

Strongest

Chapter 1571 – Realm Lord

As soon as Shi Feng set foot in the pitch-black shrine, his environment transformed. It felt as if he had just stepped through a teleportation gate and arrived in an entirely different space.

A dark forest loomed before him, and the howling of wolves occasionally echoed in his ears. In the darkness of night, he faintly saw pairs of crimson eyes flicker in the treetops.

This is...a survival battle? Shi Feng wondered as he observed his surroundings. Although it was night here, his vision was unaffected. He could see around him as clearly as if the sun hung above him.

Shi Feng spotted over a dozen Werewolves armed with crossbows and in excellent equipment standing in the trees around him. In addition, he spotted another dozen or so Werewolves with spears and greatswords beneath the trees' cover, radiating an intense killing intent.

All of these Werewolves were Level 55 or above, with the highest at Level 58. They ranged between Elites and Special Elites. If an ordinary player attempted to take all of these monsters on by themselves, they'd definitely be torn apart.

As Shi Feng observed these Werewolves, the sound of a system notification reached his ears.

...

System: Clear this Divine Shrine to obtain a reward.

...

When the system notification ended, a system map appeared in the corner of Shi Feng's vision. A teleportation point had been marked on the map in the heart of the forest. It was obvious that he had to reach said teleportation point to leave the Divine Shrine.

However, before Shi Feng could examine the map closely, the Werewolves in the treetops began to attack, the triple-loaded crossbows releasing their bolts at him simultaneously. At the same time, the Werewolves on the ground began to close in, forming a tight encirclement around him.

How troublesome. It seems that the system banned Teleportation Skills, as well. I guess I have no choice but to run to the target. When Shi Feng had noticed the Werewolves' attacks, he had attempted to use Space Movement, teleporting to the destination directly. Unfortunately, Teleportation Skills were prohibited in the Divine Shrine. He had no choice but to unsheath Killing Ray and retaliate.

A rain of bolts from above might be troublesome to ordinary players, but to Shi Feng, the bolts were practically negligible. He easily dodged the bolts and appeared before a Level 56 Elite Werewolf in the blink of an eye. He lightly swung Killing Ray at the melee-focused Werewolf.

Shadow Blade!

Numerous streaks of shadows cut past the Elite Werewolf, each hit dealing several tens of thousands of damage. Like a cannonball, the two-meter-tall Werewolf's body shot backward and slammed into the Werewolves behind it. The monster only returned to the ground after flying over twenty yards. By the time it landed, however, its HP had reached zero. Its body turned to ash and disappeared, leaving several Copper Coins in its place...

These monsters actually drop loot? Shi Feng was slightly confused to see the Copper Coins on the ground.

He had assumed that he'd be striving for nothing here. This was a kind of test, and tests normally didn't provide loot.

However, Shi Feng did not bother to kill the other Werewolves. Instead, he swiftly maneuvered out of the circle of Werewolves, heading straight for the teleportation array in the forest's heart.

Combat players like Shi Feng were no stranger to survival battles in God's Domain. These situations were common in Dungeons. If players focused on defeating the monsters in survival battles, they'd only get caught up in an endless cycle of combat, wasting their time. Shi Feng, of course, didn't have a lot of time to waste, and even if he could kill these monsters easily, he'd still consume Stamina. If he ran out of Stamina midway through a battle, he'd become a sheep for the slaughter no matter how powerful he was.

As he headed deeper into the forest, the Werewolves went into a frenzy, chasing after him. However, Shi Feng was simply too fast, and even the Special Elite ranked Werewolves could only watch as the distance between them and their target grew until the Swordsman eventually left their sight...

After a few more minutes of running, Shi Feng reached the teleportation array in the heart of the forest.

However, before he could approach the array, he felt a chill crawl down his spine. The cause of this creeping sensation was none other than a one-eyed Werewolf with a massive greatsword that guarded the teleportation array.

A Realm Lord? Shi Feng stared at the one-eyed Werewolf in shock.

This one-eyed Werewolf was over three meters tall, and although it was only a Level 58 Special Elite, the Mana circling it was extraordinary. It felt like this land's protected child.

...

[Specter Werewolf (Realm Lord)] (Humanoid Creature, Special Elite)

Level 58

HP 4,200,000/4,200,000

...

In God's Domain, the title of Realm Lord did not represent a monster's rank or Bloodline. Rather, it was a buff that greatly enhanced the monster's Skills and Spells. Monsters with this title also had strengthened physiques and HPs. Basically, they were Boss-like existences among monsters of the same level and rank.

Realm Lords were not particularly rare in God's Domain, but they were usually only found in Level 50-plus, resource-rich maps. They protected these resource maps, and as long as they remained in their designated maps, they could display far more combat power than monsters of the same level and rank.

Normally, player teams avoided Realm Lords as much as possible.

Fighting these monsters simply wasn't worthwhile. Despite being so much stronger than monsters of the same level and rank, Realm Lords didn't offer additional or better loot.

Is the Divine Shrine itself some sort of opportunity? After a moment of surprise, Shi Feng's lips curled into a smile.

When players had first discovered Realm Lords in the past, they had avoided these monsters as much as possible. Unfortunately, some battles were unavoidable, and players had been forced to kill certain Realm Lords.

As players had killed more Realm Lords, they discovered something astonishing.

The Mana Barrier Crystal Fragment!

Only Realm Lords dropped this item, and there was no way to obtain the crystal fragments from other monsters.

On its own, the Mana Barrier Crystal Fragment did not possess much of a function. At most, it could be used as a support material when crafting weapons and equipment, but when players synthesized the Mana Barrier Crystal Fragments into Mana Barrier Crystals, their value rose by over a hundredfold.

The Mana Barrier Crystals were the various NPC cities' main power source for their Teleportation Magic Arrays. Not only did the Mana Barrier Crystal contain a frightening amount of Mana, but it could also replenish itself by absorbing the Mana around it. Only, the Mana Barrier Crystal required a considerably long time to replenish itself. However, this replenishment time would vary depending on the Mana

density around it. In an ordinary environment, for example, an empty Mana Barrier Crystal would require 48 hours to recover fully.

To put it simply, a Mana Barrier Crystal was akin to an everlasting Magic Crystal. It was the perfect power source for teleportation arrays. With enough Mana Barrier Crystals, one could operate a teleportation array for no cost.

It was easy to imagine how valuable these Mana Barrier Crystals were.

After all, Mana Barrier Crystals were not that easy to obtain, yet the various large Guilds and players were in dire need of them.

Meanwhile, the Special Elite ranked Realm Lord before Shi Feng was a walking Mana source. Without hesitation, he charged forward, showing no intentions of circling the Specter Werewolf and leaving the Divine Shrine.

As Shi Feng boldly approached, the Specter Werewolf howled in anger. It raised its greatsword and swung the massive weapon at the impudent intruder.

Over a dozen magical wind blades formed before the Specter Werewolf and shot towards Shi Feng. The attacks were spread out, making it impossible for Shi Feng to dodge them all.

Fortunately, the Disintegration Armor wasn't currently suppressing Shi Feng's Basic Attributes. In other words, his Strength was even higher than a Great Lord's of the same level. Hence, although the Specter Werewolf's Realm Lord status enhanced its wind blades, and the attack nearly rivaled the power of a Tier 2 Spell, they were insignificant to Shi Feng.

Sword's Orbit!

A galaxy of stars formed around Shi Feng, striking down the approaching wind blades. Shi Feng didn't even pause as he continued towards the Specter Werewolf.

Shadow Blade!

Thunder Flame Explosion!

Flame Burst!

When Shi Feng reached the Specter Werewolf and began to bombard it with attacks, the Special Elite's 4,200,000 HP drained like flowing water. Despite the Specter Werewolf's struggles to fight back, it was powerless to change its fate. In the end, Shi Feng's swords devoured its HP. It then collapsed, transforming into a dark mist and scattering in the wind. The berserk Mana, which had surrounded the Specter Werewolf, calmed as a result.

At the same time, a pair of Level 50 Bronze plate armor boots, a dark crystal shard, and several dozen Copper Coins appeared on the ground.

Although the loot was not particularly impressive, Shi Feng's eyes glowed when he saw the dark crystal shard.

This shard was none other than the Mana Barrier Crystal Fragment.

Chapter 1572 – Blackwater Visits

Sure enough, the Divine Shrines' tests are also opportunities. Shi Feng smiled as he collected the Mana Barrier Crystal Fragment.

...

[Mana Barrier Crystal Fragment] (Consumable)

Can be used to increase Mana. A support tool for crafting items.

...

Obtaining Mana Barrier Crystal Fragments wasn't easy, and although the item had a high drop-rate, it didn't drop from every Realm Lord.

Meanwhile, Realm Lords were even rarer than Field Bosses. High-resource leveling maps only had two or three Realm Lords. In addition, these Realm Lords' respawn time was much longer than ordinary Field Bosses.

When the various large Guilds had discovered the benefits of killing Realm Lords in the past, many Guild wars had broken out over these monsters.

Obtaining one Mana Barrier Crystal Fragment after killing a single Special Elite ranked Realm Lord was a huge boon from the system.

Each Mana Barrier Crystal Fragment had sold for around 30 Gold in the past. Of course, most Guilds that had obtained these crystal shards had refused to sell them.

When players collected ten crystal fragments, they could seek out an NPC Master Alchemist to synthesize the Mana Barrier Crystal with a 40% success rate. If the synthesis were successful, one would have an everlasting Magic Crystal. The Mana Barrier Crystal was a priceless treasure, useful in multiple aspects, such as powering teleportation arrays, Magic Towers, and other such constructions.

There had even been a few Workshops that had specialized in hunting Realm Lords in distant maps, making a living from selling Mana Barrier Crystals.

After obtaining the crystal fragment, Shi Feng moved towards the teleportation array and left the forest.

When he opened his eyes again, he had arrived at the first Divine Shrine's exit, and the staircase leading to the second shrine stretched before him. Many players were already running towards the second Divine Shrine.

So many people are already out? Shi Feng was surprised. Over a hundred players were already approaching the second Divine Shrine.

However, after giving the matter some thought, he realized that he had spent quite some time fighting the Specter Werewolf. Most, if not all, of the players before him had likely avoided fighting the Realm Lord. They had simply slipped past the Specter Werewolf to enter the teleportation array.

As Shi Feng left the first Divine Shrine, the sound of system notifications reached his ears.

...

System: Congratulations! You have passed the Divine Shrine. Rewarding 10 Shrine Points.

System: Congratulations! You have passed the Divine Shrine within the time limit. Rewarding 10 Shrine Points.

System: Congratulations! You have killed the Guardian Boss within the time limit. Rewarding 50 Shrine Points.

...

So many points! Shi Feng was somewhat taken aback when he saw how many points the system had awarded for killing the Specter Werewolf.

Passing the Divine Shrine had only earned him 10 SPs, yet killing the Special Elite ranked Specter Werewolf had awarded 50...

If these other players realized that killing the Guardian Boss would award even more points, they'd likely regret their earlier actions.

Even the cheapest item available for purchase in the Divine Shrine cost 500 SPs. If one cleared the first Divine Shrine quickly and ignored killing the Guardian Boss, they would only receive 20 SPs. With that method, who knew how many Divine Shrines one would have to clear to accumulate 500 SPs? Moreover, as players climbed the Divine Staircase, the Divine Shrines would become more challenging. If players did not earn as many points as possible early on, it would only become more difficult to earn the points they needed later.

It seems that I'll have to defeat every Divine Shrine's Guardian Boss. Thinking up to this point, Shi Feng realized the fastest way to earn Shrine Points from the Divine Staircase.

Following which, he proceeded towards the second Divine Shrine.

The second shrine contained a gravel ridge, and its monsters ranged between Level 55 and 58. However, the second shrine had far fewer Elite monsters, and nearly half the shrine's monsters were Special Elites. Next to the Realm Lord, a few Level 58 Elites guarded the teleportation array.

To Shi Feng, however, this slight increase in difficulty was no issue. He had only spent a few minutes to defeat the Realm Lord and three Elites. This time, however, he did not obtain a Mana Barrier Crystal Fragment. He had only obtained a Level 55 Bronze mage top and some Coins...

Upon clearing the second Divine Shrine, Shi Feng earned 15 SPs. He also received 15 SPs for clearing the shrine within the time limit, and 70 SPs for killing the Guardian Boss.

Although Shi Feng had cleared the second Divine Shrine, he was clearly lagging behind the other players. Even those who had entered the first Divine Shrine sometime after him were already on their way towards the third shrine.

However, Shi Feng did not rush. Instead, he continued to ascend the Divine Staircase at his own pace.

Each Divine Shrine was a little more challenging than the last and awarded 5 more SPs when cleared.

When Shi Feng entered the fifth Divine Shrine, the test's difficulty visibly increased. Now, every monster he faced was a Special Elite. In terms of Attributes, the monsters were on par with well-equipped, Tier 1 players of the same level. When facing a dozen or so of these monsters at once, even elite players would be in a bind. Even the Guardian Boss was now a Chieftain ranked Realm Lord. Not only did the Chieftain possessed 10,000,000 HP, but its Skills also carried great destructive power. Even Shi Feng did not dare to meet the Boss's attacks head-on.

Shi Feng only defeated this Guardian Boss after a dozen or so minutes of fighting. Meanwhile, as a Chieftain ranked Realm Lord, the Boss had been very generous. It had dropped two Mana Barrier Crystal Fragments, instantly increasing Shi Feng's haul to four. Now, he only needed six more fragments to synthesize a Mana Barrier Crystal.

When Shi Feng had cleared the fifth Divine Shrine, the Shrine Points he earned also undergone a qualitative transformation. The clear reward alone rose to 100 SPs, while clearing the shrine within the time limit awarded another 100 SPs, and killing the Guardian Boss within the time limit awarded 500 SPs.

However, the Ranking List before the various Divine Shrines also reported that players had already reached the eighth shrine. There were over a dozen players clearing the shrines with astonishing speed.

...

Meanwhile, while Shi Feng continued to challenge Divine Shrines, Zero Wing City's fame in Star-Moon Kingdom had exceeded Stone Forest Town's. The city had become a holy resting ground for many of the kingdom's players.

Due to the city's high Mana density, the Double EXP buff accumulation, and the large number of wandering merchants, it took no time at all for Zero Wing City's player population to break past 1,000,000. The originally empty city was now so lively that Zero Wing City could rival major NPC cities.

"Guild Leader Singular, Zero Wing City's player population has grown past 1,000,000. The city is even charging players an entrance fee. Its daily income is incredibly high. With this, I don't think that it'll be easy to whittle Zero Wing down anymore," Lei Jingyang reported. He currently rested in one of Zero Wing City's restaurants, wearing a frown as he watched the crowded street outside.

Initially, he hadn't cared about Zero Wing City, but after visiting the city personally, he had to admit that it was extraordinary.

"Young Master Lei, although Zero Wing City is better than we expected, Zero Wing's celebration of the fact will be short-lived." Singular Burial chuckled; he didn't seem to mind the fact that Zero Wing City earned considerable wealth for the Guild.

"Don't tell me you plan to fight it out with Zero Wing?" Lei Jingyang frowned at Singular Burial's reaction.

He had expected Singular Burial to finish Zero Wing off in a few more days, but clearly, that plan was no longer viable. Not only did Zero Wing City earn a considerable amount of profit for its ruling Guild, but the city improved Zero Wing's reputation among players. At this rate, Heaven's Burial could never destroy Zero Wing in a short three to five days.

"Of course not," Singular Burial said, shaking his head. "Although Zero Wing has achieved great success, at the end of the day, its foundations are shaky. The nail that sticks out gets hammered down. Representatives from the Blackwater Corporation contacted me not long ago, informing me that they are willing to help us against Zero Wing."

“The Blackwater Corporation?” Lei Jingyang was visibly moved when he heard this. “Why are they suddenly interested in Zero Wing?”

The Blackwater Guild had changed drastically. It now had stronger forces under its command and ample funding. Just some time ago, it had even established a Guild Town in a resource-rich, neutral map. Even Super Guilds avoided any conflict with the Guild.

“I don’t know why, either, but this doesn’t change our plans to take down Zero Wing,” Singular Burial said, chuckling. Taking a look at the time, he continued, “Blackwater’s representatives should’ve arrived in Star-Moon City by now. I should return to meet with them.”

...

Suddenly, Aqua Rose, who was currently busy managing Zero Wing City, received a message from Yaya, stating, “Big Sis Aqua, a few people claiming to be representatives from the Blackwater Corporation have requested a meeting with our Guild’s upper echelons. Should I have them wait in the Guild Residence?”

Chapter 1573 – Domineering Aqua Rose

“Blackwater? Why are they here?”

Aqua Rose grew curious as she read Yaya’s message. It had been quite some time since Zero Wing had dealt with the Blackwater Corporation. According to her information, Abandoned Wave’s actions had

only been the Blackwater Corporation's attempt to test God's Domain's waters. Afterward the events with Zero Wing, Blackwater quickly gave up on Abandoned Wave, and the man had vanished without a trace.

Blackwater then focused its development in the distant Iron Empire, taking control of the empire after forcing several superpowers out of the competition. Logically, Blackwater should have no reason to leave the safety of the Iron Empire and travel all the way to Star-Moon Kingdom to seek out Zero Wing. Hence, Aqua Rose found the situation strange.

However, Aqua Rose decided to send Yaya to entertain Blackwater's representatives while they waited in one of the Guild Residence's reception rooms. She then dropped what she was doing and made her way to meet these individuals.

...

A man and a woman waited in one of the elegant Guild Residence reception rooms in Zero Wing City. Zero Wing's elite members, who had been sent to wait on these two, stood quietly in the corner of the room, clearly tense.

These elite members weren't tense just because of the two visitors' extraordinary identities, but because of the chilling aura they radiated. They could not help but feel like they stood before a pair of lions as they involuntarily shuddered.

Moreover, both representatives were very high-leveled; the man was a Level 49 Elementalist, and the woman was a Level 48 Shield Warrior. Even the most inferior piece of equipment these two wore was Level 45 Dark-Gold rank. The male Elementalist even wore three pieces of Epic Equipment, appearing as if he were wrapped in a constant layer of fire. In fact, due to this man's presence, the reception room's temperature had risen quite a bit.

When Aqua Rose and Yaya entered the room, the man's aura flared with even greater intensity. It was clear he wanted to intimidate Aqua Rose. Unfortunately for him, his biting-cold aura had no effect on the Zero Wing Vice Guild Leader.

"Hello, I am Aqua Rose, one of Zero Wing's Vice Guild Leaders. May I know what business Blackwater has with our Guild?" Aqua Rose asked, smiling at the male Elementalist with the intimidating aura.

"As expected of Zero Wing's Vice Guild Leader, your Guild's reputation is well-deserved," the male Elementalist praised when he saw the lack of hesitation in Aqua Rose's response to his intimidation. "I had thought that our Guild Leader's decision to send us as representatives was unnecessary. However, it seems that Zero Wing indeed qualifies for such a move."

"Thank you for the praise. Now, may I know what business your Guild has with Zero Wing?" Aqua Rose calmly repeated, paying the male Elementalist's arrogance no heed.

Moreover, the man before her earned his arrogance. Aside from the fact that this man was backed by the Blackwater Corporation, he radiated an aura that felt dangerous to Aqua Rose. After her promotion to Tier 2, she rarely felt such a feeling from other players, and any player who felt this way was a peak expert, capable of holding important positions in Super Guilds.

"My name is Falling Fire, the vice commander of Blackwater's third main force. I have come here with a message for Zero Wing from our Guild Leader: hand over Youlan and her companions, which you have chosen to shelter, and half of Zero Wing City's profits. Do that, and we can ignore the previous events. Otherwise, deal with the consequences at your risk," the man named Falling Fire informed Aqua Rose. Smiling, he continued, "Although your Guild has performed well in a few major wars thus far, your strength is only effective against small Guilds. We'll give you one day to consider our offer. I'll be waiting for your reply."

