

Strongest

Chapter 1821 – Crimson Flame Fortress

A series of system notifications assaulted Shi Feng's hearing after he chose to upgrade Silverwing Town.

Ore Empire Region System Announcement: Congratulations to Silverwing Town for becoming the first Intermediate Town in a neutral map. Rewarding 10,000 Town Popularity Points and one Caravan Guard Order.

Silverwing Town Region System Announcement: Silverwing Town will undergo a promotion. All players will be teleported out of the town in one minute.

Silverwing Town Region System Announcement: Silverwing Town's promotion will take 30 minutes. Please wait patiently until it is complete.

The system announcements repeated three times, echoing in players ears in their respective regions.

"What?! A promotion?! They're already upgrading Silverwing Town?!"

"How did Zero Wing do it?"

"Amazing! Once the town is upgraded, we'll have a much easier time getting in!"

For a time, Silverwing Town's players were in an uproar over the sudden promotion. As for the various large Guilds' upper echelons, they wore solemn expressions when they received a report on this matter.

The fat piece of meat that was Silverwing Town had already been tempting to the various major powers, and they had been trying to find a way to claim it for themselves, but the improvement speed of the town's defenses was simply absurd. The NPC soldiers the town had recruited were also becoming increasingly powerful. Including the five Magic Towers, none of these superpowers felt powerful enough to capture Silverwing Town. Hence, they decided to continue accumulating their strength for now.

However, Silverwing Town's promotion to an Intermediate Town was a huge problem.

Not only would Silverwing Town be able to construct more defensive structures, but the number of NPC soldiers it could hire had also increased from 1,000 to 2,000. That would effectively double the town's defensive capabilities.

In terms of Basic Attributes, NPC soldiers were far superior to players. In addition, Silverwing Town's soldiers were more than ten levels higher than current players. If players wished to deal with these NPCs, they would have to employ zerg tactics.

Now that the town had twice as many NPC soldiers to protect it, they would need at least twice the manpower to defeat these NPCs, making Silverwing Town even more difficult to capture.

Shortly after the system announcements, the players in Silverwing Town were all teleported a considerable distance away. However, instead of leaving the area, the teleported players stood outside of the town. In fact, players who grinded in the Ore Empire hurried to join the crowd.

Meanwhile, news of Silverwing Town's promotion quickly spread to the various superpowers.

“Zero Wing is impressively efficient. It’s a pity that there is no longer a point in upgrading Silverwing Town,” Yuan Tiexin said, sighing slightly when he read the report he had just received.

“Uncle Yuan, now that Silverwing Town has been upgraded to an Intermediate Town, it will be able to accommodate more players and increase Zero Wing’s income by multiple times. Why would that be pointless?” Purple Jade asked curiously.

“I guess it’s expected that you don’t know. Yesterday, I received news stating that Nine Dragons Emperor has secretly joined hands with Blackwater and Beast Emperor and they are preparing to raid the Ore Empire’s Crimson Flame Fortress,” Yuan Tiexin said. “The Crimson Flame Fortress is located in the Ore Empire’s inner region and on one of the safer paths to the Ore Capital City. In addition, the fortress offers teleportation services. Once the Crimson Flame Fortress has been captured, it’ll generate massive profits for the three involved parties. It’ll also allow them to raid the Ore Capital City far more quickly.”

“What?! That’s the Crimson Flame Fortress! Based on our investigations, its raid difficulty ranks among the top five Teleportation War Fortresses in the empire. It is too difficult for current players to raid, and on top of that, Dark Players will definitely try to interfere. Do they really dare to raid the Crimson Flame Fortress?” The news astonished Purple Jade.

There were countless Ores inside the Crimson Flame Fortress, and the lowest-leveled among them was Level 60, with the highest-leveled Ores being Level 75. Furthermore, the fortress was protected by many war weapons and Mythic Ores.

“That is exactly why Nine Dragons Emperor and Blackwater are working with Beast Emperor. Based on what we know so far, Beast Emperor will guard the battlefield with his Evil Beast army. Meanwhile, Blackwater and Nine Dragon Emperor’s armies will be responsible for sieging the fortress. With the Evil Beast army in their way, the Dark Guilds and Dark Players won’t try to interfere,” Yuan Tiexin explained. “Once they capture Crimson Flame Fortress, Silverwing Town’s status in the Ore Empire will become quite awkward.”

Thus far, the Secret Pavilion had only conducted a preliminary investigation on the Regional Dungeon, Ore Capital City. Even so, the resources they had discovered had far exceeded their expectations. Not only did the Regional Dungeon offer a large number of Magic Crystals, but players would also level 50% faster if they grinded in the area. Most importantly, the Ore Capital City, an Intermediate City, could be captured.

If one captured this Intermediate City, they would earn just as much profit as the Secret Pavilion's Magic Crystal vein earned.

Moreover, they wouldn't need to station a large force of players to protect the city long-term.

If Blackwater and Nine Dragons Emperor acquired the Ore Capital City, with the wealth of resources they earned through the city, they could easily destroy Silverwing Town. The two entities might even be able to threaten Zero Wing's safety in Star-Moon Kingdom.

This was because Beast Emperor bore an irreconcilable vengeance against Zero Wing. Setting aside the fact that Beast Emperor had a significant portion of his foundation within Star-Moon Kingdom and would need to take over the kingdom to further his development, the Secret Pavilion had recently learned that of the five precious Evil God Apostle slots Beast Emperor had, Shi Feng had destroyed two. This loss had severely impacted Beast Emperor's development

If Beast Emperor got his hands on the Ore Capital City's resources, he'd have a good chance of taking over Star-Moon Kingdom and yanking Zero Wing out of the game by its roots.

"Uncle Yuan, why don't we notify Zero Wing?" Purple Jade asked.

“Forget it. Even if Zero Wing found out, there is nothing it can do. Although Zero Wing’s main force had displayed outstanding combat power in the Eclipse Gate, this revelation will not change Zero Wing’s situation. While Zero Wing is fully capable of defending its territory, it simply doesn’t have enough forces to launch an offensive assault on Beast Emperor. This is also the greatest problem that upstart powers with little-to-no background normally face,” Yuan Tiexin said, shaking his head. “Had Zero Wing agreed to partner with us, they might have been able to stop Beast Emperor’s group. However, with Zero Wing’s current forces, even if they gain the full support of Phoenix Rain, Beast Emperor is impossible to stop.”

In God’s Domain, many upstart powers rose to prominence every day, but these powers had a fatal flaw; they were ignorant of greater powers. They all deemed themselves capable of rivaling true superpowers. Although Zero Wing was superior to most of the up-and-coming powers in God’s Domain, it wouldn’t be easy for the Guild to become a true superpower. There would be plenty of other powers trying to use Zero Wing as a stepping stone and rise to prominence themselves.

Meanwhile, in the Ore Empire’s Silverwing Town...

After a half-an-hour wait, the recently promoted Silverwing Town appeared before the crowd.

Silverwing Town now occupied twice as much space as the old version. It was also much closer to the Primordial Divine Ruin, which was now within range of the town’s Magic Towers. Since the town was in a neutral map, Silverwing Town’s walls had grown taller, as well. Now, they were seven meters tall. Divine runes had been carved into the walls, preventing players from vaulting over and enhancing the walls’ Defense.

“Guild Leader, look! Even the town’s buildings have changed! They look nothing like they did before!” Melancholic Smile could not help but gape in shock as she looked at the tall buildings in the distance.

Every building in the town had grown considerably taller. It was evident that the buildings had been upgraded as well.

Rather than a town, Silverwing Town looked like a Basic City.

“Mhm. Have everyone prepare to reopen Silverwing Town to the public,” Shi Feng said, nodding.

He had spared no expense in outfitting Silverwing Town with the most extravagant buildings he could afford precisely for this moment. This was also neutral towns’ secret.

Chapter 1822 – Town Opening Silverwing Town:

Under Shi Feng’s command, it took less than 20 minutes to complete the preparation work for Silverwing Town’s reopening. Moreover, thanks to the reserve NPC guards Magic King Craig Midlands had prepared beforehand and the large number of NPCs that had come looking for work after the town’s promotion completed, they had quickly filled the additional 1,000 NPC soldier slots Silverwing Town had gained.

Craig Midlands himself had inspected all 1,000 of these new NPC soldiers.

Due to Silverwing Town’s steady development, not only had more NPCs arrived to apply for a soldier position, but higher- quality NPCs had applied.

Normally, when a Basic Town was upgraded to an Intermediate Town, it would struggle to fill the additional 1,000 soldier slots within a short time. The town would be fortunate to recruit around 300 Tier 1 NPCs and a dozen Tier 2 NPCs during the first week after the town’s promotion. Most NPCs that

applied were only Elite rank. The town would slowly have to accumulate, nurture, or replace its NPC soldiers to increase the number of Tier 2 NPC soldiers it had.

