

Strongest

Chapter 1441 – Treasure of Time

Shi Feng was shocked when he saw the items on the table.

In the past, the only item the Countess had offered for trade was the Temporal Sand, yet now she had offered over ten items. Moreover, none of these items were any less valuable than the Temporal Sand.

As expected of the proprietess of Abyss City's blackmarket Shop. She even has an item like this. Shi Feng's gaze couldn't help but drift to a leaf of lambskin parchment.

Although the Temporal Sand was very valuable, players could obtain it from other sources. However, encountering the lambskin parchment on the table depended on luck.

This parchment was none other than the Magic Thruster Design.

The various large Guild would go crazy over this item.

The Magic Thruster was capable of increasing a ship's Movement Speed by 30%. To naval players, this item was a godsend.

Unlike on land, there were far fewer teleportation points available out at sea. If players wished to travel to a particular island to level, they generally had to travel by boat. A 30% increase to Movement Speed would undoubtedly save players a lot of travel time. Moreover, there were many sea monsters in the ocean. If an ordinary boat encountered a Boss-grade sea monster, escape was practically impossible.

With the Magic Thruster, however, even an ordinary boat had a high chance of getting away safely. Players were even more likely to escape if they had an ordinary speedboat or better.

Hence, Magic Thrusters were highly sought after. Even players with cheap ships would be desperate for one.

The Magic Thruster's only drawback was that it was a Consumable item; it would disappear after being used for a certain amount of time. Moreover, depending on how much Mana it uses, the Magic Thruster's duration would differ. The smaller a ship was, the less Mana it would cost to enhance its Movement Speed and vice versa. As an example, on an ordinary speedboat, the Magic Thruster could last for 48 hours.

However, the Magic Thruster was not cheap. Even once the price had stabilized on the market, each thruster had sold for 1 Gold, 50 Silver in the past. It wasn't an item ordinary players could afford. Generally, only powerful adventurer teams and Guilds had purchased the item to augment their high-quality ships. With the speed boost, they could travel to more dangerous locations and reap greater rewards.

Shi Feng had never thought that Countess Katie Green would willingly offer such a precious design for exchange.

Only, the price was slightly high.

The Countess wanted 1,000 Mana Stones for the design...

Even though Shi Feng could synthesize Mana Stones with the Philosopher's Stone, it wasn't a cheap endeavor. Each Mana Stone required 50 Magic Crystals. In other words, that design would cost him 50,000 Magic Crystals.

Although he had accumulated quite a sum recently, he had spent a lot of his crystals during the fight against Crimson Castle. After taking into account his personal expenditures, he only had enough Magic Crystals to purchase two designs.

For a moment, Shi Feng wasn't sure what to do.

Magic Crystals were invaluable to Zero Wing. Without them, it's war weapons would be useless. If he spent all of the Guild's reserves to purchase the Magic Thruster Designs, he would regret the decision should the Guild come under attack.

"Oh, right. I have another item for sale." Seeing Shi Feng's hesitation, Katie Green smiled. She then retrieved a dark-gray bracelet and placed it on the table. "I happened to come across this treasure by chance. However, it's no longer useful to me. If you can afford it, this item can be yours."

"This is..." Shi Feng was stunned when he saw the dark-gray bracelet.

The bracelet looked ordinary, like nothing more than a string of dark-gray beads. However, the Golden Stigmata indicated that it was one of the Seven Treasures.

Unfortunately, due to severe damage, it was only an Epic item.

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[Bracelet of Time] (Epic Rank Item)

This bracelet had once possessed the frightening power of time. Unfortunately, it has sustained heavy damage.

Additional Active Skill-

Temporal Sand: Can produce Temporal Sand by absorbing Mana Stones. No Cooldown. (Each Mana Stone produces two grains of Temporal Sand.)

After sustaining damage and being tainted by Evil Energy, the Evil Energy within will taint the item's wearer as well.

Drops on death.

—

This is one of the Seven Treasures? Shi Feng stared at the Bracelet of Time in shock.

Although Mana Stones were expensive and difficult to obtain, Temporal Sand was far more valuable. It also had far more uses. Practically every Lifestyle class could use it. Meanwhile, by using the Bracelet of Time, one only needed to invest one Mana Stone to obtain two Temporal Sand grains. It was certainly a profitable exchange.

He had always wondered how the Countess got her hands on so much Temporal Sand. It turned out that it was thanks to one of the Seven Treasures.

However, it seemed that his previous visit had interrupted Katie Green's plans, forcing the Countess to collect a large number of Mana Stones and convert them into Temporal Sand as quickly as possible.

However, the Countess's asking price was exorbitant. She wanted for 100,000 Mana Stones for the bracelet...

Even if he had the Philosopher's Stone, synthesizing 100,000 Mana Stones would cost him 5,000,000 Mana Stones. With Zero Wing's current net income, it would take months to save up that many Magic Crystals.

As for stealing the Bracelet of Time, even if Shi Feng had 100 lives, he would not dare do so.

"Countess, may I know if I can trade Mana Stones for these items if I visit you in the future?" Shi Feng asked.

If Countess Katie Green had only offered this Bracelet of Time on a whim, it would be out of his hands. If she were selling it long-term, however, he would have a chance to purchase it.

As long as he obtained the Manatite vein on Karna Island and maintained his hold on the rapidly developing Stone Forest Town, he could collect 5,000,000 Magic Crystals given enough time. He was only afraid that the Countess's offer was a one-time chance.

Hearing Shi Feng's question, Katie Green fell silent for a moment. Following which, she replied, "The other items will be available in the future, but I don't want to hold onto this bracelet for long. I am

prepared to sell it on the blackmarket to the highest bidder in a month. If you can gather 100,000 Mana Stones before the auction, I'll sell it to you instead."

"A month, huh?" Shi Feng frowned.

Although it was good news that the Countess wasn't only offering the bracelet right now, the time limit wasn't.

Aside from giants like Super Guilds, collecting 5,000,000 Magic Crystals in a month was a dream.

The various large Guilds spent a large amount of Magic Crystals every day. Even powerful first-rate Guilds could only save four or five thousand crystals per day. Unless he could save up around 170,000 Magic Crystals each day, gathering 5,000,000 in one month would be impossible...

As Shi Feng racked his brain for a solution, Katie Green smiled and said, "If you are interested in the Bracelet of Time, I can give it to you even if you don't have 100,000 Mana Stones. You see, I've recently encountered a little trouble. If you help me deal with this problem, I am willing to offer the bracelet as compensation."

Chapter 1442 – Another Method

"I just need to help you with this problem?"

Shi Feng gave the Countess a confused look. He hadn't expected another option to be available.

Honestly, even a Super Guild would be hard-pressed to collect 5,000,000 Magic Crystals within a month. Even with the Manatite vein, it would be a challenge. Sadly, it'd be impossible to obtain 100,000 Mana Stones any other way. After all, not everyone was lucky enough to have a fragment of the Philosopher's Stone. Without the Philosopher's Stone, a Guild's main source of Mana Stones would be Bosses in 100-man Dungeons. Having their alchemists synthesize Mana Stones would be impractical, as well; doing so would even bankrupt a Super Guild.

"That's right. I need someone to help me retrieve an item. However, the item is in a somewhat special location. The higher a visitor's tier is, the more dangerous the location is. Since you are only Tier 2, you should have a chance of securing the item," Katie Green said, nodding. Suddenly, however, she chuckled softly and said, "But before you go, you'll have to past a test of strength."

"Countess, I am willing to give it a try." Shi Feng agreed without hesitation.

This was an opportunity to obtain one of the Seven Treasures. Naturally, he couldn't afford to turn it down. Besides, the quest was far more reliable than affording the unrealistic price of 5,000,000 Magic Crystals.

Throughout their conversation, Shi Feng had understood one thing; the later he discovered Countess Katie Green's ownership of the Bracelet of Time, the harder it would be to obtain it. She had already stated that the quest would become more dangerous as one reached higher tiers, lowering the player's chances of success.

"Good. Follow me." Katie Green then stood and walked towards a dark corridor in a corner of the indoor garden.

The corridor was narrow, and the only light came from candles set in intervals. As they ventured further down the corridor, the air became colder.

After walking for about ten minutes or so, they arrived in an empty hall. A set of locked, steel doors loomed at the end of the room.

The steel doors were entirely covered in frost. Even though Shi Feng's Ice Resistance was high, he was still cold. If a player with lower Ice Resistance came here, they'd freeze to death.

"Not bad. You've endured this far without my help. You have passed the first test." Katie Green nodded in approval when she noticed the cold barely affect Shi Feng. "Your second test is next, a test of your combat power."

As Katie Green spoke, a silver Magic Scroll appeared in her hands. She unfurled it and began to chant an incantation.

Suddenly, a silver magic array appeared before the Countess, gathering the surrounding Mana. A moment later, a three-meter-tall humanoid creature manifested in the middle of the array. This humanoid figure wore silver armor and carried a greatsword that radiated frosty air. Unlike ordinary humans, dark-green flames danced in the figure's eyes.

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[Hell Knight] (Undead, Great Lord)

Level 57

HP 15,000,000/15,000,000

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“Kill this Hell Knight, and you will pass the second test,” Katie Green said as she gestured towards the Hell Knight.

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System: You have accepted Katie Green’s second test.

Quest content: Clear the second test. Your reward will vary depending on your evaluation.

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Before Shi Feng could even read the system notification, the Hell Knight roared and unsheathed the greatsword from its back. It dashed straight for Shi Feng, giving him no time to prepare.

The Great Lord ranked Hell Knight crossed the 20 yards separating them in the blink of an eye. Upon arriving before Shi Feng, the Hell Knight brandished its greatsword, the weapon transforming into three streaks of silver light as they flew towards the Swordsman. The Hell Knight had completed the entire process as smoothly as flowing water. The Hell Knight moved like an expert with years of combat experience. There were no excess movements in its actions.

High intelligence!

Shi Feng was surprised to see the sword lights moving towards him. He had assumed that he'd have to face a weakened Great Lord, but the Hell Knight's combat techniques were clearly superior to ordinary Great Lords. The Great Lord had obviously reached the Half-step Refinement Realm standard.

In response, Shi Feng countered with Killing Ray.

Dang... Dang... Dang...

Sparks scattered as a series of clangs echoed throughout the empty hall.

Shi Feng was forced back by five steps before he could stabilize his body. Meanwhile, three damages of over -1,500 appeared above his head. In contrast, the Hell Knight remained unharmed. Shi Feng's counterattack had only paused the Great Lord's attack.

After the initial clash, Shi Feng knew that he was no match for the Hell Knight's Strength. In fact, there was a large gap between them.

What power! Shi Feng began to take this fight seriously as the Hell Knight charged towards him once again. He immediately executed Void Steps, vanishing.

Although Shi Feng had only clashed with the Hell Knight for a moment, he had gained a rough prediction of the monster's standards. Not only did the Hell Knight have the Strength of a Grand Lord, but its reactions and speed also ranked near the top among Great Lords of the same level. If not for his three Fragmented Legendary items, it would've already killed him.

“Not a bad technique. Unfortunately, it is useless against the Hell Knight.” When Shi Feng had disappeared, Katie Green had been slightly surprised.

However, she shook her head and chuckled.

The Hell Knight wasn't a living being, and although it could see, it could also rely on its ability to detect living beings during a fight. Even if Shi Feng's footwork technique removed him from his opponent's sight, he couldn't erase his aura as a living creature. Unless he entered a different space entirely, the Hell Knight could keep track of him.

Indeed, even after Shi Feng had vanished, the Hell Knight showed no signs of hesitation. The massive creature thrust its greatsword into the ground.

Suddenly, dozens of ice swords rained down from above, targeting a seemingly-unoccupied location.

Peng! Peng! Peng!

Before the ice swords struck the ground, their trajectories diverted as if they had encountered an invisible wall. At the same time, Shi Feng reappeared. Each ice sword carried 100% of the Hell Knight's Strength. As a result, Shi Feng lost a little bit of his HP each time he deflected an ice sword. In less than a second, he had lost over 20,000 HP.

While Shi Feng dealt with the descending ice swords, the Hell Knight pulled its weapon from the ground and ran at the Swordsman. As it reached Shi Feng, it swung its greatsword skillfully, matching the timing of its swings with the final eight ice swords. Each of the monster's swings targeted Shi Feng's blind spots.

“This must be his limit. Not bad. His score should be above 70.” Seeing Shi Feng’s HP near zero, Katie Green prepared to cast a buff.

There was no doubt that the Hell Knight was strong. Even a peak, Tier 3 NPC of the same level would struggle in a fight against it, much less a Tier 2 player. She hadn’t wanted to lend Shi Feng a hand until now because she wanted to see how long the player would hold his ground against the Great Lord. As for her requirement for killing the Hell Knight?

She had merely said that to ensure that Shi Feng would fight with everything he had.

Actually killing the Hell Knight would take a miracle.

After all, the Hell Knight was an Advanced Combat Servant she had obtained after plenty of trials. Every Count and Countess in the Black Dragon Empire longed for one themselves, but only she had control of an Advanced Combat Servant.

Just before Katie Green stopped the battle, a blue light flashed before the Hell Knight’s descending greatsword. Suddenly, the Hell Knight flew through the air. Its remaining eight ice swords shattered instantly.

Golden, divine runes wrapped around Shi Feng’s entire body, and his aura had undergone a heaven-defying transformation.

This was none other than the Heavenly Dragon’s Power.

Shi Feng hadn’t intended to use Heavenly Dragon’s Power so soon, but the Hell Knight was far more powerful than he had expected. If he continued to hold back, he would only get himself killed.

“Alright, let’s begin the second round!”

Shi Feng shifted his gaze towards the Hell Knight, which had finally regained its footing, and advanced.

Chapter 1443 – Advanced Combat Servant

After upgrading Heavenly Dragon’s Breath, not only did Heavenly Dragon’s Power increase Shi Feng’s Strength, but it also increased his Agility.

Shi Feng reached the Hell Knight almost instantly, brandishing Abyssal Blade and Killing Ray as he executed Sword’s Orbit.

A galaxy of stars glittered around Shi Feng, intertwining as they bombarded the Great Lord, which had just gotten back on its feet.

Although the Hell Knight’s combat standards were at the Half-step Refinement Realm, it was a child in Shi Feng’s eyes. He easily grasped the monster’s blind spots and attack trajectories.

Shi Feng could’ve easily dodged the Hell Knight’s attacks, but he had chosen to repulse them instead.

Now that he had activated Heavenly Dragon’s Power, his Strength was slightly higher than a Grand Lord’s of the same level. Hence, he was stronger than the Hell Knight. If he chose to dodge the incoming attacks, he would only reduce his opportunities to deal damage.

Boom... Boom... Boom...

One sword light after another clashed with the Hell Knight's greatsword, the resulting impacts forcing the Great Lord back and preventing it from stabilizing its posture. After six consecutive attacks, the Hell Knight lost its grip on its weapon as the greatsword flew from the monster's hands.

"Die!"

Shi Feng activated Flame Burst, a blinding glow enveloping his blades. He assaulted the defenseless Hell Knight with a series of devastating blows.

-164,878!

-331,478!

-332,015!

All 15 attacks found their marks, causing the Great Lord's HP decrease at a tremendous rate. In an instant, the Hell Knight had lost 20% of its HP.

Meanwhile, Flame Burst's terrifyingly destructive power sent the Hell Knight crashing into the frozen, steel doors, and they shuddered upon impact.

Taking advantage of the Hell Knight's incapacitated state, Shi Feng hurriedly activated Lightning Edge.

He couldn't normally use the attack in a high-speed battle due to Lightning Edge's 0.5-second channeling time, but the injured Hell Knight had collapsed to the ground. He had more than enough time to activate the Skill.

Numerous silver sword lights danced before Shi Feng, the forming a silver river that flowed towards the Hell Knight.

-244,678!

-243,167!

...

Lightning Edge's powerful assault incapacitated the Hell Knight once more. The Great Lord was defenseless as the countless sword lights bit into its flesh. After five seconds, the Hell Knight only had two-thirds of its HP remaining.

Despite dealing two successful blows, Shi Feng had no intentions on relaxing his offense. The moment Lightning Edge ended, Shi Feng appeared before the Hell Knight and swung the Abyssal Blade down towards the Great Lord. However, the Hell Knight quickly responded. At a critical moment, it reclaimed its greatsword and used it as a shield, blocking Shi Feng's blade. Unfortunately, while it had held off the Abyssal Blade, it couldn't do anything about the nine sword shadows that had appeared around it.

Tier 2 Skill, Shadow Blade!

In the end, all nine shadows carved into the Hell Knight, devouring the Great Lord's HP at a rate visible to the naked eye.

"He's overwhelmed it?"

Surprise flashed in Countess Katie Green's eyes as she watched Shi Feng dominate her Hell Knight.

She had never thought that a mere Tier 2 player of the same level could surpass her Advanced Combat Servant. Not even she could've done so when she had been Tier 2.

Soloing a Great Lord of the same level was difficult for a Tier 2 class. Great Lord's HP was simply too high. These monsters' battle recovery alone was enough to overwhelm a Tier 2 player.

However, Katie Green didn't recognize Shi Feng for the monster he was.

Despite only being a Tier 2 player, Shi Feng wielded three Fragmented Legendary items. Although none of them were weapons, their overall effects were astonishing.