“Hand over Youlan and the others?” As Aqua Rose listened to Falling Fire’s message, she came to understand the gist of the situation. When she realized what Shi Feng had done, she was flabbergasted. It was no wonder why Youlan had seemed so worried. It turned out that she was wanted by Blackwater.

“That’s right. You only have one day to consider. As for Zero Wing City’s profits, I’ll send specialists to keep an eye on your city.” Falling Fire nodded.

In his opinion, Blackwater had no reason to go out of its way to warn Zero Wing. With the Guild’s strength, it could easily flatten this small, upstart Guild.

While Zero Wing’s past performance had been astonishing, that only held true for first-rate Guilds and smaller. To superpowers like Blackwater, Zero Wing was insignificant.

Furthermore, Zero Wing was currently preoccupied with its war against Heaven’s Burial.

“One day to consider handing over Youlan’s group and half of Zero Wing City’s profits?” Aqua Rose could not help but laugh when she heard Falling Fire’s words. “I see. I understand now. Since that is the case, you two may return to your Guild.”

“What do you mean by that?” Falling Fire’s expression darkened when he saw the woman’s smile.

“What do I mean? Have I not made myself clear enough? You can return, and tell that Guild Leader of yours that he can forget obtaining 50% of Zero Wing City’s profits. As for Youlan’s group, they have already joined Zero Wing. You’re even less likely to take them from us. If Blackwater is looking for an opponent, although Zero Wing is very weak, we are more than willing to keep you company!” Aqua Rose said straightforwardly. “Watch your step on your way out. I won’t be sending you off.”

When Aqua Rose finished speaking, the reception room was deathly silent.

Falling Fire stared at Aqua Rose in shock. He even wondered if he had heard her wrong.

Zero Wing was in the middle of a war of attrition with Heaven's Burial. Now, it dared to declare war on Blackwater...

Even Yaya, who silently stood beside Aqua Rose, gaped in astonishment.

She had never realized that her Vice Guild Leader was so domineering!

The Blackwater Corporation was a titan both in and out of God's Domain. In the real world, it was an incredibly famous international corporation. In God's Domain, it had successfully wrestled control of the Iron Empire from several superpowers. Zero Wing simply couldn't compare.

"Good! Very good! Since Zero Wing dares to cast aside the opportunity we've presented, you can wait until we remove your name from God's Domain!" Falling Fire sneered at his host. Immediately, he and the Level 48 female Shield Warrior stood and left the room.

After the duo from Blackwater left, Yaya turned to Aqua Rose with a reverent expression.

"Big Sis Aqua, you're so amazing! You even slapped Blackwater in the face! The look on that guy's face just now was priceless!" Yaya said with admiration flashing in her eyes.

“That’s right! It felt wonderful putting those bastards in their place. However...how am I supposed to report this to the Guild Leader?” Aqua Rose felt a headache begin to brew. For a moment of satisfaction, she had declared war on Blackwater without consulting Shi Feng.

Zero Wing City was just starting to get on the right track. The wealth the city earned even allowed Zero Wing to fight Heaven’s Burial on equal footing, but if Blackwater joined the fray, Zero Wing would be at a severe disadvantage.

...

Meanwhile, back in the World Summit’s Divine Staircase...

Shi Feng had finally defeated the tenth Divine Shrine’s Guardian Boss, a Level 60, Lord ranked Five-headed Demon Snake. Before landing the killing blow, he had made sure to activate Divine Providence.

When the Five-headed Demon Snake died, items rained from the sky.

Normally, Level 50 monsters and above had significantly reduced drop-rates. However, the Demon Snake had dropped over 20 items. No Lord ranked monster of this level should be capable of dropping so many.

“A jackpot?” Shi Feng was overjoyed when he saw the loot on the ground.

He had only used Divine Providence to increase his chances of obtaining Mana Barrier Crystal Fragments, yet he had triggered a jackpot. He truly hadn’t expected such a bountiful reward.

In God's Domain, jackpots were exceedingly rare from monsters past Level 50, much less from Realm Lords.

Chapter 1574 – Advanced Forging Design

Aside from weapons, equipment, and Mana Barrier Crystal Fragments, a tattered sheet of parchment rested among the many items the Five-headed Demon Snake had dropped.

As the parchment itself was very high-quality, it still radiated faint pulses of Mana despite the ravages of time.

Shi Feng picked up the parchment out of curiosity.

This is...an Advanced Forging Design! Shi Feng was elated when he realized what this sheet of parchment was.

In God's Domain, every Advanced Design was extremely rare and valuable. This was because Advanced Designs contained techniques unknown to the general public. For example, an Advanced Forging Design would contain a few different kinds of Advanced Forging Techniques. If players learned these techniques, they'd increase their chances of creating a new item in the future.

The various large Guilds had cherished their Advanced Designs in the past. They had all refused to sell these designs. At the same time, the large Guilds' trading firms had fought over these items.

Zero Wing had only obtained a few Advanced Designs thus far, including Advanced Forging Designs.

Moreover, the design in his hands was not just any ordinary Advanced Forging Design.

...

[Conqueror's Armor Forging Design Fragment] (Advanced Design, Fine-Gold Rank)

When learned, you will be able to produce the Level 50 Magic Rune Armor. Every piece of crafted armor contains a magic array. Five pieces can be used to form the Basic Strength Battle Array. (Current fragment count 1/9)

...

I never expected the Divine Shrines to drop something like this! I've really lucked out this time. Shi Feng was at a loss for words as he stared at the Conqueror's Armor Design.

Not only had the Five-headed Demon Snake dropped two Mana Barrier Crystal Fragments, but it had also dropped a Fine-Gold Equipment Design that came with a battle array. Killing the Demon Snake had been far more profitable than killing a Level 60 Grand Lord.

A well-equipped peak expert in God's Domain wasn't a force to be reckoned with. In fact, despite being an individual, they were capable of playing a significant role in a Guild war. However, that did not mean ordinary players were utterly helpless against peak experts. Ordinary players still had a method they could use to fight peak experts.

Battle arrays!

If a certain number of players wore equipment with the same battle array, they could trigger the battle array's effects, significantly increasing their combat power.

Battle arrays provided more than just a boost to Basic Attributes; they also improved players' physiques. Most importantly, it allowed players with the same array to share their perception. This helped players remove defensive blind spots, visibly improving their combat standards.

Although a Basic Battle Array only allowed players to share a limited degree of their perception, it still elevated players' combat standards to a whole new level.

Many of God's Domain's small Guilds in the past had survived and thrived, even after ten years, precisely because of battle arrays.

Even without peak experts, Guilds with powerful battle arrays could take down a peak expert with just a few players or a dozen or so working together. Some small Guilds had even stood toe-to-toe with large Guilds by relying on these arrays.

Of course, battle arrays were not without weaknesses.

In exchange for the huge boost in strength, players' Stamina and Concentration consumption increased massively. When players activated a battle array, their Stamina and Concentration would deplete several times faster than normal. This limited the amount of time that players had when using battle arrays.

However, despite such a glaring flaw, battle arrays had been highly sought after by many Guilds.

Equipment with battle arrays was extremely rare, and usually only dropped from super-large-scale Team Dungeons. Monsters in the fields had no chance of dropping such items. Moreover, the higher-quality a piece of battle array equipment was, the more valuable it was. A piece of battle array equipment could easily sell for several times more than a piece of equipment of the same rank.

Although he had only obtained a fragment of a Level 50 Fine-Gold Battle Array Equipment Design, it was still quite valuable. If he completed the design, its value would be immeasurable.

Since the Divine Shrine's Guardian Boss dropped a fragment, the other shrine's Bosses should have a chance of dropping them as well. As Shi Feng examined the Conqueror's Armor Design, he inwardly swore to complete it no matter what. Immediately, he moved towards the teleportation array and proceeded to the next Divine Shrine.

By the time Shi Feng appeared on the staircase leading to the 11th Divine Shrine, players had already reached the 15th. He was far behind.

...

System: Congratulations! You have passed the Divine Shrine. Rewarding 300 Shrine Points.

System: Congratulations! You have passed the Divine Shrine within the time limit. Rewarding 300 Shrine Points.

System: Congratulations! You have killed the Guardian Boss within the time limit. Rewarding 2,000 Shrine Points.

...

However, although other players progressed faster than he did, Shi Feng contained the most SPs of any player in the World Summit. Currently, Shi Feng had already accumulated 8,960 SPs. If players ascended the Divine Staircase without defeating the Guardian Bosses, even after reaching the 15th Divine Shrine, they would not have even half of Shi Feng's points.

Time passed quickly, and the Divine Shrines became more difficult as Shi Feng climbed the Divine Staircase. By the time Shi Feng reached the 15th Divine Shrine, he had to face a Lord ranked Realm Lord with a special Bloodline. By the time he emerged from the 15th shrine, many players had been eliminated in the 20th shrine.

As Shi Feng had guessed, the other shrines' Guardian Bosses had a chance of dropping the Conqueror's Armor Forging Design Fragment if he activated Divine Providence when he killed them. By the time he had cleared the 15th Divine Shrine, he had gained another fragment. He just needed to wait for Divine Providence's Cooldown to end before proceeding to the next Divine Shrine.

As for Mana Barrier Crystal Fragments, he now had 17.

However, Shi Feng had grown a bit weary after fighting for so long. Taking a look at the time, he realized how long he had spent in God's Domain. He then consumed a drop of Life Essence from the Blood Refining Crystal to boost his Stamina and Concentration recovery before logging out of the game.

Players' accumulated time in the World Summit only decreased when players were online; logging off to rest would not affect one's progress. Hence, to maintain their combat efficiency, many players had long since chosen to log out. After all, challenging the Divine Staircase was a long and arduous progress, and as one climbed the staircase, they'd have to navigate larger maps in the Divine Shrines. As a result, players had to spend more time clearing the shrines.

By the time Shi Feng logged out, the sun had risen high into the sky. The moment Shi Feng's consciousness returned to his body, he was bombarded by a series of messages and call notifications. There were messages and calls from both Blackie and Aqua Rose.

In fact, Shi Feng received another call from Aqua Rose before he had the chance to leave his gaming cabin.

"What's with the urgency? Has something happened?" Shi Feng curiously asked after accepting the call.

"Guild Leader, you've finally picked up. Any later and I would've sent Blackie to look for you in person," Aqua Rose said somewhat anxiously. "While you were gone, Zero Wing City has developed nicely. The player population has already broken past the 1,000,000-threshold. Once we finish constructing the NPC Shops, the city will attract even more players. But some time ago, two representatives from the Blackwater Corporation sought me out. They told us to hand over Youlan and her companions and 50% of Zero Wing City's income as compensation. Otherwise, they'll turn the full might of the Blackwater Guild against us."

"Hand over Youlan, her companions, and 50% of Zero Wing City's profits?" Shi Feng frowned.

The Blackwater Corporation's retaliation didn't surprise him in the least, but he didn't expect Blackwater to take action so quickly. Moreover, the corporation's timing couldn't be worse, targeting them while they were in a war of attrition against Heaven's Burial. This put Zero Wing at a considerable disadvantage.

It seems that I'll need to speed things up, Shi Feng thought after hearing Aqua Rose's report.

He was quite familiar with the Blackwater Corporation's power. He had witnessed its rise in God's Domain in the past.

Despite joining God's Domain so late, Blackwater had still developed into a Super Guild quite quickly in the past. One could just imagine how frightening Blackwater's potential was. Furthermore, the Blackwater Corporation had invested in God's Domain much earlier in this life.

Blackwater's experts had already caught up with God's Domain's mainstream players. Otherwise, it wouldn't have stood a chance against the other superpowers vying for the Iron Empire.

Of course, Zero Wing didn't have much to be afraid of if the Blackwater Corporation focused on its development in the Iron Empire. Based on what he heard from Youlan, the Guild had only recently taken control of the empire. The Guild was just starting to expand. Although Blackwater possessed plenty of experts and funding, it lacked the power to spread its influence across multiple kingdoms and empires as the various super-first-rate and Super Guilds had.

While the organization might be able to deal with small Guilds right now, it couldn't touch Zero Wing.

Unfortunately, that was only true if Blackwater worked alone. If it worked with Heaven's Burial, Zero Wing's situation would take a turn for the worst.

Blackwater could leave the reconnaissance to Heaven's Burial while it supplied the Guild with a large number of experts.

Currently, players who wanted to grind and level up had to travel to distant maps, and most of the high-level maps weren't concentrated in a single area. Even if Shi Feng used the Seven Luminaries Ring's Space Movement, it would take a considerable amount of time to travel from one high-level map to another.

"How much time have they given us to consider?" Shi Feng asked.

"One day...but I let my anger get the best of me, and I rejected their offer instantly..." Aqua Rose said in a subdued voice.

"You rejected them?" Shi Feng stared at Aqua Rose in surprise. "Did you really reject them?"

"Mhm." Aqua Rose nodded silently, knowing that she had made a huge mess of things.

By outright rejecting Blackwater's offer, she had undoubtedly created another powerful enemy for Zero Wing.

"Hahaha! Good! Well done!" Shi Feng could not help but laugh when he saw Aqua Rose's guilty expression. "Although Zero Wing is not very strong, we're never afraid of a challenge! If they want to come, let them. We'll fight it out."

"Guild Leader..." Aqua Rose felt guilty and slightly touched by Shi Feng's words. Not only didn't he blame her in the slightest, but he also actively encouraged her.

“Alright, don’t worry about it. This isn’t the first time we’ve fought a superpower,” Shi Feng said, shrugging. “But be careful this time. Keep an eye on their movement at all times. Also, we need to push our Guild members to complete their Tier 2 promotions. Every bit of help is useful. Have our Guild’s internal members focus on leveling quickly, so they can add to the Guild’s combat power.”

“Mhm. I’ll prepare some top-tier equipment, Magic Scrolls, and Advanced Potions for our Guild members to challenge their Promotion Quests. As for the Guild’s internal members, I’ll help them level up with Summer,” Aqua Rose said, nodding.

Following which, Shi Feng mentioned a few good grinding locations for Aqua Rose to use as she helped powerlevel Zero Wing’s internal members.

The Guild’s internal members already had solid combat standards; they only lacked levels. Once they were brought up to speed, Zero Wing would have another batch of expert players to help defend it.

When Shi Feng finished his call with Aqua Rose, he proceeded to train with the Guild’s internal members. To help them improve faster, Shi Feng even provided specific guidance to a few talented members. He even went so far as to use the ten additional black cards he had acquired from the Secret Pavilion to train You Ziping and a few others.

In such a way, Shi Feng trained You Ziping and the other internal members during the day. When the sun set, he’d log back into God’s Domain and grind through the Divine Staircase.

The greatest problem other players in the World summit faced was the drain on their Stamina and Concentration, but Shi Feng could rely on his Life Essence to boost his recovery rate, having no issues in this regard.

The only real problem was the Divine Shrine’s increasing difficulty. As a result, Shi Feng had to take more time to clear each shrine. Initially, he had only spent 30 minutes on each Divine Shrine, though he spent most of that time waiting for Divine Providence’s 30-minute Cooldown to end. As he ascended the

Divine Staircase, however, the amount of time he needed to clear each shrine gradually increased to two, then three hours...

After grinding for four consecutive days, Shi Feng finally defeated the 29th shrine's Guardian Boss, a Great Lord ranked Realm Lord.

He had initially assumed that he'd earn more Shrine Points from each subsequent Divine Shrine he cleared, but that wasn't entirely the case. After the 10th Divine Shrine, the SP reward only increased once every five Divine Shrines, yet these shrines' difficulty constantly increased as he cleared the last. By the time Shi Feng cleared the 29th Divine Shrine, he had only accumulated 86,360 Shrine Points.

He was still roughly 14,000 points away from affording the cheapest Bloodline.

Fortunately, although he hadn't acquired as many Shrine Points as he had hoped, he had secured a decent number of Mana Barrier Crystal Fragments. When High Lord and Great Lord ranked Guardian Bosses died, they'd drop at least one crystal fragment, but he had obtained up to three crystal fragments from a single Boss. As a result, he had a total of 43 Mana Barrier Crystal Fragments.

As for the Conqueror's Armor Design, he had collected six fragments thus far. He was only three fragments away from completing the design.

He had also obtained over 100 Level 50 to Level 55 weapons and equipment. Their ranks ranged between Bronze and Secret-Silver, and although they weren't top-tier, they were rare and valuable at this stage of the game.

During this time, the White Tiger Dojo had also delivered the previously agreed 50 bottles of S-rank Nutrient Fluid and 20,000,000 Credits. Upon receiving the payment, Shi Feng assigned Shadow Sword to take charge of the 500 apprentices from the dojo. These apprentices would train in Zero Wing City's

Battle Arena, improve their Skill Completion Rates in Stone Forest Town's advanced combat rooms, and level while grinding and questing each day. As a result, their combat standards steadily rose with each passing day.

Unfortunately, Zero Wing's members had encountered group skirmishes with Blackwater and Heaven's Burial's experts in the fields, increasing the Guild's expenditures. Despite the massive revenue source ZeroWing City had become, the situation took a heavy toll on the Guild's funds.

However, monetary compensation wasn't the Guild's biggest problem, but the loss of top-tier weapons and equipment. Meanwhile, the Guild only had a few teams capable of acquiring such items.

Although Aqua Rose and the other core members had formed teams to hunt down the enemy experts, they hadn't obtained enough Level 45 top-tier equipment to replenish the Guild's stock.

"Guild Leader, I'm afraid that our stock of Level 45 top-tier equipment in the Guild Warehouse will run out at this rate. Many of the other large Guilds in the kingdom have already surpassed our raid progress in Level 50 Team Dungeons," Aqua Rose reported, clearly frustrated. "Moreover, based on the latest reports, it seems that Blackwater has sent over 4,000 experts to target our players. Including Heaven's Burial's experts, our teams are suffering a massive disadvantage while grinding in the fields."

If Shi Feng were present, they might be able to slaughter Heaven's Burial and Blackwater's experts a few times by relying on his Spatial Gate, which would, more or less, make up for the Guild's losses.

Zero Wing's members were constantly ambushed in the fields, yet Tier 2 experts like her were limited in their ability to fend off every ambush. Unless their Guild members stopped leveling and questing, there'd be no end to this problem.

Moreover, Level 45 top-tier equipment was required to raid Level 50 Team Dungeons. If the Guild Warehouse ran out of such equipment, they'd have to stop raiding these Dungeons. If this persisted,

Guild members might even lose interest in earning Guild Contribution Points. If that happened, the Guild would fall apart.

“Have Melancholic and the others focus on crafting Level 45 equipment, and temporarily stop sales on Level 45 Secret-Silver and Fine-Gold Equipment. Use some of that stock to replenish the Guild Warehouse. If worst comes to worst, have Snow send some Level 45 top-tier equipment from the Branch Guild,” Shi Feng said after giving the matter some thought.

He had never expected Blackwater to be ruthless enough to send 4,000 experts. To make matters worse, that wasn't the Guild's full strength. Blackwater's foundations had truly exceeded his expectations.

Shi Feng jumped back into his virtual gaming cabin, ignoring the fact that it was currently daytime and he was supposed to be resting. After logging back into God's Domain, he immediately made his way to the 30th Divine Shrine.

Chapter 1576 – Divine Shrine's Opportunity

Once Shi Feng entered the 30th Divine Shrine, the space before him transformed.

Currently, he faced a dark cavern. The cavern was very large, as large as a sports arena. Moreover, many tunnels led out of it. From time to time, he also spotted one or two Lizardman patrol squads moving in and out of these tunnels.

Even the weakest Lizardman in these patrol squads was a Level 58 Special Elite, while the strongest was a Level 60 Lord.