Yet, due to Craig Midlands's fame, over 3,000 NPCs had applied to work for Silverwing Town as soon as the promotion was complete. Including the 300 Tier 1 NPCs Craig Midlands had kept on reserve, it took no time for Silverwing Town to recruit 1,000 NPCs. Among the NPCs recruited, over 100 were Tier 2 NPCs, with the rest being Tier 1 NPCs.

Normally, an Intermediate Town would need around two weeks to accumulate 100 Tier 2 NPCs. More Tier 2 NPCs would only show up and apply to work for the town after it increased its Popularity. After all, Tier 2 NPCs were not abundant in God's Domain.

Even Zero Wing City only had a little over 2,000 Tier 2 NPC soldiers thus far, while the rest were Tier 1 NPCs.

However, although Silverwing Town had plenty of high-quality NPC soldiers, Zero Wing had spent over 20,000 Gold to outfit these NPCs with proper weapons and equipment.

In God's Domain, NPC soldiers did not come with their own items. Like players, they had to be armed. This was an important factor in strengthening a town's defenses.

Of course, some NPCs would bring their own weapons and equipment when applying to become soldiers, but their items were usually low-quality. They were much weaker than the standardized weapons and equipment the system provided. Naturally, the combat power these NPCs would be able to display would depend on the quality of their weapons and equipment. For example, an NPC with Bronze Equipment and an NPC in Mysterious-Iron Equipment would have around a 20% difference in combat power.

While 20% might not seem like much to players, but it was a lot for NPCs, who possessed much higher Basic Attributes.

When Stone Forest Town and Zero Wing City had been constructed, Zero Wing had lacked funds; Shi Feng had only been able to outfit his NPC soldiers with the cheapest Bronze Weapons and Equipment available. He had only started to upgrade the NPCs gear after the Guild had money to spare.

A large fraction of the investments needed to develop a town had to be spent on the NPC soldiers' weapons and equipment. In addition, these weapons and equipment needed regular repairs, which would also cost a considerable amount of money.

These reasons were why most of the various large Guilds avoided owning too many towns. This even held true for the various superpowers. Although the superpowers occupied many towns, they would not arm every one of them to the teeth. Instead, they would focus on developing a few select towns.

However, arming the NPC soldiers with better items was why many first-rate Guilds' headquarters were able to withstand sieges from super-first-rate and Super Guilds.

The longer a town developed, the stronger the NPC soldiers guarding it would become. When fully equipped with top-tier equipment, NPC soldiers could even contend with players of a higher tier.

Fortunately, with the exception of some extremely powerful top-tier equipment, the majority of the weapons and equipment NPC soldiers used could be purchased from the system with Coins. There was no need for players to invest time and effort into farming weapons and equipment. Hence, Shi Feng had spent over 20,000 Gold to arm the newly recruited NPCs.

A full set of Level 50 to 100 Bronze Equipment would cost 2 Gold Coins. This was extremely cheap compared to players' equipment. However, as equipment quality increased, so did the price.

Level 50 to 100 Mysterious-Iron Equipment cost 10 Gold per set, while Secret-Silver Equipment cost 100 Gold, Fine-Gold Equipment cost 600 Gold, Dark-Gold Equipment cost 1,500 Gold, and Epic Equipment cost 6,000 Gold per set.

With how many NPC soldiers a town had, it was no exaggeration to say that a town's development was a bottomless pit financially. For Silverwing Town, Shi Feng had decided to arm the Tier 2 NPCs with Secret-Silver Equipment and Tier 1 NPCs with Mysterious-Iron Equipment.

Although Zero Wing had earned a lot of funding through Zero Wing City and Stone Forest Town, Shi Feng planned to invest the majority of that money in the Lost Town. The Lost Town was, after all, far more important and valuable than Silverwing Town.

"Guild Leader, we have assigned duties to all of our NPC soldiers. Should we open the town now?" Aqua Rose asked, smiling she looked at the rows of weH-equipped NPCs before her.

Due to their continuous investment in Silverwing Town, these NPC soldiers had far better equipment than those in Stone Forest Town and Zero Wing City. Among the initial 1,000 NPC soldiers, over 100 Tier 2 NPCs wore Fine-Gold Equipment, while the remaining NPCs wore Secret-Silver Equipment. This was unimaginable for other Guilds. Normally, other Guilds would, at most, arm their NPC soldiers with Mysterious-Iron Equipment, spending the majority of their money on building the town's infrastructure.

"Alright, let's open the gates!" Shi Feng said, nodding.

"Oh, right. Guild Leader, should we limit the number of visitors?" Aqua Rose asked.

"Although Silverwing Town can accommodate far more people now, for the sake of the NPC merchants, it's best if we set a limit. Let's set it at 1,500,000 players," Shi Feng said after giving the matter some thought.

“We’re letting so few people in?” Aqua Rose was somewhat confused.

After the upgrade, Silverwing Town occupied twice as much space. Even if they allowed 2,000,000 players in, the town would, at most, be as crowded as it had been as a Basic Town.

“That’s quite a lot already, actually.” Shi Feng could not help but laugh at Aqua Rose’s greed. “Moreover, Silverwing Town isn’t just meant for players. We need to leave some space for NPCs.”

“Leave space for NPCs?” Aqua Rose’s confusion grew after listening to Shi Feng’s explanation.

“In any case, open the town to the public. You’ll understand what I mean in a moment,” Shi Feng said as he gazed at the anxious crowd outside of the town. He did not bother to explain further.

In God’s Domain, while players were important to a Guild Town’s development, NPCs were equally important, but in a neutral map, NPCs were even more so.

This was because NPCs could increase a town’s Popularity. Most importantly, they could create opportunities that would allow some players to get rich overnight or instantly become peak experts.

However, players had only discovered this later in the game.

Shi Feng had to focus on preparing for that inevitability now. This was especially true now that he had the Caravan Guard Order.

Aqua Rose said nothing more after receiving Shi Feng's order. Immediately, she had some Guild members gather at the town's entrance and open the gates.

When the town finally reopened, a swarm of players surged into Silverwing Town. When these players saw the various buildings inside the town's walls, they were stupefied.

"Is this really Silverwing Town?"

"Crap! This is too extravagant! This place can rival a small NPC city!"

Everyone exclaimed in shock when they saw the town's tall buildings.

Quick, come over here and take a look! There's a five-story-tall smithy!

"Amazing! What kind of smithy is this?! It's actually run by NPC Master Forgers!"

"We can place custom orders and break down our old weapons and equipment here! Even if I never raid Team Dungeons, I can now get my hands on top-tier equipment!"

"Stop dreaming. Didn't you see the price for custom-made items? You also have to provide the required materials."

“It’s still better than having no access to top-tier weapons and equipment. Look; you can even order Level 50 Dark-Gold Weapons and Equipment! Do you think the various large Guilds would sell Level 50 Dark-Gold Equipment to independent players like us?”

When the independent players discovered the Advanced Smithy’s abilities, they went crazy with excitement. The services even tempted quite a few Guild players.

While the players in Silverwing Town discussed the Advanced Smithy, Shi Feng paid a visit to Star-Moon Kingdom’s Star-Moon City. When he arrived, Shi Feng made his way towards the headquarters of the kingdom’s Adventurer’s Association.

“Lord Protector, how may I be of service?” Elk, an NPC senior administrator, respectfully asked as he approached Shi Feng.

“I wish to commission the Association to set up a trade route to Silverwing Town,” Shi Feng stated as he took out a token made of black iron. This token was none other than the Caravan Guard Order.

Chapter 1823 – Setting up a Trade Route

“Setting up a trade route?” Senior Administrator Elk was surprised when he saw the black iron token in Shi Feng’s hand. He then warned Shi Feng, “Lord Protector, although you have a Caravan Guard Order and indeed qualify to set up a trade route to a town, I must warn you that it is not such an easy task. The cost involved is astronomical. Moreover, since you are setting up a trade route to Star-Moon Kingdom’s capital city, not only will the cost be much higher, but the risks are also significant. If you abandon the operation before it is complete, this Caravan Guard Order will become useless.”

“I understand. However, I am confident in securing a trade route to Silverwing Town,” Shi Feng said, nodding.

He knew what it meant to set up a trade route. After all, he had done so many times during his previous life.

If a Guild Town wanted to become more attractive to NPC merchants and increase the town’s development speed, it had to have trade routes. Once the trade routes were in place, the town would acquire another benefit; the town in question would gain priority over rare items that NPC merchants transported. In addition, NPC merchants that used the trade route would pay the town a usage fee.

While these privileges might not seem like much, they would become a neutral town’s main income source before it became a city.

As a town’s Popularity increased, more NPC merchants would visit it. Even ordinary NPCs that used the trade routes would have to pay a usage fee. The trade route would become a safe path to the town and would include high-tiered NPCs to escort visiting and departing NPCs. Not even Level 100 players would dare to ambush such a trade route.

Although the usage fee was only 80 Coppers per NPC, if 100,000 NPCs used the trade route each day, the trade route would generate 800 Gold each day. Moreover, this was only one trade route. As the ruling Guild set up more trade routes, the town would generate more income.