Moreover, the Hell Knight wasn't actually a Great Lord of the same level. After all, it only had 15,000,000 HP. An ordinary Level 57 Great Lord should have at least 40,000,000 HP. If not for the Hell Knight's Strength and high combat standards, Shi Feng could've easily defeated it without a Berserk Skill. Now that he had activated Heavenly Dragon's Power, suppressing the Hell Knight was a piece of cake.

“Interesting. Truly interesting. He had held back so much of his strength.” Katie Green’s lips curled into a smile as she watched Shi Feng shave off the Hell Knight’s HP. “However, I’m afraid that the unstable power of a Berserk Skill isn’t enough to defeat my Hell Knight.”

When the Hell Knight’s HP fell to 30%, it released a sudden and deafening roar. It’s silver armor shattered, causing such a powerful shockwave that even Shi Feng had to step back.

As the silver armor fell away, it revealed the Hell Knight’s crimson skin. Shi Feng also noticed dark-blue, divine runes all over the Hell Knight’s tough hide, radiating a daunting pressure. The green flames in the monster’s eyes also turned dark-blue, its chilling gaze causing Shi Feng to shudder.

“It’s gone berserk?” Shi Feng went on the defensive as he watched the Great Lord transform.

This monster was like a completely different being compared to the Hell Knight from a second ago.

“Berserk?” Katie Green smiled. Shaking her head, she said, “This is not some kind of Berserk Mode. It is merely liberating its power. I specifically make the creature wear the armor to suppress most of its power.”

Advanced Combat Servants weren’t like monsters and puppets. They fought their way to victory in the black market’s Death Arena.

Servants that won 20 consecutive matches in the arena became Basic Combat Servants, while those that won 50 consecutive matches were Intermediate Combat Servants. A Combat Servant would only rise to Advanced rank after winning 100 consecutive matches.

Hence, Combat Servants were generally stronger than beings of the same tier. Needless to say, a Tier 3 Advanced Combat Servant was extraordinarily powerful.

This was why the other Counts and Countesses in the Black Dragon Empire wanted their own Advanced Combat Servant. However, Advanced Combat Servants were incredibly expensive. Every one was a combat genius. Most nobles couldn't afford one.

They generally settled for a few Intermediate Combat Servants.

After the Hell Knight removed its armor, its Attributes underwent a qualitative transformation. Its rank had also increased from Great Lord to Grand Lord. Without the armor, the Hell Knight's mobility increased as well. Now, its combat standards had reached the Refinement Realm.

"I wonder how long you'll last against it?" Katie Green chuckled.

So far, Shi Feng had displayed more strength than she had expected. He had earned 100 points in his evaluation just by forcing the Hell Knight to abandon its armor. However, this had only fed the Countess's curiosity, and she wanted to see how far this player could go.

So, this is the test to obtain one of the Seven Treasures? Shi Feng could not help his bitter smile as he watched the Hell Knight slowly approach.

Having the power to solo a Grand Lord of the same level was ridiculous. Moreover, this Grand Lord's combat standards were on par with Refinement Realm experts...

When the Hell Knight raised its greatsword, Shi Feng took in a deep breath.

“Come!”

Shouting, Shi Feng activated Tier 2 Blade Liberation, his Attributes skyrocketing once more. He then swung the Abyssal Blade to meet the incoming greatsword.

When the two weapons collided, sparks illuminated the dark hall. The resulting shockwave sent dust and debris into the air.

“What?” The Countess’s mouth twitched when Shi Feng blocked the Hell Knight’s attack. “He was still holding back?”

After the clash, the Hell Knight was forced to take five steps backward. In contrast, Shi Feng hadn’t moved an inch. He then dashed at the Grand Lord.

Although Shi Feng’s Strength wasn’t as high as Mythic monster’s of the same level after activating Twofold Berserk, he wasn’t far from it. The Hell Knight, which was only a Grand Lord, was no match for him.

Without using any Skills, Shi Feng effortlessly broke through the Hell Knight’s defenses with only Sword’s Orbit. As slash after slash split the Hell Knight’s iron-like skin, the monster’s HP plummeted.

When only 1% of the Hell Knight’s HP remained, a golden light enveloped the monster. The Hell Knight transformed into a stream of blue smoke that flowed back into the Magic Scroll in Katie Green’s hands.

...

System: Congratulations! You have completed Katie Green's second test.

Chapter 1444 – Rewards of SSS-rank Evaluation

Following the system notification of the test's completion, Shi Feng received another system notification.

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System: Test evaluation – 200 points. Test evaluation rank – SSS-rank. Rewarding 20 Free Mastery Points, 5 Legacy Skill Points, 300,000,000 EXP, and Countess Katie Green's Favorability increased by 30 points.

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It's just a test, yet it awarded so many Legacy Skill Points? The system notification astonished Shi Feng.

Generally, players were lucky to get one or two Legacy Skill Points after completing a high-rank Hidden Quest, yet he had received five points after qualifying for the quest. One could easily imagine the bountiful rewards from the quest itself.

“To think you would actually defeat my Hell Knight, you really are a shocking adventurer,” Katie Green, who stood some distance away, said with satisfaction. “I’m even more confident that you can get the item for me.

“Since you’ve passed my test, take this as a gift.”

Saying so, the Countess revealed a blue gemstone with a chilling aura.

The moment this gemstone appeared, the already chilly temperature dropped further. The surrounding Mana gathered to the stone in a frenzy, forming a vortex.

“Is that...the Azure Source Stone?!” Shi Feng exclaimed when he saw the mesmerizing gemstone in Katie Green’s hand.

God’s Domain had many kinds of Attribute Gemstones. However, the Attribute Source Stones were a rank above. Attribute Source Stones were worth thousands of Gold, but unlike Attribute Gemstones, players could only equip one of each kind of source stone.

Although Attribute Gemstones only increased a specific Attribute, Attribute Source Stones could increase two or more. Take the Azure Source Stone for example. Not only did it increase physique by 5% when equipped, but it also increased Ice Resistance by 20%. An Azure Source Stone could’ve easily gone for six or seven thousand Gold in the past, but only a fool would sell one.

Normally, one would have traded an Azure Source Stone for a piece of Epic Equipment with high Attributes.

“It is, indeed. Moreover, it’s an Intermediate Azure Source Stone,” Katie Green said, nodding. “With this item, you’ll have an easier time fetching my item. You don’t have enough Ice Resistance right now to survive the area.”

“An Intermediate Azure Source Stone?” Shi Feng could not believe that Katie Green was actually so generous.

Attribute Source Stones were divided into four ranks: Basic, Intermediate, Advanced, and Peak. Basic Attribute Source Stones alone were incredibly valuable. In the past, a top-tier expert would be lucky to equip one or two Basic Attribute Source Stones.

Even after ten years in God’s Domain, Shadow had only acquired a single Intermediate Attribute Source Stone. Unlike gemstones, one couldn’t increase an Attribute Source Stone’s rank by synthesizing lower-ranked stones. These treasures could only be obtained from Grade 1 forbidden lands. As for Basic Attribute Source Stones, they could be found in Grade 2 forbidden lands. Though, only Dark-Gold Treasure Chests and Mythic ranked Bosses and above had a chance of dropping them.

Yet, Katie Green was generous enough to give him an Azure Source Stone...

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[Intermediate Azure Source Stone]

Only one can be equipped at a time.

Equipment requirement: Level 50

All Attributes +120;

Increases physique by 8%;

Increases Ice Resistance by 30%.

—

The Attribute bonus from one Azure Source Stone was already higher than that of top-tier, Level 50, Dark-Gold Equipment. Furthermore, it boosted physique and Ice Resistance.

After receiving the Intermediate Azure Source Stone, he replaced one of his Tier 3 Strength Gemstones without hesitation.

What Shi Feng didn't know was that the Countess had intended to give him the Basic Azure Source Stone before he had surprised her with his performance.

Not only had Shi Feng's Basic Attributes increased after equipping the Source Stone, but his five senses sharpened as well. When he had first entered the hall, he had felt slightly cold, but now he didn't feel it at all.

"Very good. Now, I'll send you to the Ice Crystal World. Once you're there, collect ten Eternal Ice Crystals for me. Bring them back, and the Bracelet of Time is yours," Katie Green explained, nodding in approval as Shi Feng relaxed, no longer affected by the room's temperature.

—

System: You have accepted Countess Katie Green's Epic ranked Main Storyline Quest "Ice Crystal World."

Quest content: Collect ten Eternal Ice Crystals from the Ice Crystal World.

Quest reward: Bracelet of Time.

—

Why is this an Epic ranked Main Storyline Quest? A frown pulled at Shi Feng's lips when he read the system notification.

Main Storyline Quests could significantly affect a kingdom or empire. These effects could be beneficial, but they could also be damaging. They were far more difficult than other quests of the same rank.

Although the quest location wasn't a forbidden land on the God's Domain continent, the Ice Crystal World was a forbidden land...

Only now did Shi Feng understand why Katie Green had told him that the higher one's tier was, the more danger they would face in the quest location. The Ice Crystal World was a world of its own and highly opposed to visiting lifeforms. The stronger the lifeform was, the more rejection they would face.

Upon entering the world, various aspects would attempt to suppress the newcomer. At the same time, foreign lifeforms entering this world would possess unique auras. Meanwhile, the stronger this aura was, the easier it would be to attract the old monsters of the Ice Crystal World.

Not even Tier 5 NPCs were a match for those old monsters. Tier 6 Gods weren't even allowed to enter.

"Alright, I'll open the teleportation gate now. I can only maintain the gate for one or two seconds, so you need to be fast. Otherwise, you'll have to wait another month before I can open the gate again," Katie Green warned Shi Feng.

In other words, Shi Feng only had one opportunity to challenge her quest. If he failed, he would have to earn 5,000,000 Magic Crystals to purchase the Bracelet of Time.

"I understand." Shi Feng nodded. Inwardly, though, he felt some contempt towards the Countess.

Other players might not know what Eternal Ice Crystals were, but he did.

It was rumored that the Eternal Ice Crystal contained Eternal Power. Eternal Power was crucial in helping NPCs reaching Tier 6.

In the past, many players with Dark-Gold Personal Guards had only been able to upgrade their NPCs to Tier 5. It was due to the lack of Eternal Power that these guards had never crossed that final hurdle.

Hence, items containing Eternal Power like the Eternal Ice Crystal had been priceless in the past. One could only have traded rare materials or items of equal value for them.

Yet, this woman wanted him to obtain Eternal Ice Crystals from the Ice Crystal World. How could they possibly be that easy to acquire? Moreover, she wanted ten of them!

But Shi Feng couldn't care less right now. Zero Wing simply wasn't equipped to collect 5,000,000 Magic Crystals. He had no other choice. If he succeeded, he would obtain one of the Seven Treasures, and with the Golden Stigmata, he could use the item better than Katie Green.

Once Shi Feng had prepared himself, Katie Green began to chant an incantation. Immediately, Mana surged towards the shut, steel gates, slowly forcing them open. A stable, spatial tunnel formed beyond the open doors.

"Hurry!" Katie Green shouted.

Ignoring his Weakened state, Shi Feng activated Windwalk and jumped into the spatial tunnel, departing the icy hall.

Chapter 1445 – Ice Crystal World

Inside a snow-capped canyon, a party of six fought a Level 48, High Lord ranked Ice-toothed Tiger.

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[Ice-toothed Tiger] (Elemental Creature, High Lord)

Level 48

HP 31,000,000/31,000,000

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A Level 45 Shield Warrior wielding a crimson longsword and aqua-blue buckler stood before this five-meter-tall monster, and despite its size, it was powerless against the player.

Regardless of how the Ice-toothed Tiger tried to attack the Shield Warrior, the latter block the blows and found gaps to strike, using his Skills to deal six to seven thousand damage per hit.

The Shield Warrior's party members were also quite capable. Not only were they all Level 44 and above, but their Skills and Spells also dealt over -10,000 damage. Their normal attacks alone dealt over -3,000 damage.

"Everyone, the Boss is almost dead. Increase your damage output. Make sure you dodge its AOE Skill," the Shield Warrior named Solitary Nine said calmly as he blocked another of the Ice-toothed Tiger's attacks.

"Commander, relax; this isn't our first time killing an Ice-toothed Tiger," a Level 44 white-clad Summoner a short distance away scoffed.

The rest of the party members nodded.

When the Ice-toothed Tiger's HP reached 30%, its snow-white fur turned vermilion as it went berserk. Its size and Attack Speed increased as well. A moment later, icicles began to rain down from the sky, covering a 50-yard radius around the Ice-toothed Tiger.

Seeing this, Solitary Nine shouted as he activated Shield Wall. He then skillfully dodged the descending icicles and focusing on defense.

Despite the boost to the Ice-toothed Tiger's Strength and speed, it was still couldn't break through Solitary Nine's defense. In the end, all of its attacks met the Shield Warrior's round shield, significantly reducing its damage. At the same time, the female Druid in the back waved her dark-green staff as she cast Healing Wind. Although the Shield Warrior was her main target, the rest of her party received a healing buff, gaining over 1,500 HP every second. This kept everyone's HP above a safe level.

Every player in the party launched a fierce assault. As a result, the High Lord's HP decreased rapidly. From 30%, it very quickly dropped to 15%...

When the High Lord's HP reached 10%, these players launched every Skill they had.

When the Ice-toothed Tiger only had 2% of its HP remaining, several scorching Flame Spears flew in from a distance, striking the High Lord and devouring its remaining HP.

As the Ice-toothed Tiger collapsed, it dropped five items.

Confused, the party members turned towards the Flame Spears' origin.

A 20-man team stood in the snow some distance away. A male Elementalist wielding a Tier 2 Magic Scroll seemed to be its leader. This Elementalist smiled at the six party members.

“Feather Wind, what is the meaning of this?” Solitary Nine demanded with an ugly expression.

“What is the meaning of this?” the Elementalist named Feather Wind chuckled. “Isn’t it obvious? I’m kill-stealing! What else would I be doing? Our Guild Leader admires you and has invited you and your adventurer team to join our Matchless Family. If you decline, the Aurora Sword adventure team will never again find any success in Cold Wind City!”

The female Druid named Yan ya growled from behind Solitary Nine, “You guys are going overboard! Since Big Brother Solitary has already determined that we won’t get involved with the struggle between your Guilds, we won’t join either side!”

Because of Matchless Family’s harassment, their adventurer team had ventured to this deserted area to level, yet these people had followed them so far from Cold Wind City to steal their Boss.

“Overboard?” Feather Wind laughed. “Winner takes all in this place. Now that the competition over Cold Wind City has reached its peak, our Guild Leader will not allow any mishaps. Of course, our Guild Leader highly values experts like Brother Nine. If Brother Nine joins our Guild, he’ll at least become the lead MT for one of our main forces.

“Yet our Guild Leader has waited for so long, and still Brother Nine refuses. Since we can’t recruit you, we’ll make sure no one can have you.

“This is your last invitation. Brother Nine, will you join us or not?”

“You... How can you do such a thing?!” Anxiety tightened Yan Ya’s chest.

The Matchless Family was one of Cold Wind City’s two large Guilds. It had plenty of experts under its command. If it really decided to move against their Aurora Sword adventurer team, the consequences would be unimaginable.

“Brother Nine, before you answer, think this through carefully. Otherwise, the people around you might have some unexpected ‘accidents.’ Who knows? If they’re not careful, they might even fall back to Level 0,” Feather Wind threatened, smiling.

Yan Ya and the other party members’ expressions darkened.

Although they were strong, Matchless Family had too many experts. If they were ambushed, they would definitely die. But they couldn’t leave Cold Wind City. In the end, this merciless Guild would pick them off.

“Aren’t you afraid that we’ll just join Centurion Dynasty?” Solitary Nine asked, his tone as cold as the snow beneath his feet.

One of Cold Wind City’s two large Guilds was Matchless Family, while the other was Centurion Dynasty. It was due to the competition between these Guilds for control of the city that the Aurora Sword suffered.

“You’re free to join those bastards, of course, but don’t think that you’ll leave this place alive.”

As Feather Wind finished speaking, he waves his hand. At the same time, he pulled an ancient, pitch-black scroll, which radiated a heart-rending evil, from his bag.

Suddenly, over 100 players from Matchless Family began to appear around Solitary Nine's party. These players had concealed their presence with a Group Invisibility Scroll.

However, the Shield Warrior was far more afraid of the Magic Scroll in Feather Wind's hand than he was of the players surrounding them.

"To think you even prepared a Dead Soul Scroll... You people from Matchless Family think too highly of me," Solitary Nine said, smiling bitterly as he stared at the black scroll.

The Dead Soul Scroll was a special Magic Scroll that could curse a target player. If the player died within a certain amount of time, their death penalty would multiply, and they would lose between three and five levels. Most Guilds saved the super-rare scroll for important targets.

"Of course. I've already told you how important you are to our Guild Leader. As proof, he personally ordered me to use this scroll," Feather Wind said, chuckling. "Well? What is your decision, Brother Nine?"

However, as Solitary Nine contemplated his options, a black vortex appeared in the sky above him. A black shadow shot down from the vortex, landing between the Aurora Sword party and Matchless Family's tyrants.

This shadow was none other than Shi Feng.

This is the Ice Crystal World? Shi Feng could not help but glance around him. Immediately, he discovered the players engaged in a confrontation. Every one of these players stared at him in shock.

Although Shi Feng had heard about the Ice Crystal World, he had never visited it. However, he wasn't surprised to find players here. After all, it wasn't unusual to find players in other worlds. Take the Dark Den for example. Despite being home to Demons, many players lived there.

What did surprise Shi Feng were the players' levels. All of these players were at least Level 44. There were even quite a few Level 45 players.