The raid difficulty really has increased quite significantly. Shi Feng frowned slightly as he observed the Lizardmen. It's no wonder so many expert Demon Players had to stop after reaching the 30th shrine.

Previously, even the strongest non-Boss monster in the 29th Divine Shrine was only a Level 60 Chieftain.

In God's Domain, Chieftain ranked monsters were at the Tier 1 standard. Hence, current players, particularly Demon Players, could still have a relatively easy time dealing with Chieftains. However, when a monster reached the Lord rank, they attained the Tier 2 standard and were capable of using Tier 2 Skills.

It might be fine if all a Demon Player had to deal with were two or three Lords. The crucial point was that, based on what Shi Feng could see, there was a total of 30 Lord ranked Lizardmen patrolling in the cavern alone. If one entered the tunnels, who knew how many more Lords they would encounter?

Against 30 Lord ranked monsters, even a Tier 2 player would get overwhelmed easily, not to mention a Tier 1 player. An ordinary Tier 1 expert would be fortunate if they could survive even ten seconds against such a large number of Lords. It was no wonder many experts in the World Summit had their progress climbing the Divine Staircase halted at the 30th Divine Shrine.

Currently, based on the Ranking List Shi Feng saw before he entered the 30th Divine Shrine, only five players had successfully passed the 30th Divine Shrine.

After observing the patrol routes of the Lizardmen, Shi Feng activated the Seven Luminaries Ring's Aura of Wind and dashed towards the tunnel that the system map indicated provided access to the heart of the cave system.

The patrol squads in the cavern moved in fixed patterns. From observation, Shi Feng found out that there would not always be 30 patrol squads moving inside the cavern but only around four to ten patrol squads most of the time.

As long as he used the opportunity when only four patrol squads were present to enter the tunnel leading to the core area, he would attract the attention of only two Lizardman patrol squads at most.

In the next moment, Shi Feng transformed into an afterimage as he dashed past one Lizardman patrol squad. By the time the patrol squad reacted, Shi Feng was already several yards beyond it. Very quickly, he zipped by the second patrol squad as well and entered the core tunnel.

However, the moment Shi Feng set foot in the core tunnel, he felt the threat of death.

Traps?

As soon as Shi Feng entered the tunnel, dozens of small magic arrays appeared along the tunnel walls. In the next moment, these magic arrays launched magical bolts of various elements. Although these magical bolts did not seem very powerful, each one contained enough power to rival a Tier 3 Spell. Even a Tier 1 player geared in top-tier equipment would be killed instantly if struck by these bolts.

In addition to these attacks, there were also two patrol squads of Lizardmen chasing after him.

Sure enough, the difficulty is very high. Upon seeing the dozens of magical bolts flying at him, Shi Feng immediately understood the reason why so few Demon Players had made it through the 30th Divine Shrine. He quickly executed Sword's Orbit, striking down the bolts one after another as he continued advancing down the tunnel.

Fortunately, the activated traps were effective not just against players but the Lizardmen as well. When the Lizardmen entered the tunnel, they were promptly bombarded by magical bolts from the traps Shi Feng triggered, and sent flying back out of the tunnel. As the Lizardmen had relatively high HP, they managed to survive even after being struck by what was effectively a Tier 3 Spell. However, this situation also prevented them from pursuing Shi Feng. Thus, they could only watch as Shi Feng gradually disappeared from their sight.

The path leading towards the core of the cave system was replete with various kinds of traps. From time to time, Shi Feng would also come across other Lizardman patrol squads. As a result, he progressed towards the core at a snail's pace.

After walking for over two hours, he arrived at a spacious cavern with a stone altar sitting in the middle of it. Stone pillars carved with magic runes surrounded the altar. Meanwhile, above the altar was the teleportation array leading out of the Divine Shrine.

At this moment, however, Lizardmen were kneeling around the altar. At a glance, Shi Feng spotted over 300 Lizardmen. Although the majority of these Lizardmen were only Elite ranked, there were nine Lord ranked Lizardmen in the mix. However, the Lord ranked Lizardmen were no longer the strongest monsters present, which was instead the staff-wielding Lizardman standing at the stone altar. Currently, the staff-wielding Lizardman appeared to be offering a prayer of sorts.

...

[Lizardman Chief (Realm Lord)] (Humanoid Creature, Grand Lord)

Level 60

HP 42,000,000/42,000,000

...

Shi Feng could not help but frown as he looked at the Lizardman Chief.

The Guardian Boss of the 29th Divine Shrine had been only a Level 60 Great Lord. Yet, in the 30th Divine Shrine, the Guardian Boss had actually become a Grand Lord. The increase in difficulty utterly exceeded Shi Feng's expectations.

Although the Lizardman Chief did not possess the HP of an ordinary Grand Lord of the same level, the enhanced Spells of a Grand Lord ranked Realm Lord was no laughing matter. Even if Shi Feng successfully blocked one of the Lizardman Chief's Spell attacks with his weapons, there was a high chance that he would end up losing his life.

Seeing this, Shi Feng could not help but hesitate whether he should bypass the Lizardman Chief and head straight for the teleportation array or stay behind and defeat the Guardian Boss.

He was fully confident of directly passing the 30th Divine Shrine while keeping his life intact. However, he could not say the same if he chose to fight the Lizardman Chief. While he did not mind losing one challenge opportunity—he did have ten chances after all—the crucial point was that players would still lose a level if they died inside the Divine Shrines. Fortunately, though, no items would drop upon death.

A Grand Lord was an existence that served as the Final Boss of Team Dungeons. It was practically impossible for players to solo such an existence.

Just as Shi Feng was mulling over his options, the Lizardman Chief suddenly started chanting an incantation. The runes carved on the stone altar then lit up with a dark-blue glow. The space above the Lizardman Chief also collapsed, forming a tunnel of sorts into the dark void.

Immediately after, a golden tablet slowly descended from this shattered space.

The moment this golden tablet appeared, the Mana inside the entire cavern stirred. The tablet itself also released a powerful Divine Might that put immense pressure on the living creatures around it.

This is...a legacy tablet? Shi Feng's eyes focused on the golden tablet. For a moment, he even thought they were playing tricks on him.

He had acquired quite a few legacy tablets thus far. Meanwhile, every tablet was a treasure that allowed players to learn combat techniques.

However, the tablets he possessed were just Bronze and Silver ranked. Thus far, he had only seen one Gold Tablet before. Moreover, the said tablet had even been stolen by a mysterious Tier 5 NPC. One could just imagine the value of a Gold ranked Secret Technique Tablet.

Just as Shi Feng was feeling surprised at the appearance of the Gold Tablet, the Lizardman Chief extended his hands and received the tablet. He then started chanting another incantation. This time, the Lizardman Chief caused an even greater commotion. The Mana inside the entire cavern gathered at the stone altar and became so dense that it started transforming into white mist. At the same time, a threefold magic array also formed on the ground the stone altar sat on.

This is a Space-time Teleportation Magic Array? What is he trying to do? Could he be trying to send the Gold Tablet to another location? Shi Feng was very familiar with the threefold magic array that formed beneath the stone altar. However, he did not believe that the Lizardman Chief was going to leave the Divine Shrine. Hence, there was only one other possibility why the Lizardman Chief would need a teleportation array—to send something away.

Since the Lizardman Chief had summoned the teleportation array immediately after receiving the Gold Tablet, it was highly likely that the Realm Lord was planning on sending the Gold Tablet away.

This won't do. I can't let him send the Gold Tablet away. Shi Feng steeled his heart and started sneaking his way over to the Lizardman Chief.

A Gold Tablet was incomparably valuable. It was not something that Bronze and Silver Tablets could compare to. Just a Silver Tablet was already enough to prompt the various superpowers to bloody one another's noses, all the more a Gold Tablet. If he missed out on this opportunity, who knew how long it would take before he came across another Gold Tablet? In fact, he might never come across another Gold Tablet again.

Moreover, the Divine Staircase became increasingly difficult the higher one ascended. If he could not defeat the Lizardman Chief, then it was even less likely that he could defeat the Guardian Bosses of the subsequent Divine Shrines.

Just as the Lizardman Chief was about to send the Gold Tablet out of the cavern...

At the critical moment, Shi Feng activated the Aura of Time's Forbidden Domain.

Please work! Seeing that the Space-time Teleportation Magic Array was about to activate, Shi Feng could not help but pray for his Forbidden Domain to succeed in stopping it.

When Shi Feng activated Forbidden Domain, a layer of black mist enveloped the entire cavern, the mist freezing the flow of all the Mana inside the cavern.

Meanwhile, due to the stoppage in the flow of Mana, the Space-time Teleportation Magic Array, which was still in the process of activating, failed. The Mana the teleportation array had gathered then began to leak out and scatter into the surroundings, which also caused the spatial tear above the stone altar to close.

Good! Shi Feng inwardly grew ecstatic when he saw the teleportation array disappearing.

The Space-time Teleportation Magic Array, which was activated using the stone altar, was frighteningly powerful. Although Forbidden Domain could suppress Mana, if a source of Mana had an insuppressible amount of power, then Forbidden Domain naturally would be of no avail.

Fortunately, the enhanced Space-time Teleportation Magic Array had yet to reach a realm where Forbidden Domain was ineffective.

Meanwhile, the disappearance of the teleportation array had riled up every Lizardman inside the entire cavern. Immediately, they all turned to look in Shi Feng's direction.

"Intruder! You dare interrupt this sacred ritual! Pay for your crime with your life!"

The Lizardman Chief bellowed at Shi Feng, a wrathful expression on his face as he thumped his tail furiously on the ground. Every Lizardman present inside the cavern promptly charged at Shi Feng. As for the Lizardman Chief, he gathered Mana in his staff to destroy Shi Feng's Forbidden Domain.

Among the 300-plus Lizardmen charging at Shi Feng were nine Lords and one High Lord. In the face of such a force, even an ordinary Tier 2 expert would shudder in fear.

However, rather than feeling fearful, Shi Feng smiled as he switched the Aura of Time to the Aura of Fire. He then unfurled a crimson Tier 3 Magic Scroll in his hands. Meanwhile, contained within this Magic Scroll was none other than the Tier 3 large-scale destruction Spell Flame Prison!

Suddenly, fiery pillars shot up from the ground, trapping all the oncoming Lizardmen in a prison of flames.

Any Lizardman that came into contact with the scorching flames received devastating amounts of damage, losing over 1,000,000 HP every second. The Spell's activation instantly killed the Elite ranked Lizardmen.

Meanwhile, before Flame Prison's duration was anywhere close to ending, Shi Feng took out an aqua-blue Tier 3 Magic Scroll.

Ice Torrent!

A torrent of water crashed down from the cavern's ceiling and impacted the ground heavily. Any living creature that came into contact with the water turned into an ice sculpture on the spot. The Chieftain ranked Lizardmen, who had received critical damage from the initial wave of attacks from Flame Prison, had their remaining HPs thoroughly consumed, their frozen bodies shattering into tiny frost particles. Loot then scattered all over the cavern's submerged floor.

After just a brief moment, only the nine Lords and one High Lord remained of the Lizardman army.

How tough! Seeing that the Lord ranked Lizardmen were already at critical HP, Shi Feng followed up with Flame Domain.

Although Flame Domain was not as powerful as a Tier 3 large-scale destruction Spell, it was more than enough to deal with the Lord ranked Lizardmen.

After the three large-scale-destruction Spells descended, only the High Lord ranked Lizardman Captain remained of the 300-plus Lizardmen that charged at Shi Feng. At this moment, though, the High Lord had less than half of his HP left.

Even so, Shi Feng had no intentions of showing mercy, immediately advancing towards the Lizardman Captain.

If it were during normal times, Shi Feng would pay no attention whatsoever to a High Lord ranked monster. However, he currently had to deal with the Grand Lord ranked Lizardman Chief. If he left the Lizardman Captain alone now, he might very well come to regret it later on.

Currently, the Lizardman Chief was much more powerful than the Grand Lord ranked Purgatory Puppets Shi Feng had fought during the entrance test. The Realm Lord also possessed much greater HP. Moreover, Shi Feng was alone right now, and the system disallowed the use of Summoning Scrolls. Hence, it would be extremely difficult for him to kill the Lizardman Chief, and he definitely could not afford even the slightest bit of carelessness.

However, just when Shi Feng arrived before the Lizardman Captain and was about to use Flame Burst to finish off the High Lord...

Numerous flame spears suddenly shot at him. Upon seeing this, Shi Feng retreated in surprise.

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

When the flame spears impacted the ground, large craters immediately formed.

What power! So, this is a Tier 3 Spell cast by a Realm Lord? Shi Feng was inwardly astonished as he looked at the flaming craters.

It was self-evident that the Lizardman Chief had removed the effects of Forbidden Domain.

Although the Lizardman Chief had cast only a Tier 3 Spell, its power was already at the Tier 4 standard. If Shi Feng tried blocking such a Spell, he might very well lose his life in an instant.

Meanwhile, as soon as Shi Feng dodged the flame spears, flames started raining down from midair. At the same time, chains made of flames emerged from the ground and shot at him, giving him no chance to catch a breather.

Whether it was the Rain of Flames or the Flaming Chains, both were Spells capable of killing Shi Feng upon contact right now.

Damn it! Gritting his teeth, Shi Feng activated Heavenly Dragon's Power.

He then executed the Tier 2 Instant Strike at the Lizardman Captain.

In the blink of an eye, Shi Feng's body disappeared from the trajectories of the Lizardman Chief's attacks and appeared before the heavily injured Lizardman Captain.

Phantom Kill!

Nine Dragons Slash!

Shi Feng held nothing back as he launched one powerful attack after another at the Lizardman Captain, who only had around 4,000,000 HP remaining.

Due to Heavenly Dragon's Power's effect, Shi Feng's Strength Attribute increased by 150%. His Strength was now superior to even a Grand Lord's of the same level. There was also Instant Strike's effects, which increased his Attack Speed by 500% and damage dealt by 400%.

In the next moment, damages exceeding -100,000 appeared above the Lizardman Captain's head one after another. Sometimes, a critical hit dealing over -300,000 damage would also occur. As Shi Feng and his doppelganger hacked and slashed at the Lizardman Captain, they also activated Defensive Blade to block the Spell attacks coming from the Lizardman Chief.

The fight with the Lizardman Captain lasted only a matter of seconds. During this period, the High Lord had very little chance to counterattack.

By the time the Lizardman Captain was dead, Shi Feng and his doppelganger had mostly exhausted the block counts of their Defensive Blade.

Although only the Lizardman Chief remained now, Shi Feng did not dare to be careless. As a precaution, he stabbed the Abyssal Blade into the ground and activated Abyssal Curse.

Suddenly, pitch-black shackles emerged from the ground beneath the Lizardman Chief's feet, binding the Realm Lord completely. The Realm Lord's Basic Attributes then began decreasing rapidly.

However, the Lizardman Chief was not an easy opponent to defeat. With a shout, he shattered the restraints on his body and stopped his Basic Attributes from decreasing any further. In the end, the Realm Lord still retained 80% of his Basic Attributes—remaining a nightmarish existence to current players.

However, Shi Feng had long since expected such an outcome. He then activated Disintegration Field, causing the Lizardman Chief's Basic Attributes to plummet once more.

Eventually, the Lizardman Chief's Basic Attributes fell to only 60% of their original values. However, Shi Feng was still not satisfied with this result. He took out the Ring of Gospel and spent 5,000 Magic Crystals, activating World Projection.

Threefold suppression. If players in the outside world were to see this scene, their eyes would most likely fall out of their sockets.

Shi Feng had actually suppressed a Realm Lord-grade Grand Lord to the point where the Boss possessed only 45% of his original Basic Attributes. Now, the Lizardman Chief was no different from a Great Lord of the same level.

However, the Lizardman Chief was thoroughly enraged under Shi Feng's threefold suppression. Waving his staff, he cast the most powerful Spell in his arsenal, Hell Pythons. Suddenly, the Lizardman Chief's staff transformed into a bundle of flames, which then expanded and became nine massive, flaming pythons that were fully under the Lizardman Chief's control.

He still had such a trump card to play? Shi Feng's complexion darkened when he saw the flaming pythons striking at him.

Although he had yet to clash with these flaming pythons, he could already tell that they were not something a Tier 2 player like himself could hope to stop.

Just when the nine flaming pythons were about to come into contact with Shi Feng, the latter suddenly split into ten identical copies of himself.

This move was none other than Divine Steps. Even if he left the nine pythons alone, the latter would be able to attack only nine targets at most at any time. With the flaming pythons distracted, Shi Feng immediately made his way towards the Lizardman Chief.

Thundering Flash!

Flame Burst!

Shadow Blade!

Both Shi Feng's main body and doppelganger attacked the Lizardman Chief in a frenzy. Although the Lizardman Chief was a Realm Lord, his Basic Attributes were now suppressed to the point where they only rivaled a Great Lord's of the same level. Moreover, the Lizardman Chief did not excel in melee battles. As a result, the Lizardman Chief became no different from a punching bag to Shi Feng, whose Basic Attributes were currently superior to a Grand Lord's of the same level.

99%... 95%... 90%...

When Divine Steps ended, Shi Feng took out a Tier 3 Defensive Scroll, Sacred Shield of Water, and used it. The Defensive Spell was capable of blocking Tier 4 attacks even for a short moment, let alone the Tier 3 attacks of the flaming pythons.

By the time Hell Pythons' 20-second duration was over, the Sacred Shield of Water still had over a quarter of its energy remaining.

Without the annoyance of the Hell Pythons, Shi Feng had a much easier time dealing with the Lizardman Chief and was able to whittle down the Realm Lord's HP.

When the duration of Heavenly Dragon's Power ended, Shi Feng promptly followed it up by activating Power of Darkness, maintaining his Strength at the level of a Grand Lord. Meanwhile, every one of his normal attacks dealt over -30,000 damage to the Lizardman Chief and -80,000 for a critical hit. His Skill attacks dealt over -100,000 damage each and -300,000 for a critical hit.

However, Shi Feng would occasionally be forced to block one of the Lizardman Chief's Spell attacks with his weapons, losing 10,000 to 20,000 HP in the process. Fortunately, Shi Feng had Life Domain and Void Shield to help him recover and block a portion of those attacks. Hence, he had no problems keeping his HP above a safe margin. The only real challenge he faced was that the high-intensity combat was depleting both his Stamina and Concentration at a severe rate.

As the minutes passed by, the Lizardman Chief's HP steadily decreased.

50%... 30%... 10%...

“Despicable intruder! I will not let you win!” The Lizardman Chief suddenly exploded in violent fury and tossed aside his staff. He then started gathering a stupendous amount of Mana inside his body. Following which, not only did his body turn pitch-black, but it also doubled in size.

Mana Madness?

At this moment, when Shi Feng looked at the Lizardman Chief, he could feel the threat of death from the Realm Lord. Actually, even if his mind did not warn him about the Lizardman Chief, his eyes could see very clearly just how dangerous the Realm Lord was right now.

Despite the Lizardman Chief just standing still right now, the ground beneath the Realm Lord buckled and shattered from the intense aura his body radiated. The air surrounding the Lizardman Chief had also become extremely heavy as well as scorching hot.

“Roar!”

The Lizardman Chief bellowed and dashed forward, appearing in front of Shi Feng in the blink of an eye. The Realm Lord then raised his massive arms and smashed down at Shi Feng.

“Come!”

Shi Feng had no intention of dodging the Realm Lord’s attack. Instead, he activated the Tier 2 Blade Liberation, increasing his Basic Attributes once more.

Shadow Blade!

Suddenly, several streaks of shadow merged with the slash Shi Feng executed using Killing Ray, the combined attack landing squarely on the Lizardman Chief's fists.

Boom!

Shi Feng was forced to retreat by only half a step from the resulting impact. In contrast, the Lizardman Chief's arms got flung away, leaving his scaly chest wide open to attack. Moreover, the counter had also forced the Realm Lord to retreat by two steps.