However, players could only set up trade routes for neutral towns. This function was not available for Guild Towns in kingdoms and empires. This function was only available to Intermediate Towns and above, as well.

In addition, the number of NPCs that visited a Guild Town via the trade route would depend on the NPC city the town was connected to. The more prosperous the NPC city was, the more NPC visitors a Guild Town would see. If players set up a trade route to a capital city, it was almost guaranteed that their

Guild Town would see 100,000 to 200,000 visiting NPCs every day. If the trade route were connected to an ordinary NPC city, the town would only receive around 20,000 to 50,000 NPCs. However, the more prosperous an NPC city was, the more difficult it would be to set up a trade route.

Aside from a revenue source, trade routes were a good method for players to acquire rare resources.

Not all of an NPC merchant caravan's goods were available to players. A considerable portion would be reserved for other NPCs. Normally, players weren't allowed to purchase these items, but if a Guild Town had priority over NPC merchants' goods, not only would the town's owner have access to rare items for players, but they'd also have access to NPC reserved items.

Many of the NPC reserved items were materials that were very difficult to purchase via the player market. Sometimes, NPCs even sold large quantities of Magic Crystals. Only, they cost significantly more than the market price. Even so, this was a valuable opportunity for Guilds. While it was easy to convert Magic Crystals into Coins, the opposite wasn't. This was especially true with a large stock of Magic Crystals.

However, NPCs were different from players. NPCs had a much easier time acquiring Magic Crystals because NPCs occupied most ore veins that were capable of producing Magic Crystals and within kingdoms and empires' borders. It was fairly normal to find NPCs who sold Magic Crystals carrying a stock of 5,000 to 10,000. On the other hand, one would be hard-pressed to purchase 5,000 to 10,000 Magic Crystals from players.

NPC merchants occasionally sold rare Advanced Designs, as well. Although these designs would similarly be overpriced, their rarity made the cost worth it. After all, it was almost impossible to purchase Advanced Designs from other players.

If one were extremely lucky, they could even find NPC merchants that sold Fragmented Legendary items or clues leading to such treasures. Although such occurrences were ridiculously rare, based on player-

collected statistics, the more NPCs merchants that visited a Guild Town, the higher the ruling Guild's chances were of finding an NPC that carried such items and clues.

Naturally, every clue that led to a Fragmented Legendary item was extremely valuable.

Since there was a possibility to acquire Fragmented Legendary items, Shi Feng wouldn't miss the opportunity. Since players in the past hadn't often spoken about how they had acquired their Fragmented Legendary items, Shi Feng knew very few methods to do so. In fact, most players wouldn't even reveal the fact that they owned a Fragmented Legendary item. Hence, Shi Feng only knew about the relatively famous Fragmented Legendary items. However, the methods of acquiring those items were incredibly demanding, so he couldn't hunt them down at this stage of the game.

"Since you understand the risks involved, that is fine. If you wish to set up a trade route to Silverwing Town, it will cost you a base fee of 10,000 Gold and 5,000 Magic Crystals. As you possess an ordinary Caravan Guard Order, you are only allowed to form a 100-man team. The team will require a minimum of one Advanced Magician to carve magic arrays on the route to repel monsters," Senior Administrator Elk explained. "Lord Protector, may I know if you will need me to introduce you to some mercenaries to accompany on your journey?"

"Of course," Shi Feng said, nodding.

The Caravan Guard Order was a trigger to activate the special quest for setting up a trade route. While Shi Feng could rely on players to complete this quest, he could also enlist the help of the Adventurer's Association's mercenaries.

At this stage of the game, NPC mercenaries were undoubtedly much stronger than players. Hence, players that acquired a Caravan Guard Order at this stage of the game would generally hire mercenaries to aid them. Unfortunately, the price was quite high. In the past, some Guilds had tried to save money, confident that their members would be strong enough to handle the task.

However, while Zero Wing's main force was very powerful, the trade route he wanted to establish required crossing the border into the Ore Empire. When establishing a trade route, the system would occasionally send monsters to interfere. These monsters would be 15 levels higher than the local monsters, and many of the Ore Empire's monsters were Level 60 or higher. In that case, the interfering monsters would be Level 75 and above once he entered the empire. These monsters were too high of a level for Zero Wing's main force members at this time, so they weren't suitable for this quest.

"Alright. Here is a list of mercenaries willing to undergo this challenge with you, Lord Protector," Elk said before handing Shi Feng a list.

The quest to set up a trade route was very special and very dangerous. Players couldn't simply hire whatever NPC mercenaries they wished. The available mercenaries would depend on the player's status in the Adventurer's Association. The higher one's status was, the more NPC mercenaries they could choose from for the operation.

Amazing! Four-star treatment in the Adventurer's Association is really a great help when setting up a trade route. Shi Feng could not help his surprise when he read the list

During his previous life, he had only been able to recruit three-star, Tier 2 NPCs at best. As a result, he had struggled to set up trade routes for Shadow's neutral towns. Now, however, even two-star, Tier 3 NPCs had applied to join his quest, not to mention three-star, Tier 2 NPCs. He had to admit that the Spirit Slayer Advanced Title came with some awesome benefits.

Without hesitation, Shi Feng spent over 15,000 Gold to hire 97 mercenaries, spending almost every Coin he had on hand. The weakest mercenaries he hired were Level 80, three-star, Tier 2 NPCs, with the strongest being Level 83, two-star, Tier 3 NPCs. Overall, his team had 15 Tier 3 NPCs.

After Shi Feng handled the necessary procedures and learned how to draw the necessary Advanced Magic Array, he summoned the Level 85 Anna and Level 83 Kite. With 97 other NPCs in tow, he grandly departed Star-Moon City, riding Secret-Silver Transport Carriages.

The Secret-Silver Transport Carriages were an extraordinary sight to behold. Five-meter-tall Lightning-horned Earth Dragons pulled the carriages behind them. The Earth Dragons themselves were Great Lords, and watching the caravan move down the city streets was spectacular.

“What’s going on? Is the city hosting some kind of event?”

“That’s not it! Look! The lead transport carriage’s driver is a player! Could this be a player-triggered event?”

“That player is wearing Zero Wing’s Guild Emblem!”

“Zero Wing is so awesome! It can actually produce such powerful carriages?”

Crap! There are over ten Tier 3 NPCs in the caravan! This is ridiculous!”

Chapter 1824 – Strong Legion

Shortly after the ten Secret-Silver Transport Carriages being pulled by Lightning-horned Earth Dragons appeared on the streets of Star-Moon City, the sight quickly sent the entire city into an uproar.

The adventurer teams that made a living by delivering items were green with envy as they looked at the transport carriages.

Transport carriages might not seem particularly important in the game right now, as players could simply store items inside their bag spaces and teleport to other cities. However, as players reached higher levels, transport carriages would become increasingly relevant.

The number of items that could not be stored inside players' bag space would increase as players progressed further into the game. Such non-bag space items were extremely valuable, and the only way to transport them was via transport carriages.

Meanwhile, the adventurer teams could purchase only horse-drawn transport carriages. On the other hand, the Secret-Silver Transport Carriages had Great Lord ranked Lightning-horned Earth Dragons pulling them. There was simply no comparison between the two. Just the aura of the Earth Dragons was enough to scare away the mobs one would normally come across out in the fields. Not to mention, the transport carriage itself was like a huge house. One could easily imagine how many non-bag space items the transport carriage could store in such a huge transport carriage.

"As expected of Star-Moon Kingdom's number one Guild. I wonder when our adventurer team will be able to obtain a transport carriage like that?"

"That's right! If we have a transport carriage like that, we can earn over ten Gold per delivery trip."

The adventurer team members seated on the Advanced Transport Carriages parked along the streets cast covetous looks at the Lightning-horned Earth Dragons.

Currently, the minimum price in the delivery business for transporting a non-bag space item was 1 Silver Coin. The price scaled up depending on the distance traveled. Meanwhile, the adventurer team members estimated that the Secret-Silver Transport Carriage could carry over 100 non-bag space items. This assumption was because the Advanced Transport Carriages they owned were only the size of an ordinary horse carriage but could already carry a maximum of 60 non-bag space items. No matter how

they looked at it, the house-sized transport carriages should be capable of transporting at least 100 non-bag space items.

Only Shi Feng knew that the value of the Secret-Silver Transport Carriage was actually not the slightest bit inferior to a Secret-Silver Speedboat

The Secret-Silver Transport Carriage could carry 350 non-bag space items and 30,000 bag space items. The ten transport carriages lent to him this time were meant to convey the materials needed to carve special magic arrays. Each of these materials took up one non-bag space slot

Moreover, in terms of speed, the Lightning-horned Earth Dragons were superior to even Dark-Gold Mounts.

While the players on the streets were talking about the Secret-Silver Transport Carriages, the Lightning-horned Earth Dragons took only a few seconds to disappear from everyone's sight as they galloped toward the city's main gate.

Although some members of large Guilds tried to follow Shi Feng and investigate his actions, their Mysterious-Iron Mounts could only eat the Earth Dragons' dust as they watched the Secret-Silver Transport Carriages disappear from view.