"Who are you? Don't you realize that Matchless Family is trying to conduct business here?" Feather Wind haughtily demanded.

Chapter 1446 – Instant-kill

Hearing Feather Wind's question, Shi Feng turned to look at the man.

Although Feather Wind was a Level 45 Elementalist, his equipment was ordinary for his level. Only half of his equipment consisted of Level 40 Dark-Gold Equipment, while the other half consisted of Level 40 Fine-Gold Equipment.

As for the other Level 44 players, only a small number possessed one or two pieces of Dark-Gold Equipment, while most didn't even have one. It was astounding to see.

At this stage of the game, at least half of the equipment worn by the various large Guilds' experts should be Level 40 Dark-Gold rank. It wasn't even surprising to see an expert in a full set of Dark-Gold Equipment. After all, God's Domain's mainstream players were still some distance from Level 40, so the demand for better equipment wasn't that high yet.

Could the drop-rate for Level 40 Equipment be low here? Shi Feng guessed.

God's Domain had many Otherworlds. Generally, expert players started to encounter these worlds after reaching Level 40.

Each world had a different development model. In the Dark Den, for example, players used different play styles from those in God's Domain.

Leveling up must be easier in the Ice Crystal World. In return, though, the drop-rate for equipment was lacking.

Shi Feng glanced around him again. Although he had just arrived, he easily inferred what was going on. Banditry was common everywhere, after all.

Although, large forces fighting over a measly Level 48 High Lord were still considerably rare.

Of course, Shi Feng was more interested in the Ice-toothed Tiger's loot than he was in the situation before him.

Not a single weapon or piece of equipment lay among the Boss's loot. In fact, four of the five items that had dropped were materials, while the last was a Tier 2 Magic Scroll.

Most players would curse their bad luck for such drops, but the High Lord's loot was shockingly attractive to a Master Forger like Shi Feng. The four materials were extremely valuable, and the most valuable among them was the Arctic Manatite. This treasure was even difficult to obtain from a Manatite vein.

A single ingot of Arctic Manatite would've sold for over 50 Gold in the past. It was a necessary material for producing Epic ranked weapons with ice effects.

Shi Feng was also surprised to find that his Weakened debuff from activating Twofold Berserk was gone, though his Berserk Skills were still on Cooldown.

"What? Didn't you hear what I just said?" Feather Wind's gaze turned frosty as he glared at Shi Feng.

He had only asked for the Swordsman's identity due to his sudden appearance. Even with his Observation Skill, Shi Feng's data listed as 'Unknown.'

Since he was dealing with an unfamiliar player, he had mentioned his Guild's name to gauge Shi Feng's reaction.

Matchless Family was one of Cold Wind City's two major Guilds. Everyone in the region recognized the name. The only power capable of competing with the Guild was Centurion Dynasty.

However, Shi Feng seemed unaffected. The man even ignored him, Matchless Family's Vice Guild Leader. This was the first time he had encountered this situation since joining God's Domain.

Let alone Solitary Nine, Aurora Sword's commander, even Sky Slicer, Centurion Dynasty's Guild Leader, would not dare to disregard his existence.

"Is this guy a fool? Or is he scared senseless? He actually dares to ignore our Vice Guild Leader?"

"This guy is dead. After angering our Vice Guild Leader, he'll probably have to delete his account."

...

Matchless Family's members watched Shi Feng with ridicule and pity.

They still remembered the adventurer team that had refused to leave their Guild's leveling spot after Feather Wind had warned them not to linger. In the end, Feather Wind had led a force to slaughter the adventurer team over a dozen times. Those players had only lingered for about ten seconds...

Now, the mysterious man before them ignored Feather Wind entirely. Not even the heavens could save him now.

Suddenly, Solitary Nine sent Shi Feng a whisper, "Friend, you best reply to his question and get out of here. He is the Vice Guild Leader of Matchless Family. He can easily eliminate anyone in Cold Wind City."

Cold Wind City? The Vice Guild Leader of Matchless Family? Shi Feng turned to Feather Wind in surprise.

Hearing Solitary Nine's warning, he realized that this world wasn't like the Dark Den. This world had NPC cities, and by the looks of it, this Matchless Family Guild seemed to rule over Cold Wind City. However, the fact that a large Guild's Vice Guild Leader wore such poor equipment shocked Shi Feng.

Even the upper echelons in Star-Moon Kingdom's large Guilds were fully geared in Level 40 Dark-Gold Equipment, much less the Vice Guild Leaders. It seemed that the equipment standards here were far more than a little inferior to those in God's Domain.

"It's too late for you to realize your mistake." When Feather Wind saw Shi Feng's surprise, he sneered and said, "I'll bury you alongside Solitary Nine and the others!"

Saying so, Feather Wind activated the Dead Soul Scroll.

Suddenly, a magic array appeared above Shi Feng and the party from Aurora Sword. They all felt an evil presence wrap around them, and a special debuff appeared in their status windows.

—

[Soul Lock]

Death penalty multiplied. Effect will persist after player has died.

Duration: 12 hours

—

The Dead Soul Scroll? Surprise flashed in Shi Feng's eyes once again when he saw his status window.

The Dead Soul Scroll was a super-rare Magic Scroll and the best tool to destroy an enemy. Not only did the scroll lack side-effects, but it was also an AOE, which made it impossible to dodge. If players died within the 12 hours, they would suffer a far more severe death penalty than normal. Meanwhile, the more times a player died during the debuff's duration, the heavier the penalty would become.

Targets weren't even safe in NPC cities, and when they logged out of the game, the duration would pause until they logged back in. Only after 12 hours in God's Domain would players be free of the debuff.

Hence, the Dead Soul Scrolls were even as valuable as Tier 3 Summoning Scrolls.

Most players avoid using them unless they had a deep hatred for their target.

"Friend, I truly apologize for this. I did not expect to drag you into my mess with Matchless Family. I'll do my best to open a path for you. Try to escape," Solitary Nine hurriedly said. He then turned towards his teammates and said, "You guys have to try to get away, too."

He was a Shield Warrior. He could never escape so many players without some special tool. He could only help his allies get away.

“Commander!”

“Big Brother Solitary?!”

The other five party members worried for their commander. They were very familiar with Solitary Nine’s strength. If he focused on getting away himself, he had some hope, but he had given that up to help them escape. Should Solitary Nine die, it would take a very long time to recover the lost EXP and equipment.

“Escape?” Shi Feng smiled and shook his head. He then slowly approached Feather Wind.

“What is he trying to do?” Yan Ya watched this newcomer in confusion.

“He’s not trying to beg for mercy, is he?”

“What a fool! That’s Feather Wind! If begging for mercy worked, he wouldn’t have killed so many players in Cold Wind City.”

Aurora Sword’s members were flabbergasted as they stared at Shi Feng.

Feather Wind was well-known for his ruthlessness in Cold Wind City. He was a vicious person that never accepted apologies.

“What? You want to beg for mercy?” Feather Wind sneered at Shi Feng as the man moved closer.

As everyone waited for the Swordsman's reply, Shi Feng vanished.

"Where is he?" Feather Wind searched his surroundings.

Everyone was stunned. They had never seen a Swordsman disappear like an Assassin.

In the next second, however, Shi Feng reappeared beside Feather Wind. Before anyone realized it, two sword lights blossomed on Feather Wind's mage robes.

The man's vision darkened as his lifeless body dropped to the ground...

Chapter 1447 – Monster-like Mysterious Expert

Silence dominated the area as every player stared at Feather Wind's motionless corpse. Although Shi Feng had not used any impressive techniques or Skill, everyone was petrified. They even forgot to breathe.

"What just happened?"

"The Vice Guild Leader...is dead?"

“Just what did he do?!”

...

Everything had happened so quickly that by the time they reacted, Feather Wind, a top-tier expert and Matchless Family’s Vice Guild Leader, was already dead...

“He died...?”

“This is impossible! That’s Feather Wind we’re talking about! He might not rank among the top ten in Cold Wind City, but he is still a top-tier expert in the top 20! How could an expert like that die so quickly?! Even Lifeless Thorn, Cold Wind City’s number one expert, couldn’t achieve such a feat!”

“Could he be Lifeless Thorn?”

“Lifeless Thorn is a Berserker; that guy is a Swordsman. There’s no way he’s Lifeless Torn.”

“Commander, do you know who that guy is?”

Even Aurora Sword’s members were astonished. One of Cold Wind City’s top 20 experts had died in one hit. If news of this matter got out, it would shock everyone in the city.

Solitary Nine stared at Shi Feng in confusion, his mind spinning to figure which expert in Cold Wind City this man was. As for the possibility of Shi Feng being from somewhere else, that was practically

impossible. The only way in or out of the Cold Wind City region was through the Snow Rift, a forbidden land for players.

Current players couldn't even enter the map, much less cross through it.

This was why the city's players were so afraid of Matchless Family and Centurion Dynasty. Should they provoke either power, their life in Cold Wind City would become a living hell or end completely.

However, no matter how Solitary Nine racked his brain, he couldn't match any of the city's experts to Shi Feng. Even Cleansing Whistle, the strongest Swordsman in Cold Wind City, was only ranked sixth. Moreover, Cleansing Whistle was a woman, not a man, making it impossible for her to be the mysterious Swordsman expert before him.

"I'm not sure, either. But you should get ready. We'll use this opportunity to escape in a moment," Solitary Nine said in the team chat after pondering the situation for some time.

Now that Feather Wind was dead, the 100-plus experts from Matchless Family had lost their commander. Hence, they had a high likelihood of escaping. Moreover, they had an expert like Shi Feng to hold the line, which further increased their chances.

Feather Wind had over 30,000 HP. Although he was an Elementalist, the fact that Shi Feng had killed him without using Skills meant that he could kill an MT of the same level with a handful of attacks. If Shi Feng's Attack Speed was high enough, he could even finish off an MT before the enemy healers could react. As long as no one could pin the Swordsman down, their party could safely retreat.

Suddenly, Matchless Family's members snapped out of their daze. Their leader had died, yet they had stared blankly at the killer for so long...

They all discarded their fear and pounced on Shi Feng.

“Die!”

“Brat, you’re dead! You dare kill our Vice Guild Leader?! From today on, we’ll hunt you to the end of the world!”

The Matchless Family’s experts charged at Shi Feng. They were so focused on killing the newcomer that they ignored Aurora Sword’s members. They all understood that if news of this reached Cold Wind City, they could kiss their lives goodbye.

If they let Shi Feng escape after killing Feather Wind in front of them, what hope did they have of mingling in Cold Wind City?

Fireballs, Frost Arrows, and arrows flew towards Shi Feng from all directions. Watching from a distance, Solitary Nine’s expression darkened.

Not even a Shield Warrior like himself could block so many attacks at a time. He’d be lucky to block 60 or 70% of the attacks. If dozens of attacks hit him at once, he’d only last a few seconds even with Shield Wall active...

However, a galaxy of stars suddenly formed around Shi Feng. These stars crushed the various Spells and arrows as they came within 10 yards of the Swordsman. It was as if the stars had formed a magic barrier around Shi Feng.

No matter how many attacks flew towards Shi Feng, none of them hit their mark. In fact, the bombardment hadn't even reduced Shi Feng's HP by a single point.

"What kind of Skill is that?!" Every player watching was stupefied.

Meanwhile, after Shi Feng had deflected a volley, Matchless Family's dozens of melee players moved in to strike.

Charge!

Chop!

Shadow Assault!

Flame Slash!

One Skill after another collided with Shi Feng's Sword's Orbit.

Peng... Peng... Peng...

The moment these melee players encountered Sword's Orbit, they were thrown backward like cannonballs. Some nearly lost their grip on their weapons from the powerful impact. Moreover, these melee players had lost a visible chunk of their HPs.

Even the Guardian Knights and Shield Warriors lost over 2,000 HP, and they had only received the damage from assaulting Shi Feng with their shields. The other classes lost around 4,000 HP.

Four thousand damage would even reduce an MT's HP by one-tenth...

"How is this possible?" Solitary Nine and his companions watched, dumbfounded.

"Don't be afraid of this trash! We have healers to recover our HP! I refuse to believe his Skill can last forever!" a member from Matchless Family shouted to his team.

The other members nodded in response. They eyed Shi Feng from the sidelines, waiting until the duration of whatever Skill he was using came to an end.

"What? You don't want to play anymore?" Shi Feng shook his head and chuckled when he saw his opponents' hesitation. "Since you won't come to me, I'll come to you!"

He had simply focused on defense to get a better idea of these players' combat standards.

He had only instant-killed Feather Wind to instill shock and fear into these players. Now that the enemy commander was dead, the remaining 100-plus experts were little more than test subjects to help him understand players' standards in the Ice Crystal World.

Following which, Shi Feng advanced and instantly appeared before a Level 44 Shield Warrior, the Sacred Sword in his hand smoothly descending from an angle that the Shield Warrior couldn't evade.

“So fast!” The Shield Warrior raised his shield in a panic. At the same time, his feet also unconsciously took a step back.

The instant Killing Ray met the Fine-Gold ranked shield, it left a scar in the metal, and the resulting impact threw the player over a dozen yards away. The Shield Warrior’s HP fell by over 2,400.

Following which, Shi Feng brandished his swords at the nearby MTs. Without exception, he sent every MT flying.

“Monster...”

“He isn’t a player! He’s a monster!”

Matchless Family’s members were petrified as they watched Shi Feng toss about their MTs.

Normally, they were lucky to land blocked attacks that dealt over -100 damage during duels with these MTs, yet they received over -2,000 damage from Shi Feng’s attacks. It was easy to imagine how horrifying the man’s damage would be if they failed to block an attack...

It seems the Ice Crystal World’s players don’t just have inferior equipment, but their combat standards are lower than players in God’s Domain as well. After clashing with Matchless Family’s members several times, Shi Feng gained a general understanding of these players’ combat standards. Following which, he stabbed the Abyssal Blade into the ground and glanced at the frightened players before him, saying, “My experiment is over! Let’s start the real battle!”

Abyssal Curse!

Skywheel Sword!

Suddenly, a dark fog bound every player within 30 yards of Shi Feng. As these players tried to activate their Control Removal Skills, countless divine swords descended from above. Shi Feng then followed up with Killing Ray's Summon Lightning, dealing 400% lightning damage to all enemies within a 15-yard radius.

In the blink of an eye, almost every player within Summon Lightning's range turned to ash and disappeared, leaving weapons and equipment scattered across the battlefield. Only a few MTs and the players who had fled the attack's radius had survived...

Chapter 1448 – Shocking Cold Wind City

“Who is he?”

“An expert like this guy was hidden in Cold Wind City all this time?”

The Aurora Sword's party members, who had been about to flee, were stupefied by the scene before them.

They had never seen such a massive gap between players' strength. Even zerg tactics would crumble against Shi Feng.

A second ago, over a hundred players from Matchless Family had Shi Feng surrounded. Now, however, only a dozen or so players were still standing. These players were only alive because they had reacted quickly enough, activating their Lifesaving Skills upon realizing the severity of the situation. Otherwise, they, too, would've been electrocuted and turned to ash with their dead companions.

“Monster...”

“Run!”

No one knew which player had shouted, but upon hearing the word ‘run,’ every surviving Matchless Family member turned and fled as if a pistol had gone off to sign the start of some race.

They all knew that if they fled as a group, none of them would get away, but Shi Feng couldn't catch them all if they ran in different directions.

However, contrary to expectations, Shi Feng didn't immediately run after the fleeing players. He simply sheathed his two swords and activated Chilling Field.

Chilling Field covered a 50-yard radius. Upon activation, the Skill enveloped every fleeing player. Nine, dark-gray swords appeared above the Guild players.

As Matchless Family's members focused on escape, they did not manage to react to the incoming attacks in time. As a result, the dark gray swords pierced their hearts with zero resistance, plundering the little HP they had remaining.

After two waves of attacks, the last of Matchless Family's players transformed into particles of white light and disappeared, leaving only weapons and equipment in their places.

"Is he...really a Swordsman?" Solitary Nine was thunderstruck as he watched the instantaneous slaughter.

Among the dozen or so survivors, the closest had been 20 yards from Shi Feng, while the farthest had been over 35 yards away, yet even from such a distance, Shi Feng obliterated them effortlessly. With such attack capabilities, could anyone escape this man's wrath?

Solitary Nine's party members stared at Shi Feng, shock and fear dancing in their eyes.

Although they had encountered plenty of experts before, they had never felt so powerless before one.

It had taken Shi Feng only a few moves to wipe out over a hundred experts from Matchless Family...

When they had first seen the Swordsman, they hadn't thought much of him. However, chills crawled down their spines as they watch Shi Feng calmly collect the loot littering the snowy ground.

It was as if the thing walking towards them was some prehistoric beast, not a player.

As Shi Feng collected the dropped weapons and equipment, each item surprised him more than the last. Only a small fraction of the loot was system-made. Most of the weapons and equipment were crafted items...

The lowest rank among these items was Secret-Silver, while the highest quality items were Dark-Gold rank. Every weapon and piece of equipment was Level 40.

Currently, even Zero Wing's prided Candlelight Trading Firm could only mass-producing Level 40 Mysterious-Iron Weapons and Equipment. Only the top-ranking Lifestyle players were capable of crafting Level 40 Fine-Gold Weapons and Equipment. Moreover, they could only craft a limited amount.

One of the reasons for the low production volume was material rarity.

Another reason was the low success rate, which resulted in high production costs. Rather than waste time trying to procure rare materials, most players simply purchased their weapons and equipment in the Auction House.