A chance!

Shi Feng used this opportunity to activate Divine Providence and stabbed the Abyssal Blade at the Lizardman Chief.

Flame Burst!

After launching a series of devastating attacks, Shi Feng eventually reaped the final 10% HP the Lizardman Chief had remaining. Meanwhile, like a bursting balloon, the Realm Lord's body instantly turned into ashes and disappeared...

Chapter 1578 – Basic Strength Battle Array

He's finally dead. Shi Feng breathed out a sigh of relief when he saw the Lizardman Chief disappearing.

After going berserk, the Lizardman Chief was simply too powerful. Not only was the Realm Lord's Strength overwhelming, but his attacks also carried the Mana Erosion effect. Every time Shi Feng clashed with the Realm Lord, although he appeared to have the advantage, in reality, his HP also decreased by a significant amount. At this moment, Shi Feng's HP had already fallen below 25%...

Had the Lizardman Chief been able to endure a few more attacks, the one to die in that battle would have been Shi Feng, instead.

Meanwhile, after the Lizardman Chief died, over a dozen items had dropped to the ground, including three pieces of Level 55 Fine-Gold Equipment, four pieces of Level 55 Secret-Silver Equipment, eight rare materials, and two Mana Barrier Crystal Fragments. For a Level 60 Grand Lord, this loot was quite satisfactory.

Not to mention, aside from all these items, the Realm Lord had also dropped three design fragments. When Shi Feng saw these design fragments, his eyes immediately glowed. After all, these design fragments were meant for none other than the Conqueror's Armor Design.

With this, I'll be able to start producing Level 50 Fine-Gold Equipment that has a Basic Battle Array added to it. Shi Feng smiled as he looked at the three design fragments.

He then combined the nine design fragments, forming a complete forging design.

...

[Conqueror's Armor Forging Design] (Advanced Design, Fine-Gold Rank)

When learned, you will be able to produce the Level 50 Magic Rune Armor. Every piece of armor produced will have a magic array carved on it. Five pieces of armor can be used to form a Basic Strength Battle Array.

[Conqueror's Armor] (Chest Piece, Plate Armor, Fine-Gold Rank)

Level 50

Equipment Requirement: Strength 700 and Agility 700

Defense +2,150

Strength +64, Endurance +72, Agility +60

Additional Passive Skill-

Life Sacrifice: The lower the wearer's HP, the greater the power they will receive. Increases to a maximum of 10% Strength and 20% Attack Speed.

Additional Active Skill-

Basic Strength Battle Array: Requires five or more players wearing the Conqueror's Armor to activate. Upon activation, increases wearer's Strength by 25%, Agility by 15%, Endurance by 15%, and physique

by 10%. Grants Basic Perception Sharing buff. Stamina and Concentration consumption rates are also increased by 400%. Maintaining the battle array costs one Magic Crystal every five minutes.

...

The effects of this Basic Strength Battle Array sure are powerful. Shi Feng could not help his astonishment after reading through the Conqueror's Armor's introduction.

He had seen many Basic Battle Arrays before. Meanwhile, a Basic Battle Array would be considered excellent if it increased the Attribute it specialized in by 20%. Normally, though, most Basic Battle Arrays only increased their specialized Attributes by 15%. The Conqueror's Armor's Basic Strength Battle Array, however, actually increased Strength by 25% and two other Basic Attributes by 15%. There was also the 10% improvement to physique. The effects of the Basic Strength Battle Array could already rival the transformation effects of Demon Players.

In fact, the Basic Strength Battle Array provided even greater improvements to a player's combat power than a Demon Player's Demon state did.

After all, the battle array's Perception Sharing buff allowed players to eliminate their defensive blind spots. This, in turn, would improve a player's combat standards significantly. Moreover, coordination between players wearing the Conqueror's Armor would also become much better, and they would be able to execute much more frightening attacks.

If a party of five elite players was equipped with the Conqueror's Armor, they might be able to defeat even a party of five ordinary experts.

This was the reason the various large Guilds had been extremely desperate to obtain equipment with battle arrays in the past. Moreover, the Basic Strength Battle Array was only a Basic Battle Array. If the

Conqueror's Armor had an Intermediate or Advanced Battle Array instead, it could provide even more frightening improvements to a player's combat power.

In the past, it was also because of some special battle arrays that many insignificant small Guilds had managed to survive despite not subordinating themselves to a large Guild.

Currently, the value of the Conqueror's Armor Design was worth even more than Fragmented Legendary items.

After going through the Lizardman Chief's loot, Shi Feng approached the stone altar and carefully picked up the Gold Tablet placed on top of it.

Shi Feng was very curious to find out just what kind of combat technique the tablet recorded.

To all players, Secret Technique Tablets were precious treasures that they could use to learn combat techniques from. Moreover, the higher the rank of a Secret Technique Tablet, the more powerful the combat technique one could learn from it.

In fact, in order to obtain a Gold Tablet, an NPC had gone as far as to commit robbery in the middle of Blackwing City.

After suppressing the excitement in his heart, Shi Feng clicked to inspect the Gold Tablet.

...

[Secret Body Technique]

The pattern engraved on this tablet is too vague and incomplete, and no information can be deciphered. However, some kind of divine power hides within this pattern. If one gathers all of the stone tablets, this vague and incomplete pattern can be restored.

Current tablet count (1/3)

...

A Secret Body Technique? Shi Feng's eyes glowed as he looked at the Gold Tablet.

It was common knowledge that among the various combat techniques available in God's Domain, combat techniques focused on the physical body were the most valuable. Moreover, just like Void Steps, such techniques were suitable for both physically and magically oriented classes. Even if one failed to grasp the combat technique completely, they would still be able to improve their control over their own bodies.

After he finished inspecting the Gold Tablet, before he could even store it away, a golden light suddenly shone down on him.

"This is..." A pleasant feeling filled Shi Feng's body as he was enveloped in this golden light. He also fully recovered all the Stamina and Concentration he had exhausted previously.

...

System: Congratulations! You have exceeded your own limits and achieved an Exploit acknowledged by the Gods.

System: Congratulations! You are the first player to have achieved an Exploit on the Divine Staircase. Rewarding 15,000 Shrine Points.

...

“So, this is an Exploit?” Shi Feng could not help but feel joyous when he saw the proof of having achieved an Exploit appearing in his status window. “Also, 15,000 Shrine Points? The system sure is generous.”

Unlike Shrine Points, one’s accumulated Exploits would not reset upon leaving the World Summit. They would remain until players spent them or deleted them deliberately.

Meanwhile, the more valuable items available at the Divine Staircase, such as Bloodlines and Fragmented Legendary items, all required Exploits to exchange for. Otherwise, even if one had the necessary Shrine Points, they would only be able to stare at their desired items, helpless to do anything.

Moreover, due to the system reward this time, Shi Feng’s accumulated Shrine Points had finally broken past the 100,000-point threshold. He was now qualified to exchange for the cheapest Bloodline.

After thinking up to this point, Shi Feng could not help but quickly leave the 30th Divine Shrine.

When he appeared back on the Divine Staircase, a series of system notifications entered his ears.

...

System: Congratulations! You have passed the Divine Shrine. Rewarding 1,500 Shrine Points.

System: Congratulations! You have passed the Divine Shrine within the time limit. Rewarding 1,500 Shrine Points.

System: Congratulations! You have killed the Guardian Boss within the time limit. Rewarding 4,000 Shrine Points.

...

After including these rewards, Shi Feng's total Shrine Points reached 109,360.

However, he still had no intention of ending his challenge. After getting sufficient rest, he immediately proceeded to the next Divine Shrine.

Although he currently no longer had enough Magic Crystals to use World Projection for the subsequent Guardian Bosses, even if he could not beat the Guardian Bosses, he was more than capable of maneuvering past them. In any case, he was not required to defeat the Guardian Bosses in order to clear the Divine Shrines and ascend the Divine Staircase.

Hence, while avoiding battle with the Guardian Bosses, Shi Feng cleared one Divine Shrine after another.

Meanwhile, as he was rapidly accumulating more Shrine Points, some players out on the World Summit had also started to notice something odd.

Previously, the highest record on the Ranking List displayed before the various Divine Shrines was only at the 33rd Divine Shrine. Now, however, someone had already reached the 35th Divine Shrine.

Moreover, this person showed no signs of slowing down as they sped through the 35th Divine Shrine and entered the 36th.

“Who is this person?” Skyhawk, who had just exited the 33rd Divine Shrine, revealed a surprised expression as he looked at the Divine Shrine Ranking List.

As one reached further Divine Shrines, not only would they face much more difficult Bosses, but the traps set up inside the Divine Shrines also became increasingly powerful. In fact, Skyhawk had spent two of his seven attempts on clearing the 33rd Divine Shrine. Furthermore, he had already planned on giving up trying to pass the 34th Divine Shrine altogether.

As for the 35th Divine Shrine, he did not even dare think about clearing it. After all, the Divine Staircase’s difficulty increased substantially every five levels. Despite that, there was actually someone who had successfully done so already and was challenging the 36th.

After Shi Feng entered the 36th Divine Shrine, the monsters he came across were mostly Chieftains. Meanwhile, the monster patrol squads he encountered were mainly led by Level 60 Lords, with a few led by High Lords.

Even an expert player would not dare to pick a fight if they came across such monster patrol squads; their only option would be to run away.

In addition, the traps found inside the Divine Shrine had increased in both quantity and quality. Now, every trap was more than capable of killing a player instantly. If players lacked the strength to cope with the traps and patrol squads simultaneously, it was basically game over for them.

To Shi Feng, however, these monster patrol squads were no problem whatsoever. Only, having to deal with both the traps and monsters at the same time consumed a lot of his time and Stamina.

Fortunately, he had Life Essences to help replenish his Stamina. Hence, he still managed to arrive at the teleportation array of the 36th Divine Shrine relatively easily.

From the 35th Divine Shrine onwards, the Guardian Bosses had become Grand Lord ranked Archaic Species. Even if Shi Feng had enough Magic Crystals to execute threefold suppression, he was not confident of defeating such a foe.

A casual hit from a Grand Lord ranked Archaic Species could heavily injure Shi Feng even if he succeeded in blocking the attack. If he failed, needless to say, he would be killed instantly.

As a result, Shi Feng had to resort to Heavenly Dragon's Power and Life Domain to keep himself alive. He then used the doppelganger summoned through Phantom Kill to activate the teleportation array. After the teleportation array was ready, he swapped positions with his doppelganger and promptly left the 36th Divine Shrine.

Although Shi Feng failed to kill the Guardian Boss, passing the 36th Divine Shrine still granted him a total of 4,000 Shrine Points.

Through this method, he smoothly ascended the Divine Staircase all the way up to the 40th Divine Shrine, causing a huge commotion among the players in the World Summit.

After all, the second-ranked player only managed to clear the 33rd Divine Shrine.

Meanwhile, Shi Feng directly chose to give up on the challenge after passing the 40th Divine Shrine.

The reason for this decision was the Guardian Bosses no longer being Grand Lord ranked Archaic Species, but Mythic monsters, instead, from the 40th Divine Shrine onwards. Whether it was in terms of Strength, speed, or combat standards, a Mythic monster surpassed a Grand Lord ranked Archaic Species by a wide margin. Against a Mythic monster, Skills such as Abyssal Curse and Disintegration Field had minimal effect.

Even after Shi Feng had used Heavenly Dragon's Power, the Guardian Boss of the 40th Divine Shrine still managed to overwhelm him. Had Shi Feng made even the slightest mistake during the fight, he would've definitely been killed instantly. In the end, he was left with no choice but to resort to Twofold Berserk. However, even after he did so, against an unsuppressed Mythic monster, it had taken him everything he had just to keep his life. Fortunately, he was able to hold out long enough for his doppelganger to activate the teleportation array, and he succeeded in leaving the 40th Divine Shrine.

However, after activating Twofold Berserk, he had also entered a Weakened state, which had a very long duration.

As this method of clearing the Divine Shrines was simply too time-consuming, Shi Feng decided that it was better to give up and use his remaining time to explore the other Shrines on the World Summit.

After Shi Feng chose to leave the Divine Staircase, he arrived back at the Divine Hall located at the bottom of the World Summit.

There are so many people!

Upon arriving at the Divine Hall, he discovered that most of the Demon Players he encountered at the World Summit's main entrance were currently present in the Divine Hall.

"Buying Demon Potions, 150 Gold per bottle! Willing to use Level 45 top-tier weapons and equipment to exchange as well!"

"Purchasing set pieces for Level 50 Dark-Gold or Fine-Gold Set Equipment! Prices negotiable!"

Among the players present inside the Divine Hall, very few were here to exchange for items using their Shrine Points. Instead, the majority of the players were purchasing items exchanged using Shrine Points. Rather than an exchange center, the Divine Hall looked more like a marketplace right now.

At this moment, a cloaked player approached Shi Feng and asked, "Fellow friend, you just came out from the Divine Staircase, right? If you still have points remaining after you're done exchanging for the items you want, I'm willing to purchase those points at a high price. I'll buy 20 points for one Gold. I'll buy ten points for one Gold if you have over 1,000 points, ten points for two Gold if you have over 3,000 points, and ten points for three Gold if you have over 5,000 points. How about it?"

Hearing the cloaked player's words, Shi Feng was inwardly astonished.

The purchase price was simply too frightening.

If players had over 5,000 points on hand, that meant passing the first Divine Shrine alone could already earn them six Gold Coins. If they defeated the Guardian Boss as well, they could make a total of 21 Gold from clearing the first Divine Shrine.

“Sorry, but I don’t have that many points to spare,” Shi Feng replied, shaking his head. He then headed straight for the exchange counter, showing no intention of trading away his points for Coins.

After all, he did not have a lot of Shrine Points on hand. Currently, he had accumulated a total of only 146,360 points.

Given Shi Feng’s lack of interest, the cloaked player had no choice but to search for willing sellers.

When Shi Feng arrived before the exchange counter, a female Demon NPC smiled at him and asked, “Hello, sir, may I know what item you wish to exchange for?”

“Bloodlines!” Shi Feng replied.

“Bloodlines?” The Demon NPC revealed a shocked expression when she heard Shi Feng’s answer. Very quickly, however, she nodded and said, “Alright. Here is a list of Bloodlines available for exchange.”

Although Shi Feng and the female Demon NPC did not speak loudly, everyone present in the Divine Hall was an expert. They also possessed considerably good physiques. Moreover, they were very familiar with the high-ranking items available for exchange at the Divine Hall. Hence, upon hearing the word “Bloodline,” they turned to look at Shi Feng, who stood before the exchange counter, their ears immediately perking up.

“What?! That person is actually trying to exchange for a Bloodline?! Even the cheapest Bloodline requires 100,000 points!”

“Previously, I heard that the monsters that managed to pass the 31st Divine Shrine only obtained 32,540 points. They are far from reaching 100,000 points. That guy should just be taking a look at the available Bloodlines.”

“No, that might not be the case. I checked the Ranking List just now and saw that someone has already cleared the 40th Divine Shrine. He might be that person.”

“Still, even if he cleared the 40th Divine Shrine, it shouldn’t be possible for him to accumulate so many points.”

At this moment, everyone looked at Shi Feng with eyes filled with curiosity.

After all, to them, 100,000 Shrine Points was an astronomical amount.

It seems nobody else has discovered it yet?

From the hushed discussions Shi Feng overheard, he couldn't help but pity these expert Demon Players. In order to save time, these players had chosen the fastest method to clear the Divine Shrines and missed out on the opportunity to obtain the points for killing the Guardian Bosses.

However, he also wasn't so kindhearted as to announce this fact. Following which, he focused his gaze on the list of Bloodlines the NPC provided him.

There was a total of 33 different Bloodlines available for exchange.

Among them, 23 were Basic Bloodlines, eight were Advanced Bloodlines, and two were Peak Bloodlines.

In his two lives playing God's Domain, this was the first time Shi Feng saw so many Bloodlines gathered in one place. Meanwhile, any single one of these Bloodlines could cause any expert in the past to go crazy over it; even apex experts would have been willing to pay any price to acquire one of these Bloodlines.

Chapter 1580 – Hidden Benefit

Sure enough, they are all amazing! It's no wonder so many experts were so crazy about Bloodlines back then! Shi Feng felt slightly emotional when he saw the list of Bloodlines.

In the past, even superpowers had an extremely tough time getting their hands on Bloodlines. Information on Bloodlines was also heavily restricted. Even though Shi Feng had been the Guild Leader of a second-rate Guild, he had not possessed any detailed information on Bloodlines. All he knew was that Bloodlines improved a player's Life Rating and that they were of great help when players got promoted to higher tiers.

Meanwhile, although the list of Bloodlines the Demon NPC gave him did not reveal a lot of information, what he could see was already more than enough to thrill him.

Even the most ordinary Bloodline would allow players to undergo a qualitative transformation.

Take the Frost Bloodline, for example. It increased the owner's compatibility with ice-type Skills and Spells, improving their Skill and Spell Completion Rates and base power. In addition, players with Bloodlines would gain some extra Basic Attribute Points every time they leveled up. In the case of the Frost Bloodline, its primary focus was Intelligence, while Strength, Agility, Endurance, and Vitality were secondary. Moreover, the bonus Basic Attributes gained through leveling up would further increase with each tier promotion.

Eventually, as players rose in levels, the gap in Basic Attributes between players with Bloodlines and players without Bloodlines would also grow increasingly wider, to the point where the disparity could instill despair.

However, looking at the cost of the various Bloodlines listed, Shi Feng could not help but frown.

Of the two Peak Bloodlines available, one needed 340,000 SPs, while the other needed 360,000 SPs. In addition, both of them required three Exploits each. These Peak Bloodlines were even more expensive than the top-tier Fragmented Legendary items.

As for the eight Advanced Bloodlines, they, too, were far beyond Shi Feng's reach as even the cheapest among them cost 200,000 SPs and two Exploits, while the most expensive one cost 260,000 SPs and two Exploits.

Even if he managed to kill the Mythic ranked Guardian Boss in the 40th Divine Shrine, accumulating 200,000 SPs was unlikely.

It seems I can exchange for only a Basic Bloodline. Shi Feng could not help but sigh. Revealing a bitter smile, he set his eyes on the 23 Basic Bloodlines.

Even the cheap Basic Bloodline, which was named Boulder Bloodline, cost 100,000 SPs and one Exploit. The Boulder Bloodline improved a player's Defense, and the main Basic Attribute it increased was Endurance. It was a Bloodline more suited for MTs rather than Swordsmen.

In the end, Shi Feng narrowed his choices to three Bloodlines.

...

[Hurricane Bloodline]

Increases compatibility with wind-type Skills and Spells. Mainly improves Agility, followed by Endurance, Strength, Vitality, and Intelligence.

Requires 115,000 Shrine Points and one Exploit to exchange.

[Scorching Flame Bloodline]

Increases compatibility with fire-type Skills and Spells. Mainly improves Endurance, followed by Strength, Agility, Vitality, and Intelligence.

Requires 122,000 Shrine Points and one Exploit to exchange.

[Earth Dragon Bloodline]

Increases Magic Resistance. Mainly improves Strength, followed by Endurance, Agility, Vitality, and Intelligence.

Requires 125,000 Shrine Points and one Exploit to exchange.

...

These three Bloodlines were more suitable for a melee physical class like the Swordsman class. Whether they were wind-type or fire-type Skills, the Swordsman class had a little of both. Hence, the Hurricane and Scorching Flame Bloodlines would provide significant improvements to a Swordsman's DPS. As for the Earth Dragon Bloodline, it was suitable for practically every class in the game.

As players reached higher levels, the maps available for them to grind in would have increasingly poor environments. In the past, many players would even prepare multiple sets of equipment to cope with different environments. Hence, Magic Resistance was very helpful to players.