Sure enough, Secret-Silver Transport Carriages are really fast! If Zero Wing can acquire one, transporting Diamond Wood and Seven Luminaries Crystals on land would be a lot easier. Shi Feng could not help but be astonished as he looked at the scenery rapidly flashing by.

If a transport carriage possessed such speed, even robbing it would become a very tough proposition.

However, during his previous life, first-rate Guilds would be very fortunate if they could acquire even Bronze Transport Carriages, let alone Secret-Silver Transport Carriages.

After traveling for about half an hour, Shi Feng arrived at a crossroads. He then stopped the caravan and had all the NPCs stand guard.

Someone traveling from Star-Moon City to Silverwing Town on a Dark-Gold Mount wouldn't be able to complete the journey even after traveling continuously for five or six days. Not to mention, one would have to cross many high-level regions during the journey. Fortunately, he was only setting up a trade route, so he didn't need to travel its entire length.

All he had to do was connect some trade routes that previously were unconnected. By doing so, he would be able to bypass a few high-level regions and carve out a trade route to Silverwing Town that would come across monsters no higher than Level 80.

If this task were left to a first-timer, creating such a safe path without several days' worth of research would be impossible, due to a lack of familiarity with the existing trade routes of Star-Moon Kingdom.

Shi Feng, however, knew the trade routes present within the kingdom like the back of his hand. After all, back when he was serving as Shadow's Guild Leader, he had been the one responsible for setting up the majority of the trade routes owned by Shadow. Hence, he was well aware of which existing trade routes would get him from Star-Moon City to the borders of the Ore Empire safely and swiftly.

Shi Feng spent about ten minutes to carve out a magic array in the middle of the crossroads. When he activated the magic array, a blue ripple spread out from the magic array and stopped only after covering a 30,000-yard radius. The monsters close to the crossroads immediately started distancing themselves from it. After a short moment, a safe path was established between the route he currently stood on and a nearby trade route.

After completing this task, he led his caravan toward the nearest NPC town. He then used the teleportation array there to travel to another NPC town and continued connecting other independent trade routes.

Throughout his journey, he caused quite a commotion across the entire Star-Moon Kingdom. The various major powers based within the kingdom grew restless and confused at Shi Feng's actions, unable to figure out what Zero Wing was trying to do.

After running around for a day or so, Shi Feng successfully created a new trade route that connected Star-Moon City and the border between Star-Moon Kingdom and the Ore Empire.

For the remainder of the trade route, due to the absence of existing trade routes within the Ore Empire, Shi Feng had no choice but to create an entirely new one by himself.

When the various Guild players grinding and questing in the Ore Empire's outer area saw the Secret-Silver Transport Carriages approaching, they involuntarily gaped in shock.

Compared to the Lightning-horned Earth Dragons pulling the transport carriages, the Level 60 Ores trying to stop the carriages were nothing more than jokes. The Earth Dragons sent every Ore that stood in their path flying with a single headbutt. In the end, the Lightning-horned Earth Dragons took only a brief moment to break through the blockade of several thousand Ores.

Then, after reaching an empty section of the road, the convoy of carriages suddenly came to a halt. In the next moment,

Level 70-plus Ores and monsters appeared out of nowhere and charged at the cloaked man that just alighted from the lead carriage. The man was sporting a six-winged emblem.

As the Ores and monsters closed in on the man, groups of NPCs got off the other carriages and took up a defensive formation. These NPCs were all Level 80 and above, and even the weakest among them was Tier 2. Despite facing an army of several thousand monsters, these NPCs remained steadfast as they defended the cloaked man. Meanwhile, the dozen or so Tier 3 NPCs fighting in the front lines sent groups of Lord ranked Ores and monsters flying with a casual attack.

Among these NPCs was a golden-haired beauty that summoned a Great Lord ranked Golden Giant, which thoroughly suppressed the Great Lord ranked Ore leading the assault on the caravan. Meanwhile, every offensive Spell cast by the golden-haired beauty wrenched a cry of pain from the Great Lord ranked Ore, whose HP decreased rapidly.

The army of several thousand Ores and monsters were utterly helpless against this 100-man team. The monsters couldn't even get within 30 yards of Shi Feng before dying at the NPCs' hands. The horrific scene made the spectating Guild players nearby shudder in fear.

Meanwhile, the spectating Guilds included the Blackwater Guild, which Shi Feng was very familiar with. Currently, there was a 1,000-man team from Blackwater present led by Singular Burial.

At this moment, however, Singular Burial no longer had a tyrannical air around him. After suffering consecutive defeats, he had lost all his corporate backing, which left him in an extremely awkward position in the Blackwater Guild. Now, he was only an inconspicuous Elder in Blackwater. Moreover, he was only Level 53 right now. He looked nothing like the almighty Guild Leader of Heaven's Burial.

"Who is that person? How is he able to control so many NPCs?"

"Wait a minute! Isn't that female NPC one of Black Flame's Personal Guards?"

“She is! That’s Anna! Crap, doesn’t that mean that player is Black Flame?!”

“Not good! Black Flame is looking over...”

At this moment, when Blackwater’s members looked at Shi Feng, fear flooded their hearts because they were all fully aware that he could command the NPCs around him to reap their lives at a whim. Meanwhile, they would be utterly powerless to do anything about it.

Chapter 1825 – One’s Success was Built Atop the Sacrifice of Thousands

As the NPC legion pushed back the approaching Ore and monster army, a wall of corpses quickly formed on each side of the road.

“These NPCs are so strong! I get the feeling that this NPC team can even raid an ordinary Guild Town.”

“I know, right? Just look at those Tier 3 NPCs going. They are throwing Level 70-plus Great Lords with a single hit. Their individual combat power is likely even higher than Grand Lords of the same rank. Even if these Tier 3 NPCs aren’t enough to raid a Guild Town, they’re more than enough to kill every one of us.”

“As expected of Star-Moon Kingdom’s number one expert. With the ability to control so many powerful NPCs, Black Flame could easily annihilate armies of tens of thousands of players. It’s no wonder why the various superpowers are helpless against Zero Wing.”

The various spectating Guilds and adventurer teams gulped as they watched the fight between the NPCs and monsters.

Tier 2 NPCs were much stronger than Tier 2 players of the same level. Only peak experts with several pieces of Epic Equipment could possibly contend with an ordinary Tier 2 NPC. If Tier 2 players tried to face a Tier 2 NPC that was over 20 levels higher, they could only wait for their deaths. As for Tier 3 NPCs, they would only need a few moves to finish off Tier 2 players. If the targeted Tier 2 players lacked defensive capabilities, they might die after one hit

If these NPCs turned their blades against Tier 1 players like themselves, a single attack would be more than enough to kill several of them instantly.

“Blackwater’s members are probably doomed.”

“That’s right! Blackwater has been picking a lot of fights with Zero Wing in the Ore Empire. Now that Black Flame has found some of Blackwater’s members, he’ll massacre them.”

The various large Guilds’ members couldn’t help but watch Blackwater’s members with pity as they fought the local Ores.

Nowadays, Blackwater and Zero Wing’s members would fight whenever they came across each other in the fields. Although Blackwater currently had over a thousand members present, before the Sword King, the group was a joke. Furthermore, Black Flame had a team of Level 80-plus NPCs with him. This further reduced the chances of Blackwater’s members escaping this place alive.

“Why is Black Flame here?”

“We’re doomed! We’re doomed!”

Fear colored the faces of Blackwater’s members as they watched Shi Feng.

They had experienced the man’s might firsthand, so they knew just how powerful he was. Black Flame was truly unstoppable. He could easily single out and kill a specific player while surrounded by an army of tens of thousands. Although their team currently had over a thousand well-equipped elite and expert players, Black Flame could annihilate them all by himself.

Their only option was to run...

If others heard their thoughts, they’d be a laughingstock. If 1,000 elite players simultaneously attacked a single expert, one move should be enough to end the battle. Even a peak expert would try to avoid a 1,000-man enemy elite team. How could a lone player possibly defeat an army of elite players?

However, they knew very, very well that the likelihood of such a situation was high. Not only did Black Flame possess multiple large-scale destruction Spells, but he also had ridiculous Movement Speed. He also had enough Strength to contend with Mythic monsters. In addition, he was capable of summoning powerful monsters. It wasn’t an exaggeration to call Black Flame a one-man army.

“Damn it! Why is he here?!” Singular Burial paled when he saw Shi Feng’s cloaked figure.

Looking at Shi Feng now, Singular Burial was no longer as confident as he had been in the past. He harbored no thoughts of fighting Shi Feng as he knew that doing so would be a waste of energy. In fact, it would only lead to a quicker death.

Singular Burial could not understand why Shi Feng had come to a backwater place like this. They were currently in the Ore Empire's outer region. For an expert of Shi Feng's caliber, only grinding or questing in the empire's core would be worth his time.

He had struggled to stabilize his standing in Blackwater. In the hopes of elevating his position in the Guild, he had been doing his best to raise the Heaven's Burial members that had followed him to join Blackwater, yet before his efforts could bear fruit, he had encountered Shi Feng..

