Zero Wing's war weapons wiped out one-third of its forces before Crimson Castle could even reach the Guild."

“Zero Wing even used a fleet of Miniature Ballistas to bombard Crimson Castle’s forces with flaming arrows. Against so many war weapons, not even several hundred thousand elite players would have a chance, much less tens of thousands.”

The Black Dragon Empire’s official forums burned with conversation. Some people had even uploaded battle videos of Zero Wing’s assault on Green Rain Town.

Everyone who saw the two massive craters in Green Rain Town was stupefied. At the same time, they also understood why Crimson Castle had lost.

What a joke!

With a few more attacks of that scale, Green Rain Town would fall to ruin. Crimson Castle hadn’t had any hope of winning. In fact, that battle couldn’t be called a fight. This had simply been one-sided bullying. The number of Miniature Ballistas Zero Wing had employed in the end had been particularly ridiculous. How was a player army supposed to stand against so many war weapons?

Meanwhile, the recording of Crimson Fox’s death at Shi Feng’s hands showed the Black Dragon Empire’s players what a Sword King truly was.

“So, that is Zero Wing?” Everyone’s eyes glowed when they watched Zero Wing’s overwhelming power.

Although Zero Wing’s performance in the ranking competition had been frightening, it had only proven that the Guild had powerful experts. To the Black Dragon Empire’s players, Zero Wing had a long way to go before it could compare to the other large Guilds’ foundations.

However, after watching today's battle, everyone believed that Zero Wing deserved the rank it won in the competition.

With so many weapons of war, who would possibly dare provoke the Guild?

For a time after the momentous battle, more of the empire's players tried to join Zero Wing.

Now that they were certain of Zero Wing's rise in the empire, they knew that it'd be far more difficult to join the Guild if they didn't do so now, if they did not join now, it would become much more difficult to do so in the future.

At the same time, the empire's various large Guilds held emergency meetings.

The goal of these meetings was simple: notify everyone to avoid provoking Zero Wing under any circumstances. At the same time, they began to reorganize their priorities, focusing on exploring ancient ruins to obtain more war weapons.

Shi Feng had no idea that due to this war, he had taught these Guilds an important lesson. The number of members a Guild had would no longer be important in Guild wars and siege battles. Defensive magic arrays and war weapons would decide victory. With these armaments, even a 1,000-man team could easily capture a Guild town.

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Meanwhile, every player had fled Green Rain Town. Only the town's NPCs remained.

“Guild Leader, are we going to take over Green Rain Town now?” Gentle Snow’s excitement grew when she saw the defenseless Guild town.

From the time they had arrived, the battle had only lasted a little over ten minutes, and they had captured a Guild town while only suffering minor losses. Moreover, Green Rain Town was in a resource-rich area. With this town, Zero Wing would have a much easier time collecting herbs and ores.

“No. We’re going to destroy it,” Shi Feng said, shaking his head.

“But Guild Leader, it’s a ready-made town.... If we claim it, we can save on construction costs,” Aqua Rose hurriedly advised when she heard Shi Feng’s plan.

What a joke!

It was clear that Crimson Castle must have invested at least several tens of thousands of Gold. Moreover, Green Rain Town was a high-resource town. Many Guilds would love such an opportunity. If not for Nine Dragons Emperor’s secret support, the empire’s first-rate Guilds would’ve long since tried to raid the town and claim it for their own.

Yet, Shi Feng wanted to abandon it! This was insane!

“There’s no need to get caught up in this town. We have a much better option,” Shi Feng said, smiling. He then took a blood-red stone that radiated a faint pressure from his bag. This was the stone that had dropped from Crimson Fox’s body.

Chapter 1438 – Frightening Harvest

“A better option?”

Gentle Snow looked at the blood-red stone in Shi Feng’s hand curiously. The stone was the size of a fist. If not for the faint pressure radiating from it, it would be easily mistaken for an ordinary red gemstone.

“This isn’t just an ordinary stone. It’s actually made of Red Luminaries Stone.” Seeing the doubt on Gentle Snow’s face, Shi Feng smiled and explained, “You know what Red Luminaries Stone is. It’s far more valuable than Magic Crystals. It’s also a superconductive ore, only second to the Seven Luminaries Crystals.”