All three Bloodlines were considerably good. At the moment, Shi Feng did not know which Bloodline to choose.

“Sir, should I recommend you a few Bloodlines that are suited to yourself?” the female Demon NPC asked, smiling as she looked at Shi Feng’s hesitant expression.

“May I know what your recommendations are?” Shi Feng could not help but ask curiously.

Recommendations from NPCs were generally very accurate. However, it was not easy for players to get one from them. Usually, a player had to be lucky or have sufficiently high Favorability with an NPC for such a situation to occur.

“As you are the heaven’s blessed that has progressed the furthest up the Divine Staircase, you get to enjoy a 10% discount on all exchanges. Hence, I recommend either the Thunderblade Advanced Bloodline or the Dark Iron Basic Bloodline,” the female Demon replied as she called out two displays showing the details of the Bloodlines she mentioned.

“You’re saying the number one ranking player in the Divine Staircase gets a 10% discount?” Shi Feng was slightly surprised to hear this.

He never thought that the Divine Staircase’s Ranking List also provided such a hidden benefit.

The Thunderblade Bloodline the female Demon mentioned was an Advanced Bloodline. It improved not only a player’s compatibility with lightning-type Skills and Spells but also their Attack Speed. As for Basic Attributes, the Advanced Bloodline mainly improved Strength and Agility, followed by Intelligence, Endurance, and Vitality. However, since it was a powerful Bloodline, its cost was also frighteningly high; it needed a whopping 230,000 Shrine Points and two Exploits.

Even with the 10% discount, he couldn’t afford this Bloodline.

As for the Dark Iron Bloodline, it increased a player's compatibility with melee Skills. As for Basic Attributes, the Bloodline mainly increased Strength, followed by Agility, Endurance, Vitality, and Intelligence. The Bloodline's price was, likewise, very high, requiring 150,000 SPs and one Exploit.

Currently, he had 146,360 SPs. If he included the 10% discount, he would have more than enough to exchange for the Dark Iron Bloodline.

"I'll exchange for this Dark Iron Bloodline," Shi Feng said, inwardly ecstatic as he looked at the Dark Iron Bloodline.

Among the many Basic Bloodlines available, the Dark Iron Bloodline was the most suited to melee classes. Since he could afford it, he naturally wouldn't go choosing other Basic Bloodlines.

"Alright. You have to pay a total of 135,000 Shrine Points and one Exploit," the female Demon said, nodding.

Immediately, a payment window appeared before Shi Feng. Without hesitation, he chose to complete the transaction.

A moment later, the female Demon retrieved a pitch-black crystal bottle from a magic array beside her. She then carefully handed the bottle over to Shi Feng.

So, this is a Bloodline? As Shi Feng looked at the pitch-black liquid inside the magic crystal bottle, he could sense vitality radiating from the liquid. Moreover, the liquid also contained terrifying power.

“This is the Dark Iron Bloodline you’ve purchased. Please store it away properly. May I know if you have anything else you wish to exchange for?”

“I wish to exchange for the cheapest God Crystal available.”

When Shi Feng took a look at the Shrine Points he had remaining, he saw he still had 11,360 points left. Meanwhile, the cheapest God Crystal up for exchange cost 12,000 SPs before discount, which was significantly less expensive than an Epic item. Not to mention, compared to an Epic item, a God Crystal was much more useful to him.

Following which, the female Demon inserted her hand into the magic array beside her again and retrieved a God Crystal.

Every God Crystal carried the remnant Divine Might of a God. Hence, the mere appearance of a God Crystal caused the players inside the Divine Hall to feel an enormous pressure bearing down on them.

“What is this pressure?! It’s so strong! What kind of item can give off such a powerful pressure?!”

“Who is that person? Just now, he seemed to have exchanged for a Bloodline already. Now, he’s even exchanging for such an item. Just how many points does he have?”

The crowd inside the Divine Hall stared at Shi Feng in shock. The players that previously doubted him now looked at him with eyes brimming with envy and admiration.

A Bloodline!

That was something that could allow even an ordinary player to become an expert. If Demon experts like themselves could obtain a Bloodline, they would definitely become one of the apex existences in God's Domain in the future. Hence, how could they not envy Shi Feng?

Meanwhile, after Shi Feng obtained the Dark Iron Bloodline and God Crystal, he no longer had any reason to remain in the Divine Hall. He immediately turned around and headed towards the exit.

However, before Shi Feng could leave the Divine Hall, a man suddenly stood in his way. Smiling, the man said, "Fellow friend, your performance at the Divine Staircase is amazing! May I know if you can hand over that Bloodline you have to the Flower of Seven Sins? Rest assured, the Flower of Seven Sins definitely will not mistreat you and will reward you amply."

With a look, Shi Feng identified the man before him as none other than Skyhawk of the Flower of Seven Sins.

Chapter 1581 – Disintegration Armor Recovers

Overhearing Skyhawk's request, the players inside the Divine Hall could not help but turn to look at him with shocked expressions.

"What? That guy is actually someone from the Flower of Seven Sins?"

"Sure enough, even a superpower like the Flower of Seven Sins is highly interested in Bloodlines."

"I wonder if that person will agree to trade his Bloodline away?"

“Why wouldn’t he agree? That’s the Flower of Seven Sins we’re talking about! It’s the strongest assassination organization in the virtual gaming world! Who would dare defy them?”

The surrounding onlookers started a quiet discussion among themselves as they looked at Skyhawk.

The Flower of Seven Sins was known by practically everyone in the virtual gaming world. However, the members of the Flower of Seven Sins always took action covertly, so most players had only ever heard about the organization and knew that it specialized in commissions for assassination. As long as one could afford the price, the Flower of Seven Sins would dare to take action even against Super Guilds.

Moreover, every member of the Flower of Seven Sins was an expert among experts. Even Super Guilds felt fearful of some of the organization’s experts.

Meanwhile, regarding the matter of Shi Feng acquiring a Bloodline, although the onlookers felt very envious of him, they also knew that any player capable of exchanging for a Bloodline was definitely no ordinary expert. Hence, there was very little chance they could steal the Bloodline from Shi Feng. However, it would be a different story if the Flower of Seven Sins was the one asking for it.

The Flower of Seven Sins dared to take action against even the old monsters of Super Guilds. Although Shi Feng was someone capable of acquiring a Bloodline, the Flower of Seven Sins would still consider him an insignificant existence.

Just as everyone was wondering what kind of decision Shi Feng would make, Shi Feng rolled his eyes at the arrogant Skyhawk.

“I’m not interested in this transaction. You’d best look for someone else,” Shi Feng said before continuing towards the main entrance of the Divine Hall.

Bloodlines were limited items in God's Domain. Although they were available for exchange at the Divine Staircase, every Bloodline was unique. Once one was taken, its listing would no longer appear at the Divine Staircase.

In addition, players wouldn't be allowed to exchange for items of similar rank and type in the future, which implied that players could exchange for only one Basic Bloodline at the Divine Staircase in their lifetime. If Shi Feng wished to exchange for another Bloodline in the future, his options would be only Advanced Bloodlines and Peak Bloodlines. The same rule applied for Epic and Fragmented Legendary items as well. Players were limited to only one such item.

Hence, Shi Feng naturally wouldn't be so foolish as to trade away his Bloodline.

Moreover, even if he could exchange for an unlimited number of Bloodlines, he still wouldn't trade the Dark Iron Bloodline away. Bloodlines were incomparably precious. Aside from the Divine Staircase, Shi Feng had no idea where he could obtain a Bloodline with absolute certainty. Hence, if he managed to get his hands on additional Bloodlines, he would naturally give it to the other members of his Guild. Only a fool would try to sell their Bloodlines away.

Upon Shi Feng's departure, Skyhawk's complexion darkened immediately.

"That guy's dead! He actually dared offend someone from the Flower of Seven Sins!"

"As expected of an expert. If it were me, I definitely would've chosen to trade away the Bloodline."

Everyone could not help but send Shi Feng looks of pity and worship as they watched the Swordsman leave the Divine Hall.

When it came to tracking and investigative capabilities, the Flower of Seven Sins could rival even the Secret Pavilion. If the organization wanted someone dead, there was almost no escaping the organization's grasp. Hence, if given a choice, independent experts would rather provoke a Super Guild than the Flower of Seven Sins.

"Commander, that person sure is arrogant! He actually dares disrespect the Flower of Seven Sins!" the Guardian Knight belonging to Skyhawk's party said as he approached Skyhawk, shock and anger on his face as he looked at Shi Feng's departing figure.

"Since he refuses to trade it to us, we'll just take it away from him by force." Skyhawk sneered as he looked at Shi Feng. "Did you use the Tracking Scroll?"

"I did. For the next twelve hours, no matter where he runs to, we'll be able to find him." The Guardian Knight smiled and nodded. Taking a look at his system map, he continued, "He seems to be heading for the World Summit."

In God's Domain, while it was indeed true that only Rangers and Assassins possessed tracking abilities, other players could rely on special Magic Scrolls to track players.

Meanwhile, as these special Magic Scrolls did not deal any damage, even when used on a player, the said player would not notice the tracking marker and neither could they remove it. Unless the targeted player logged out of the game, they could be located regardless of where they went.

The only flaw of these special Magic Scrolls was that they could not be used repeatedly on the same target. Once a player was marked, no other tracking marker could be placed on them within the next 48 hours.

“What a confident person. Notify Ink Hunter and have him get ready. We’ll take action on the World Summit,” Skyhawk ordered.

In the World Summit, only the foot of the mountain was a safe zone. Once players ascended the mountain, the prohibition on attacking other players no longer applied. There, players could fight each other however much they wanted. Only, once a player was killed on the World Summit, although they would not lose a level, they would drop an item and be sent directly out of the World Summit regardless of how much time they had remaining.

Since Bloodlines were categorized as limited items, after players exchanged for a Bloodline, they could not use it immediately. They needed to wait three hours for the restriction to end. Meanwhile, if players were killed during this restriction period, they would drop the Bloodline with a 100% certainty.

“Understood!” The Guardian Knight licked his lips in anticipation as he contacted their Cleric companion.

...

Meanwhile, after Shi Feng ascended the World Summit, he did not make a beeline for the area where the Epic Shrines were located. Instead, he found a secluded spot and retrieved the Disintegration Armor and God Crystal from his bag.

Hopefully, it doesn't require too many. Shi Feng took a deep breath as he chose the Fusion option in the system interface.

In the Divine Staircase's exchange menu, God Crystals were considered only unique items and not limited items. However, players had a cap of one God Crystal per visit to the World Summit. If Shi Feng wished to exchange for another God Crystal, he could do so only on his next visit.

After he chose to fuse the Disintegration Armor and God Crystal, the magic circuits carved on the Disintegration Armor released a dazzling silver glow. At the same time, the Disintegration Power the armor radiated intensified. A short moment later, a stream of evil, pitch-black energy flowed out of the Disintegration Armor.

This pitch-black energy felt as if it could corrode all items in existence. In fact, it even began corroding the ground, air, and even space around the Disintegration Armor.

What a strong power! Shi Feng involuntarily retreated three steps in a hurry as he looked at this pitch-black energy, deeply afraid of getting tainted by this corrosive energy.

However, shortly after this pitch-black energy started corrupting its surroundings, the space around it began trembling. The boundless energy permeating the entire World Summit actually started dispelling this pitch-black energy. In the blink of an eye, it obliterated the pitch-black energy.

The World Summit truly is a place created by Gods. Shi Feng could not help his surprise as he looked at the formerly decayed grass and air that had reverted to their original states.

The corrosive energy was capable of suppressing even the Disintegration Armor's mighty Disintegration Power. Yet, when this pitch-black energy came into contact with the energy in World Summit, it got wiped out almost instantly.

Meanwhile, after this pitch-black energy was removed, a small change occurred to the Disintegration Armor.

The formerly dull and tattered armor was actually glowing right now. Although it still had some physical damage and the magic circuits engraved on it remained dim and powerless, the Disintegration Power it exuded had become much more resplendent than before. Even Shi Feng, the owner of the Disintegration Armor, felt intense pressure coming from it.

He immediately walked up to the Disintegration Armor and checked its statistics again.

What amazing Attributes! Shi Feng could not help but grow ecstatic as he looked at the Disintegration Armor's new statistics.

Chapter 1582 – Domain Improves

Shi Feng's desire for the Disintegration Armor was intense.

After all, it was a set piece of one of the Nine Great Legendary Sets in God's Domain.

He had only heard rumors about the Nine Great Legendary Sets in the past.

He knew that these nine sets were far stronger than ordinary Legendary Set Equipment; they could be considered the best among the various Legendary Set Equipment in God's Domain.

Generally, among the various pieces of a set equipment, the chest piece was the most important.

As long as he could repair the Disintegration Armor, its benefits would be far beyond that of ordinary Legendary Equipment.

Although the Disintegration Armor hadn't fully recovered, its statistics were frightening.

...

[Disintegration Armor]

One piece of the Legendary Set Equipment the Orc Empire's Founding Emperor had crafted. The wearer of this armor will gain even greater strength than that of Titans. They will also fall into an endless cycle of madness. However, the Disintegration Armor had been damaged beyond repair during the great war, and now leaks the Disintegration Power within. The Disintegration Power will taint any player that carries this item. It has also been tainted by an evil power, making it impossible to recast the armor. (At present, 75% of the armor is still tainted by an evil power.)

[Disintegration Field]

Disintegrates all Skills and Spells within a 100-yard radius (Skills and Spells at Tier 2 and below will be nullified, while Skills and Spells above Tier 2 will be weakened by 70%). All entities within range of the Disintegration Field will sustain a 40% reduction to Basic Attributes, physique, and Stamina in addition to a 400% increase to their Stamina and Concentration consumption rates. No Cooldown.

...

Despite removing a quarter of the evil power, the Disintegration Armor's power had grown significantly. He didn't dare to imagine how powerful the Disintegration Field would become once he removed the remaining evil power.

Disintegration Field's ability to weaken Skills and Spells above Tier 2 by 70% was outrageous. Such suppression would basically cripple any Skill or Spell it encountered. The Skill or Spell would likely deal even less damage than a normal attack, and that's not even including the 40% reduction to Basic Attributes.

Only three more to go. Shi Feng could not help his grin as he looked at the remaining evil power in the armor.

Although he had spent more time on the Divine Staircase than any other player, he had earned a lot of time in the entrance test. He still had 5,724 minutes he could use to explore the World Summit. If he spent this time wisely, he shouldn't have any issues acquiring three more God Crystals. Opening an Epic Shrine only cost 1,000 minutes, and excluding travel time between shrines, he could activate up to five Epic Shrines.

As long as three of these Epic Shrines contained God Crystals, he could remove the remaining evil power that tainted the Disintegration Armor.

Once he had a plan, Shi Feng stopped wasting his time. After storing the Disintegration Armor, he dashed towards the Epic Shrine area.

Shi Feng ascended the World Summit's mountain far faster than he had during his previous visit even though he was still suffering a Weakened state from activating Twofold Berserk.

After climbing the mountain for a little over an hour, he had made it past the Bronze area and was already past the Mysterious-Iron area.

During his climb, he had spotted many players who tried to make the most of their remaining time as they entered as many low-rank shrines as possible.

Unlike the Dark-Gold and Epic Shrines, which cost 400 minutes and 1,000 minutes to activate, respectively, lower-ranked shrines were relatively cheap to activate. The Bronze and Mysterious-Iron Shrines, in particular, only cost 50 minutes and 100 minutes to activate.

Just as Shi Feng was about to reach the Secret-Silver area, three figures moved to intercept him.

Leading this trio was none other than the Flower of Seven Sins' Skyhawk.

"What a coincidence! We meet again," Skyhawk said, smiling at the cloaked Shi Feng.

"A coincidence?" Glancing at Skyhawk and his two companions, who currently wore sneers, Shi Feng said, "I'm wearing a Black Cloak like many of the players in the World Summit. Quite a few of them are Swordsmen as well. Aside from using a Tracking Scroll, I don't think you have any other methods of differentiating me from anyone else."

"Such a quick and astute observation is only to be expected from the expert that earned enough SPs to purchase a Bloodline," Skyhawk praised and clapped. "You are correct. To find you, I used one of the only two Tracking Scrolls I had on hand. Are you willing to sell us the Bloodline now?"

Tracking Scrolls were extremely rare and precious items in God's Domain. They were treasures used to hunt players.

If Shi Feng had merely obtained an Epic Weapon or piece of Equipment from the Divine Staircase, he would not have bothered to waste a Tracking Scroll on the Swordsman.

However, Shi Feng carried a Bloodline. Skyhawk would even willingly spend ten Tracking Scrolls to hunt this Swordsman down.

“What if I refuse?” Shi Feng asked.

“Refuse?” Skyhawk could not help but laugh at Shi Feng’s question. “You can refuse, but the Flower of Seven Sins always gets what it wants. Or do you think that you can actually escape our pursuit?”

Skyhawk’s statement had been quite loud, and his words quickly caught the attention of nearby players who came and went from the Secret-Silver area.

“What’s going on?”

“Members of the Flower of Seven Sins are actually robbing someone! Is this for real?!”

“That person sure is unlucky.”

The passing players sent Shi Feng looks of sympathy.

Although they weren't certain that Skyhawk and his companions were actually from the Flower of Seven Sins, they outnumbered their target. Moreover, their weapons and equipment were exceptional. These three players definitely weren't ordinary experts. Shi Feng would clearly be at a disadvantage if the trio decided to take action.

"Commander, those people seem to think that Flower of Seven Sins' members are robbing someone," a savage-like man, who had just descended from the Secret-Silver area, reported to the cold beauty beside him as he looked towards Shi Feng. "The other members in the World Summit should be in Skyhawk's party. Should we go and take a look?"

"There's no need. It's Skyhawk's party," the woman said as she looked at the man with a broken, massive, pitch-black blade across his back.

If Skyhawk weren't preoccupied, he would notice that the cloaked savage and the cold beauty were none other than Brute Spear and Hidden Soul.

"Seriously? What exactly happened? Why are they resorting to theft?" Brute Spear could not help but gape at the distant Berserker.

The Flower of Seven Sins only had seven commanders. Meanwhile, Skyhawk commanded the Sin of Wrath, an existence that stood among the Flower of Seven Sins' upper echelons. Normally, Skyhawk felt it beneath himself to attack someone for an Epic item, yet this man was trying to rob someone.

If news of this reached the organization, it would cause chaos.

"I don't know, but this is quite interesting. Let's head over and find out what's going on." When Hidden Soul saw Skyhawk ready to take action, interest bubbled in her heart.

However, this interest was not directed towards Skyhawk, but Skyhawk's target.

A player daring enough to offend Skyhawk had to be extraordinary.

Immediately, these two players approached the battle to get a better grasp of the situation.

Meanwhile, Skyhawk's party burst into action.

As companions that frequently fought alongside each other, the trio had long since reached an instinctual understanding of the party's battle formation. Immediately, Ridiculous, the tall, robust Guardian Knight, charged towards Shi Feng. Meanwhile, Skyhawk took advantage of the Ridiculous's large frame, shielding himself as he stealthily circled to Shi Feng's side. As for the Cleric, Ink Hunter cast a Truth Shield on Ridiculous. At the same time, he used Soul Cloud to assist in battle.

Instantly, the trio formed a well-coordinated, three-pronged attack. If not dealt with properly, this attack would even instant-kill a peak expert.

"Die!"

Ridiculous shouted as he radiated a golden glow, activating Justice Roar and forcing Shi Feng to attack him. At the same time, he swung his one-handed axe at the Swordsman, utilizing the dazzling glow from his body to hide his attack.

However, as Ridiculous swung his axe, an energy pulse radiated from Shi Feng, extending across 100 yards before dissipating. Everyone within range suddenly found themselves under an intense suppression.

Skyhawk, Ridiculous, and Ink Hunter's Basic Attributes began to plummet as exhaustion settled in their bones.