"Commander, what should we do?" Daybreak Fog revealed a somber expression when she saw Shi Feng, as well.

After Heaven's Burial disbanded and Flame Blood was crippled, over half of Heaven's Burial's main force members had chosen separate paths. Because of this, their positions in Blackwater had plummeted. Among their 1,000-man team, only a hundred or so were experts. While this might be a high number compared to other 1,000-man elite teams, it was nowhere near enough to deal with Shi Feng. To Shi Feng, their experts were no different than the team's elite players. The Swordsman could kill them all with one hit.

"We don't have any other choice. Have everyone slowly retreat. We can't afford another loss. Get ready to use the Tier 3 Group Instantaneous Teleportation Scroll to send the main force away from this place. Everyone else should spread out and run. Absolutely do not fight Black Flame," Singular Burial said, gnashing his teeth. o

The Tier 3 Group Instantaneous Teleportation Scroll was extremely valuable, an item he had obtained after completing a difficult Team Quest. It was also the only lifesaving tool he had to save his team. However, the teleportation scroll could only teleport a maximum of 100 players. He couldn't transport his entire team.

"I understand." Daybreak Fog nodded. She then took a silver Magic Scroll from her bag and eyed Shi Feng's every movement. If she noticed the slightest change, she'd activate the scroll immediately.

However, Shi Feng, who sat on the leading transport carriage, had finally finished carving a magic array on a crystal shard. He then tossed the crystal to the ground before him and started chanting an incantation. Very quickly, the crystal merged with the earth. A slightly incomplete magic array then formed beneath Shi Feng's feet. Seeing this, Shi Feng took out several light-blue crystals to complete the array.

Once complete, a blue ripple of light radiated out from the array.

As if something had frightened them, the Level 70-plus Ores and monsters, which had been busy fighting the NPCs, fled from the caravan. Even the Ores and monsters several hundred yards away from the caravan began to back away.

The spectating crowd nearby stared with dropped jaws.

"What did he just do?"

The several thousand Ores and monsters that had previously occupied the road had retreated by over 500 yards, watching the road in terror. Every monster as far as the eye could see did the same. Not one dared to approach the road.

Once Shi Feng finished his work, he collected the leftover materials. As he returned to the transport carriage, he noticed a 1,000-man legion backing away from his position.

Singular Burial? Shi Feng quickly spotted Singular Burial among this 1,000-man legion. However, his old enemy watched him cautiously. Seeing this, Shi Feng could not help but sigh inwardly.

Currently, Singular Burial wore a mix of Level 50 Secret-Silver and Fine-Gold Equipment. Aside from the man's longbow, Shi Feng could easily discern the rank of his other items. Looking at him now, it was hard to believe Singular Burial had once been the Guild Leader of an almighty Guild in Star-Moon Kingdom.

This was the cruel reality of God's Domain. In God's Domain, one's success was built atop the sacrifice of thousands.

After a glance at Singular Burial, Shi Feng climbed back onto his transport carriage and had the convoy continue down the road. If he did not complete the trade route quickly, the magic arrays he had already set up within the empire would begin to disappear. This was the time limit players had to endure. The system would not allow players to take their sweet time when establishing a trade route.

As for killing Singular Burial and the others, he had no interest in such a task. Moreover, with Singular Burial's current state, he didn't consider the man a threat.

After realizing that Shi Feng was leaving without a fight, Blackwater's members breathed a deep sigh of relief.

"Commander, Black Flame left!" Daybreak Fog could not help but cry out with joy when she saw Shi Feng drive his transport carriage away.

When Shi Feng had turned to look at them, she had nearly used the precious Group Instantaneous Teleportation Scroll out of anxiety.

“Yes, he left...” Singular Burial wore an expression of mixed indignation and sadness as he watched Shi Feng leave. He had noticed a hint of pity in Shi Feng’s eyes. This discovery had dealt an unprecedented mental blow. Is he trying to say that I don’t even qualify to face him now?

Chapter 1826 – Vulcan’s Sigh

After Shi Feng left, all of the various large Guilds’ members visibly relaxed.

“Black Flame is leaving, just like that? He doesn’t intend to deal with Blackwater’s members?”

“My guess is that Black Flame finds it beneath him to deal with them. I’ve watched the battles that occurred at the Primordial Divine Ruin. Black Flame had soloed a Mythic monster. Then he sent both Blackwater’s army and the Evil Beast army running with their tails tucked between their legs. A measly 1,000-man elite team probably isn’t worth his effort.”

“Black Flame is too strong! His presence alone was enough to make the various large Guilds shrink back with fear! It’s no wonder why Black Flame is recognized as Star-Moon Kingdom’s number one expert. He is far stronger than those famous peak experts!”

The adventurer teams watching from a short distance away were shocked when they looked at the various Guild players, who watched the departing convoy cautiously. They had never thought that the presence of a single player would be enough to deter so many Guild players.

They had all heard many rumors about Black Flame, but they had assumed the rumors were jokes and baseless assertions. However, they simply treated those rumors as jokes and baseless assertions.

However, after seeing the man in person today, they finally understood that the rumors were actually true. In fact, Black Flame was even scarier than the rumors made him out to be.

Because of this discovery, many of these independent players, who hadn't been interested in joining any Guild, began to have second thoughts. They all considered joining Zero Wing, especially the Swordsman players. This was especially true for Swordsman players.

Unbeknownst to Shi Feng, his casual action of sparing Blackwater's members had made many independent players in the Ore Empire reconsider their position about joining his Guild.

At the same time, news of Shi Feng's appearance in the Ore Empire had reached the various Dark Players hiding in the empire.

"Commander, we have discovered Black Flame."

"Where?"

"He's near the Ore Empire's border. However, there are quite a number of NPCs moving with him. Taking him out won't be easy."

"Follow after him for now. I'll gather our members and head over as soon as possible. As long as our Wind's Arrow adventurer team kills Black Flame once, we'll qualify to join Dark Soul. We cannot miss this opportunity, so follow him closely!"

"Understood!"

The various dark adventurer teams operating within the Ore Empire began to make their way towards Shi Feng.

Some time ago, the Dark Night Empire's Dark Soul had placed a bounty on Zero Wing. For each Zero Wing upper echelon killed, one could earn a Dark Mutation slot. If one managed to kill Zero Wing's Guild Leader, regardless of whether an individual or an entire team completed the task, both would be welcomed to join Dark Soul. Individuals would be given command of a new adventurer team in Dark Soul.

To players that operated in the dark, Dark Soul's reputation was equivalent to that of a Super Guild. Joining the Dark Alliance and become one of its commander-level figures was no different than becoming the Vice Guild Leader in a Super Guild. Why wouldn't such an offer be tempting?

The various dark adventurer teams and several Dark Guilds began an enthusiastic search for Black Flame.

Although Black Flame was very powerful, even giants would fall against overwhelming numbers. God's Domain also had many special methods to kill players. Dark Soul had not specified a requirement to defeat Black Flame with raw strength.

The Lightning-horned Earth Dragons dashed down the Ore Empire's gravel roads.

As Shi Feng ventured deeper into the Ore Empire, stronger monsters and Ores showed up to hinder his progress. Initially, most of the monsters had only been Chieftains, but now, Lords began to target his caravan.

If not for the Lightning-horned Earth Dragons being Level 80 Great Lords, the monsters in their way would have stopped the caravan long ago.

Sure enough, it really is difficult to set up a trade route in a land ruled by the dark forces. Shi Feng inwardly celebrated as he watched one Lord ranked Ore get knocked aside after another.

Fortunately, he was the first player to set up a trade route in Star-Moon Kingdom and had the privilege of using the Lightning-horned Earth Dragons. Normally, players would only have access to Mysterious-Iron Transport Carriages, which were only pulled by Lord ranked monsters, when setting up a trade route. Traveling through a neutral map under the dark forces' rule with such carriages would be extremely difficult. He would have had to stop his progress whenever he was attacked. In that case, he would have had to rely on the NPCs he had hired to clear a path or dispatch a large number of his Guild members to do so.

With the Lightning-horned Earth Dragons, however, he could simply bulldoze his way through. Though, due to the large number of Ores and monsters blocking his path, his advance had slowed considerably. Now, the transport carriages only moved a little faster than players running at full speed.

Meanwhile, this was only the beginning of the dark forces' territory. As Shi Feng traveled deeper into the empire, he would encounter more numerous and powerful Ores and monsters, which even the Tier 3 NPCs accompanying him would have some trouble with.

After about eight hours, Shi Feng arrived before an Ore Fortress. According to the system map, the fortress was the final point for the trade route.

This quest... Does it really want me to build the magic array inside the fortress? As Shi Feng watched the patrolling Ores on the fortress's walls, he wondered if he had read his system map wrong.

This was nothing like the Ores he had faced on the road earlier.