“But what does this stone have anything to do with a resource town?” Gentle Snow asked curiously.

“I haven’t finished. This stone is made of Red Luminaires Stone, but it’s not complete. Originally, the Black Dragon Empire had created teleportation gates leading to 33 neutral maps outside of the empire’s borders. These locations were the reason the empire had flourished during the past. However, the teleportation gates had been destroyed during a rebellion, and the teleportation cores that powered the gates had gone missing. This stone is one of those cores.

“With this teleportation core, we can construct a stable teleportation gate in a Guild town within the Black Dragon Empire as long as we collect a bottle of Temporal Sand and 200,000 Magic Crystals. We can use the teleportation gate to travel to the neutral map recorded within the core.”

Shi Feng explained the teleportation core in detail as he gazed at the stone in his hand.

During the Black Dragon Empire's early days, the empire had stood shoulder to shoulder with the Four Great Empires. If not for the rebellion and the teleportation gates' destruction, the Black Dragon Empire would've been the fifth strongest empire in God's Domain.

The Dragon-Phoenix Pavilion had obtained seven of the 33 teleportation cores in the past. As a result, the Pavilion had secured an abundance of resources and eventually grew to rival veteran Super Guilds.

Shi Feng had never expected to obtain one of these cores by killing Crimson Fox.

There were only 33 of these teleportation cores in the Black Dragon Empire, each one linked a high-resource, neutral map. Due to the nature of these maps, teleportation arrays couldn't reach them. Players usually had to rely on their own two feet to travel to these areas. If one had a means to teleport to a particular map, they'd have a monopoly on the map's resources.

Shi Feng had considered capturing Green Rain Town, but the town's resources paled in comparison to the teleportation core.

As long as Zero Wing captured Hidden Fog Town and constructed a teleportation gate, it'd have access to a large amount of resources, focusing a fraction of those resources into the town's development. They didn't need Green Rain Town; it would just be an additional expenditure for the Guild. They didn't need to worry about fending off other major powers contesting for the town either.

"Teleport to a neutral map? Guild Leader, are you joking?!" Gentle Snow stared at the stone in Shi Feng's hand in shock.

She had been playing God's Domain for quite some time now. As a member of the Guild's upper management, she kept up on various information about the game. Naturally, she had an acute understanding of the importance of neutral maps.

Neutral maps were not under human control. They weren't suitable for human settlements, either. However, these locations shared a similar aspect; they had a ridiculous amount of resources, far beyond those found in empires and kingdoms.

One could find rare and valuable resources in practically every corner.

However, neutral maps were extremely dangerous. They were also far from any civilization. Traveling to and from these areas was troublesome. Furthermore, it was difficult for players to remain in these maps for long periods. As a result, players' harvest was limited.

A teleportation gate connected to a neutral map was as good as taking control of that map. One could send players through the gate freely. Not only was it convenient, but it would also help Guild towns attract players and the resources they had to offer. One could just imagine how frighteningly valuable the core was.

Not even five Green Rain Tows would be worth as much as a single teleportation core.

Once Zero Wing set up the teleportation gate, it could develop in the Black Dragon Empire without worry, even if it had to face fierce competition from the empire's other large Guilds.

"Take a look at it yourself." Shi Feng then shared the teleportation core's introductory text with Gentle Snow.

The text referred to the stone as a teleportation core as Shi Feng had explained. However, there was no mention of its connected location. It only stated that it could be used to construct a teleportation gate leading to an unknown location.

After reading the introductory text, Gentle Snow began to search through Zero Wing's database. She quickly found information regarding fallen teleportation gates that had existed within the empire. These gates had led to 33 different neutral maps.

This discovery rendered Gentle Snow speechless.

She even wondered if Shi Feng were some kind of robot. It was astonishing how much information he knew.

The information about the Black Dragon Empire's teleportation gates was fragmented. If not for Shi Feng's explanation, she wouldn't have learned anything about these gates.

Although the teleportation core was a wonderful item, there was a major problem: the bottle of Temporal Sand and the 200,000 Magic Crystals. She had never even heard of the Temporal Sand.