The fact that the majority of the weapons and equipment Matchless Family's members had dropped were player-made was inconceivable.

The development of weapon and equipment production on God's Domain's continent was already quite fast, yet it was nothing compared to Ice Crystal World.

While Shi Feng collected the scattered items, Solitary Nine took the initiative to approach the man.

"Friend, thank you for earlier. If not for you, Matchless Family's members would've killed us. I am Solitary Nine, the commander of the Aurora Sword adventurer team," Solitary Nine introduced himself. "If you have any problems in Cold Wind City, please feel free to contact me."

Although Aurora Sword wasn't one of Cold Wind City's top adventurer teams, it was relatively well-known. The team had over a hundred members in total, and although they were strong enough to make major changes in the city, they could deal with minor issues.

The other party members nodded eagerly.

They both feared and revered Shi Feng. If they spread the news about what had happened here, it would cause chaos in Cold Wind City.

Matchless Family was a peerless organization in Cold Wind City, yet Shi Feng had slaughtered over a hundred of its experts by himself. He was a monster-like existence. Countless players dreamed of befriending an expert like him.

"Cold Wind City?" After giving the matter some thought, Shi Feng asked, "Can you tell me a little about the situation in Cold Wind City?"

He had practically no understanding of the Ice Crystal World, let alone any clues leading to Eternal Ice Crystals.

Now that Katie Green had sent him here, if he did not acquire the required Eternal Ice Crystals within a month, he would have a far more difficult time obtaining the Bracelet of Time.

The first thing he needed to do was learn about the situation here. Once he did, he'd have an easier time searching for the Eternal Ice Crystals.

“Tell you about Cold Wind City?” Solitary Nine was taken aback. He quickly recovered from his surprise and asked, “Could it be...that you’re not a player from this region?”

The others were similarly dumbfounded.

Everyone knew that unless one crossed the Snow Rift, it was impossible to leave or enter the Cold Wind City region.

“That’s right. I’m not from this area.” Shi Feng nodded, feeling no particular need to hide the truth. After all, players in Otherworlds didn’t always stay there. As they reached higher levels, the system would gradually integrate them into the rest of the game. Besides, it’s not like they could do anything about his origin.

Realization dawned Solitary Nine and the others. It was no wonder why they had never seen a monster like Shi Feng in Cold Wind City.

However, Solitary Nine and his companions couldn’t help their rueful sighs.

Solitary Nine was one of the top three MTs in Cold Wind City. He should rank near the top in other regions as well, but they had never imagined that other regions would have experts like this Swordsman. It was easy to surmise that the expert standards in other regions were much higher than in Cold Wind City.

This revelation was a mental blow.

At the same time, though, they were eager to leave their city and explore other maps.

Only, Solitary Nine and the others did not know that Shi Feng was not from a different region in the Ice Crystal World. Rather, he had come from God's Domain's continent. Even in his home region, Shi Feng only ranked among the top 100 on the God's Domain Experts List.

Following which, Solitary Nine explained some basic details and the general situation in Cold Wind City.

...

Meanwhile, an uproar shook Cold Wind City.

Matchless Family's failed attempt to annihilate the Aurora Sword adventurer team had already reached the public.

Not only had the Guild member failed to kill a single player from the group, but hundreds of its experts had also been eliminated by some passing Swordsman.

Chapter 1449 – Becoming Famous in Cold Wind City

Cold Wind City, Matchless Family's Guild Residence:

Over a dozen upper echelons occupied the Residence's meeting room and extraordinarily tense atmosphere. A middle-aged man on the Guild Leader's throne was the cause for this tension.

This middle-aged man wore a suit of azure armor. Although he said nothing, the pressure he radiated chilled the room.

Even a passing glance from this man felt like that of some ferocious beast.

This middle-aged man was none other than Thundering Sky, Matchless Family's Guild Leader.

In Cold Wind City, one word from him could easily decide whether a player lived or died.

Right now, Thundering Sky's blood boiled with rage.

"Can someone tell me where this person came from?" Thundering Sky frowned as he watched Shi Feng's battle video. "It's been so long since the incident, yet none of you know anything about him?"

"Guild Leader, we've launched a full investigation on the player. However, we have yet to uncover any information about him," one of the upper echelons answered, cold sweat chilling his forehead.

Immediately after Feather Wind died, the Elementalist had sent them an offline message, ordering them to focus all of their resources on investigating Shi Feng.

However, no matter how hard they searched, they found nothing about the Swordsman. It was as if the man had suddenly appeared.

“This player has already killed over a hundred of our members, but we don’t even know his name?! Garbage! Every one of you!” Thundering Sky bellowed. “Continue searching! Mobilize everyone! I want this person found! Since he dares to disrespect Matchless Family, then he shouldn’t even dream of surviving in Cold Wind City!”

“Understood!” Everyone nodded and notified the Guild’s members to search for the Swordsman.

For a time, every member of Matchless Family hunted for Shi Feng, killing intent igniting their hearts.

...

Centurion Dynasty also held a meeting to discuss the situation.

“Interesting! Truly interesting! That person actually annihilated Feather Wind’s expert team! I don’t think even Lifeless Thorn could do that,” Sky Slicer, Centurion Dynasty’s Guild leader, said, laughing as he watched Shi Feng’s battle video.

Matchless Family had been humiliated. Not only had the Guild failed to kill Solitary Nine, but it had also lost over a hundred experts. Most importantly, a single player was responsible for all 100-plus deaths. This had dealt a huge blow to Matchless Family’s reputation. After all, winning a one-on-five expert battle was impressive. Even an expert like Lifeless Thorn should only be able to handle a dozen or so experts at a time.

Yet, Shi Feng had faced over a hundred experts, and his victory had been overwhelming.

Naturally, anyone who watched Shi Feng's battle video would realize that the man was very powerful. However, those who had only heard about the massacre would assume that Matchless Family's experts were nothing but paper tigers.

Suddenly, a female Elementalist in white mage robes asked, "Guild Leader, what should we do next?"

"Since the Matchless Family wants to kill this player, we have to do the opposite," Sky Slicer said, laughing. "Rain, find him. Tell him that the Centurion Dynasty would like to welcome him with open arms."

"What if he refuses?" Swirling Rain asked.

"Refuses?" Sky Slicer snorted. "That's not an option. We're talking about Matchless Family, after all. Even if he is strong as an individual, he can't take on the whole Guild. He'll only be safe if he joins us."

"Understood." Swirling Rain then bowed and left the meeting room.

...

Both of Cold Rain City's large Guilds began their search for Shi Feng. Meanwhile, the city's players were dumbfounded.

"What's going on?"

“This person is awesome! Both large Guilds are actually offering a high price for information about his whereabouts! Not even Lifeless Thorn has ever elicited such a reaction.”

“There’s no helping it. Although Lifeless Thorn doesn’t belong to any Guild, his adventurer team, Wave Heart, is a top adventurer team with over 3,000 members. It has over 300 experts. Three of the city’s top ten experts belong to the adventurer team, as well. The Guilds would have to weigh their options seriously before moving against Lifeless Thorn.”

“That’s right! This player is doomed. He killed so many of Matchless Family’s players. The Guild won’t rest until they kill him back to Level 0.”

“Both Guilds are offering such a high price. They’re already offering 2 Gold for any information about the man’s current location.”

...

The independent players on Cold Wind City’s streets quietly discussed the new player, every one of them admiring Shi Feng’s courage.

In Cold Wind City, no one, aside from Centurion Dynasty, dared to provoke Matchless Family. Independent players often resented the two large Guilds. Unfortunately, since both Guilds were so powerful, they had no choice but to endure their suffering. Hence, when they had heard the news of Shi Feng slaughtering over a hundred experts from Matchless Family, they quietly celebrated.

As the city’s players chatted about the recent events, seven players arrived in the Teleportation Hall. These players were none other than Shi Feng and the party from Aurora Sword.

After Solitary Nine had offered a general explanation of Cold Wind City, Shi Feng had decided to pay the city a visit. Hence, Solitary Nine had given Shi Feng a few Return Scrolls for Cold Wind City so that he could return via teleportation alongside his people.

Cold Wind City was the only NPC city in this particular zone. The city's player population exceeded 2,000,000, and each of the large Guilds had over 100,000 members. It was why the two Guilds were able to rule over Cold Wind City.

If Shi Feng wanted to find more information about the Eternal Ice Crystals, Cold Wind City's library was undoubtedly the best place to do so. All of God's Domain's libraries collected information about their home locations.

As soon as Shi Feng's group left the Teleportation Hall, gasps erupted from the players outside of the building.

"Crap... Isn't that the expert that killed the Matchless Family's experts?"

"What?! Does he not know that the Guilds have mobilized their forces to find him?!"

"He must be insane! He actually ventured into the city! Does he think Matchless Family is afraid of attacking him within the city walls?"

"That might be the case. Unfortunately, he's underestimated the Guild. Some time ago, some guy had provoked a few of Matchless Family's members. In the end, they killed him over ten times inside the city. The matter was only resolved after he paid the Guild 10 Gold and every weapon and piece of equipment he had."

“Quick... Notify Matchless Family!”

These players were stupefied as they watched Shi Feng stroll down the street, admiring the scenery. From time to time, Shi Feng even entered a Shop to browse its merchandise.

After so recently provoking Matchless Family, this man dared to show his face in Cold Wind City. From a certain perspective, Shi Feng deserved to be called Cold Wind City’s number one player...

Shortly after Shi Feng’s arrival, news reached both large Guilds.

...

“What?! He’s shopping in the Trade Area?! Are you sure?!” Sky Slicer could not help his shock upon hearing the latest report.

“I’m absolutely sure. I’ve compared his face to the person in the video,” the Assassin confirmed, nodding seriously.

“I’ll head there immediately! Notify the main force members and tell them to gather in the Trade Area as soon as possible!” Sky Slicer hurriedly instructed after digesting the information.

...

Meanwhile, in Matchless Family's Residence, when Thundering Sky received the news of Shi Feng's appearance, he nearly shattered his desk.

"Daring bastard! After killing my subordinates, he still dares show his face?! Notify every expert in the Guild and tell them to hurry over! Halt all operations and quests temporarily!" Thundering Sky bellowed.

Chapter 1450 – City of Crafters

Cold Wind City, Trade Area:

"Commander, more people are tailing us now. Matchless Family's probably found out about our return already. Should we notify Big Brother Ye Feng about?" Yan Ya asked worriedly as she glanced at the players stalking them.

News of the slaughter of Matchless Family's members had already spread throughout the city.

Yet, now, the main culprit boldly walked down the city streets without a care in the world. It was a slap in the face to the Guild. Once the Matchless Family's members arrived, they would not leave without a fight.

Thousands of players from Matchless city resided in the city. Killing a single player would be child's play for the Guild. Furthermore, their group still had the Soul Lock debuff.

Solitary Nine nodded in response to Yan Ya's question.

Based on his understanding of Matchless Family, the Guild would seek revenge for the smallest of grievances. It wouldn't hesitate to take action against Shi Feng even in the city. Although he trusted in Shi Feng's strength, Matchless Family had the home-ground advantage. Regardless of how powerful the man was, he was at a disadvantage.

Solitary Nine walked up to Shi Feng and whispered, "Brother Ye Feng, why don't we head to the library? I'm afraid that if we linger around here any longer, Matchless Family's members will find us. Dealing with them will be troublesome."

"Troublesome?" Curious, Shi Feng asked, "Do players have full power over the city?"

Solitary Nine hadn't gone into the management style in the Ice Crystal World's NPC cities. If these cities were like the Dark Den's Shelters, where players had full authority to determine a city's rules, they would indeed have some trouble to deal with.

"That's not the case. Matchless Family just has a lot of members inside the city," Solitary Nine said, shaking his head.

Shi Feng breathed a sigh of relief when he heard Solitary Nine's reply. He then pointed at the Cold Wind Auction House a short distance away and said, "That's alright, then. I've already visited most of the Shops, so let's make a trip to the Auction House before we head to the library."

"This..." Solitary Nine was speechless.

The man even wondered if Shi Feng understood what he meant by 'a lot of members.' Cold Wind City was the Matchless Family's main headquarters. The Guild could easily gather over ten thousand players

at a moment's notice. Centurion Dynasty was the only existence capable of contending with the Guild in the city.

"Commander, what should we..."

"Forget it. We'll just accompany him until the end. Hopefully, Thundering Sky can keep his cool and avoid doing anything rash..." As Solitary Nine watched Shi Feng leisurely approach the Auction House, he struggled with various complex feelings. He could not understand what was going through Shi Feng's mind. However, since Shi Feng had saved his and his teammates' lives, he could not escape by himself. He could only pray that Matchless Family did not do anything too reckless. After all, they were currently standing in the heart of the city. Patrolling NPC guards were everywhere. If it really came down to a fight, Matchless Family would not have too much of an advantage, either.

Upon entering the Auction House's main hall, the sight of players hawking their items greeted Shi Feng.

"Selling cheap, top-tier Level 40 Fine-Gold Weapons! Ten Gold per item! Get a 5% discount if you buy two!"

"Selling Refined Meteorite Copper for 3 Gold per stack!"

"Selling Frost Steel Ore for 1 Gold per stack!"

...

The players selling items in the hall outnumbered the shopping players. The items these players were selling shocked Shi Feng.

On the God's Domain continent, even the cheapest Level 40 Fine-Gold Weapon could sell for 15 Gold or more, yet players here were offering the same for 10 Gold each. Moreover, they were all player-made weapons...

With how high current demand was for Level 40 Fine-Gold Weapons in his world, he could easily turn a massive profit if he bought and resold these player-made weapons.

As for the Refined Meteor Copper, the rare forging material currently sold for 30 Silver per ingot. Moreover, it was very difficult to purchase. Each stack, containing 20 ingots, sold for 6 Gold, yet these players were selling each stack for half that.

The various forging materials sold in the hall were all significantly cheaper than those in God's Domain. In addition, this world had an abundance of forging resources. Even empires famous for producing ores paled in comparison to the Ice Crystal World.

This place is really impressive. It's a pity that I don't have a way to return once I leave. I guess I have no choice but to stock up on rare materials before I depart. Shi Feng sighed ruefully as he looked through the various items these players offered.

If he could travel between the Ice Crystal World and the God's Domain continent, he could earn more income from reselling items than what he earned from Stone Forest Town. Moreover, he could rely on the large quantity of materials to nurture the Candlelight Trading Firm's forgers. If luck would have it, he might nurture a few Master Forgers. After all, creating new items required experimentation with various materials. With so many rare materials in the Ice Crystal World, one could experiment to their heart's content.

This was most likely the reason that the standard of Cold Wind City's forgers was far above those in the Candlelight Trading Firm.

Based on Solitary Nine's explanation, the Ice Crystal World should have other NPC cities. As players reached higher levels, Cold Wind City's Guilds began to prepare to challenge the Snow Rift. It was only a matter of time before Cold Wind City's players encountered cities in other regions.

At this point, Shi Feng suspected that the Ice Crystal World had birthed the game's first Master Forger.

However, purchasing a large amount of materials required a lot of Coins, but he hadn't been carrying many when he had come to the Ice Crystal World. His only option was to make money by selling the Matchless Family's Secret-Silver and Fine-Gold items for a low price. Unfortunately, the Dark-Gold items were precious to Zero Wing, so Shi Feng intended to hold on to them for now.

After Shi Feng finished putting the loot from Matchless Family for up for sale, he left the Auction House and made his way to the library.

Seeing Shi Feng finally willing to leave this risky location, Solitary Nine and the others breathed a sigh of relief.

However, as soon as they left the Auction House, they were greeted by a shocking scene.

Players crowded the street, and every one of them wore Matchless Family's Guild Emblem.

With a rough glance, they easily counted over 10,000 players...

Matchless Family's members radiated killing intent as they glared at Shi Feng's group, scaring off any unrelated players.

"What's going on?"

"Does Matchless Family plan to monopolize the Auction House?"

"You don't know? Some expert killed a bunch of their members. They've come to deal with him!"

"Do they need to go to such lengths, though? Why would they dispatch so many people just for one player?"

...

The domineering display frightened the independent players on the street. Among the Matchless Family members present, the lowest-leveled member was Level 43. Their equipment was awe-inspiring, as well.

"This... Has the Matchless Family lost its mind?" Solitary Nine felt an unprecedented pressure.

He had thought that, at most, Matchless Family would send around 1,000 experts. He hadn't expected Thundering Sky to be mad enough to dispatch a 10,000-man army.

Not even Lifeless Thorn, Cold Wind City's number one expert, could elicit such a reaction.

However, after Matchless Family's members had gathered in front of the Auction House, another commotion shook the street. Another player army slowly approached from the other end of the street, and although this army was smaller than Matchless Family's, it still included around 3,000 players. These new arrivals wore Centurion Dynasty's Guild Emblem.

For a time, experts from both of Cold Wind City's large Guilds stood before the Auction House's entrance. Following which, both Guilds' Leaders pulled away from the crowd.

Both men looked at Shi Feng.

"You're the expert that killed Feather Wind?" Thundering Sky and Sky Slicer asked in almost perfect unison.

The spectating players were stupefied.

Chapter 1451 – Obliterated

"That guy is so amazing! Both Guild Leaders actually came looking for him! Just who is he?!"

The distant spectating players were shocked to see the two men.

Solitary Nine, who stood behind Shi Feng, was at a loss for words.

Both Thundering Sky and Sky Slicer were top-tier existences in Cold Wind City. Normally, they were very difficult to meet, yet these two had gathered here due to Shi Feng.