Disintegration Field!

Chapter 1583 – Mana Cutter

When the Disintegration Field took effect, the three members of Skyhawk's party visibly slowed.

Meanwhile, when Ridiculous's one-handed axe was a few inches away from Shi Feng's face, it clanged against a blue longsword, unable to move an inch further.

This is...a Domain's suppression?! When Ridiculous felt his Basic Attributes decrease, he could not help but stare at the cloaked Swordsman before him in astonishment.

At this stage of the game, Domain Skills were as rare as a phoenix's feather.

Not only had Shi Feng used a Domain Skill, but it had also reduced his Basic Attributes by 40%. Only a high-tiered Domain Skill was capable of accomplishing this.

Yet, since the start of the battle, he hadn't seen Shi Feng use any Magic Scrolls...

During Ridiculous's brief shock, Skyhawk approached Shi Feng's right side and swung the broken, pitch-black blade in his hands.

Indiscriminate Slash!

Immediately, over a dozen black energy blades flew towards Shi Feng's blind spots.

At the same time, Ink Hunter bombarded the Swordsman with Soul Cloud, launching magic blades from above.

"What exquisite coordination!"

Skyhawk and Ink Hunter's performance shocked the spectating crowd. The two players had timed their attacks perfectly, targeting every one of the Swordsman's blind spots.

Even an expert player would be forced to activate their strongest Lifesaving Skill in such a predicament. There was no way to block every attack.

However, as the numerous attacks soared towards Shi Feng, the latter didn't move to defend himself. Rather, Shi Feng slashed the Abyssal Blade towards Skyhawk, who followed his Indiscriminate Slash with a normal attack.

Is he trying to get himself killed? Skyhawk was confused as he watched Shi Feng ignore both his Indiscriminate Slash and Ink Hunter's Soul Cloud.

Others might not realize how powerful his Indiscriminate Slash was, but he was very familiar with the attack. Even though his Attributes had decreased, if every one of the dozen or so energy blades struck an MT of the same level, they'd either be near-dead or lose half of their HP.

Dang!

Brilliant sparks scattered when the Abyssal Blade clashed with Skyhawk's broken sword. Skyhawk's normal attack came to an abrupt halt.

As everyone expected the energy and magical blades to devour Shi Feng's HP, something astonishing occurred.

Both attacks vanished half a yard from Shi Feng. It was as if these attacks had never existed...

"This... What is going on? Did he use an Invulnerability Skill?"

"Is he an NPC?"

Everyone's jaws dropped.

All of the watching players were experts in God's Domain. They had seen countless Skills and Spells in their travels, and they had a certain understanding of Invulnerability Skills. As far as they knew, Invulnerability Skills typically formed an eye-catching barrier of sorts to protect the player, yet despite

the lack of any barrier around Shi Feng, both Skyhawk and Ink Hunter's attacks had been nullified. This was simply inconceivable.

A Defensive Skill? Skyhawk remained relatively calm despite his failed attack. Sneering at Shi Feng, he hissed, "How long do you think this Skill of yours can last? Do you think it can protect you from this?!"

Skyhawk immediately adjusted his footwork, and his broken blade began to gather a horrific, black energy around itself as it slashed towards Shi Feng.

The black energy quickly formed a black blade over Skyhawk's broken sword. As this black blade moved, it tore apart space itself.

Meanwhile, the Guardian Knight attacked from the side.

Shield of Vengeance!

With Justice Roar already active, his Strength and Attack Speed had doubled.

Suddenly, Skyhawk's broken blade split into five copies, each resembling a conning, venomous snake as they attempted to strike Shi Feng's blind spots.

Advanced Combat Technique, Snake Bite!

...

“Is Skyhawk finally taking this seriously?” Hidden Soul frowned slightly as she watched from a distance.

Skyhawk’s technique standards weren’t his only monstrous weapon. The broken, black blade he wielded was also extraordinary. The weapon itself lacked a quality rank, and it’s only Attribute bonus was Attack Power. It didn’t provide any additional Basic Attributes.

In exchange, however, the broken blade had two, incomparably powerful Skills.

The first Skill was Mana Rebound.

The second was Mana Nullification. With this effect, the weapon could even slice through Invulnerability Skills.

One could say that the weapon was a magic killer. In fact, this ability suited the broken blade’s name perfectly.

Mana Cutter!

All Defensive Spells and Skills were useless in the face of Skyhawk’s attacks. Moreover, if melee players weren’t careful with the Skills they used to attack Skyhawk, Mana Rebound might turn their own attacks against them rather than damage Skyhawk.

Because of this weapon, Skyhawk was the most formidable of the Flower of Seven Sins' seven commanders.

If one wanted to defeat Skyhawk, they had to rely on techniques or Basic Attributes. Unfortunately, Skyhawk was a monster in both regards.

If Hidden Soul had to face such an offensive, even she'd have no choice but to activate Vanish, receiving Ridiculous' attack, before putting as much distance between herself and Skyhawk as possible. If she tried to fight the Berserker and Guardian Knight simultaneously, she'd have no hope of victory.

...

The Mana Cutter? Shi Feng felt a little jealous as he watched the broken, pitch-black blade, which had transformed into five black snakes.

In the past, every player had known about the Flower of Seven Sins' commanders. They were just as popular as Super Guilds' Guild Leaders. Their weapons and equipment had been just as famous.

Among them, countless Berserkers and Swordsmen dreamed of wielding Skyhawk's Mana Cutter.

Realizing that Skyhawk and Ridiculous' attacks were about to hit their target, Shi Feng disregarded the idea of intercepting them forcibly. Instead, he used Divine Steps and split into eleven copies, spreading out to circle his two opponents.

Shi Feng still suffered a Weakened state, and although the duration was much shorter than earlier, it still reduced his Basic Attributes by 80%. Overall, his Basic Attributes were only slightly higher than Skyhawk

and Ridiculous's, who were still suppressed by Disintegration Field. He didn't have the ability to deflect the incoming attacks, which targeted his blind spots and weak points.

Doppelgangers?

The instant Mana Cutter slid through Shi Feng's body, Skyhawk followed up with a Whirlwind Slash, giving Shi Feng no chances to escape his grasp by swapping positions with his doppelgangers.

Reacting in a similar manner, Ridiculous followed up his attack with Devotion, an AOE Skill that only attacked his enemies.

Based on his experience with Skills that summoned doppelgangers, he immediately determined that Shi Feng's doppelgangers were likely invulnerable to attacks and couldn't be differentiated from the true body. In that case, he simply needed to attack all eleven clones with an AOE to find Shi Feng.

"This..." However, Ridiculous was dumbfounded after he used Devotion. All eleven doppelgangers remained unharmed...

They're all fakes? Skyhawk looked at each clone carefully. He had prepared to launch an attack as soon as his companion revealed Shi Feng's real body, but since none of the copies had taken damage, he was at a loss.

Using his opponent's shock as an opportunity, Shi Feng appeared before Ridiculous and activated the Aura of Time's Forbidden Domain. His two blades then transformed into streaks of light as they bit into the Guardian Knight before him.

Tier 2 Skill, Instant Strike!

Although Ridiculous noticed Shi Feng's attack, due to his weakened physique and the Swordsman's Attack Speed, which had been increased by 500%, he couldn't react in time. He didn't even have time to activate his Lifesaving Skill before Shi Feng's attack struck.

In the end, he could only watch as the Abyssal Blade and Killing Ray slashed down at him in succession.

Before Skyhawk could react, the Guardian Knight's 30,000 HP had fallen to zero...

Chapter 1584 – Wrong Opponent

As Ridiculous's HP hit zero, silence descended on the spectating players.

As they watched the battle, everyone realized that Skyhawk, Ridiculous, and Ink Hunter were definitely peak experts. The trio's combat standards were even better than theirs, and their weapons and equipment were nothing compared to the trio's.

Yet, despite three such excellently-gear'd peak experts working together, Shi Feng killed one of them without receiving a single point of damage. Moreover, the Swordsman had taken out the player with the highest Defense and HP.

This was simply inconceivable!

How is this possible?

Ridiculous stared at Shi Feng in shock as his vision began to fade to black. No matter how he thought about it, he couldn't rationalize what had just happened. All eleven clones should have been Shi Feng's doppelgangers; Shi Feng's main body should not be among them. When he had used Devotion, none of the clones had been affected in the slightest. The only logical explanation was that all eleven clones were doppelgangers, yet one of these clones had killed him.

Ridiculous wasn't the only one confused. Skyhawk and Ink Hunter were just as shocked.

There were doppelgangers in God's Domain that could attack, and those that could not. Doppelgangers that could attack were generally much weaker and easier to kill than the main body. In contrast, the majority of doppelgangers that weren't capable of attacks were invulnerable. These doppelgangers mainly served as a distraction.

However, not only were Shi Feng's doppelgangers invulnerable, but they could also launch their own attacks. This was beyond their understanding of Doppelganger Skills.

...

"So fast! Who is that?! He actually instant-killed Ridiculous!" Brute Spear, who watched from a distance, gulped as the previous scene replayed in his mind.

Ridiculous' techniques were no weaker than his own, but the Guardian Knight was much tougher than a Berserker like him.

Yet, this Guardian Knight had died without the chance to defend himself...

Brute Spear felt every hair on his body rise.

“No, there’s something wrong with Ridiculous,” Hidden Soul said, shaking her head. “Although that player’s Attack Speed is incredible, it’s so fast that Ridiculous wouldn’t have time to react and activate a Lifesaving Skill. Had Ridiculous activated his Lifesaving Skill, he wouldn’t have died so quickly. At the very least, he could’ve bought himself enough time for Skyhawk and Ink Hunter to save him.

“It’s highly unlikely that Ridiculous would’ve made such a major mistake. That player must’ve done something to prevent Ridiculous from using a Lifesaving Skill in time or at all. By the looks of it, Skyhawk’s group provoked the wrong opponent.”

Brute Spear nodded his agreement. Hidden Soul’s deduction sounded logical.

Or rather, he wanted to believe in Hidden Soul’s reasoning. The thought that someone could overwhelm a peak expert’s reactions with Attack Speed alone was too terrifying.

...

“Damn it! It’s a Silencing Skill! Ink, we’re retreating!” Skyhawk couldn’t help but grit his teeth as he glared at Shi Feng. Decisively, he turned and fled.

Skyhawk finally understood why Shi Feng had dared to ascend the World Summit before the Bloodline’s restriction period had lifted.

Rather than arrogance and foolishness, Shi Feng had done so because he was absolutely confident in his abilities.

While they could cope with the Basic Attribute suppression, it was an entirely different story if they had been Silenced.

Aside from the fact that they wouldn't receive any healing, the fact that they couldn't transform into their Demon states or activate Berserk Skills put them at an overwhelming disadvantage.

He was not afraid of powerful Spells or Skills, but if his opponent used a Berserk Skill, his Basic Attributes would be overwhelmed. Furthermore, his opponent was an incredibly calm, peak expert.

Ink Hunter, who stood some distance away, reacted as well, fleeing.

...

"What? Skyhawk is actually retreating?" Brute Spear gaped as he watched Skyhawk and Ink Hunter run away.

Skyhawk was one of the Flower of Seven Sins' commanders. Even when against four or five peak experts, he would likely fight until the bitter end and either wipe out his opponents or take as many lives as he could.

Yet, against Shi Feng, Skyhawk had decided to flee.

In fact, Brute Spear wasn't the only one shocked. All of the spectating players were dumbfounded. Only, unlike Brute Spear, they weren't surprised by Skyhawk and Ink Hunter's retreat. They were shocked by the strength Shi Feng had displayed. Not only had the Swordsman killed a peak expert instantly, but he had also followed up by scaring away two other peak experts.

"He's too strong!"

Is he an NPC? He actually killed a peak expert from the Flower of Seven Sins!"

"I never knew that there was such a frightening expert among Demon Players. It would be great if I could get to know him."

Everyone deeply admired Shi Feng. They, too, were experts in God's Domain, and they realized how powerful Skyhawk and his party members were. Ordinary experts couldn't compare to the trio, yet Shi Feng had overwhelmed them despite being outnumbered. These players agreed with Skyhawk and Ink Hunter's decision to retreat. Only a fool would try to fight Shi Feng after seeing the Swordsman's display of strength.

Although players would not lose any levels when they died in the World Summit, they would drop one of their items. At their levels, every piece of equipment was worth a fortune. This was especially true for peak experts like Skyhawk.

...

"You want to escape?"

Watching Skyhawk and Ink Hunter flee, Shi Feng thrust the Abyssal Blade into the ground.

Abyssal Curse!

Suddenly, black mist began to rise from the ground in a 30-yard radius around Shi Feng. The mist then transformed into countless, pitch-black chains that attempted to bind Skyhawk and Ink Hunter.

Reacting quickly, Skyhawk swung the Mana Cutter at the incoming chains.

While in Forbidden Domain, players couldn't use Skills or Spells, but both of Mana Cutter's Skills were Passive. Even in Forbidden Domain, the weapon could still slice through Spells and Skills.

As the crowd watched, Skyhawk shattered every one of the pitch-black chains that moved towards him.

Unfortunately, although Skyhawk had escaped Abyssal Curse, the Cleric, Ink Hunter, had not. In the end, the chains bound the Cleric, and his Basic Attributes began to decrease once again.

Shi Feng then left an afterimage behind him as he dashed towards Ink Hunter.

"Fight me if you have the guts!" Skyhawk shouted, furious as he watched Shi Feng charge towards his companion.

Ink Hunter was a Cleric. Without the ability to use Spells and Skills, he was powerless against Shi Feng.

Meanwhile, Shi Feng's Silencing Skill was clearly a region-based Skill. As long as they moved out of the affected region, they would be free from the Silencing effect. However, if Ink Hunter died before they escaped, he'd be left without a healer to support him. He'd definitely have a difficult time against Shi Feng alone.

As Skyhawk declared his challenge and before the watching players had realized it, Shi Feng had appeared before the Berserker, his Sacred Sword descending on the commander from the Flower of Seven Sins.

Shadow Blade!

A single slash, alongside nine shadows, struck Skyhawk from various directions.

Shi Feng's sudden appearance had caught Skyhawk off guard, but the Berserker reacted almost immediately, adjusting his footwork and wielding his blade.

Advanced Defensive Combat Technique, Iron Wall.

The broken blade's trajectory seemed strange as it deflected the incoming attacks. As Mana Cutter countered more of the attacks, its speed seemed to increase.

In the end, Skyhawk managed to deflect nine of the ten incoming attacks, receiving only one. When the attack struck, he had lost a little over 2,000 HP and retreated several steps. Skyhawk had basically lost one-tenth of his suppressed HP.

However, Skyhawk did not pay much mind to the damage. At the very least, he had lured Shi Feng in. With this, Ink Hunter could escape the Silencing AOE. Once they were free of the Silencing effect, recovering his lost HP would be a piece of cake.

However, before Skyhawk could celebrate his success, he realized that something was amiss.

Originally, there had been eleven copies of the enemy Swordsman on the battlefield, but now there were twelve. The clone charging towards Ink Hunter had never deviated from its path. At this point in time, said clone had also arrived before the Cleric and activated Shadow Blade already.

The Cleric, with low HP and Defense, died instantly as the ten attacks bit into his body.

How is this possible?!

Skyhawk shifted a bewildered look between the Shi Feng that had claimed Ink Hunter's life and the one that stood before him. What he did not know was that Shi Feng had never intended to let any of them get away. Shi Feng had sent the doppelganger he had summoned with Phantom Kill after Ink Hunter, while his main body had used Void Steps to approach Skyhawk.

Chapter 1585 – Slaying Skyhawk

Everyone was stupefied yet again when Ink Hunter had died. They were confused about how Shi Feng had two main bodies on the battlefield and could actually attack Skyhawk and Ink Hunter simultaneously.

Meanwhile, Skyhawk's complexion darkened considerably after he recovered from his momentary shock.

Not only was he still stuck in the Silencing AOE, but he had also lost his healer. If Shi Feng used a Berserk Skill now, killing him would be very easy.

However, what Skyhawk did not know was that Shi Feng had recently used Twofold Berserk and was still in a Weakened state, which prevented him from using Berserk Skills. Otherwise, he wouldn't have needed to expose trump cards like Forbidden Domain and Phantom Kill.

Shi Feng didn't give Skyhawk much time to think about his situation as he sent another quick slash at the Berserker.

Flame Burst!

Although he had already killed Ink Hunter, Skyhawk wasn't an opponent he could take lightly. If he allowed Skyhawk to escape Forbidden Domain and activate a Berserk Skill, he would definitely be placed in a very passive state.

Suddenly, the two swords in Shi Feng's hands released a burning glow as they approached their target. Shi Feng didn't bother with complex techniques, relying on bold, simple movements instead.

Experts like Skyhawk had practically no weak points. Skyhawk was more than capable of countering any technique he could use against the Berserker. Hence, rather than wasting Stamina and Concentration executing powerful combat techniques, it was far more efficient to force Skyhawk to defend himself with simple movements, turning this battle into a contest of Stamina and Concentration.

“Don’t even think of killing me that easily!” Skyhawk shouted. Reacting, he brandished Mana Cutter to deflect Shi Feng’s attacks.

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

Every time the swords clashed, the resulting impacts radiated powerful shockwaves. Even Hidden Soul and the other spectators, who stood a safe distance away, could clearly feel these shockwaves. Meanwhile, the ground under Skyhawk and Shi Feng’s feet cracked and shattered. To the watching crowd, it felt as if they were watching two, gigantic, humanoid beasts clash, rather than players. Even the terrain changed in the wake of their might.

In terms of Basic Attributes, Shi Feng was just slightly superior to Skyhawk. Hence, even if Skyhawk received the full force of Shi Feng’s attacks, he wouldn’t take much damage. Furthermore, the Berserker deflected his opponent’s attacks rather than block them. However, Shi Feng’s slashes were far more powerful than Skyhawk’s with Flame Burst’s explosive power.

Although Mana Cutter could slice through projectile Skills and Spells, it wasn’t effective against Skills that enhanced their user’s power.

As a result, every time Skyhawk deflected an attack, he was forced back several steps. His HP fell by over 700 as well. After deflecting 15 consecutive attacks, Skyhawk’s HP had fallen to 50%.

...

“That guy is amazing. He’s actually suppressed Skyhawk despite only having a slight advantage in Basic Attributes. Not even the other commanders are capable of something like this.” Brute Spear could not help but sigh with admiration as he watched Shi Feng back Skyhawk into a corner. “It’s no wonder why

the Boss always warns us to be careful in the fields. If we accidentally provoke such a hidden expert while adventuring, we'll definitely be in for a painful lesson."

Skyhawk's combat standard was extremely high, and Mana Cutter only bolstered his strength. He had never been suppressed in a melee duel against the Seven Sins' other commanders. Normally, he was the only one to suppress the others.

Hidden Soul nodded in agreement, but as she watched Shi Feng's figure, something about the man felt familiar.

Could he be...Maple Leaf? The thought drifted through Hidden Soul's mind as she watched the battle.

She thought it was unlikely that two unknown, monster-level experts had visited the World Summit at the same time. Moreover, the doppelganger Skill Shi Feng had used against Skyhawk was the same Skill he had used against the Purgatory Puppets.

She also found the situation somewhat hard to believe.

Every expert had strengths and weaknesses. For example, some experts focused on fighting monsters, and against monsters, they could display extraordinary strength. Meanwhile, some experts preferred to fight other players, and they could display much greater strength against players than they could against monsters.

Shi Feng had previously displayed incredible combat standards against the Purgatory Puppets, proving that he put quite a bit of effort into fighting monsters. Even Hidden Soul had to admit that she wasn't as skilled as Shi Feng in monster battles.

Yet, despite facing Skyhawk's 3-man party, Shi Feng had displayed the same extraordinary tactics and combat standards. His performance wasn't inferior to his fight with the Purgatory Puppets in the least. This proved that he was just as familiar with PvP...