Without the Temporal Sand, the teleportation core was just a paperweight.

"Leave the teleportation gate to me. You just need to worry about securing Hidden Fog Town and completing your Tier 2 promotion as soon as possible. You've seen the gap between Tier 1 and 2 for yourself. The sooner you complete your Promotion Quest, the easier leveling up will be," Shi Feng said.

He was fully aware of the teleportation core's flaws.

The required 200,000 Magic Crystals were enough to choke a first-rate Guild. It was already difficult to make ends meet, much less save up. A Guild would require a tremendous amount of time to collect so many crystals.

The other problem was the Temporal Sand. Temporal Sand was counted by the grain, and each bottle contained 500 grains. Every grain was extremely valuable. Each had sold for 20 Gold or more in the past. During its peak, these Temporal Sand grains had even sold for over 50 Gold each. Moreover, there wasn't nearly enough supply to keep up with demand.

Aside from its relation to the teleportation gates, Temporal Sand grains were also used as valuable materials in crafting various Epic items. When one used Temporal Sand in an item's production, not only could it increase the success rate, but it could also enhance the item's Attributes. Moreover, the more Temporal Sand the crafter used, the greater the final product's enhancements would be. Hence, Temporal Sand had been highly sought after in God's Domain.

However, he only knew of two methods to obtain Temporal Sand in the Black Dragon Empire. Fortunately, he was considerably familiar with one method; he could purchase them from Countess Katie Green in Lake Heart City.

"It seems like it's time to pay another visit."

Chapter 1439 – Revisiting the Countess's Mansion

Black Dragon Empire, Black Dragon City:

People crowded the streets in the city's prosperous Trade Area. Level 42 and 43 experts were everywhere. Players atop Mounts were also a common sight.

In the luxurious Shops lining the streets, one could easily find Level 40 Secret-Silver Weapons and Equipment. A few Shops even had Level 40 Dark-Gold Weapons and Equipment on display in their windows.

Although more players in God's Domain reached Level 40 by the day, Level 40 Weapons and Equipment were still extremely rare. Many players that had reached Level 40 had to continue using Level 35 Equipment. Players who obtained even a piece of Level 40 Secret-Silver Equipment were overjoyed. As for Level 40 Dark-Gold Equipment, such items were even hard to find in kingdoms' Auction Houses.

Hence, seeing Level 40 Dark-Gold Equipment on display in the Shops here was incredible.

Only, the Level 40 Dark-Gold Weapons and Equipment were ridiculously expensive. Their prices were at least three times higher than the market price. It was obvious that these Shops had no intentions of selling the items, only using them for promotion.

Meanwhile, an eight-story-tall Guild Hall dominated the center of the Trade Area. From the building's top floor, a player could gaze upon the city as if they were its emperor.

In the Guild Hall's top-floor hall, Nine Dragons Emperor read a report he had just received from a subordinate. The players next to this intense player felt an intense pressure weigh on their shoulders. They felt as if they had been submerged in water as they even struggled to breathe.

"Zero Wing!" Nine Dragons Emperor's eyes were icy as he read the report. "Does Black Flame think he can afford my enmity just because he has Phoenix Rain backing him up?"

Not long ago, Zero Wing had utterly destroyed both of the towns under Crimson Castle's control.

Although most players didn't know that he, in fact, controlled both of the towns from the shadows, the Black Dragon Empire's various large Guilds were fully aware of the fact. Destroying these resource towns was the equivalent of a slap to the face.

Yet, Nine Dragons Emperor couldn't do anything about it.

Both towns had belonged to him personally, not his Guild. If he tried to mobilize the Dragon-Phoenix Pavilion's power against Zero Wing, Phoenix Rain would certainly get in his way, but sending his personal forces against the offending Guild was dangerous. Zero Wing was no longer a monster to be taken lightly.

Without the Dragon-Phoenix Pavilion's foundations, neither the Intermediate Mana Pulse Cannons nor the movement-type defensive magic array would be easy to deal with. The Guild had items that could cope with Zero Wing's war weapons, but they were under the Great Pavilion Master's control. Unless he became the next Great Pavilion Master, he wouldn't have access to these items.