“That’s right. What business do you have with me?” Shi Feng calmly replied to the Guild Leaders’ question.

An army of ten thousand players might be shocking to ordinary players, but not even a million-player army could surprise Shi Feng. Besides, they were still inside an NPC city.

“Good! I never thought you would have the guts to admit it!” Thundering Sky’s face twitched in anger as he glared at Shi Feng’s calm composure. “I am Thundering Sky, the Guild Leader of Matchless Family. Since you admitted to killing my Guild’s experts, that makes things simple. Hand over every item and piece of equipment you have and let me kill you once; then we’ll consider the matter settled. Otherwise, bear the consequences at your own risk.”

“Guild Leader, aren’t you letting this brat off too lightly?” The Guild Leader’s demand confused his upper echelons.

They had assumed that Thundering Sky wouldn’t rest until he forced this newcomer to delete his account, he had just offered to let Shi Feng off with such a light punishment.

“Enough! I have my reasons!” Thundering Sky shot his subordinates a withering glare, immediately silencing them.

What these Guild upper echelons did not know was that Thundering Sky was far more interested in Shi Feng’s weapons and equipment than he was in avenging Feather Wind.

After watching the Swordsman's battle video, he realized that the man's Basic Attributes were ridiculously high. Not even Thundering Sky was confident of killing Feather Wind in one hit. After all, Feather Wind's weapons and equipment were considerably good. The Elementalist's HP was also over 30,000. PVP battles were different from those with monsters. A player's damage would scale down when they struck another player. Killing expert players of the same level was very difficult.

Yet, Shi Feng had done it. Moreover, he had thrown Level 44 and 45 Shield Warriors with his normal attacks. His Strength could definitely rival that of a Great Lord of the same level.

With such powerful Attributes, Shi Feng had to have more than one top-tier weapon or piece of equipment. He might even have something Thundering Sky could use.

However, if they killed this man while the Soul Lock debuff was active, Shi Feng would only drop a few pieces of equipment. On the off chance that he had stored his items in the Bank, they would lose any chance of obtaining them.

"Hahaha! Fellow friend, ignore this man's foolish demands! If you join Centurion Dynasty, I guarantee that no harm will come to you within the Cold Wind City region," Sky Slicer said as he sent a contemptuous glance at Thundering Sky before turning back to Shi Feng. "In addition, I'd like to offer you the position as our Guild's main force vice commander."

"Insane! This is madness!"

"I didn't hear wrong, right?! Sky Slicer actually offered so much to an unknown expert?! They haven't even been that generous to Lifeless Thorn!"

Sky Slicer's voice had been quite loud, so the spectating crowd had heard every word. The offer confused them.

A Guild's main force was a Guild's core of power. The main force generally only answered to the Guild Leader; not even Vice Guild Leaders had the authority to mobilize the main force. Hence, the main force's commander was even more important than the Vice Guild Leader. Although the vice commander wasn't as important, it was still a crucial role.

Sky Slicer had offered Shi Feng such an important position right off the bat.

"Slicer! Do you intend to make an enemy of Matchless Family?!" Thundering Sky shouted, enraged. Although he had expected Sky Slicer to oppose him, he hadn't expected the man to be so brazen about it.

"Have our Guilds ever been friendly?" Sky Slicer sneered.

Their two Guilds had fought countless battles against each other, and neither feared their rival. Now that he had an opportunity to suppress his rival's momentum and recruit a powerful expert, he couldn't miss the chance to kill two birds with one stone.

"Good! I'll take care of your Centurion Dynasty as well!" Thundering Sky's expression darkened. Immediately, he commanded, "Everyone, attack!"

"Yes! Let's see who is afraid of whom!" Sky Slicer also commanded his Guild members to fight.

For a time, the Matchless Family and Centurion Dynasty's members slaughtered each other inside the city. Due to so many players involved, the NPC patrols couldn't quell the incident quickly. They could only clear out the fighting players, little by little.

Both Guilds' members fought with everything they had, fully intent on annihilating their enemy.

Now that players were reaching higher levels, it was only a matter of time before they could raid the Snow Rift. To compete with Guilds in other NPC cities, they first needed to deal with Cold Wind City's problems. Otherwise, they would have to face enemies on both fronts.

The entire street had transformed into a battlefield. Spells and arrows blotted out the sky, and explosions and screams filled the air.

Unfortunately, as Centurion Dynasty had brought fewer members, Matchless family quickly suppressed its players. As a result, the former Guild's members were forced to retreat. Of course, Matchless Family couldn't eliminate their rival's members as Centurion Dynasty's reinforcements began to arrive. All Matchless Family could do was push the other Guild back.

Shortly after the battle had begun, the dead players' weapons and equipment littered the street.

Even experts were forced to use their Lifesaving Skills. The weaker players died before they could even react as numerous attacks struck.

The spectators were stunned.

This fight helped them realize just how weak an individual was compared to a Guild. Even the well-known adventurer teams were nothing.

Very quickly, Sky Slicer was forced into a corner. Meanwhile, Matchless Family's members surrounded the Auction House.

"Hmph. Do you think that we can't touch you just because Centurion Dynasty wants to lend a helping hand?" Thundering Sky sneered at Shi Feng, who had not participated in the battle. "I guarantee you that no one can protect you in the Cold Wind City region. If you hand over all of your weapons and equipment now, I can still let you off the hook. If you try to retaliate, I'll eliminate you, Solitary Nine, and his group hiding behind you!"

The watching crowd gasped when they heard Thundering Sky's threat.

They all knew that Thundering Sky was a man of his word, but they hadn't expected him to be ruthless enough to target Solitary Nine's group as well.

However, as soon as Thundering Sky finished speaking, Shi Feng, who had maintained a relaxed posture, unsheathed Killing Ray. He then casually walked towards Thundering Sky, who stood 50 yards away from him, as if he were just taking a stroll through his own backyard.

"What?! He actually dares to defy Thundering Sky?!"

"Is he insane?!"

Even Matchless Family's members were stunned.

Setting aside Thundering Sky's individual prowess, the man was surrounded by hundreds of his experts. These subordinates would likely kill the Swordsman before he got close to their Guild Leader.

“You asked for this!” Thundering Sky frowned. He hadn’t thought this newcomer would be so foolish. He gestured with a hand and ordered, “Kill him!”

The instant Shi Feng was within the ranged players’ reach, over a hundred Spells and arrows flew towards him, forming a tight wall that left no room for Shi Feng to dodge.

However, Shi Feng raised the Sacred Sword and swung it forward.

Lightning Edge!

Suddenly, countless arcs of blue lightning streaked towards the incoming Spells and arrows. In the blink of an eye, the lightning destroyed everything in a 50-yard cone.

“I am only one person. However, you can’t just kill me because you want to,” Shi Feng calmly stated as he watched Thundering Sky and his numerous subordinates transform into particles of white light.

Chapter 1452 – Overwhelming Difference

Silence!

It seemed as if time had stopped. The fighting players from both Guilds froze as they stared at the particles of light that had once been Thundering Sky and his subordinates.

All of a sudden, a large, empty space had opened on the crowded street. Even now, faint arcs of electricity flickered around the clearing.

In a single move, Shi Feng had killed hundreds of Matchless Family's players.

Thundering Sky, who ranked among Cold Wind City's top 10 players, had died before their eyes. He hadn't even put up the slightest fight before he had died. It was hard to believe that an ordinary-looking Swordsman with a blue longsword had been responsible for this.

When Solitary Nine and the others, who stood behind Shi Feng, saw this, they could not help but gasp, the corners of their lips twitching slightly.

They already knew that Shi Feng was very powerful, but it now seemed that Shi Feng hadn't taken his fight with Feather Wind seriously.

"Just who is this guy?" The corners of Sky Slicer's eyes twitched as he stared at the empty clearing a short distance away.

He wouldn't have been so surprised if Shi Feng had been a magical-class player. However, this was the first time he had seen a Swordsman in God's Domain possessing such a powerful Skill. Moreover, this Skill had such a short channeling time, giving the Skill's targets no time to react.

"How is this possible? The Guild Leader died?"

Matchless Family's members were at a loss. Everything had happened too quickly.

“He killed our Guild Leader! We can’t let him get away!”

“That Skill must have a long Cooldown! He can’t use it again anytime soon! Kill him!”

Suddenly, Matchless Family’s members turned their attention away from Centurion Dynasty as they charged at Shi Feng.

A Guild Leader was directly connected to the Guild’s reputation. The fact that this man had killed their Guild Leader instantly humiliated every one of them. If they did not kill Shi Feng right now, Matchless Family’s reputation would suffer. This would severely impact their Guild’s development.

“Damn it! Matchless Family’s players have lost their minds!” Tension gripped Solitary Nine as he watched the players swarm towards him.

However, before the Matchless Family’s members reached their group, Shi Feng pointed Killing Ray at the approaching crowd.

Dragon Breath!

Suddenly, a beam of white light shot forth. The white light vaporized any player it touched.

In the blink of an eye, several hundred more players had died...

After using Dragon Breath, Shi Feng followed up with Dragon's Authority, inflicting the Fear debuff on all enemies within a 50-yard radius, reducing their Movement Speed and Attack Speed by 40% for one minute.

Everyone within the Skill's range felt as if they had plunged into a muddy swamp. Following which, Shi Feng activated Defensive Blade, increasing his attack range. He then took a step forward and vanished.

"Where is he?" As the crowd recovered from the shock and fear Shi Feng's Dragon Breath had inflicted, the man had disappeared. They could not help their growing confusion.

However, before anyone had realized it, Shi Feng had reappeared among Matchless Family's members. He lightly swung his two swords at the nearby enemies.

Boom!

A tornado formed around Shi Feng. Following which, all players within 15 yards of Shi Feng collapsed, staring at their empty HP bars in a daze. Not even the MTs with high HP had escaped Shi Feng's wrath.

Following which, Shi Feng advanced once again. This time, however, he didn't execute Void Steps. Instead, he left numerous afterimages trailing behind him as he moved forward. At the same time, he brandished his swords without a care in the world, slaughtering every player that came within 15 yards. None of the players within his range escaped death's embrace. In fact, they couldn't even block or dodge the Swordsman's attacks.

One after another, Matchless Family's members transformed into particles of light. Shi Feng looked like a god of death as he claimed these players' lives. Nobody could even slow him down.

Although the Guild's ranged players tried to stop Shi Feng, their attempts were little more than a joke. They couldn't even keep up with Shi Feng's movements with their eyes, much less land an attack. They could only watch as particles of light floated in the air...

"He can't be a player! He must be a Demon in disguise!"

"He's a monster! A monster in human skin! We need to run!"

After a brief moment, Shi Feng had killed another several hundred players. Panic overwhelmed Matchless Family members as they watched Shi Feng reap their allies' lives. At this point, they had forgotten about avenging their Guild Leader and restoring their Guild's reputation. They could only think of getting as far away from Shi Feng as possible.

They had never seen such a terrifying player before. Compared to Shi Feng, the strongest Boss monster they had ever faced looked cute. After all, they had some hope of damaging a Boss. Against Shi Feng, however, they couldn't even resist. How was this supposed to be a PvP battle? This was just a one-sided massacre.

Like frightened rats, the thousands of Matchless Family members scattered and fled in all directions.

The players watching from a safe distance were stupefied.

Before today, they had seen thousands of players pursue a single person. They had never watched one player chase after a 10,000-man army. This scene had shattered everything they had thought they knew about God's Domain.

“Isn’t he a little too strong...? Just who is he?” Solitary Nine was beyond shocked.

An individual having the power to suppress an entire Guild only ever happened in his dreams, yet he watched as that dream became a reality.

What Solitary Nine did not know was that, while Cold Wind City’s players might be stronger than those in God’s Domain as forgers, their weapons and equipment were nothing in comparison. To prove this point, not one player from Matchless Family dropped an Epic Weapon or piece of equipment. The best they had was Level 40 Dark-Gold Equipment. On the other hand, Shi Feng wielded three Fragmented Legendary items.

He was also a Tier 2 player. With both advantages, the difference between Shi Feng and his opponents was horrifying.

As the other players from Aurora Sword watched Shi Feng’s massacre, an indescribable excitement bloomed in their chests. They were fully aware that Shi Feng was a player. They fully intended to boast to their friends that they had met such a powerful expert.

After around 30 seconds, the originally clogged street was empty of players. Only Shi Feng and a bunch of weapons and equipment remained. The survivors from Matchless Family had long since fled the battlefield.

Despite so many items covering the street, none of the spectators moved forward to steal them. On the contrary, they distanced themselves from the loot, making sure that at least a hundred yards lay between them and the nearest item.

As for the NPC guards, they spared Shi Feng little more than a glance before pursuing Matchless Family's surviving members.

In NPC cities, the NPC guards would target the side that attacked first. Matchless Family members had teamed up before surrounding Shi Feng. If any member of the team attacked, they would implicate the entire team in the crime. Hence, within a fixed amount of time, Shi Feng could kill as many members of the team as he wanted without receiving any punishment from the system.

Even if this mechanic hadn't existed, Shi Feng could've simply found a secluded location and altered his appearance with the Demon Mask. With Nightwalker Cape's passive concealment effect, not even high-tiered NPC guards could touch him.

After crushing Matchless Family members, Shi Feng didn't hurry to collect his loot. Instead, he smiled as he turned to Sky Slicer, who stood a short distance away, saying, "Guild Leader Slicer, now that the problem has been dealt with, may I know what business you have with me?"

Chapter 1453 – Unexpected Harvest

As Centurion Dynasty's members watched Shi Feng walk towards them, their breath caught, and cold sweat drenched their backs. It felt as if a prehistoric beast approached, not a player, and they desperately wanted to turn and flee.

One man had inspired thousands of Matchless Family's members to run like frightened rats.

If someone had told them of such a thing happening in the past, they would have laughed it off. Now, however, they could not find it in themselves to laugh.

They had clashed with the other Guild many times, and both were roughly on the same level. Since Shi Feng could suppress Matchless Family by himself, naturally, he wouldn't have any issues doing so to Centurion Dynasty.

Sky Slicer wore an ugly expression.

Had he known something like this would happen, he would not have poked his nose into the situation...

"Brother Expert, I believe there has been a misunderstanding. I only came here to recruit you because I have a grudge against Matchless Family. If I had known that Brother Expert was so powerful, I would not have meddled in your affairs. For this offense, I am willing to pay 10,000 Magic Crystals as compensation," Sky Slicer respectfully told Shi Feng. His previous pride had faded like smoke.

"What a generous offer!" Solitary Nine quietly exclaimed.

In his opinion, Sky Slicer was insane to offer 10,000 Magic Crystals as an apology.

Even a well-known adventurer team like Aurora Sword had only accumulated 2,000 Magic Crystals thus far.

Meanwhile, Magic Crystals were an indispensable resource in Cold Wind City. For example, Lifestyle players needed the crystals when producing weapons and equipment. To increase their production success rate, they would spend Magic Crystals on renting special workshops in their respective Lifestyle Associations. There was also the Divine Colosseum, and training there cost a lot of crystals. Magic Crystals were nearly impossible to save.

Although there were quite a few ways to obtain Magic Crystals in Cold Wind City, handing over 10,000 Magic Crystals would deal a considerably painful blow to Centurion Dynasty.

However, Solitary Nine wasn't a Guild Leader, so he couldn't understand Sky Slicer's thought process.

If an expert of Shi Feng's caliber decided to target Centurion Dynasty and randomly ambush its main force or elite members, the Guild would break under the loss. Moreover, Centurion Dynasty couldn't do anything to Shi Feng. If such a situation lasted for a long time, it could cripple the Guild.

The 10,000 Magic Crystal offer also served to put some distance between Centurion Dynasty and Shi Feng.

"Ten thousand Magic Crystals?" Shi Feng was slightly confused. The resources in Cold Wind City were far more abundant than he had assumed.

Both Centurion Dynasty and Matchless Family would only be third-rate Guilds on God's Domain's continent. Giving away 10,000 Magic Crystals would likely bankrupt the Guild. However, based on Sky Slicer's expression, he only felt a slight pang at the loss.

When the Guild Leader saw the small frown forming on Shi Feng's face, he realized that the other party wasn't particularly satisfied with the compensation. Gritting his teeth, he said, "If Brother Expert doesn't find the compensation satisfying, I can include this map as well?"

Saying so, Sky Slicer took out an ancient, tattered animal skin. Although the hide was quite old, it emitted a faint pressure.

Although there was only a trace of this pressure, everyone seemed to fear it.

This is...Divine Might? Shi Feng stared at the animal hide in Sky Slicer's hands in surprise.

Divine Might was an aura unique to Gods. Any item that radiated the energy wouldn't be ordinary. Furthermore, this item had manifested in the Ice Crystal World.

Although this Otherworld's rank was quite high, it could only accommodate up to Tier 5 creatures. Tier 6 Gods were barred from this world. The fact that such an item, once used by God, had manifested here made it even more valuable.

"Brother Expert, what do you think?" Sky Slicer asked, smiling when he saw Shi Feng's interest in the animal hide.

He had obtained this animal hide some time ago, but although he recognized it as valuable, he had no way to reveal its secrets. Using it to appease Shi Feng and improve his relationship with the man wasn't a bad trade.

"Deal!" Shi Feng nodded.

His goal in traveling to the Ice Crystal World was to obtain Eternal Ice Crystals, not to dominate Cold Wind City. He had no reason to clash with the local Guilds. If not for Matchless Family's determination to pick a fight, he wouldn't have bothered with them.