...

As Hidden Soul pondered over Shi Feng's identity, the battle between the Swordsman and the Berserker grew more intense. They began to exchange blows so fast that even many of the watching Demon experts could no longer keep up with the battle.

Damn it! Not being able to use my Skills is too much of a problem! Skyhawk was frustrated as he desperately repelled Shi Feng's frenzied attacks.

The standard of his techniques was considerably higher than Shi Feng's. In a fight where neither combatant could use Skills or Spells, he'd have no fear of Shi Feng.

Yet, Shi Feng had used a Skill that boosted his attacks' destructive power before launching swift and straightforward attacks, forcing him to receive the attacks one way or another. Had Shi Feng relied on projectiles, he could have easily found an opportunity to use Mana Cutter to turn the tables on the Swordsman, but as if Shi Feng had known about the weapon's abilities, he refused to give Skyhawk such an opportunity.

This forced him into a passive situation, having to focus on his own defense. As a result, he could only watch as his HP continued to decrease. Moreover, Shi Feng had yet to use a Berserk Skill or his Demon state.

That's not right! Considering the events up to this point, Skyhawk suddenly realized a possibility as to why Shi Feng would bother to fight him for so long. With a sneer, he hissed, "I understand now! The

reason you haven't used a Berserk Skill yet isn't that you don't want to, but because something is preventing you from doing so! You're trying to desperately to deplete my HP so you can kill me before I leave your Silencing AOE, aren't you?!"

Shi Feng didn't bother to reply to Skyhawk's accusation. Instead, he activated Illusory Shadow.

Although Illusory Shadow's attacks were quite weak, only dealing 40% of a normal attack's damage, the attacks couldn't be blocked.

"Your silence only confirms my guess! Since you can't use your Berserk Skill, I don't have to be careful around you anymore!" Skyhawk smiled. Immediately, he executed a deceptive footwork technique, retreating at a much faster pace.

He hadn't put much focus into escaping the Silencing Skill since he couldn't find any hope of victory. Even if he could use a Berserk Skill or transform into his Demon state, so could Shi Feng. But now, things had changed.

Once he was out of range of the Silencing AOE, he could use his Berserk Skill. Killing Shi Feng would be a piece of cake.

To put it simply, this battle's outcome depended on whether or not he could escape the Silencing AOE safely.

As Skyhawk inched towards the edge of the Silencing AOE, his focus sharpened. As a result, the drain on his HP began to slow.

“In ten seconds, I’ll escape your Silencing Skill. It’s impossible to deplete my remaining HP in so little time. I have to admit, though, you are the first person to force me into such a position since I’ve joined God’s Domain. You should be proud of this fact. Do you have any last words?” Skyhawk asked, smiling arrogantly at Shi Feng.

“Is that so?” Shi Feng grinned suddenly.

In the next moment, a black figure descended from the skies and landed behind Skyhawk. This figure was none other than Shi Feng’s doppelganger. The doppelganger had already activated Flame Burst and brandished its swords at the Berserker.

Seeing this, Skyhawk’s expression darkened. Hurriedly, he spun and used Mana Cutter to deflect the incoming attacks.

As for Shi Feng, he activated Dragon’s Authority and executed Sword’s Orbit.

Dragon’s Authority immediately inflicted the Fear debuff on Skyhawk. Not only did the debuff decrease the Berserker’s Attack Power by 40%, but it also reduced his Attack Speed and Movement Speed by 40%.

With Skyhawk’s Attack Speed decreased significantly, he couldn’t keep up with both Shi Feng and his doppelganger. As a result, he had to watch, helpless, as one sword light after another sliced through his body and stole a significant portion of his already-low HP.

He had only needed ten more seconds to reach the edge of the Silencing AOE, yet it now seemed endlessly far away.

In the end, Skyhawk's HP plummeted, and like a puppet with cut strings, the Berserker's body collapsed to the ground.

"You should be proud of the fact that you forced me to attack in sync with my doppelganger," Shi Feng said softly as he looked at the fallen Berserker.

Chapter 1586 – Demon King's Horn

Although Shi Feng had only spoken after Skyhawk's HP had reached zero, players would retain their senses for a short moment after they died in God's Domain. Only, players weren't able to move.

"You..." Skyhawk nearly spat blood when he heard Shi Feng's statement.

Had he had use of his Skills, Shi Feng's mindless, brutish attacks wouldn't have claimed his life outright even without activating his Berserk Skill.

However, Skyhawk's HP had already reached zero. Even if he wanted to say something, he couldn't. He could only wait, hateful, as the system gradually sent him out of the World Summit.

When the spectating crowd saw Skyhawk's corpse on the ground, they gulped audibly as they turned towards the Swordsman beside said corpse.

Shi Feng was too strong!

This was the first time that they, as expert players, had realized that players could dominate a battle by relying on Skills, not just Basic Attributes and techniques.

Despite facing three peak experts simultaneously, Shi Feng had killed all three by relying on his Skills. Shi Feng's Skills were so powerful that Skyhawk's party hadn't been able to retaliate in the slightest.

First, Shi Feng had suppressed his opponents with a Domain Skill. He then used a Silencing AOE Skill and another Skill that allowed him to instant-kill a Guardian Knight. In the end, he had relied on his doppelgangers to fight a two-on-one battle. With his numerous Skills, he had crushed any advantage his opponents had possessed.

After this battle, these expert players realized how important Skills and Spells actually were.

Now, they understood that Skills and Spells could make up for their imperfections, furthering their combat powers.

Even when struggling with an overwhelming disadvantage, they could rely on the synergy of powerful Skills and Spells to turn the tide of battle.

Shi Feng was proof of this.

"Skyhawk died, just like that. He's definitely going to get an earful when he reports back to the main headquarters," Brute Spear could not help but laugh as he watched Skyhawk's body gradually disappear. "We really have to thank this mysterious expert."

As the Sin of Wrath's commander, everyone in the Flower of Seven Sins recognized the man's strength. He had achieved quite a bit in the organization.

This was also why Skyhawk was so dissatisfied with Hidden Soul, who had recently been promoted to the Sin of Pride's commander due to her connections. Hidden Soul faced a lot of pressure in the organization, but now that Skyhawk had died during an attempted robbery, he would lose quite a bit of influence.

"Mysterious expert?" Hidden Soul could not help but shake her head. Smiling bitterly, she said, "He is no mysterious expert. In fact, you know him."

"I know him?" Brute Spear was confused.

"If I'm not mistaken, he is Maple Leaf," Hidden Soul said as she stared at Shi Feng's distant figure. "Although he had hidden his appearance under a Black Cloak, one of the Doppelganger Skills he used during the fight is the same Skill Maple used in the entrance test."

"He's Brother Maple?" Brute Spear turned to Shi Feng with wide eyes, shocked. He couldn't believe it.

Not only was Shi Feng ridiculously powerful against monsters, but he was equally powerful in PvP.

"Commander, if we can deepen our relationship with Brother Maple, wouldn't we have a better chance of retrieving the item?" Brute Spear suggested excitedly.

"Mhm. But this isn't the time to ask him," Hidden Soul said after giving the matter some thought. "He has just killed Skyhawk. Even if Skyhawk can stomach this grievance, the Elders aren't likely to turn the

other way. They'll do everything to learn as much as they can about him. It won't be too late to contact Maple once the Elders have discovered his true identity."

After giving the matter some thought, Brute Spear understood Hidden Soul's reasoning.

The Flower of Seven Sins was a mysterious organization, which everyone in the virtual gaming world feared and revered. Meanwhile, news of a mysterious player killing a commander like Skyhawk would leak, sooner or later. The other superpowers would laugh at and ridicule the Flower of Seven Sins. If the organization wanted to maintain its reputation, it couldn't sit still and do nothing. Otherwise, the organization's prestige would plummet.

...

While the watching players discussed Shi Feng and the battle, the Swordsman began to collect the loot Skyhawk and his party had dropped.

Skyhawk, Ridiculous, and Ink Hunter were all bona fide peak experts. Every weapon and piece of equipment they used was the best of the best.

When Skyhawk had died, not only had he dropped Level 45, Dark-Gold plate-armor gloves, but he had also dropped a horn that radiated dense, demonic power. As it lay on the ground, it increased the demonic power in the air by several-fold.

"What's this?" Shi Feng picked up the horn curiously and inspected it.

...

[Demon King's Horn] (Epic Rank Consumable)

This horn carries the power of a living Demon King. Activating the horn will allow you to execute an attack with the power this Demon King had during his life. Activating the Demon King's power will cost 30,000 Magic Crystal. (Can be used two more times.)

...

Shi Feng was dumbfounded when he read the Demon King's Horn's description. A moment later, ecstasy gripped his heart.

An Epic Consumable!

This item was far rarer than an ordinary Epic item, and it was obvious that Skyhawk had purchased it with his Shrine Points. However, it seemed that the Berserker had been in so much of a hurry to kill Shi Feng that he had ignored the Restriction Period. In the end, Skyhawk had dropped the Demon King's Horn.

When Skyhawk realized that he had lost this item, he would die from regret.

Not even Shi Feng could help but pity Skyhawk a little.

Needless to say, Skyhawk had spent most, if not all, of the Shrine Points he had earned from the Divine Staircase on this item. If Shi Feng had been in his place, he wouldn't have spent his points on the horn. After all, it was merely a Consumable item. It would disappear once its usage counts had been spent.

However, Shi Feng had to admit that the item could exert an astounding amount of power due to its limited usage counts. With it, a player could use all of the potential of an Epic item in an instant.

In God's Domain, Demon Kings were Tier 5 existences. Although their Life Ratings were lower than Fallen Angels, they were still Tier 5 creatures. On their own, they had enough combat power to devastate an entire kingdom.

Quite a few Demon Kings had roamed God's Domain in Shi Feng's previous life. These Demon Kings had significantly changed the kingdoms they had risen in. To defeat these Demon Kings, the various local Guilds had made astronomical sacrifices.

Could that fellow have intended to raid a Mythic monster? Shi Feng wondered as he gazed at the Demon King's Horn.

Since the Demon King's Horn allowed a player to use a Demon King's power, the player could launch an attack of a Tier 5 creature.

A Tier 5 attack could even wound a Tier 5 monster severely if not dealt with properly. To current players, however, Tier 5 monsters were practically invincible. No player would be foolish enough to challenge a Tier 5 creature at this stage of the game.

The only reason why Skyhawk would purchase this item was to face a Tier 4 Mythic monster.

Although Mythic monsters were still insurmountable to current players, it was possible to take one down with the help of the Demon King's Horn and a few other powerful items.

Now that Shi Feng had obtained the Demon King's Horn, he had gained another trump card, which was even stronger than the Elemental Sources, to deal with Mythic monsters in the future. He could even use it to deal with the Final Boss in a Level 50 super-large-scale Team Dungeon. The only problem was the high requirement of Magic Crystals to activate the Demon King's Horn...

Not just any Guild could afford to part with 30,000 Magic Crystals. Not even Zero Wing could afford the expenditure. Many aspects demanded Magic Crystals of the Guild. Right now, Zero Wing couldn't even afford to spend 10,000 Magic Crystals, let alone 30,000...

Forget it. It's better than not having it at all.

After pondering the situation for a moment, Shi Feng decided to set the Demon King's Horn aside for now, continuing towards the World Summit's Epic area.

...

Meanwhile, news of Shi Feng's single-handed annihilation of Skyhawk's party spread like wildfire, quickly reaching the various superpowers' ears.

Players bustled about on the streets of a Guild Town, protected by tall walls. Quite a few of these players were architects, busily construction all types of buildings.

From the top floor of an open-air restaurant in the town, a middle-aged man in dark-gray armor quietly watched these architects. A flame-shaped shield rested beside his chair.

Suddenly, a young man burst into the room, running up to the middle-aged man.

“Uncle Yuan, something big has happened,” the young man excitedly reported. “We just received news that Skyhawk, one of the Flower of Seven Sins’ commanders, has been killed.”

The middle-aged man in question was none other than the Secret Pavilion’s Yuan Tiexin. He had already reached Level 50 and wore the Level 50 Fine-Gold ranked Landslide Set, a set equipment for Shield Warriors which could only be obtained from Level 50, 100-man Team Dungeons.

“Skyhawk has been killed?” Yuan Tiexin turned towards the young man in astonishment. “How is that possible? Did someone organize an expert team to ambush him? No, that can’t be right. We’re talking about one of the Seven Sins commanders here. The Flower of Seven Sins definitely won’t take such a blow lying down.”

Skyhawk was one of only seven commanders in the Flower of Seven Sins. His individual strength even ranked near the top in the assassination organization.

Yuan Tiexin found it truly hard to believe that a handful of players could kill such an expert. The only possibility was that some superpower had organized a small army to ambush the man. They’d also need various powerful tools to ensure that he couldn’t escape.

“No...that’s not the case. Based on what we’ve heard, it seems that Skyhawk and two of his close aides attempted to rob another player. In the end, that player turned the tables, and the three lost their lives,” the young man explained, stammering.

“Skyhawk led his men to kill a player, but ended up dead instead? How is that possible?” Yuan Tiexin was even more shocked.

Not only had Skyhawk died, but he had also been killed by a lone player. The man had even had the numerical advantage in the situation.

No matter how Yuan Tiexin considered the younger man’s words, they sounded like a joke.

“It’s true. Here’s a video of the battle,” the young man said as he hurriedly relayed the recording.

The video had been recorded some distance from the battlefield, so the fight’s details weren’t clear. However, Skyhawk’s Mana Cutter was. There was no doubt that the Berserker wielding the broken blade was indeed Skyhawk.

“What powerful Skills!” Although Yuan Tiexin could not see the entire process of the battle clearly, he could, more or less, deduce the reason that Skyhawk’s party had lost. “Just who is that player?”

“We’re already doing our best to investigate this matter. Unfortunately, we can only glean a limited amount of information from the video. Although the Flower of Seven Sins should have access to more details, our spies in the organization are too low-ranked to gain access to the information. The Guild Leader has already asked us to find this expert as quickly as possible, and he has stated that we cannot allow the Flower of Seven Sins to reach the player before we do.”

“I understand. I’ll do my best to look into the matter.”

After Yuan Tiexin finished with the video, he became interested in the mysterious expert who had killed Skyhawk’s 3-man party. He immediately ordered his subordinates to investigate the battle video.

Meanwhile, God’s Domain’s other superpowers began their own investigations.

...

At this point, Shi Feng, who was wholly ignorant of the commotion he had caused, reached the World Summit’s Epic Shrine area.

Compared to the Dark-Gold and Fine-Gold areas, the Epic area was void of players. The majestic Epic Shrines in the area remained unoccupied. Shi Feng didn’t need to worry about any competition over the Shrines.

The God Crystals aren’t as valuable as Epic items, but the Shrine’s difficulty increases with altitude. Correspondingly, the Shrines should offer more treasures. I may be able to find God Crystals in the lowermost Shrines. After a quick inspection of the Epic Shrines dotting the mountainside, Shi Feng began his mission.

The lowermost region of the Epic area had a total of 21 Epic Shrines. Shi Feng did not put too much thought into the matter and approached the closest shrine.

When he reached the shrine’s entrance, Shi Feng placed a hand on the doors before him.

...

System: Inferior Legendary Shrine Key detected. You are qualified to open the doors of the Epic Shrine. Do you wish to spend 1,000 minutes to open them?

...

Shi Feng clicked "Agree" without hesitation.

Immediately, the shrine doors swung open, allowing Shi Feng to enter.

The moment Shi Feng stepped into the Shrine, he felt as if he had entered a different world.

He stood on a platform above the clouds, and from time to time, Shi Feng spotted flying beasts soaring by. These monsters were all frighteningly strong, and even the weakest among them was a Level 150 Great Lord. Some of these flying beasts were even Level 180 Mythic monsters...

Any one of these monsters could easily extinguish Shi Feng's life.

Multiple, humanoid statues had been erected in the center of the platform, and dazzling items in translucent, crystal boxes had been placed before each statue. Even from this distance, Shi Feng could tell that every one of these items was extraordinarily valuable.

When Shi Feng tried to approach one of the statues to inspect the items before it, the sound of another system notification reached his ears.

...

System: You may choose one item before the numerous statues. As long as you fulfill the requirements, you may obtain the item you desire. If you fail to complete the requirements within the given time limit, you will be teleported out of the Shrine automatically.

...

Sure enough, the system won't let players take these items easily. Shi Feng wasn't particularly surprised.

Although every Shrine in the World Summit offered its own rewards, not every shrine granted players a reward upon entry. Some required players to pass certain tests. The Shrine of the Lord of Destruction, which Shi Feng had previously visited, was one such example.

If players did not choose the appropriate Shrines based on their strength, they might walk away empty-handed.

A total of twelve statues occupied the platform. Among the items before the statues, four were damaged items, and there were five pieces of intact Epic Equipment, two Epic Weapons, and one Epic item.

According to the acquisition difficulty in God's Domain, the Epic item would be the most difficult to obtain, while the damaged items would be the easiest. It was relatively easy to determine the various statues' difficulty levels.

However, none of this mattered to Shi Feng. After all, he was not here for practical items. The God Crystals were his only goal.

Please, let this be a God Crystal. Shi Feng then approached one of the statues with a damaged item.

The moment he made his choice, the stone statue before him began to crack. The cracked stone fell to reveal a stalwart man wielding a two-handed sword and wearing golden armor.

...

[Shrine Knight] (High Human, Tier 4 Sword Emperor)

Level 100

HP 20,000,000/20,000,000

...

The moment the Shrine Knight appeared, Shi Feng felt an unprecedented pressure bear down on him.

Normally, NPCs' combat techniques were far stronger than monsters of the same level and tier. Furthermore, the NPC before him was a High Human...

High Humans were unlike the current humans populating the God's Domain continent. High Humans had long since gone extinct in God's Domain.

Long ago, the Gods had blessed High Humans, and their Life Rating was much higher than their ordinary, current cousins. They were bona fide humanoid monsters. In fact, the legends that spoke about humans who had slain Dragons didn't refer to current humans, but High Humans. Current humans' Life Rating was far lower than Dragons', and not even a Tier 5 NPC would be a match for an ordinary Tier 5 Dragon.

However, High Humans could fight and defeat Dragons.

As another example of how powerful High Humans were, the Tier 4 Shrine Knight before Shi Feng could easily kill Mythic monsters of the same level as if they were ants.

Chapter 1588 – Bloodline Improves

After the stone enveloping the Shrine Knight shattered on the platform, it started to move towards Shi Feng.

As the situation developed, the pressure Shi Feng felt continued to build.

Had Shi Feng not known that the Shrine's trials wouldn't kill the challengers, he would've likely used Absolute Domain to defend himself.

“Challenger, you have two choices. The first is to dodge all of my attacks; the second is to surpass me in combat standards. Your time limit is three hours. You have three minutes to consider. If you do not decide in three minutes, you’ll be forced out of the Shrine automatically,” the Shrine Knight mechanically explained.

Dodge all of his attacks or surpass him in combat standards? Shi Feng took a closer look at the Shrine Knight before him. After a moment of consideration, he declared, “I choose the second option!”

The Shrine Knight was a Tier 4 Sword Emperor.

Even if the NPC were the same level as Shi Feng, its attacks wouldn’t be a trivial matter. Furthermore, Shi Feng was still in a Weakened state. That would make it even more difficult to dodge every one of the Sword Emperor’s attacks.

Competing against the Shrine Knight in combat standards was his only chance to clear the challenge.

Normally, after NPCs reached Tier 3, their combat standards would be on par to ordinary expert players. Some powerful Tier 3 NPCs could even reach the Refinement Realm. Including NPCs’ superior Attributes, Tier 3 NPCs were generally far more powerful than Tier 3 players.