"Martial, tell Beast Emperor that I accept his offer, but I have one condition. He must help us destroy Zero Wing!" Nine Dragons Emperor instructed his general in a frosty tone.

"Pavilion Master, if you agree to Beast Emperor's conditions, it will likely affect the situation at Black Dragon City. On the off chance that the Great Pavilion Master investigates the matter..." Martial Dragon could not help his surprise to hear the order.

"It doesn't matter. Beast Emperor needs some more time to deal with issues on his side. By the time he's ready, the contest on Thunder Island will be over. By then, I could be the Great Pavilion Master.

Who could possibly stand in my way?" Nine Dragons Emperor said, smiling confidently. "Alright, enough. Just pass my answer on to that old man."

"Understood!" Martial Dragon immediately left the hall.

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Meanwhile, a mysterious man in black robes and bandages was in the middle of a ceremony in a canyon surrounded by Evil energy. As he led the ritual, the Mana density around the man was several times higher than when Stone Forest Town's Obelisk had activated.

Flame Blood, whose skin had turned dark-gray, suddenly approached the black-clad man.

"Temple Master, we just received a message from Nine Dragon Emperor's men. The Dragon Pavilion Master has agreed to our conditions. However, in return, he wants us to eliminate Zero Wing," Flame Blood said with a smile.

"Hahaha! Interesting! Truly interesting!" Beast Emperor stopped chanting when he heard the news. He continued, "I will gladly accept this condition! Tell Nine Dragons Emperor that, as long as I complete my quest, neither Zero Wing nor his rival, Phoenix Rain, will be a problem."

He already bore a deep-seated hatred for Zero Wing. Due to Black Flame, not only had his Evil Demon army suffered a massive loss, but he had also lost an Evil God's Apostle slot.

If given the opportunity, he'd make the Guild pay.

Only, he hadn't expected Zero Wing to infuriate Nine Dragons Emperor to such a degree. Despite his numerous attempts to ally with Nine Dragons Emperor, the man had refused his offers. The refusals put in him a bit of a predicament.

Although he was an Evil God's Envoy, he hadn't accumulated enough power to be a threat to the Dragon-Phoenix Pavilion.

He had never dreamed that Zero Wing would inevitably lend him a hand.

With Heaven's Burial helping him in Star-Moon Kingdom and Nine Dragons Emperor supporting him in the Black Dragon Empire, he now had over a 70% chance of completing the quest he had received from the Evil God's Temple's Great Temple Master.

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Meanwhile, Lake Heart City's main street was quite lively. It was no less active than Black Dragon City's Trade Area.

This was all because Zero Wing had destroyed Crimson Castle's two Guild towns. This thorough and spectacular victory proved Zero Wing's prowess to every player in the city. It was obvious that given enough time, Zero Wing's Branch Guild in the Black Dragon Empire would grow to stand on equal footing with, or even surpass, the empire's first-rate Guilds, becoming the second most powerful Guild in the Black Dragon Empire.

Many independent players and experts in the empire had rushed to Lake Heart City in hopes of joining Zero Wing and its prosperous future. Even some of the empire's well-known adventurer teams wanted to join the Guild.

Not only was the Guild frighteningly powerful, but it also had the Battle Arena in Stone Forest Town. At this point, due to the ranking competition's results, Stone Forest Town's Battle Arena had become famous throughout the Black Dragon Empire.

According to the statistics some players had compiled, the public had discovered that many of the empire's top-ranking experts had trained in the Battle Arena. To be precise, they had trained in the Advanced Combat Rooms.

The Advanced Combat Room was a sacred training grounds that all expert players dreamed of accessing. Among the players that had trained in the Advanced Combat Rooms, Remnant Cloud and Graceful Moon had displayed the greatest improvements to their combat standards.

During the previous ranking competition, Remnant Cloud had only risen to the top 100 of his class, yet he had ranked among the top 50 in the latest competition. Furthermore, this last ranking competition had included far more powerful experts than those in the past. Many of the previous top 100 experts didn't even make it into the top 200.

Graceful Moon's performance had also been surprising, ranking among the top 100 of her class.