On his way here, he had faced wild Ores or Ore patrols, but these Ores were members of the Ore Empire's well-trained army. Fortunately, due to his quest, the fortress only had around 3,000 Ore guards, far fewer than normal. In return, however, their levels and rank had increased significantly. Now, the weakest Ore guarding the fortress was a Chieftain, with the majority of the Ores being Lords. The leader of these creatures was even a Level 80 Mythic ranked Ore General.

After spotting Shi Feng's caravan, the Ore General raised its greatsword with one hand and loosed a furious roar. Suddenly, the army of 3,000 Ores stationed inside the fortress flooded out of the fortress's gates and marched towards Shi Feng's caravan. Sturdy, shield-wielding Ores occupied the frontline while agile, bow-wielding Ores moved at the rear. The Ore army's approach even made the NPCs with Shi Feng nervous.

Shi Feng could see well over a hundred Great Lord ranked Ores and over a dozen Grand Lords. This force was on an entirely different level than the caravan's contingent

As Shi Feng wondered if something had gone awry, the sound of a system notification reached his ears.

System: You have triggered the Epic Trade Route Quest "Ore King's Ambitions." You may choose to accept or abandon this quest. If you complete this quest, you will receive a commendation from Star-Moon Kingdom and qualify to build an airport. Abandoning this quest will not affect your original Trade Route Quest. If you choose to abandon this quest, the system will designate an alternative path for the trade route. You have three minutes to consider.

An Epic Trade Route Quest? Shi Feng was stunned when he read the system notification, but after seeing the quest

rewards, he couldn't help his growing excitement. Could this be the reward for being the first player to set up a trade route?

The qualifications to build an airport!

Countless Guilds in neutral maps dreamed of acquiring this qualification, but very few succeeded in doing so. In the past, not a single Guild had revealed how they had managed it.

Meanwhile, the sensational scene at the Ore Fortress stupefied the various dark adventurer teams and Dark Guilds following Shi Feng.

“Crap! What’s going on?! Is Black Flame trying to raid the fortress?!”

“Does he intend to raid a fortress by himself? Is he crazy?”

“Black Flame is insane! That’s an Ore Fortress we’re talking about! Although he can stand against a Mythic monster for some time, capturing a fortress is a different story entirely! Even if he has some NPCs to support him, ambushing a fortress is impossible!”

As the Dark Players watched the distance between the Ore army and Shi Feng’s caravan decrease, they were dumbfounded.

They had watched many Guilds try to raid one of the Ore Empire’s fortresses before, but this was the first time they had seen a single player attempt it...

“Commander, what should we do? Should we attack Black Flame?”

“These Ores are too high-leveled. Moreover, there’s a Mythic Ore among them. If we attack carelessly, we might get dragged into the fight. Let’s wait. It won’t be too late to take action once the Ore army pushes Black Flame and his NPCs back.”

All of the dark adventurer teams and Dark Guilds following Shi Feng came to the same decision.

Meanwhile, as the Ore army approached the caravan, Shi Feng and his NPCs prepared for battle.

Let’s give it a try, Shi Feng decided after analyzing his current combat power and the challenge. The quest had only mentioned that he needed to set up a magic array in the fortress, not capture the fortress. There was a huge difference between the two tasks. Naturally, the former was far easier. Moreover, this was a valuable opportunity. It would be a huge waste to give it up.

Grinding his teeth, Shi Feng accepted the quest. He then pulled a Magic Scroll with crimson divine runes from his bag.

This Magic Scroll was none other than the Tier 4 Continuous-use Magic Scroll, Vulcan’s Sigh, which he had acquired from the Gold Magic Crystal Treasure Chest in the Eclipse Throne. The Magic Scroll was even more valuable than ordinary Epic Equipment.

Vulcan’s Sigh was also an extremely rare Summoning Scroll.

He had hoped to save the scroll as a trump card for any future Guild wars, but using it to complete this Epic Trade Route Quest was worth the expenditure.

Following which, Shi Feng injected 1,000 Magic Crystals of Mana into the Magic Scroll and activated it.

In the next moment, a crimson, threefold magic array manifested beneath Shi Feng's feet. The sky also began to transform, and the earth started to quake.

“Why did the sky suddenly go dark?”

Everyone noticed dark clouds block out the sun. A moment later, the space around Shi Feng began to freeze. The spectating Dark Players felt a powerful aura assault their minds and bodies.

Chapter 1827 – Battle of Monsters

As the dusky space froze, over two dozen magic arrays appeared in the cloudy sky, radiating a light that illuminated the Ore Fortress and its surroundings.

As these magic arrays manifested, the Dark Players felt their auras' intensity increase, making their bodies feel much heavier than a moment ago.

As the heavy feeling grew, they began to panic.

“What's going on? Why can't I move?”

“What did Black Flame do?”

Everyone quickly discovered that they couldn't even move a finger, much less walk away. They felt as if time had stopped. Moreover, they weren't the only ones subjected to this phenomenon. Even the Ore army had fallen deathly silent. Some Ores had even lost strength to stand and fell to a knee, terrified.

Following which, the sky shattered and formed a massive black hole. If one looked closely, they would notice a pair of flaming eyes, as large as small mountains, within the black hole.

As these eyes appeared, the pressure on the players present increased yet again. Immediately, all of the Ores, including the Mythic ranked Ore General, slumped to the ground and shuddered in fear.

“What's going on?!”

“It's over! We're doomed!”

“Damn it! This must be a trap Black Flame set up! We've been tricked!”

As the Dark Players looked up at the massive pair of eyes, they sensed their impending death and destruction. They weren't even ants before the owner of those eyes. As long as the creature willed it, its aura alone would slay these players. It wouldn't even need to attack.

The players from the various dark adventurer teams and Dark Guilds suddenly regretted their decision to target Shi Feng.

Just as everyone covered before their doom, the pair of flaming orbs vanished abruptly before fire began to pour from the black hole, raining down on the Ore Empire like meteors.

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

A series of explosions shook the Ore Fortress and the area. The ground trembled so violently that the Dark Players, who stood quite a distance away, nearly lost their footing.

The shower of fire continued for six seconds, transforming the earth under the Ore army into a burning hellscape. By the time flames stopped pouring out of the black hole, the Chieftain ranked Ores had been wiped out while the Lords sustained heavy injuries.

The several thousand Dark Players gasped when they saw this outcome.

With one attack, Shi Feng had obliterated half of the entire Ore army.

However, before the crowd could recover from their shock, the fire on the battlefield converged and transformed into easily over a hundred Flame Giants. The weakest among these Flame Giants was a Level 80 High Lord, whereas the strongest five were Level 82 Grand Lords.

Vulcan's Sigh is actually so powerful? Even Shi Feng was astonished as he gazed at the Flame Giants.

He had assumed that he'd be lucky to summon even one Grand Lord. He had never expected for Vulcan's Sigh to summon such a powerful legion of Flame Giants.

After the single activation of Vulcan's Sigh, Shi Feng noticed that the Magic Scroll had lost half of its durability. In other words, Vulcan's Sigh was a Continuous-use Magic Scroll that could only be used twice. Moreover, he would have to wait two natural days before he could use the scroll again; he could not use it consecutively.

However, Shi Feng was very satisfied with the result. Although most Tier 4 Continuous-use Magic Scrolls could be used four to six times, their effects couldn't compare to Vulcan's Sigh.

The flame legion's arrival instantly disrupted the Ore army's formation. The 20-meter-tall Grand Lord ranked Flame Giants sent over a dozen Ores flying with a single slap. In terms of Strength, even the Grand Lord ranked Ore Warriors were no match for the Grand Lord ranked Flame Giants.

For a time, the legion of Flame Giants brought chaos to the Ore army.

The battle between the Flame Giants and Ores was earth-shattering. Sounds of slaughter and explosions echoed across the barren plains that surrounded the Ore Fortress, stupefying the Dark Players that hid in the distant forest.

Although the battle only involved several thousand monsters, it was no less intense than a battle between tens of thousands of players. If players joined this fight, even the shockwaves from the Ores and Flame Giants' clashing would vaporize them.

While the Ore army tangled with the flame legion, Shi Feng used the opportunity to lead his NPC mercenaries past the Ore army and towards the Ore Fortress.

He did not need to exterminate the Ore army to capture the fortress. He only needed to set up the trade route magic array inside of it. Moreover, Shi Feng did not think that he could defeat the Ore army.

The army was led by a Mythic Ore, after all. Although the Flame Giants were powerful, a Mythic ranked creature could easily suppress them. Furthermore, the flame legion was badly outnumbered. It was only a matter of time before the Ores wiped the legion out.

When Shi Feng was within 500 yards of the fortress, the Level 80 Ore General discovered his group. With a roar, the Ore General raised its greatsword, firing a chilling beam attack at the Grand Lord ranked Flame Giant before it. The attack sent the Flame Giant flying back as a layer of ice formed on the ground before the Ore General.

The Mythic Ore then led a group of subordinates as they ran down the icy path its attack had created to block the fortress's entrance with their bodies. Other Ores also began to abandon their fights with the Flame Giants, charging towards Shi Feng's group.