Even the weakest Tier 4 NPCs’ combat standards were at the Refinement Realm, and the more powerful ones could even reach the Void Realm. Not even Tier 4 peak experts would have dared to provoke Tier 4 NPCs in the past.

As for the Heroes who were summoned to protect towns and cities, those capable of reaching Tier 4 had no issue reaching the Void Realm. This was precisely why they could summon towns and cities.

Although Shi Feng bore a Weakened state, his combat standards weren't affected.

Moreover, competing against a Tier 4 NPC via techniques was a rare opportunity.

Unlike players, an NPC's combat techniques were far more refined. Their application could even stun players.

“Excellent. Let's start the battle, then. During this time, my Basic Attributes will drop to match yours. I will also be set at Tier 2. Neither of us will be allowed to use any Skills or Spells during this fight. You're also prohibited from using any tools. You will only complete the trial after depleting my HP completely,” the Shrine Knight said, nodding. His aura then began to weaken as the Shrine Knight fell from a Level 100 Sword Emperor to a Level 61 Sword Master.

For a brief moment, Shi Feng felt restricted. A notification then appeared, telling him that he was temporarily barred from using Skills, Spells, or tools.

Shrine Knight now had 1,000,000 HP remaining. It was entirely possible for Shi Feng to end this battle quickly, even while relying on his combat techniques.

Before Shi Feng could prepare, the Shrine Knight appeared before him, its golden greatsword transforming into a streak of golden light that struck at Shi Feng repeatedly in quick succession.

So fast!

Shi Feng promptly executed Sword's Orbit as the Shrine Knight's blade descended.

There wasn't a shred of hesitation in the Shrine Knight's movements. It seemed as if the NPC moved on instinct rather than rational thought. He was unlike players, who usually thought before taking action. The near-instinctive movements allowed the Shrine Knight to execute attacks that were so fast that Shi Feng couldn't preemptively defend himself. As a result, Shi Feng had to rely on passive defense techniques like Sword's Orbit to protect himself from the incoming attacks.

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

Metallic clangs echoed across the platform as dazzling sparks lit the air.

If other players saw this, they'd be dumbfounded. As time passed, both fighter's movements became faster and smoother, and any ordinary expert would be overwhelmed by the scene.

Although Shi Feng and the Shrine Knight's swings were incredibly fast, their speed wasn't a result of high Attack Speed. Rather, it was due to their instinctive execution.

Even after exchanging blows for several minutes, neither side had dealt any damage.

As expected of a Sword Emperor; if I don't rely on Sword's Orbit to block his attacks, he'll likely kill me very quickly. Shi Feng could not help his bitter smile as he deflected the NPC's frenzied attacks.

Fighting the Shrine Knight reminded Shi Feng of how powerful NPCs were.

Despite their equally high Attack Speeds, the Shrine Knight overwhelmed Shi Feng due to the difference in their reaction speeds.

This won't do. I can't allow this to drag on. Realizing that none of his attacks reached the Shrine Knight, Shi Feng retreated to search for more favorable terrain.

Although the Shrine Knight had the same Basic Attributes as Shi Feng, NPCs had far more Stamina and Concentration. Shi Feng did not doubt for a second that the Shrine Knight could outlast him in a battle of endurance.

As Shi Feng retreated, he soon discovered a small grove of tall trees near the edge of the platform.

That should work. Shi Feng immediately made his way towards the small grove.

Unlike players, NPCs weren't good at taking advantage of their surroundings. This fact even held true for Tier 4 NPCs. If he used the trees to block a portion of the Shrine Knight's attacks, he would have more opportunities to deal damage.

However, as soon as Shi Feng left the platform's central area, the Shrine Knight stopped his attacks and leaped backward, withdrawing from the battle. The NPC then turned and walked back to his original position.

Crap! Is this for real?! The system won't even give me a chance of winning?! Shi Feng was speechless when he saw the Shrine Knight recover to his original state.

If he could not fight outside of the platform's central area, he wouldn't be able to take advantage of the terrain. If he continued to exchange blows mindlessly with the Shrine Knight, he would exhaust himself and die before his three hours were up.

Why is this trial so difficult even though it's the lowermost Epic Shrine? Shi Feng felt a wave of frustration wash over him as he stared at the motionless Shrine Knight.

Whether it was players or NPCs, as long as they reached the Void Realm, they would have a clear grasp of movement around them. In addition, the Shrine Knight could execute near-instinctive attacks.

Aside from Domain Realm experts, Shi Feng doubted that anyone was capable of beating the Shrine Knight's combat standards.

Of course, there was one way that Void Realm players could defeat an NPC like the Shrine Knight.

An Advanced Offensive Combat Technique. But even now, Shi Feng had only learned Basic Offensive Combat Techniques. He had only learned two Advanced Combat Techniques, one of which was Void Steps, while the other was Sword's Orbit. Void Steps was a footwork technique, and ineffective against Void Realm NPCs and players. As for Sword's Orbit, it was mainly a defensive combat technique. It could not be considered a true offensive combat technique.

Is giving up my only choice? Shi Feng took a moment to consider the situation.

Without being able to use his Skills and Spells, he had lost one of his major advantages. He couldn't use the Soul Water or Crystal of Souls he had produced with the Soul Orb to enhance his focus, either. Without these options, he had no hope of defeating the Shrine Guard. If this continued to drag on, he'd only waste his precious time.

As Shi Feng searched his bag for any items that might help him, he came across the Dark Iron Bloodline. The restriction period had already ended, and he could now use the Bloodline. Fortunately, this didn't count as a prohibited item.

That's right! How could I forget about the Bloodline?! Shi Feng laughed as he gazed at the Dark Iron Bloodline in his bag.

When consumed, Bloodlines improved a player's Life Rating. When a player's Life Rating in God's Domain increased, every aspect of their being improved. Reaction speed, Stamina, and Concentration were just a few of these aspects.

Shi Feng retrieved the Dark Iron Bloodline from his bag. Removing the crystal bottle's lid, he consumed the pitch-black liquid contained within.

Chapter 1589 – Frightening Bloodline Power

As Shi Feng consumed the Dark Iron Bloodline, the mana on and around the platform began to gather around his body.

Suddenly, two threefold magic arrays appeared above and below him. It looked as if the magic arrays had formed a barrier, enveloping Shi Feng. The surrounding Mana then poured into the threefold array above Shi Feng, and golden, divine runes began to surround his body.

As more divine runes appeared around Shi Feng, his aura intensified.

When the divine runes covered Shi Feng entirely, a pillar of golden light emerged from Shi Feng's body and shot into the sky. The golden pillar radiated an aura that was even stronger than the Shrine Knight's.

A few seconds later, the light pillar began to dissipate and calm returned to the platform.

Once the platform returned to its original state, Shi Feng slowly opened his eyes.

His previously pitch-black pupils now contained a trace of silver. Meanwhile, his aura, which he usually suppressed, overflowed. If an ordinary player saw him now, they'd assume that Shi Feng was an NPC, not a player. Not only did he radiate a domineering aura, but his gaze also carried an indescribable cold. It felt as if Shi Feng could remain calm and rational, regardless of his situation.

So, this is the power of the Dark Iron Bloodline?

Shi Feng was shocked as he tried to process the changes to his body.

There was no doubt that he was extremely excited, but before this feeling could reach its peak, a wave of serenity assaulted his mind, giving him instant peace.

Even his perception of his environment had changed.

He had previously needed to allocate the majority of his mental power to monitor his surroundings if he wanted to grasp movement around him accurately. However, despite investing only a small fraction of his attention, he could now gain an acute understanding of his environment...

This improvement had exceeded Shi Feng's expectations.

Every expert capable of reaching the Void Realm in God's Domain was capable of holding a high rank in a Super Guild. Experts that had just reached the Void Realm still had to focus on observing their environment. Even veteran Void Realm experts had to allocate a considerable amount of their mental fortitude to do so.

Yet, now, Shi Feng did not even need to allocate half of his attention to achieve the same result. The boost from the Dark Iron Bloodline was truly terrifying.

There was a limit to a person's mental power in both the real world and in God's Domain. Not everyone could multitask. Experts, however, had this skill.

Of course, they were limited to simple tasks when dividing their attention. If an expert encountered a complex problem, they would struggle to multitask. Needless to say, observing every movement in one's surroundings was a complex task. If a Void Realm expert only needed half of their focus to observe their surroundings and could allocate the other half to physical movement, their combat power would soar.

Aside from the boost to his mental capacity, consuming the Dark Iron Bloodline had improved Shi Feng's Basic Attributes. His Strength had risen by 10%, Agility by 7%, Endurance, Vitality, and Intelligence by 5%. Although these were minor improvements, his total Basic Attributes would increase exponentially as he reached higher levels and tiers.

Following which, Shi Feng executed a few slashes at the empty air.

As he did, his swords drew soundless, beautiful arcs of light before him.

Sure enough, not only had the Bloodline improved my Basic Attributes, but it's also improved my reaction speed! Before this, my reaction time had peaked at 0.1 seconds. Now, I should peak at 0.08 seconds. Bloodlines truly are amazing. It's no wonder why the various superpowers were so desperate for Bloodlines in the past. Shi Feng could not help his rueful sigh as he watched the lingering afterimages of his blade.

Although it was only a 0.02-second improvement to his reaction time, to most expert players, it was like the difference between heaven and earth. Normally, only incredibly talented experts could cross the 0.1-second limit.

He had only been able to react, at most, ten times in one second in the past, but he could now react 12 times. Assuming that his physical limit wasn't a factor and his opponents only had a peak reaction time of 0.1 seconds, the two extra reactions would allow him to outmaneuver his opponents, utterly overwhelming them.

Had he obtained a Basic Bloodline in his previous life, he could have easily succeeded with his Tier 4 promotion, even if his early development had been lacking. Unfortunately, Bloodlines were even rarer than Fragmented Legendary items in God's Domain.

Following which, Shi Feng spent the next ten minutes or so getting used to the new changes.

By the time he was satisfied, he was more than eager to resume his battle with the Shrine Knight.

As soon as Shi Feng reentered the platform's central ring, the Shrine Knight awakened and charged at him with his greatsword raised.

“Come! Let me test the Dark Iron Bloodline’s strength!” Shi Feng could not help but grin as the Shrine Knight ran towards him. He immediately advanced to meet the NPC in battle.

This time, however, Shi Feng did not execute Sword’s Orbit to deflect the Shrine Knight’s frenzied assault. Instead, he defended himself with normal swings of his blades.

As the swords clashed, sparks and clangs filled the platform once more.

Although Shi Feng couldn’t execute his attacks instinctively as the Shrine Knight did, he could make up for the missing attacks by relying on his superior reaction speed.

As Shi Feng exchanged blows with the Shrine Knight, he gradually became comfortable with his defense. After three minutes of battle, he had gone from a passive position to fighting the Shrine Knight on equal footing.

Moreover, he had a lot more energy to spare than he had during the previous encounter as he executed Void Steps to dodge a portion of the Shrine Knight’s attacks. The Shrine Knight, who had worn an indifferent expression thus far, now revealed his astonishment.

It seems that this is my current limit. Although I still have energy to spare, I haven’t mastered enough combat techniques. I still can’t exhibit the Bloodline’s full power. I’ll have to find an opportunity to learn more techniques later. After fighting the Shrine Knight for some time, Shi Feng fully understood what he still needed.

Now that he had reviewed his strengths and weaknesses, he adjusted his swings and began to execute Sword’s Orbit.

Every attack with Sword's Orbit was nearly instinctive. As a result, the speed of Shi Feng's slashes had reached its limit.

Suddenly, a cut split the skin on the Shrine Knight's shoulder. The NPC's HP fell by roughly 3,000.

After the first cut, it didn't take long for the second, third, and fourth to appear as well.

As more cuts split the Shrine Knight's skin, his HP plummeted. Before ten minutes had passed, the NPC's 1,000,000 HP had fallen to zero. The NPC then collapsed, turned to stone, and shattered. In the blink of an eye, Shi Feng was alone on the platform.

Once the Shrine Knight was gone, Shi Feng moved forward to collect his reward. Fortunately, the damaged item turned out to be a God Crystal.

However, when Shi Feng plucked the God Crystal from its crystalline prison, he noticed that the God Crystal radiated far more Divine Might than any he had obtained before.

"An Advanced God Crystal?" When Shi Feng inspected the item, he realized why the trial had been so challenging.

The Power of God in an Advanced God Crystal was far denser than in ordinary God Crystals. One Advanced God Crystal was the equivalent of two ordinary God Crystals, and naturally, it wasn't any less valuable than a piece of ordinary Epic Equipment.

Now, he only needed one more God Crystal to remove the mysterious power suppressing the Disintegration Armor.

...

System: Congratulations! You have completed the Shrine's trial. You now have two options. One: exit the Shrine. Two: challenge another trial at the cost of 1,000 minutes.

...

Shi Feng chose option two without hesitation when he saw the system notification. After all, he needed another God Crystal.

This time, however, the trial was much less difficult. This Shrine Knight had only reached the Flowing Water Realm, and as a result, he defeated the NPC very easily.

After Shi Feng secured his third God Crystal from the Epic Shrine, he received a notification that he had reached his challenge limit for Epic Shrines and was teleported out of the shrine without having any say in the matter...

Chapter 1590 – Shi Feng Returns

Outside of the Epic Shrine Shi Feng had previously entered, the space before the Shrine's doors shattered. A figure began to emerge from the spatial tear, clumsily falling to the ground.

“Three challenges is the limit?” Shi Feng gave the Epic Shrine’s doors a bitter smile. “This World Summit is really stingy.”

He had thought that he could challenge the Epic Shrine’s trials as long as he still had enough time remaining, but it seemed that that wasn’t the case. Even if he had enough time, he could only enter three Epic Shrines per visit.

In addition, there was a 10-day Cooldown after he used his three changes, which would only decrease while he was in the World Summit and included all Epic Shrines.

But after giving the matter some thought, Shi Feng found it reasonable.

The World Summit was a land of treasure. Even Fragmented Legendary items were available here, let alone Epic items. As players reached higher levels, they’d grow stronger, and in turn, they’d be able to earn more time from the entrance test. If the system allowed players to visit the Epic Shrines without limit, they’d ruin God’s Domain’s economy. It was only normal for the system to create limitations. These restrictions were particularly important when dealing with players who wielded special items.

Take Shi Feng’s Moloch’s Ring for example. While Demon Players had to complete a large number of rare and challenging quests to earn visitation rights to the World Summit, Shi Feng could simply teleport here. With Moloch’s Ring, Shi Feng had to face far fewer challenges to obtain the World Summit’s treasures.

Forget it. In any case, I’ve achieved my goal. It’s about time that I return, Shi Feng thought as he gazed at the three God Crystals in his bag. He then took out a White River City Return Scroll and activated it.

Although he still had more than enough time to visit a few Dark-Gold Shrines, he had spent quite a bit of time away from the God's Domain continent already. Now that he had achieved his goal, and gained an unexpected windfall, he had no reason to linger in the World Summit. It was far more important for him to complete the "Recast the Disintegration Armor" quest. Otherwise, he'd have to deal with the constant annoyance of the Mutated Orcs that would target him in the fields, restricting his movement.

With a flash of light, Shi Feng vanished from the World Summit.

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Star-Moon Kingdom, White River City:

When Shi Feng opened his eyes, he stood in White River City's Teleportation Hall.

As Shi Feng moved along the city streets, he noticed that White River City had far more players than several days ago. Many of the new arrivals were merchant players, and plenty of well-known adventurer teams had traveled here from other kingdoms and empires.

Players' average level had also visibly increased. Now, many of the players exploring White River City had reached Level 45. Shi Feng even spotted Level 46 and 47 independent players.

In addition, the sight of players atop Mounts had become more common in the city. During his last visit, only expert players had owned Mounts, but now, many elite players had Mounts of their own.

However, with the increase of White River City's player population, Shi Feng discovered quite a few cloaked players that stood out from the crowd. What made these players stand out in Shi Feng's eyes

was their interest in the players that wore Zero Wing's Guild Emblem. Killing intent would flash in their eyes whenever they spotted a Zero Wing member. By the looks of it, Zero Wing's members were just as wary of these cloaked players. It felt as if a fight would break out between them at any moment.

As Shi Feng pondered the city's new, strange atmosphere, Aqua Rose contacted him.

"Guild Leader, you've finally returned." Aqua Rose was visibly excited when she saw Shi Feng's face.

"What's going on in White River City? Why do I feel like the city is polluted with killing intent?" Shi Feng asked as he glanced around him.

"That's... It's all because of Blackwater and Heaven's Burial. Roughly ten hours ago, they doubled the bounty on our Guild members. It's tempted many Dark and independent players from other kingdoms and empires to take action against us. Now, everyone's hunting our Guild members. Some have even found opportunities to strike while in White River City. At this point, other players have ambushed and killed dozens of our core members..." Aqua Rose helplessly explained.

While Shi Feng had been gone, Zero Wing's expenditures had grown massively due to the war with Heaven's Burial and Zero Wing City's construction costs. Zero Wing had spent practically every Coin it earned from the Candlelight Trading Firm, Stone Forest Town, and Zero Wing City in one way or another. The Guild had no way to keep up with the increased bounty.

"How generous of Blackwater and Heaven's Burial!" Shi Feng was astonished.

By doubling the bounty, each of Zero Wing's normal members was worth 40 Silver, while elite members were worth 2 Gold, and killing a core member could earn a player 20 Gold.

Twenty Gold!

Not even the majority of God's Domain's experts earned 20 Gold per day, yet now, one could earn that many Coins by killing one of Zero Wing's core members. In addition, players would earn a piece of top-tier equipment when they killed one of these core members.

It was no wonder why other kingdoms and empires' Dark Players had set their sights on White River City. After all, White River City housed the highest number of Zero Wing members. Besides, these Dark Players wouldn't have an opportunity to strike in Stone Forest Town or Zero Wing City.

Without the ruling Guild's approval, players couldn't wear Black Cloaks in Guild Towns and Cities. The ruling Guild usually killed anyone who wore a Black Cloak without any repercussions. The only places in which these players could strike were the fields and White River City. Of the two options, it was easier to find Zero Wing members in the city.

Although it was risky to attack another player in an NPC city, the potential profits were just as high. Countless Dark and independent players would be willing to take the risk.

"Guild Leader, we've almost run out of Guild funds. We are also running out of top-tier weapons and equipment for trade. The situation had disheartened many of our Guildmates. We really cannot afford to allow this situation to continue. Why don't we change the direction of our Guild's development a little and send more members to the Black Dragon and Apocalypse Empires?" Aqua Rose suggested.

Although Zero Wing made a lot of Coins from Stone Forest Town and Zero Wing City, there was a limit to how much top-tier equipment they could purchase. Furthermore, due to the constant fighting with Heaven's Burial and Blackwater's experts, Zero Wing's ability to gather top-tier equipment and rare materials from Team Dungeons had weakened. If this persisted, it was only a matter of time before Zero Wing crumbled.

“No! Since Heaven’s Burial and Blackwater want to increase their bounty, we’ll increase ours as well! We’ll see who will remain standing in the end!” Shi Feng said, shaking his head. “Also, notify Melancholic and have her prepare these materials for me. Gather every Advanced Forger we have, as well.”

“But we have very little spare capital remaining. If we increase our bounty, we’ll run out of funds very quickly,” Aqua Rose said worriedly.

Currently, Zero Wing’s emergency funds only amounted to 22,000 Gold. This even included the rent they had received from merchant players in Zero Wing City. If they increased the bounty on Heaven’s Burial’s members, that might not even last them one more day.

If Zero Wing couldn’t pay the bounties, its reputation would suffer.

“Relax. I have a way to deal with the money problem. Just make the announcement.” Shi Feng simply smiled in response to Aqua Rose’s question. He then disconnected the call and made his way towards the Candlelight Trading Firm.