Due to these two players' performances, Stone Forest Town's popularity in the Black Dragon Empire had skyrocketed despite Zero Wing's lack of effort to promote the town.

As Shi Feng strolled down Lake Heart City's main street, he wore a new appearance thanks to the Demon Mask. With his Nightwalker's Cape's concealment, not even high-tiered NPCs he had encountered before should be able to recognize him.

During his previous visit to Countess Katie Green's mansion, the Countess had thrown him into a Trial of God. Now that he had the Nightwalker Cape, he should be able to visit the Countess again.

As Shi Feng approached the Countess's mansion, the Golden Stigmata's pulsing grew more intense. It reached a peak when he finally stood before the building.

She shouldn't be able to notice it, right? Taking a deep breath, Shi Feng stepped through the mansion's main entrance.

Chapter 1440 – Tier 5 Sacred Magic Knight

“Sir, this is the Countess's mansion. Outsiders are prohibited from entering.”

As soon as Shi Feng set foot in the compound, an elderly man in a black suit appeared before him.

“Outsiders are prohibited?” Shi Feng was curious as he looked at the old man.

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[Milton (Countess's Steward)] (Human)

Level 140

HP 55,000,000/55,000,000

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Although this was a Countess's mansion, Countess Katie Green was the proprietress of many of the empire's blackmarket Shops. She often had business with many NPC merchants. Hence, she never restricted entry to her mansion.

He hadn't encountered a single servant during his previous visit, yet entry was now restricted. It was clear that the Countess had grown cautious.

If he did not deal with this situation properly, he might further agitate the Countess. She might even move her base of operations elsewhere.

Fortunately, he had the Nightwalker's Cape. The Countess wouldn't easily see through his disguise.

"Hello. I've heard that the Countess is interested in Mana Stones. I have quite a few on hand. May I know if I can speak with her ladyship?" Shi Feng said as he revealed his Demon Hunter title.

The Demon Hunter title granted him the authority of a World Noble. As such, he enjoyed the status of a noble throughout all of God's Domain's human territories. With this title, he could even gain access to a Duke's home.

“So, you are Lord Demon Hunter. Please, follow me.”

Milton immediately adopted a respectful attitude upon seeing Shi Feng’s title. The old man then led Shi Feng into the mansion.

In the past, Countess Katie Green had been quite famous in the Black Dragon Empire. There were two reasons for her renown. The first reason was Countess Katie Green’s ownership of the blackmarket in Black Dragon Empire’s Abyss City. Abyss City was like Star-Moon Kingdom’s Evernight City in that it was also a Dark City. Countess Katie Green’s blackmarket Shop in the city offered players a variety of high-quality items, some of which could even tempt Super Guilds.

However, it was not easy to purchase the items from this Shop. To gain access, one first needed sufficient Favorability with the Countess. Players would only be able to purchase items after becoming members of the Shop. Meanwhile, the Shop didn’t accept Coins or Magic Crystals as payment. Rather, one had to haggle and offer items of equal value.

The second and most important reason for the Countess’s fame in the empire was related to her stock of Temporal Sand.

Temporal Sand was incredibly rare. Normally, players only had a chance of obtaining a few grains from super-large-scale Team Dungeons. Depending on the Dungeon’s difficulty, the drop-rate would vary. However, even Normal Mode super-large-scale Team Dungeons were no walk in the park. These Dungeons were generally reserved for large Guilds and a small number of well-known and top adventurer teams.

Due to its rarity and many uses, Temporal Sand was an extremely valuable commodity. Normally, the various large Guild reserved it as a strategic resource.

Fortunately, one could purchase Temporal Sand from Countess Katie Green, but there was a limit of 100 grains per day. As for the exchange rate, a single grain of Temporal Sand cost one Mana Stone. This price was a testament to the grain's value.

When players had realized this in the past, it had caused a commotion that had shaken God's Domain. Eventually, though, the Dragon-Phoenix Pavilion had monopolized this privilege.