Hearing Shi Feng's reply, Sky Slicer breathed a sigh of relief. He then handed over the 10,000 Magic Crystals and the animal hide. As for the weapons and equipment littering the street, Shi Feng decided to sell the items to Sky Slicer for Coins and various rare materials.

Weapons and equipment took up an entire slot by themselves in a player's bag space. However, materials didn't; one slot could hold multiple articles of the same item. By selling the weapons and equipment for materials, Shi Feng could maximize the number of items he brought back to God's Domain.

Naturally, Sky Slicer was more than happy to accept Shi Feng's offer.

The Matchless Family members that had cornered Shi Feng earlier consisted of the Guild's elites and experts. Most of the players that had fallen to Shi Feng had been experts. Hence, the weapons and equipment they had dropped were considered top-tier in Cold Wind City.

Through this transaction, Shi Feng had obtained close to 8,000 Gold in rare materials. If he resold these materials in his home world, he could easily earn over 20,000 Gold. However, Shi Feng wouldn't sell all of the materials even for a single payment of 20,000 Gold.

These rare materials could help the Candlelight Trading Firm's forgers improve quickly. The trading firm might even manage to nurture a Master Forger.

After obtaining the materials, Shi Feng quickly made his way to Cold Wind City's library.

Meanwhile, news of Shi Feng's triumph over the Matchless Family quickly spread throughout Cold Wind City, shocking the resident players.

“That guy is so awesome! Not only did he suppress Matchless Family by himself, but even Centurion Dynasty treated him with respect! I wish I had half his strength!”

“After this, Lifeless Thorn will have to relinquish his position as Cold Wind City’s number one expert.”

“I wonder if this expert is accepting disciples? If he is or plans to start an adventurer team or Guild, I’ll be the first to apply!”

...

For a time, Cold Wind City’s players heatedly discussed this newcomer.

...

Meanwhile, a man wearing ice-blue armor and wielding a purple spear faced off against a Level 54, Great Lord ranked Demonic Frost Wolf in the Snow Rift, Cold Wind City’s forbidden land.

Despite the Frost Wolf’s upper hand in speed and Strength, it was helpless against this indifferent man. On the contrary, the player repeatedly restricted its movements.

Because of this one man, the 20-man team following him easily dealt with the Demonic Frost Wolf.

Less than a minute after the fight had begun, the Demonic Frost Wolf collapsed and dropped several items. The team members watched as their experience bars rose quite a bit.

While the team rested, a heroic-looking female Swordsman turned to the indifferent man, who rested with his eyes closed. Giggling, she said, "Lifeless, didn't you say that you're the strongest player in Cold Wind City? It seems that you have a rival now."

"A rival?" Lifeless Thorn's eyes opened when he heard these words. Shaking his head, he said, "Cold Wind City's experts are clueless. They're nowhere near being a suitable rival for me."

"I'm not talking about them," the female Swordsman, Cleansing Whistle, responded. Revealing a leisurely smile, she said, "Weren't you boasting about how powerful you are? Do you think you can stand against 10,000 elites from Matchless Family?"

"You've got to be kidding. You're talking about 10,000 elite players." Lifeless Thorn rolled his eyes.

"Then why do you claim to be invincible in Cold Wind City? Here; take a look at this. Not long ago, a Swordsman expert single-handedly suppressed Matchless Family's army. Centurion Dynasty even offered him a gift as an apology," Cleansing Whistle said, giggling as she sent a copy of Shi Feng's battle video to Lifeless Thorn.

"This is..." Although Lifeless Thorn wanted to refute Cleansing Whistle's words, he couldn't help his shock as he watched the battle video. "How can there be such a powerful expert in the city?"

"Well? Hadn't you said something earlier about the Swordsman class being crap? Now you know how powerful Swordsmen are!" Cleansing Whistle said, feeling a little proud when she saw the man's shock.

"He is powerful. He is on an entirely different level than I am," Lifeless Thorn straightforwardly admitted.

The Assassin's admission stunned Cleansing Whistle. She had thought the news would shake Lifeless Thorn's confidence, allowing her to get some payback for his insults towards her class.

Before Cleansing Whistle could say more, Lifeless Thorn stood and took a Return Scroll from his bag.

"What are you doing?" Cleansing Whistle asked curiously.

"Do you really have to ask? I'm going to look for that expert," Lifeless Thorn said, excitement flashing in his eyes.

"Are you mad?! We wasted all that time to get here, yet you're going back, just like that?!" Cleansing Whistle was astonished.

However, ignoring her words, Lifeless Thorn activated the Return Scroll. He then transformed into a streak of light as he left the Snow Rift. Seeing this, Cleansing Whistle and the other team members had no choice but to take out Return Scrolls and head back as well.

...

Meanwhile, in Cold Wind City's Noble's District, Shi Feng impatiently took out the animal hide Sky Slicer had given him and carefully inspected as he traveled in an advanced carriage.

Chapter 1454 – Treasure that Surpasses Epic Rank

It's no wonder why Sky Slicer couldn't do anything with this.

When Shi Feng tried to inspect the hide, he was only able to learn its name—Tattered Animal Hide. The item displayed no further information.

Although this animal hide radiated a faint trace of Divine Might, due to time, it was damaged beyond recognition. The images and words that had been inscribed on the item were nearly impossible to discern.

Fortunately, Shi Feng was confident that he was even more skilled at analyzing items than a Master Appraiser.

I wonder what this item is, exactly. Shi Feng then activated Omniscient Eyes and inspected the hide once more.

The moment he tried to do so, a loading bar appeared above the item.

Watching the loading bar, Shi Feng was astonished.

How is this possible?! Just what kind of item is this?!

When he used Omniscient Eyes to appraise Dark-Gold items, the process took no more than 10 seconds, yet this scrap of hide required 30 seconds.

Not even Epic items took so long to appraise.

As the seconds ticked by, the process restored the images and words on the animal hide. By the time the loading bar was full and disappeared, the originally tattered hide seemed as if it had regained its vitality as it began to restore itself.

In the blink of an eye, the tattered animal hide looked brand new.

This is...an Ancient Shrine? Shi Feng gave the leather an incredulous look.

“Big Brother Ye Feng, has something happened?” Yan Ya asked from beside Shi Feng.

Everyone in the carriage was curious, looking to Shi Feng for an explanation. This man had remained calm even when he stood against an army of 10,000 players, yet he stared at the hide Sky Slicer had given him in surprise.

“It’s nothing. I’m just satisfied with the transaction with Sky Slicer,” Shi Feng said, chuckling.

Although Shi Feng had brushed the matter off verbally, inside, he was ecstatic.

Ancient Shrines were considerably old and mysterious locations. No one knew who had built them, yet every large-scale Otherworld had them.

Ancient Shrines were extremely dangerous, guarded by powerful monsters. They were also crowded with traps. Even so, players residing in large-scale Otherworlds swarmed to these Ancient Shrines like madmen.

This was because Ancient Shrines housed the passage to travel from their Otherworlds to God's Domain's continent.

As Otherworld's experts grew more powerful, they would find clues leading to these Ancient Shrines. They would then search for the shrines' locations before exploring their interiors. Eventually, they would find God's Domain.

However, this process normally only started after players reached Level 100.

The maps that contained these Ancient Shrines were generally high-level areas. Moreover, the Ancient Shrines themselves were very well-hidden.

The animal hide Sky Slicer had given him was a record of all of the locations of and information about the Ice Crystal World's Ancient Shrines. This item would save players a lot of time.

Only now did Shi Feng understand why it had taken an unusual amount of time to appraise the animal hide.

There was no doubt that the Ancient Shrine Map in his hand was worth far more than a measly Epic item. After all, whoever possessed this map would have full access to the Ice Crystal World.

As long as he developed the path to one of the Ancient Shrines, he could freely transfer resources between the Ice Crystal World and his home world. The benefits of reselling these items could even tempt Super Guilds. The sooner he opened this path, the more benefits he'd obtain.

According to the Ancient Shrine Map, the easiest Ancient Shrine to reach was in a Level 50 to 70 map. This map was a forbidden land that connected the various NPC cities in the Ice Crystal World. For Cold Wind City, this map was the Snow Rift.

Only, the map indicated that the Snow Rift's Ancient Shrine lay under its core region, so it would be extremely difficult to locate.

By the time anyone discovered the hidden map, Ice Crystal World's mainstream players would have exceeded the recommended level.

With this map, my trip here has certainly been worth it. Shi Feng began to formulate numerous plans as he inspected the Ancient Shrine's location.

He had come to the Ice Crystal World because of a quest. Originally, he would've had to wait until someone from the Ice Crystal World activated an Ancient Shrine's teleportation gate to return to this world after finishing his quest. Moreover, that was dependent on whether or not the player who discovered the shrine would publish the teleportation gate's location. After all, he wouldn't be able to return to the Ice Crystal World unless he found another teleportation gate on God's Domain's continent.

However, things had changed. If he could activate an Ancient Shrine before he left, he would travel between worlds unhindered. This would give Zero Wing an advantage. Moreover, unlike the Dark Den, where he could only take one person with him, the Ancient Shrine's teleportation gates wouldn't have such a restriction.

Of course, he'd have to pay the teleportation fee.

Incredibly powerful NPCs guarded Ancient Shrine's teleportation gates, and each of these NPCs determined the fees based on how much distance separated the two worlds. Generally, the fee ranged between 20 and 50 Magic Crystals per person. Although Shi Feng had once encountered a gate that charged one Mana Stone per person...

Usually, only independent elite and expert players could afford to travel back and forth between worlds.

However, the cost was nothing compared to the potential profits Guilds could gain. After all, every Otherworld had its own specialty resources that were extremely rare in God's Domain. If Guilds had to pay a small teleportation fee to obtain these precious resources, they would be more than happy to part with the cost.

Right now, opening a path to the Ancient Shrine was far more important than obtaining Eternal Ice Crystals to Shi Feng.

As long as he activated the Ancient Shrine, he'd accept failing the quest and losing his chance to trade Eternal Ice Crystals for the Bracelet of Time. He could simply rely on the Ice Crystal World's resources to earn 5,000,000 Magic Crystals within a month and purchase the Bracelet of Time for the originally stated price.

It seems I'll need to make a trip to this Ancient Shrine later. Thinking up to this point, Shi Feng carefully inspected the information on the animal hide.

No one should ever underestimate an Ancient Shrine. Based on his memories, an Ancient Shrine required a considerable amount of time to raid and conquer. And he was alone in the Ice Crystal World. It wouldn't be easy to clear a path.

As for the Eternal Ice Crystals, Shi Feng intended to visit the library before making his decision.

If he could find a way to obtain the ten Eternal Ice Crystals, he would save a massive amount of Magic Crystals.

After looking at the Ancient Shrine Map for some time, Shi Feng felt his head ache.

The Ancient Shrine in question would be extraordinarily difficult to raid. Only now did he understand why the various Otherworld's large Guilds required a month to clear out a single shrine.

Even a low-level Ancient Shrine, like the one located below the Snow Rift, was guarded by a Level 70 Mythic monster.

Even the Snow Rift's final Boss was a Level 70, Grand Lord ranked Nine-headed Earth Dragon. Although only one tier separated the two, the difference in strength was like heaven and earth.

Alone, he could never defeat a Level 70, Mythic ranked Boss.

When Shi Feng finished examining the Ancient Shrine Map, he turned to Solitary Nine and asked, "Brother Nine, would you to help me with something?"

"Help you?" Solitary Nine asked, confused.

“Yes. I wish to establish an adventurer team in Cold Wind City,” Shi Feng stated.

Chapter 1455 – Adventurer Team Established

“Establish an adventurer team?”

“Big Brother Ye Feng, are you joking?”

For a moment, everyone in the advanced carriage looked at Shi Feng in surprise, wondering if they had misheard.

Shi Feng had previously expressed his lack of interest in establishing his own force. He had only come to Cold Wind City from another region to complete a quest.

Yet, this man had just stated that he wanted to establish his own adventurer team. They were both confused and excited to hear this.

If Shi Feng formed an adventurer team, it would undoubtedly flourish.

In addition, during the previous battle, Shi Feng had made a name for himself in Cold Wind City. He wouldn't have any issues establishing a Guilds, much less an adventurer team.

They could already see players lining up to apply.

“What do you need our help with?” Solitary Nine asked, practically glowing.

He had already decided to join any force this man established. After all, Shi Feng’s strength and combat standards were far more impressive than his own. Watching Shi Feng’s battle had opened the doors to a completely new world for him. Unfortunately, Shi Feng hadn’t shown any interest in setting up his own force, so he hadn’t asked the Swordsman about it. He had only hoped to form a close relationship with the Swordsman and find an opportunity to seek Shi Feng’s guidance.

Now, however, he didn’t need to do so. He could simply join Shi Feng’s adventurer team.

His goal in establishing an adventurer team was to improve his combat standards by delving into God’s Domain’s various ruins and Dungeons. He did not like participating in the struggles between Guilds.

Most importantly, he had always hated the way Matchless Family and Centurion Dynasty had operated. Hence, he had established the Aurora Sword adventurer team. He had thought that he and his companions could join Wave Heart, Cold Wind City’s number one adventurer team, if the Guilds put too much pressure on Aurora Sword. Fortunately, he didn’t have to worry about that anymore.

“I’d like to ask your help in advertising and organizing the adventurer team’s recruitment.” After giving the matter some more thought, he continued, “I don’t need a lot of people for the team. Three or four thousand members will be enough. Official members will have to reach the Trial Tower’s fifth floor at the very least, though the requirement will increase as time goes on.”

Cold Wind City had its own Divine Colosseum, and although it wasn’t connected to those in other cities, it wouldn’t affect players’ evaluations.

“The fifth floor?” Yan Ya’s jaw dropped. “Big Brother Ye Feng, very few people in Cold Wind City will be able to meet that requirement. Most experts can only reach the fourth floor.”

Yan Ya was one of Aurora Sword’s top-ranked experts, but even she had only recently made it to the fifth floor.

“Quality is more important than quantity. Of course, we could let players take another set of tests before joining the adventurer team,” Shi Feng said. He then took out the list of Zero Wing’s test criteria when recruiting members, displaying it for Solitary Nine and his party.

Not all talents in God’s Domain were powerhouses. Rather than only recruiting those who were already strong, they could also look for players with potential.

Players with potential would become reserve members for the moment. Reserve members would then be tested and judged based on their improvement speed. They could become official members once they reached a certain standard. If not, they would have to resort to the primary test, reaching the Trial Tower’s fifth floor. Although this two-stage process was tedious, it helped Zero Wing avoid missing out on potential experts.

Of course, there was a minimum requirement to become a reserve member; players had to reach the Trial Tower’s fourth floor.

At this stage of the game, the Trial Tower’s fourth floor was still a fairly difficult hurdle for players. However, as player standards continued to improve, more of them would reach the fourth floor. If a player could not even reach the fourth floor, there was no point for them to take the test to become a reserve member.

Even so, Shi Feng’s requirements stunned Solitary Nine and his companions.

In Cold Wind City, players who could reach the Trial Tower's fourth floor were generally recruited to become elite members in one of the two major Guilds, yet they would only be reserve members in Shi Feng's adventurer team. Once the city's players found out about this, they'd call him a madman.

After all, how could an adventurer team offer more benefits than a Guild?

Convincing 1,000 people to join this man's adventurer team would be immensely difficult, much less 5,000 people...

"Brother Ye Feng, what do you intend to call your adventurer team?" Solitary Nine asked.

"The adventurer team's name?" Shi Feng thought about how others had called him an Asura. Being intensely uncreative, he replied, "Let's call it the Asura adventurer team."

At first, he had considered simply calling it the Zero Wing adventurer team. After all, he had planned to use this adventurer team as reinforcements for Zero Wing's core members. However, after giving the matter some thought, he gave up on the idea. After all, many of God's Domain's experts disliked the restrictions Guilds imposed on their members.

Instead, he could invite the experts that refused to join Zero Wing to his Asura adventurer team.

This way, the Asura adventurer team could collect independent experts who disliked Guilds, forming a symbiotic relationship with Zero Wing.

“Then, Brother Ye Feng, can my Aurora Sword adventurer team join yours?” Solitary Nine asked anxiously after taking a deep breath.

“Of course! It’ll help me out quite a bit if you join. As long as your team members can meet one of the two requirements, they are welcome,” Shi Feng said, smiling.

He already had a rough estimation of Solitary Nine’s strength. He had also listened to Yan Ya’s comments on the matter.

Not only was Solitary Nine one of Cold Wind City’s top three MTs, but he had also reached the last stage of the Trial Tower’s sixth floor. He was only a step away from the seventh. Although he didn’t know any advanced combat techniques, he was not that far from the Half-step Refinement Realm. In Zero Wing, he could easily rank among the Guild’s top 10 MTs.

It was quite impressive. Furthermore, Solitary Nine hadn’t received any official training like Zero Wing’s core members had. The man had reached that standard of his own power.

If Solitary Nine were offered sufficient training and guidance, he could easily reach the Half-step Refinement Realm. Given enough time, reaching the Refinement Realm wouldn’t be much of an issue.

As such a capable expert, why wouldn’t he welcome Solitary Nine into his adventurer team?

Unfortunately, he’d have no choice but to let go the Aurora Sword members who couldn’t meet the recruitment requirements. It was important than an organization adhere to its own rules. Otherwise, the organization would lose its members’ trust.

“I understand.” Solitary Nine replied. The Asura adventurer team wanted experts. He’d have no choice but to compensate the Aurora Sword members who didn’t make the cut.