Sure enough, they won't let me through so easily. Shi Feng smiled bitterly as he looked at the Ore General before the fortress's entrance. He then turned toward Anna and ordered, "Do it!"

Nodding, Anna began to chant as she approached the Ore General.

When less than 100 yards separated the two, Anna finished her Spell and pointed her staff at the Ore General.

Suddenly, a Level 85, Tier 4 Valkyrie descended from the sky.

Using an Advanced Instantaneous Movement, the Valkyrie instantly appeared before the Ore General and swept the lightning spear in her hands at the Mythic Ore.

Boom!

Failing to react in time to the strike, the Ore General and a dozen or so Great Lord ranked Ores got sent flying over a hundred yards to the side. The Valkyrie's frightening Strength had even shattered the ground before her, creating a small ravine.

"Good!"

Shi Feng then led his group into the fortress, commanding his NPC mercenaries to guard the entrance while he headed for the system-designated location to set up the trade route magic array.

The fortress's entrance wasn't particularly large. Twenty NPCs would be more than enough to form a barricade. Fortunately, the fortress's walls had been enhanced with magic runes, and not even Mythic monsters would be able to jump over them. Now, the Ores could only enter the fortress if they destroyed its walls or the NPCs guarding the entrance. The fortress walls were quite sturdy, and it would even take a Mythic monster some time to destroy them. By the time the Ore General created an opening, Shi Feng would've long since completed his task. The only way the Ore General could get into the fortress before Shi Feng finished was through the main entrance.

Hence, stationing guards would be enough.

Very quickly, Shi Feng found the targeted location. Wasting no time, he immediately took out a large, blue crystal from his Epic ranked Spatial Bag and began to engrave the necessary magic array.

As the seconds ticked by, more Ores tried to force their way into the fortress. The Tier 2 NPCs defending the entrance began to die, one after another. Only the Tier 3 NPCs barely held their ground against the Grand Lord ranked Ore Warriors. The Valkyrie fought a fierce battle against the Ore General outside of the building, doing her best to injure the Mythic Ore. Meanwhile, the Ore General was utterly powerless to stop the beating.

Although the Ore General was a Level 80 Mythic ranked creature, the Valkyrie was a Level 85 Mythic ranked Angel. There was a massive difference between the two beings' Life Ratings. The Valkyrie completely overpowered the Ore General, and it took everything it had just to block the Valkyrie's attacks. Occasionally, the Ore General slipped up, and the Valkyrie's attacks sent it flying.

The watching Dark Players were flabbergasted.

The various commanders and upper echelons from the dark adventurer teams and Dark Guilds wiped the sweat from their foreheads. They inwardly celebrated the fact that they hadn't rushed to attack Shi Feng. The consequences would've been unimaginably dire.

By the time the Valkyrie disappeared, the Ore General was heavily injured, greatly reducing its combat power. Now, it was only slightly more powerful than the Grand Lord ranked Ore Warriors.

I need to hurry! When Shi Feng saw the Ore General attack the guards at the entrance, he began to inscribe runes faster. Twenty seconds... Forty seconds... Sixty seconds...

Once the Ore General rejoined the fight, more NPC mercenaries began to fall. In just 60 seconds, over ten Tier 2 NPCs had died. One of the Tier 3 NPCs had even sustained heavy injuries.

When there were fewer than 30 NPC mercenaries remaining, the Ore General used a powerful Skill and charged past the blockade. Upon entering the fortress and spotting Shi Feng, the Ore General roared and swung its greatsword at the offending Swordsman.

Suddenly, a cold energy beam shot toward Shi Feng, and everything it passed froze.

While inscribing the magic array, Shi Feng couldn't move without canceling the inscription process. He'd have to start all over again. Hence, Shi Feng had no choice but to activate Absolute Defense. After the energy beam disappeared, everything except for Shi Feng's immediate surroundings had frozen solid.

When the Ore General saw that Shi Feng had survived, it was further enraged. It charged up to Shi Feng, brandishing its greatsword.

Despite the fact that the power of the Ore General's attacks shattered the ground around him, Shi Feng remained unharmed. However, his heart pounded with nervous energy, rather than feeling relieved.

Just when Absolute Domain's duration was about to end...

The blue crystal in Shi Feng's hand suddenly lit up. He had finally finished inscribing the magic array.

"Go!" Shi Feng shoved the crystal into the ground before him.

As the crystal melded with the ground, a magic array appeared beneath Shi Feng's feet. Seeing this, Shi Feng activated Heavenly Dragon's Power, his Attributes skyrocketing.

"Scram!" Shi Feng yelled as he swung Killing Ray at the Ore General.

Lightning Slash!

A blue lightning bolt struck the Ore General, and like a cannonball, the creature flew backward, only stopping when it crashed into a nearby wall.

Using this opportunity, Anna had her ten Rock Guardians form a magic array around the Ore General, trapping the Mythic Ore. Meanwhile, Shi Feng took out several small crystals for the magic array's finishing touches.

Since Shi Feng was now very familiar with the process, he only needed ten seconds to complete the array.

As the magic array completed, a blue ripple of light enveloped the war fortress.

A moment later, a series of system notifications reached Shi Feng's ears.

Chapter 1828 – *Advanced Manager*

System: Congratulations! You have completed the Epic Trade Route Quest "Ore King's Ambitions."
Rewarding Star-Moon Kingdom Reputation +100, +50% EXP of current level, and one Star-Moon Kingdom Airport Building Order.

Ore Empire Region System Announcement: Congratulations to Zero Wing's Silverwing Town for becoming the first town in the Ore Empire to set up a trade route. Rewarding 10,000 Popularity Points to Silverwing Town and one Transportation Firm Design.

The system announcement echoed three times in the ears of every player within the Ore Empire.

"Set up a trade route? What's that?"

"It should be something that can lure in more NPC merchants."

"If that's true, doesn't that mean we can obtain even more rare items from the NPCs of Silverwing Town now?"

"Zero Wing is really amazing. Silverwing Town got promoted into an Intermediate Town just recently. Now, Zero Wing has even managed to set up a trade route for it. The Ore Empire will definitely fall under Zero Wing's dominion in the future."

"That's for sure. Previously, the Evil Beast army was already helpless against Zero Wing. With how rapidly Silverwing Town is developing right now, I believe it will surpass Ancient Rock City before long."

"It would be great if that's the case. If Silverwing Town really does surpass Ancient Rock City, we won't have to worry about getting ambushed by Dark Players when grinding in the Ore Empire's outer area."

The players grinding in the Ore Empire promptly started a discussion about Zero Wing. They all held an optimistic view of Zero Wing's future. At the same time, they also hoped that Silverwing Town could develop quickly.

For some reason, Ancient Rock City had actually become a mecca for the dark forces. A large number of Dark Players was currently gathered there.

Since Ancient Rock City was located in the Ore Empire's inner area, the Dark Players' main sphere of activity encompassed the Ore Empire's inner area and the boundary between the inner and outer areas.

As a result, the independent players trying to grind and do quests in these areas frequently came under attack from Dark Players.

As for Silverwing Town, which was the town closest to Ancient Rock City, while it could be considered a mecca for normal players like themselves, as the town could accommodate only a very limited number of people, not that many players gathered around the town. Hence, the number of normal players operating within the vicinity of Silverwing Town was relatively low~far from enough to contend against the Dark Players operating around Ancient Rock City.

However, if Silverwing Town were developed further, the number of players gathering at the town would also increase. The influx of normal players would naturally pose a deterrent to the Dark Players. At the very least, they would refrain from boldly launching attacks in large numbers.

Although the news of Silverwing Town setting up a trade route brought joy to the independent players operating within the Ore Empire, somber expressions appeared on the faces of the various major powers' upper echelons when they received this piece of news.

At this point in time, the number of players willing to operate within the Ore Empire had already peaked. In other words, the player population within the Ore Empire would no longer increase significantly like before. Meanwhile, the various major powers that had captured a town within the Ore Empire all needed to lure more players to their towns to develop their towns.

However, if most of the players operating within the empire were heading to Silverwing Town, how were these major powers supposed to develop their own Guild Towns?

“Wind, with this recent development, the Ancient Rock City you’re managing is in for a tough time,” Falling Fire, who held a crystalline crimson staff, said when he heard the latest system announcement. A grin appeared on his face as he turned to look at the Level 55, Tier 2 Berserker standing beside him.

“To begin with, we only joined hands with the Dark Players to use their strength to whittle down Zero Wing. This change will bring no loss to the Evil God’s Temple,” Wind Hunter said indifferently. “Moreover, no matter how Zero Wing develops Silverwing Town, it is already too late. Don’t you agree?”

“Indeed. While Zero Wing’s Black Flame is indeed very scary, unfortunately for him, a Guild can’t become strong just by relying on one person. At the end of the day, a war between Guilds is decided by the financial strength and foundations both sides possess,” Falling Fire said as he looked at the Crimson Flame Fortress, whose defensive magic array had already been shattered. “We’ll let Zero Wing maintain its arrogance for now. As long as we capture the Crimson Flame Fortress, Zero Wing’s existence will be over.”