Since no one knew about Temporal Sand yet, this was a good opportunity for Shi Feng to build up his stock. Luckily, he had accumulated quite a few Mana Stones thus far. As for the Seven Treasures, he would cautiously investigate the matter. After all, as a Countess in the Black Dragon Empire, her status was extraordinary. The Countess was a more powerful individual than he was. Naturally, one couldn't just open a Shop in Abyss City without enough strength.

Countess Katie Green was capable of rivaling Weissman, White River City's Magistrate. Her combat power was at the peak of Tier 4. A measly Tier 2 player like Shi Feng had no chance against the woman.

A short moment later, under Milton's lead, Shi Feng arrived before a quiet, elegant indoor garden on the mansion's third floor. A beautiful woman in a luxurious, crimson dress relaxed in the garden's center. She sipped from a teacup as she read an ancient tome. The woman gave off a peaceful aura. As the aura swept over him, Shi Feng felt as if nature itself had embraced him. The feeling was intoxicating.

Why is she so strong? Shi Feng stared at Countess Katie Green in shock.

He had met the Countess many times in his previous life. However, the Countess had always been a Level 180, Tier 4 Sky Knight. Now, however, her statistics revealed that she was a Level 180, Tier 5 Sacred Magic Knight.

Although only one tier separated the two, the difference was like heaven and earth.

If a Tier 4 NPC could dominate and protect a major NPC city, then a Tier 5 NPC could move through a kingdom's capital unhindered. A Tier 5 NPC was an absolute overlord. Normally, one only encountered such existences in imperial capitals. Encountering one in other major NPC cities would rely entirely on luck.

Yet, this Countess had become one such mythical powerhouse...

When Shi Feng thought about the Seven Treasures' fragment in this woman's hands, a hint of despair gripped his heart.

Even if he became a Level 180, Tier 5 player, he still couldn't defeat the Countess, much less at Level 57. NPCs and players were on different levels; NPCs had a far more difficult time reaching new tiers. When they succeeded, their strength would undergo a qualitative transformation. Moreover, the higher the tier they reached, the more strength they would acquire.

Right now, well-equipped Tier 2 players might be capable of defeating an ordinary Tier 2 NPC of the same level. However, after reaching Tier 4, only peak experts and above could face Tier 4 NPCs. Moreover, a peak expert must be equipped with at least one or two Fragmented Legendary items to have a chance. Otherwise, fighting one-on-one with a Tier 4 NPC would be suicidal.

Unlike players, NPCs had an easier time obtaining top-tier equipment. Players had to struggle for every piece of Epic Equipment they wore, but NPCs could get what they needed as long as they had enough money.

Tier 5 NPCs typically wielded at least one Legendary item. If a Tier 5 player didn't have the same, they could never stand against an NPC of the same tier.

Hence, Tier 5 players had usually formed parties to deal with a Tier 5 NPC.

“I hear that you have a lot of Mana Stones?” Katie Green asked softly as she set her book down and turned to Shi Feng.

“Yes, your ladyship.” Shi Feng nodded. At the same time, he celebrated the fact that he had obtained the Nightwalker’s Cape. Thanks to its effects, the Countess had failed to see through his disguise. She didn’t seem to detect the Golden Stigmata’s aura on him either.

If he were discovered, the consequences would be unimaginable.

“How many do you have?” Katie Green asked. “If you have enough, I am willing to offer a generous trade.”

Shi Feng was slightly confused to hear Katie Green’s interest. He hadn’t expected her to want Mana Stones so fervently. She had never shown such interest in the past.

Could my previous visit have caused this change in her? The only explanation Shi Feng could think of was the revelation of his identity as the War God’s Temple’s representative during his previous visit. After giving the matter some thought, he stated, “I currently have 100 Mana Stones. Will that be enough?”

He had prepared the 100 Mana Stones to purchase the Temporal Sand. He hadn’t brought any extra with him. It seemed as if he had blundered.

“One hundred? Alright, what do you want for them?” Katie Green nodded, clearly satisfied with the amount. “If you don’t know what items you’re looking for, I can offer a few valuables for you to consider. Of course, I will only accept Mana Stones for these items.”

Saying so, Katie Green gestured with a hand. Suddenly, a stone table rose from the ground, covered in all sorts of dazzling items. Every item radiated a faint pressure.