Following which, Shi Feng and his new companions drew up a list of benefits that the Asura adventurer team would offer its members.

With such a high recruitment requirement, not many players would apply if they didn’t offer appropriate benefits.

Before they realized it, their advanced carriage had arrived before Cold Wind City’s library.

What a marvelous library!

As soon as Shi Feng alighted from the carriage, he could not help but stare at the mountainous building before him. Compared to White River City’s library, Cold Wind City’s was a giant. The building was well over 300 meters tall. It was large enough to fill three sports arenas. At the same time, the library felt ancient like some long-lost ruin.

Following which, Shi Feng activated his Demon Hunter title and approached the entrance. The four NPC guards by the doors glanced at Shi Feng as he passed by, showing no intention of stopping the Swordsman.

Elsewhere, Solitary Nine published the recruitment information for the Asura adventurer team on Cold Wind City’s official forums. At the same time, Yan Ya and the others saw to the necessary arrangements to spread the news throughout the city.

Very quickly, news about Shi Feng’s an adventurer team reached every player in Cold Wind City.

“What? He’s actually trying to establish an adventurer team?” When Thundering Sky, who had recently resurrected, received the news, his expression darkened.

Chapter 1456 – Adventurer Team’s Benefits

“Guild Leader, quite a few of our members have withdrawn from the Guild as soon as they heard the news. If we don’t do something to stop this, I’m afraid that we’ll lose more of our members,” Feather Wind cautiously reported to Thundering Sky.

The battle at the Auction House dealt a massive blow to Matchless Family’s reputation, and because of that, the Guild had lost over a thousand elites and experts.

Yet, despite such huge losses, Matchless Family couldn’t do anything about them.

After all, the Guild was utterly helpless against Shi Feng.

To make matters worse, Shi Feng had decided to establish his own adventurer team.

They couldn’t afford to provoke Shi Feng when he stood alone, but they could still avoid the man. Matchless Family had over 100,000 members. Even if Shi Feng were more powerful, he wouldn’t be able to damage the Guild’s foundations if their members spread out. If he had an adventurer team under his control, however, Matchless Family would likely have to face thousands of players in the future.

It'd become even harder to deal with this expert.

"Damn it! Just who is he?! Why haven't we heard of this guy before?!" Thundering Sky's expression twisted as he read the latest report.

If not for Shi Feng's sudden appearance, their plans wouldn't have been interrupted, and he would have secured his hold on Cold Wind City.

"Guild Leader, should we...contact *those* people?" Feather Wind asked softly.

"It can't be helped. At this rate, Cold Wind City will either end up in Centurion Dynasty's hands or the Asura adventurer team's. Since they've taken Cold Wind City from me, I won't let them have it, either," Thundering Sky growled, a cold glint flashing in his eyes. "Contact them. Tell them that Matchless Family is willing to join their Guild. However, we require that they destroy Centurion Dynasty and the Asura adventurer team!"

Although Cold Wind City's players couldn't travel to other NPC cities right now, they could communicate with players in these cities offline.

An upper echelon from Hecate, a large Guild in another NPC city, had contacted Matchless Family, stating Hecate's interest in purchasing the Guild.

Initially, Thundering Sky had hesitated. After all, Hecate was far more powerful than Matchless Family, controlling more than five NPC cities. Hecate even ruled over Ice Crystal City, the Ice Crystal World's largest NPC city. Thundering Sky wasn't confident of Matchless Family's survival should it insult this massive Guild.

He had hoped to solidify his control over Cold Wind City before anyone cleared the Snow Rift. Even if his city were connected with other NPC cities, he'd more or less have the power to withstand outside forces.

Now that he had lost any hope of becoming his city's overlord, joining Hecate was his best choice. Once the passage opened, with Hecate's secret support, Matchless Family would send both Centurion Dynasty and Shi Feng to meet their maker.

"Understood. I'll see to it right away." Feather Wind then logged out of the game and disappeared from the office.

...

Elsewhere, after splitting up, Solitary Nine and the others took the 3,000 Gold Shi Feng had given them to purchase a considerably large plot of Land from the City Hall. They then visited the Adventurer's Association to begin their Residence's construction. Although the Residence was not as luxurious as a Guild Residence, it could easily accommodate 1,000 people at a time.

Hopeful applicants had already surrounded Asura's Residence. Over 4,000 players waited for their evaluation, and this was only the beginning.

"As expected of the adventurer team established by Cold Wind City's number one expert! Asura's Residence is even larger than Wave Heart's!"

"That's right! I bet it won't be long before Asura becomes the number one adventurer team in Cold Wind City!"

While the crowd waited for the application process to start, Solitary Nine emerged and posted the recruitment requirements at the entrance.

As Asura's recruitment standards went public, many players were shocked.

"Is the Asura adventurer team crazy? Only those who reached the Trial Tower's fifth-floor qualify to join? Do they not know what it means to reach the Trial Tower's fifth floor?"

"What?! Even those who can reach the fourth floor have to deal with further testing!? If I had that kind of strength, I would've joined a Guild as a core member! Why would I even bother joining an adventurer team?!"

"Is this really an adventurer team? Why do I feel like its recruitment requirements are harsher than a large Guild's?"

"With these standards, I doubt that Asura will even recruit 1,000 members. No, it might not even get 500 members!"

"Is the Asura adventurer team toying with us?"

"Crap! Isn't this just an adventurer team!? Who would be desperate enough to deal with this crap?!"

When the players outside Asura's Residence saw the requirements, some laughed, some cursed, and others simply turned and left. Everyone thought that the Asura adventurer team was mad.

As far as they knew, Asura's recruitment requirements were even higher than a first-rate Guild's, not to mention Cold Wind City's Guilds. With such high requirements, only a small number of players throughout the Ice Crystal World would bother to join the adventurer team.

After all, Asura was merely an adventurer team. It couldn't offer any significant benefits. An adventurer team just existed to give players an easier time forming teams and parties to raid Dungeons and explore ruins. Expert players never needed to worry about finding party members.

Furthermore, the Asura adventurer team had only recently been established. Even with an expert like Shi Feng, without Dungeon raid or ruin exploration results, expert players were less inclined to consider an adventurer team.

"Commander, players have stood outside our doors for quite some time now, yet only a few have applied. What should we do?" Yan Ya stated at the crowd outside in frustration.

"Yan Ya, stop calling me commander. Now that we've joined the Asura adventurer team, Ye Feng is the commander. I am simply one of Asura's party leaders," Solitary Nine said. "Regarding the recruitment issue, the commander has stated that if people don't apply, we'll reveal this benefit to the public."

He had mentioned the possibility of this awkward situation to Shi Feng, and after giving the matter some thought, the man had decided to raise the team members' benefits.

Any official member of the Asura adventurer team could use Contribution Points to purchase Dark-Gold Weapons and Equipment as well as the opportunity to learn various combat techniques.

“What?! Co-Commander, is that true?!” Yan Ya exclaimed when she heard this.

Being able to purchase Dark-Gold Weapons and Equipment from the adventurer team was already impressive. Even Cold Wind City’s experts only had a few Dark-Gold items on them. Usually, only Guilds’ core members had any access to such items, yet the Asura’s official members could bid on these items.

However, the Dark-Gold items paled in comparison to the combat techniques.

Most players knew something about combat techniques, mysterious techniques that could significantly improve one’s combat power.

Unfortunately, very few players actually knew any of these techniques. In fact, neither of Cold Wind City’s two large Guilds had any players that had learned a combat technique.

Yet, the Asura adventurer team offered to teach its members various combat techniques. This felt like a dream!

“Mhm. The commander made the decision, so don’t worry about it. In any case, publish the information outside.” Solitary Nine nodded. He, too, had been surprised when he had heard Shi Feng’s decision.

Following which, Yan Ya ran to the notice board outside the Residence’s entrance and published this shocking announcement.

Cold Wind City's library:

As soon as Shi Feng entered the library, he felt as if he had just stepped into a different world.

The library didn't contain any books whatsoever. Instead, the hall included a starry sky and organized shrubbery. Creeks and bridges snaked through the main hall. From time to time, one caught sight of glittering, translucent balls of water rising from the creeks before they dispersed into tiny drops.

All of these creeks originated from a single location, the massive water ball hovering in the center of the hall.

Not even Star-Moon City's library was this beautiful.

What an amazing library. It's fully automated with the use of magic water balls. The Mana density is double that of outside. If players could practice their Spells in here, their learning efficiency would double, maybe triple. Shi Feng could not help his surprise when he sensed the building's Mana.

However, Shi Feng was surprised to see only a few magical-class players in the library. At a glance, he only counted two to three hundred players. It was an abnormally small number for a library.

What he didn't know was that one had to become a Baron before they could enter Cold Wind City's library.

If not for Shi Feng's the Demon Hunter title, the Level 180 NPC guards at the entrance would've chased him away.

He didn't give the matter too much thought, though. He approached the central water ball and began to search for information on the Eternal Ice Crystals.

It was far more convenient to search through the magic water ball than it would be to leaf through numerous books.

There sure is a lot of information here. Shi Feng was astonished when his search for the Eternal Ice Crystal came back with over a hundred results.

Normally, he'd be lucky if he got ten or so results for a particular search. Fortunately, it was usually enough information to find the item they wanted, yet hundreds of entries mentioned the Eternal Ice Crystals. This almost guaranteed that he could find the crystals' location.

Following which, Shi Feng browsed through the information.

How is this possible?! What Shi Feng found shocked him.

The Eternal Ice Crystal was actually a Mana Crystal. Only, due to the Ice Crystal World's influence, the power of frost tainted these Mana Crystals, transforming them into Eternal Ice Crystals. These crystals could be found in the Ice Crystal World's various forbidden lands, but only Great Lord ranked Bosses and above had a chance of dropping them.

Unfortunately, these Bosses wouldn't drop complete Eternal Ice Crystals. Rather, they had a very low chance of dropping Ice Crystal Fragments. One had a 50% chance of successfully synthesizing ten Ice Crystal Fragments into one completely Eternal Ice Crystal.

No wonder she gave me a month for this quest. It's certainly not going to be easy. Shi Feng frowned. Although the Snow Rift was a forbidden land, it didn't have many Field Bosses. Considering the low drop-rate and the 50% success rate, it would take a long time to obtain one Eternal Ice Crystal, much less ten. *I guess I need to hurry.*

Now that he knew that Eternal Ice Crystals were actually Mana Crystals, he had even more reason to obtain them. He also needed Mana Crystals to evolve the Abyssal Blade.

Although the Tier 1 Abyssal Blade was plenty powerful, particularly when it came to compatibility rate, its Basic Attributes weren't quite on the level of top-tier Epic Weapons.

He wanted to evolve the Abyssal Blade, but he hadn't found any Mana Crystals, so he had been forced to set the matter aside for some time.

If he could evolve the Abyssal Blade once more, he'd be more confident of defeating the Ancient Shrine's Guardian Boss.

Armed with this new information, Shi Feng was glad he had decided to establish an adventurer team in Cold Wind City. He wouldn't have had any hope of collecting enough Eternal Ice Crystals in time if he were alone.

Following which, Shi Feng left the library and hurried towards Asura's Residence.

...

Shortly after the Asura adventurer team had published the new benefits, the crowd outside the team's Residence went into an uproar.

"What?! Members can trade Contribution Points for combat techniques?!"

"Asura is actually willing to teach combat techniques! Not even the city's two large Guilds offer that benefit!"

...

Although Cold Wind City had many experts, only a handful had learned combat techniques. These experts treated these techniques like family heirlooms, refusing to teach any outsider.

But the general public knew how powerful combat techniques were. A player with a combat technique could easily defeat one without.

Moreover, unlike Skills and Spells, players could improve their combat standards while they learned a technique. This was yet another reason that experts refused to teach others their techniques. They adamantly refused all sorts of payment for the training.

Yet, the Asura adventurer team *wanted* to teach its members various combat techniques. The news stunned countless players.

None of them doubted the validity of Asura's offer. As Cold Wind City's number one expert, Shi Feng certainly knew many combat techniques. There wasn't anything surprising about him teaching his

members one or two of these techniques. Moreover, the more powerful an expert was, the more they would value their promises.

After a short moment, players crowded the previously empty registration area.

The crowd even included players who had yet to reach the Trial Tower's fourth floor. These players begged Solitary Nine to give them a chance and let them become reserve members.

For a time, Solitary Nine and the other players manning the registration area were incredibly busy. More players had come to apply than they had expected. Even fifth-floor experts were rushing to put in their applications. Among these experts, many had been main force members from well-known adventurer teams or experts from the two large Guilds.

In less than 30 minutes, Asura had over 100 official members and 500 reserve members.

Unfortunately, Solitary Nine rejected every player who hadn't yet reached the Trial Tower's fourth floor, telling these players to return after they did so.

News of the Asura adventurer team's offer to teach its members combat techniques quickly spread throughout the city. It became a hot topic among these players, and many expressed their intention to join the organization.

The city's two large Guilds suffered headaches because of this. They had planned to ridicule Asura for its high recruitment requirements, but now, they were only frustrated over the new adventurer team. If Asura gathered enough experts and taught them combat techniques, there was no doubt that the adventurer team would become Cold Wind City's overlord...

...

“Guild Leader, I’ve notified Hecate. However, more than 500 players have already joined Asura. At this rate, Asura will rule the city long before Hecate opens a path to Cold Wind City,” Feather Wind said, shocked as he overlooked the statistics he had recently received.

“This won’t do. Go and... No... We’ll go and find Wave Heart. Even if we have to pay a high price, we have to form an alliance with the adventurer team and convince them to deal with Asura,” Thundering Sky said as he stood.

He had hoped to avoid allying with Wave Heart to deal with Asura, but it’d be enough if the adventurer team helped Matchless Family survive until Hecate arrived.

“Guild Leader, a report just came in. Wave Heart’s Lifeless Thorn has led a team to Asura’s Residence. By the looks of it, Lifeless Thorn plans to take action,” Feather Wind said, smiling coldly at the latest report.

Lifeless Thorn was a battle maniac. Since his debut in Cold Wind City, not a single expert he had challenged had lasted more than five moves. Eventually, he had become Cold Wind City’s publicly acknowledged, number one expert. Not even the city’s main Guilds could do anything against the man and were forced to ignore his existence.

“He’s making a move?” Thundering Sky could not help but laugh. “This is going to be interesting. Let’s go. We’re heading to the Residence to watch this play out.”

Cold Wind City, Asura adventurer team's Residence:

As soon as Shi Feng stepped out of the advanced carriage, he was greeted by a sea of people crowding around the Residence's entrance.

It was even more lively than an imperial capital's Auction House.

Why are so many people here? Shi Feng was confused to see such a large crowd.

Around a dozen people stood before the registration area, the leader of which was a man in icy-blue armor, holding a purple spear in his right hand. Although this man stood in silence, the surrounding players had distanced themselves from him, creating a wide, open space clearing.

Aside from this man's companions, no player dared to move within 20 yards of him.

"I hadn't expected Lifeless Thorn to visit. Why do you think he's here?"

"Do you really need to ask? He's here to issue a challenge. Lifeless Thorn was Cold Wind City's number one expert. Now that someone has usurped his position, he must be here to reclaim his status."

"Indeed. I've heard Wave Heart members talk about how bored he is because he hasn't been able to find someone who can put up a decent fight. He's been spending time in the forbidden land to open a path to other NPC cities so he can find new experts to challenge."

“This is going to be interesting. I wonder which of the two experts will win the duel.”

“You can’t figure that out on your own? Lifeless Thorn is definitely going to win. He’s invincible in Cold Wind City. On the other hand, the mysterious Swordsman has only made a name for himself recently.”

“I wonder if that Swordsman will accept Lifeless Thorn’s challenge?”

...

The spectating crowd discussed the potential duel between Shi Feng and Lifeless Thorn. They all anticipated the fight between these two powerful experts.

“Guild Leader, Lifeless Thorn has grown stronger again. He’s replaced his old weapon, too. His last weapon was a top-tier, Level 45, Dark-Gold spear called Meteor Spear; it had been crimson red, and I’ve heard that Lifeless Thorn had found it in a Dark-Gold Treasure Chest. It seems that he had earned quite the harvest from the Snow Rift,” Feather Wind said, smiling as he gazed at the purple spear in the Berserker’s hand. “That damnable Swordsman is in trouble.”

“Indeed. If Lifeless Thorn gets serious, not even Sky Slicer and I would have any hope against him. That’s why Hecate’s been urging us to do everything we can to recruit him. It’s a pity that he isn’t interested in joining a Guild. I doubt he even would have joined Wave Heart if not for the help in obtaining better weapons and equipment,” Thundering Sky said as he tried to sort out a tangle of complex emotions.

He had always treated Lifeless Thorn like the biggest thorn in his side, but even Hecate had warned him not to provoke the man.

Now, Lifeless Thorn would finally be of some use to him.

“Lifeless, I already told you that our commander isn’t here! Standing here is pointless! If you want to challenge the commander, I’ll let him know once he’s finished his tasks and returns!” Solitary Nine growled, frustrated with Lifeless Thorn obstructing the registration area.

Solitary Nine had personally experienced this man’s power.

The gap between them was massive. Despite being one of the top three MTs in Cold Wind City, he had only lasted three moves against Lifeless Thorn. From start to end, he had been powerless to retaliate.

Moreover, their duel had been over a month ago. Now, Lifeless Thorn radiated an even more frightening feeling. With a single glance from the man, Solitary Nine felt as if he trudged through a muddy swamp, his movement growing sluggish.

On the surface, the two large Guilds ruled over Cold Wind City. In reality, however, these Guilds only operated as they wished because of Lifeless Thorn’s disinterest in struggles over power and resources.

Since the Berserker blocked off the registration area, who would be bold enough to come forth to apply to Asura?

“That won’t be a problem. I have plenty of spare time. If I can’t face him today, then you can contact your commander and inform him of my challenge,” Lifeless Thorn said, smiling. “He can choose the time and place. It doesn’t matter to me.”

“Nine, you know that Lifeless is a battle maniac. Once he has made a decision, nothing can stop him. Just contact your commander,” Cleansing Whistle advised.

In reality, she, too, was curious to see who would win a fight between Shi Feng and Lifeless Thorn.

Lifeless Thorn might’ve claimed that he wasn’t a match for the newcomer, but he was simply being humble. She was fully aware of the man’s true power.

Not only had he obtained the top-tier, Epic Weapon, Thunder Spear, but he had also obtained the Lightning Saint’s Legacy, a Peak Legacy.

Even throughout the Ice Crystal World, Lifeless Thorn could rank near the top. How could he possibly lose to some unknown Swordsman?

“You guys...”

As Solitary Nine struggled with his frustration, a deep voice reached him from down the hall.

“Alright, I accept your challenge.”

Everyone immediately turned towards the voice.

“Commander!”

Solitary Nine gave Shi Feng a confused look as he approached. Shi Feng had told him that he needed to concentrate on finding certain information, and they shouldn't disturb him unless it were of the utmost importance. Hence, he had avoided contacting the commander.

"Hahaha! You've finally shown yourself!" Lifeless Thorn smiled at Shi Feng, who hid his name and appearance. His eyes shining with fighting spirit, he said, "I knew an expert like you wouldn't refuse a challenge!"

The crowd had gasped when they heard Shi Feng's answer. They hadn't expected the Asura adventurer team to accept the challenge.

"I'll agree to your challenge, but a simple duel would be too boring. Why don't we place make a bet?" Shi Feng asked, smiling.

Even during his previous life, he had heard of this man.

One of the Twelve Sacred Berserkers, Lightning Warrior!

Lifeless Thorn had only been a step away from becoming a Tier 6 Berserker God.

This player had become so famous in the past because he had provoked the Super Guild, King's Return. Although the Guild eventually killed him, his defeat had been glorious.

During the final battle, King's Return had dispatched three Tier 5 players to suppress Lifeless Thorn, yet he had killed one of the of these Tier 5 players before he had fallen. In the end, a Tier 6, God-ranked expert had joined the fray, and Lifeless thorn had faltered and died.

Lifeless Thorn's rise to prominence had been extremely fast. Although he had been incredibly famous in his own Otherworld, he had only become truly renown after venturing to God's Domain's continent. Once there, he had caused quite the commotion as he had challenged and defeated one expert from the God's Domain Experts List after another. It hadn't taken him long to rank among the top 50 on the list.

If not for the fact that he had remained a solo player, refusing to join any organization, he wouldn't have been stuck at Tier 5.

If he hadn't been so stubborn and simply joined some random, first-rate Guild, he would've likely become a Tier 6 God-ranked expert.

Shi Feng had never thought that he'd encounter Lifeless Thorn in the Ice Crystal World. He was truly blessed.

In the past, Lifeless Thorn had never joined a Guild, but now that Shi Feng had established his own adventurer team, he could attempt to recruit the Berserker. It'd be almost as good as convincing the man to join Zero Wing. If Shi Feng succeeded, he'd have yet another powerful supporter.

Chapter 1459 – Battle for Number One

"A bet?" Smiling, Lifeless Thorn responded without hesitation, "That won't be a problem. Even if you hadn't offered, I would have. I just wonder if you're brave enough to accept my wager."

When they heard Lifeless Thorn's reply, Wave Heart's members sent Shi Feng provocative glances. At the same time, their gazes contained a hint of pity. They acted as if they already knew this bet's outcome.

Solitary Nine finally realized what was happening. Quickly, he whispered to Shi Feng, "Commander, you must not agree to his bet! He wants your combat techniques. Not long ago, he had challenged every expert in Cold Wind City who had their own combat technique and forced the defeated to teach him. That's why he's become so powerful."

"Combat techniques?" Realization dawned on Shi Feng.

He had been confused by how fast Lifeless Thorn had accepted his offer. Now, he knew why the man was so eager.

He had proposed the bet to create an opportunity where he could recruit Lifeless Thorn into the Asura adventurer team; he hadn't expected this Berserker to have designs on him as well.

Combat techniques were precious in God's Domain. The various large Guilds that had their own only taught their most important members. Everyone else would have to rely on others' battle videos, either mimicking those with combat techniques or creating their own

Shi Feng now understood why Lifeless Thorn had risen so quickly on God's Domain's continent.

"You're the one who suggested a bet. Are you chickening out?" Lifeless Thorn ridiculed as he glanced at Shi Feng.

“I have no issues. I’ll accept your wager as long as it is within my capabilities to fulfill.

Every core member in Zero Wing could learn the Guild’s combat techniques. Even if Lifeless Thorn didn’t want to gamble combat techniques, if he joined Asura, he could easily purchase them with enough Contribution Points...

“Good!” Hearing Shi Feng’s reply, Lifeless Thorn hurriedly said, “My request is simple. If I win, you teach me that special footwork technique you used earlier. If you win, you can ask for whatever you want.”

Ordinary players would have watched Shi Feng’s battle against Matchless Family as entertainment; they wouldn’t have examined the Swordsman’s skills. However, he had realized that Shi Feng’s disappearing act wasn’t the result of a Skill, but due to the man employing a special footwork technique to fool his opponents’ eyes.

He had never even heard of such powerful footwork before. Compared to this combat technique, those he had learned were garbage.

Although Asura had declared that its members could purchase combat techniques with Contribution Points, he was fully aware that there were differences between techniques. This Swordsman would never let his adventurer team’s members trade CP for such an effective footwork technique.

“This guy really has a big appetite! He’s actually aiming for Big Brother Ye Feng’s unique combat technique right of the bat! He is shameless!” Yan Ya stared at Lifeless Thorn with contempt. Solitary Nine and the others nodded in agreement.

They had a rough understanding of combat techniques, as well. For example, offensive combat techniques were the most common, while defensive combat techniques were much rarer. Footwork and breathing techniques were the rarest, capable of enhancing a player's maneuverability. If a player learned one of those, their combat power could reach a whole new level.

Yet, despite understanding the value of such a technique, Lifeless Thorn shamelessly asked for it.

"That's all?" Shi Feng asked.

"Yeah, that's all I want. Do you accept?" Lifeless Thorn nodded, curious about Shi Feng's calm reaction.

"I don't have any problems with that. My request is pretty simple as well. If I win, you have to join the Asura adventurer team," Shi Feng said, smiling.

"Deal. I'll join Asura if you can defeat me," Lifeless Thorn agreed without hesitation. However, he continued, "To ensure that our duel is fair, we'll use Balance Mode."

An uproar ripped through the crowd when they heard this.

"Lifeless Thorn, aren't you asking for too much?! Not only have you asked for a powerful combat technique if you win, but you dare to ask for Balanced Mode?! You're Cold Wind City's number one expert! How is this 'fair?!' " Solitary Nine cursed.

In a Balanced Mode PvP, the opponent's Basic Attributes would equalize, and any level or tier suppression would be rendered useless. Normally, players only used this mode if they wanted to compare their techniques.

“Although I like PvP, I have no interest in one-sided oppression,” Lifeless Thorn declared righteously.

After watching Shi Feng’s battle video, he realized how high the Swordsman’s Basic Attributes were. He definitely wasn’t a match for the Swordsman. Although he was proud of his strength, he wasn’t blindly confident.

“Alright. Let’s use Balanced Mode.” The suggestion didn’t particularly surprise Shi Feng. If Lifeless Thorn could not tell the difference between their Basic Attributes despite watching his battle video, he wouldn’t want to recruit the man for the Asura adventurer team.

“Good. Let’s sign a contract, then.” Hearing Shi Feng’s consent, Lifeless Thorn pulled out a contract he had prepared earlier. All it was missing was Shi Feng’s signature.

After reading through the contract, Shi Feng signed it. With the Main God System as the judge, no one could deny the duel’s outcome.

Following which, Shi Feng and Lifeless Thorn headed to one of the Divine Colosseum’s combat rooms.

The combat room, which could accommodate up to 10,000 spectators, was full. The large screen in the main hall would live-stream the duel. Almost every player in Cold Wind City with nothing better to do made their way to the Divine Colosseum to watch the match.

This duel would determine Cold Wind City’s true number one expert. No one wanted to miss this.

“Asura’s commander is pretty arrogant. He dares to face Lifeless Thorn in Balanced Mode. He’ll humiliate himself,” Cleansing Whistle stated, smiling faintly at Shi Feng, who stood in the arena.

“That’s right! Brother Lifeless’s Split Spear is no laughing matter. Even Shadowless, the city’s second-ranked expert, couldn’t evade it after activating a Berserk Skill. Now that Brother Lifeless has the Thunder Spear, his Split Spear is even stronger. He can probably instant-kill Shadowless now,” a Level 45 Shield Warrior said, nodding.

While Wave Heart’s members merrily chatted, the timer above the stage began to count down.

As if he had become someone completely different, Lifeless Thorn began to release a bone-chilling killing intent. The look in his eyes had changed as well. He felt like a ferocious beast. Tension gripped the stage as the seconds ticked by, and the players in the stands felt stifled.

The moment the timer reached zero, Lifeless Thorn activated Twofold Berserk, his aura becoming explosively intense. The Berserker knew he couldn’t afford to be careless against Shi Feng.

If this fight had happened before he had obtained the Lightning Saint’s Legacy, he would have hesitated to challenge Shi Feng. The Swordsman’s combat techniques were clearly superior to his. He would’ve been asking for a beating if he had challenged the man to a Balanced Mode duel.

However, Peak Legacies granted Legacy Berserk Skills, which could be used in conjunction with ordinary Berserk Skills. If he activated Twofold Berserk, his Basic Attributes would exceed Shi Feng’s by leaps and bounds. Even if Shi Feng’s combat standards were superior, the Swordsman could never make up for the gap in Attributes.

“I have a hidden class! Don’t blame me for hiding it! You only have yourself to blame for being careless! I’ll gladly take that footwork technique now!” Lifeless Thorn smiled at Shi Feng before activating Charge and advancing.

Chapter 1460 – Complete Suppression

After activating Charge, it took only an instant for Lifeless Thorn to cross the 20-plus yards separating him and Shi Feng.

As soon as Lifeless Thorn reached his opponent, he thrust Thunder Spear at the other player, sending over 20 afterimages at Shi Feng from different angles. It was impossible to find the real weapon among the fakes.

“How has his Split Spear become so much stronger?!”

Solitary Nine could not help but gasp.

When he had dueled Lifeless Thorn, the Berserker had only produced over a dozen spear images. Even with his shield, he hadn't been able to block every spear image, forced to rely on luck and hope he blocked the real weapon.

Yet, the Berserker could now produce over 20 images, nearly double what he had previously been capable of. Just watching the images was confusing, not to mention trying to block the attack.

“Brother Lifeless's Twofold Berserk is impressive. Not even an MT can block so many images.” The attack surprised Wave Heart's members.

“Lifeless is taking this too seriously.” Cleansing Whistle revealed a helpless smile as she watched the Berserker fight with everything he had. “His opponent is doomed.”

Throughout her time raiding Dungeons and adventuring with Lifeless Thorn, this was the first time she had seen him go all-out.

Moreover, in a Balanced Mode duel, the player with higher Basic Attributes would be suppressed to match the opponent’s.

Since Lifeless Thorn’s Attributes weren’t affected, he wouldn’t feel awkward as he moved. In contrast, Shi Feng would need some time to get used to the lower Attributes.

It was clear that Lifeless Thorn realized this, yet he refused to give Shi Feng any time to adapt.

With so many advantages, the Berserker would have an easy time winning this duel.

As the numerous spear images were about to devour Shi Feng, a blue light flashed before him. Following which, a loud explosion shook the arena, followed by a powerful shockwave radiating across the stage.

Lifeless Thorn’s Thunder Spear had stopped an inch from Shi Feng’s neck.

“Impossible!” Cleansing Whistle shot up from her seat, shock flashing in her eyes. “Lifeless’s Split Spear... Why did it stop?”

“What?! Brother Lifeless messed up?!” The other Wave Heart members were similarly stunned.

Lifeless Heart had rarely ever failed to hit his target with Split Spear. His opponent could only block the attack if they were lucky.

Of course, nobody was more surprised than Lifeless Thorn.

However, the Berserker didn't give up after his first attack had failed. Immediately, he executed Split Spear again, sending another 20-plus spear images thrusting at Shi Feng.

Before the spear images reached Shi Feng, another blue light flashed. This time, the Thunder Spear stopped several centimeters away from Shi Feng's right shoulder. There was more distance between the weapon and the Swordsman than before.

“Did it hit? What's going on?” Wave Heart's members watched Shi Feng in confusion, realizing that golden scales covered the man's body.

“He... He actually deflected Lifeless's Split Spear! Is he some kind of monster?!” Cleansing Whistle's expression darkened as she watched the fight.

Split Spear was so impressive because it was nearly impossible to pinpoint the real weapon, which confused the opponent as they tried to defend themselves. But in the brief moment before Lifeless Thorn's weapon reached Shi Feng, the Swordsman located the real Thunder Spear and properly deflected it. His grasp of Strength and timing was simply godlike.

Before Cleansing Whistle could overcome her shock, Shi Feng took a step forward and disappeared.

He vanished?

Lifeless Thorn immediately responded by executing Whirlwind Slash, his spear sweeping horizontally to slice everything within 10 yards of the Berserker.

Dang!

A loud clang echoed throughout the venue. Following which, Shi Feng reappeared as he flew over a dozen yards backward before landing. Despite being knocked back so far, Shi Feng hadn't lost a single HP. He had nullified Lifeless Thorn's Horizontal Slash with Parry.

As expected of the Lightning Warrior! His reactions are so fast! Shi Feng smiled faintly as he glanced at the still-vibrating Killing Ray.

Split Sword was Lifeless Thorn's trademark combat technique. He had used it plenty of times against the experts on God's Domain Experts List. However, the technique was still immature right now. Although he could create over 20 spear images, his attacks were monotone.

Against Shi Feng, who was capable of pushing his five senses to their very limits and had a perfect grasp over his environment, the immature technique was useless.

Moreover, although Balanced Mode would equalize the combatants' Basic Attributes, it wouldn't affect the players' physiques.

To Shi Feng, whose physique exceeded that of an ordinary Tier 2 player, Lifeless Thorn's Split Spear was a joke.

Meanwhile, the Berserker felt an unprecedented pressure weigh down on him as he watched his opponent.

In a clash of techniques, the player that used a Skill first would lose. Although this duel wasn't a pure exchange of techniques, it was the first time he had encountered a player who could treat his Split Spear like a normal attack.

"You are incredibly strong!" Despite the minor loss, Lifeless Thorn wasn't discouraged. Instead, he smiled as he said, "I admit that I am no match for you in terms of technique. However, combat techniques aren't the only factor that determine a player's strength. One must also take into account Attributes and Skills."

Saying so, Lifeless Thorn's Thunder Spear shuddered slightly. Suddenly, six golden replicas of the weapon appeared around him.

This move was Adjudication Spear, one of Thunder Spear's Skills. Every Adjudication Spear carried 100% of Lifeless Thorn's Strength. Moreover, he had complete control over the weapons and could use them alongside his Split Spear. The only downside was its 10-second duration. However, in a fight between experts, it was more than enough time.

...

"Guild Leader, Lifeless Thorn is really scary. Asura's commander will definitely lose," Feather Wind excitedly announced.

“Good! As expected of the publicly-acknowledged, number one expert!”

If Shi Feng lost, Lifeless Thorn would be Cold Wind City’s undisputed, number-one expert. The Asura adventurer team’s reputation would plummet, and although it would still pose a threat to Matchless Family, it wouldn’t rule over Cold Wind City.

...

As the upper echelons of Cold Wind City’s large Guilds sighed with relief, Shi Feng walked towards his opponent.

“You are correct. A player’s strength doesn’t solely depend on their combat techniques. Attributes and Skills do play a factor,” Shi Feng said, nodding. He then activated Tier 2 Blade Liberation and Nine Dragons Slash.

Suddenly, the intensity of Shi Feng’s aura skyrocketed. At the same time, twelve Abyssal Blade phantoms manifested around him.

“You... You have...a hidden class as well?” Lifeless Thorn was dazed as he felt the power of Shi Feng’s aura, his heart pounding madly. Suddenly, he lost his previous confidence.

Twofold Berserk was his biggest trump card. With absolute power, he could easily overwhelm his opponents, even if his techniques were inferior.

However, based on the man’s aura, Shi Feng’s Basic Attributes were now much higher than his.

His opponent's twelve phantom swords even outnumbered his prided Adjudication Spears...

As Lifeless Thorn stared, Shi Feng appeared before him and lightly swung Killing Ray.

Tier 2 Legacy Skill, Shadow Blade!

Although Lifeless Thorn tried to defend himself, he was too slow, and ten streaks of light, one blue and nine black, struck him. Instantly, Lifeless Thorn's HP vanished, his body transforming into particles of light as he disappeared.

As if time had frozen, silence dominated the combat room.

Lifeless Thorn, Cold Wind City's number one expert, had been defeated!