The Crimson Flame Fortress was one of the most important fortresses within the Ore Empire’s inner area. It was also one of the relatively safe transport hubs in the empire. Capturing the Crimson Flame Fortress would be equivalent to taking control of the majority of the players heading to the Regional Dungeon Ore Capital City. The amount of Coins and resources they could earn from the fortress would easily surpass that from Ancient Rock City at its peak.

At the same time, their control of the Crimson Flame Fortress would essentially allow them to bar Zero Wing from entering the Ore Capital City. This would render all of Zero Wing’s efforts in the Ore Empire useless.

In the long run, their alliance would grow increasingly stronger in the Ore Empire, whereas Zero Wing would weaken. After accumulating sufficient strength, they could then capture Silverwing Town and destroy Zero Wing, permanently relegating the Guild to history.

Elsewhere, due to Shi Feng completing the expulsion magic array, the Ore army trying to kill him was subjected to a powerful pressure from the magic array. Even the Ore General's reactions turned sluggish under the pressure, allowing the Swordsman to evade the Ore General's attacks, albeit barely.

Just as Shi Feng was trying to think of a way to escape...

A series of war cries suddenly came from outside the fortress.

In the next moment, an army of NPCs suddenly appeared roughly a thousand yards away from the fortress and charged toward it. Although there were only 1,000 NPCs in this army, they were all very high-leveled, at least Level 100.

In God's Domain, Level 50 was a major turning point. Likewise, Level 100 was also a very important turning point. A Level 100, Tier 2 NPC would make short work of a Level 95 Great Lord. Meanwhile, among the NPCs galloping over, the weakest one was a Level 100, Tier 2 NPC. Claude, the NPC leading the charge, was even a Level 120, Tier 3 Knight Captain.

Although Claude was only Tier 3, he was not in the same league as ordinary Tier 3 NPCs—because Claude was fully equipped in Epic Equipment. The silver spear he wielded was even a Fragmented Legendary Weapon. His combat power was no doubt at the peak of Tier 3. He could even go toe-to-toe with ordinary Tier 4 Mythic monsters.

Shortly after these NPCs appeared, they quickly engaged the Ore army in battle. Riding atop a one-horned beast, Claude swung his spear at the Ore Warriors that were trying to force their way through the entrance.

Claude's spear transformed into a silver streak of light, tearing a hole through space as it swept at the Ore Warriors.

Two Level 80 Grand Lord ranked Ore Warriors went flying. Meanwhile, the Lord ranked Ores, which were caught in the crossfire, were killed on the spot.

In the blink of an eye, Claude cut open a path in the Ore army and charged straight into the fortress.

Reinforcements? Shi Feng was both joyful and confused at Claude's appearance. He had never thought that the system would provide such a service after he completed his quest.

In the eyes of a Level 120, Tier 3 NPC, the Level 80 Mythic ranked Ore General was no different from a Common monster with a lot of HP. Claude sent the Ore General flying with every one of his attacks. As Claude and the Ore General clashed, the Ore General's HP continuously decreased.

When the Ore General's HP fell to 50%, the Mythic Ore let loose a frustrated and indignant roar. In the next moment, the battling Ore army started retreating. As for the Ore General, it, too, backed up to the top of a fortress wall, then jumped off and escaped.

After the Ore army fled, Claude approached Shi Feng.

"Lord Protector, thanks to your efforts, we were able to set up this important trade route. From now onward, Star-Moon Kingdom's army will be managing this place to assure the trade route's security.

Meanwhile, as you are the pioneer of this trade route, are you willing to pay 60,000 Gold to repair this Secret Stone Fortress and become its Advanced Manager?”

Chapter 1829 – *Secret Stone Fortress*

“Advanced Manager?” Shi Feng was ecstatic upon hearing Claude’s words.

In God’s Domain, becoming a fortress town’s manager was akin to becoming a noble of an NPC town or city. Players would gain the authority to manage a portion of the Shops in the fortress town and would be able to determine its development direction. However, an NPC fortress town wouldn’t have only one manager. Just like Thunder Island, there could be multiple managers overseeing a single fortress town.

An Advanced Manager possessed more authority than a Basic Manager. An Advanced Manager was close to being the deputy mayor of a fortress town. They would be able to manage important establishments such as the Auction House, Teleportation Hall, and Adventurer’s Association, not just a bunch of Shops.

Although becoming an Advanced Manager was inferior to fully occupying a fortress town, since an NPC fortress town would be partially operated and guarded by NPCs, barring special situations, it was much safer than a Guild Fortress Town.

For example, currently, so long as the Secret Stone Fortress was being garrisoned by Level 100 NPCs, even if Beast Emperor sent his entire Evil Beast army over, he wouldn’t be able to take down the fortress. Unless Beast Emperor had some way to reduce the garrisoned NPCs’ levels, capturing the fortress would be impossible.

“Lord Claude, must the 60,000 Gold be paid right now?” Shi Feng asked.

Sixty thousand Gold was no small sum. This was especially true for Shi Feng right now, as he had already spent most of his funds on this expedition.

“Sixty thousand Gold is indeed a lot of money. Moreover, it’ll take some time to get the necessary materials to repair the Secret Stone Fortress,” Claude said, nodding. “It’ll take four days at the quickest for the kingdom’s army to arrive. It is fine so long as you gather the 60,000 Gold within these four days.”

...

System: You have triggered the Quest “Secret Stone Fortress.” Collect 60,000 Gold within four days. Failure to do so will result in the loss of the opportunity to become Secret Stone Fortress’s Advanced Manager.

...

“Wonderful!” Shi Feng breathed out a sigh of relief upon seeing the system notification.

While it might be difficult for ordinary first-rate Guilds to collect 60,000 Gold in four days, some might even have to sell some of their Lands to do so—this was not a problem for Shi Feng.

After all, he had a business deal with the Dragon-Phoenix Pavilion and Unyielding Soul. Both these super-first-rate Guilds had shown great interest in the Dark Corrosion Set. They had also placed an order for a large number of All-rounded Devices and Elven Silver. If he offered to let the two Guilds pay for a

portion of the All-rounded Devices and Elven Silver using Coins, instead of Magic Crystals, the two Guilds would definitely be more than happy to do so.

After Shi Feng was done speaking with Claude, he immediately left for Silverwing Town.

While collecting 60,000 Gold in four days posed no problem, the money he needed amounted to far more than just 60,000 Gold.

After completing the Ore King's Ambitions quest, he had acquired the extremely precious Star-Moon Kingdom Airport Building Order as well as a Transportation Firm Design. Both these items were priceless treasures.

The Star-Moon Kingdom Airport Building Order was akin to a permit to open up an air route. However, he would need a lot of funds to build an airport. Fortunately, the construction of the airport did not require a design, only money.

Even so, building a Small Airport still cost 50,000 Gold.

However, once he set up an air route from Star-Moon Kingdom to Silverwing Town, not only would it expedite the transport of NPC merchants' goods, but players from Star-Moon Kingdom would also have an easier time getting to Silverwing Town. Although air travel wasn't as fast as teleportation, it was still many times faster than traveling on land on a Mount. Moreover, the transportation fee one had to pay was also much cheaper than that for a teleportation array.

In the past, a large part of the reason why many superpowers were able to develop their neutral towns into an Advanced City was their possession of an airport. Although many first-rate Guilds possessed great financial strength, the neutral towns they developed only managed to reach the Basic City standard; they simply couldn't become an Advanced City no matter what. Only the first-rate Guilds that succeeded in building an airport were able to develop their neutral towns to the Advanced City standard.

This was because an airport was capable of bringing a town or city immense Popularity and prosperity.

Not only could an airport help NPC merchants enter a town or city much more easily, but it also provided the ability to transport cargo safely and swiftly. A delivery trip that normally took one or two days by land could be completed in just a few hours by airship. Moreover, in God's Domain, some NPC trading firms restricted their development to towns and cities with airports.

In addition, there was the recruitment of NPC soldiers. As neutral maps were located very far away from human civilization, many NPCs were unwilling to travel to neutral towns and cities. However, if a neutral town had an airport, the number and quality of NPCs willing to work as a soldier for that town would also increase. With this, the improvement of the neutral town's security level would accelerate.

Due to this reason, the development speed of a neutral town with an airport far surpassed that of a neutral town without an airport.

This was also the reason why Shi Feng had decided to undertake the Ore King's Ambitions quest no matter what

As for the Transportation Firm, its construction cost 20,000 Gold. The Transportation Firm was something that would be of great help to the players developing in the town where the firm was based. Once he constructed it in Silverwing Town, players would be able to pick up Transportation Quests in Silverwing Town. When players completed these quests, they could not only obtain a large sum of Coins but also accumulate Transportation Firm Contribution Points. Players could then spend the CPs and Coins they earned to purchase items that were exclusively traded between NPCs.

To players that were incapable of raiding high-difficulty Team Dungeons, this was a good opportunity to acquire top-tier weapons, equipment, and tools. In the past, the Transportation Firm was actually much more popular than even the Auction House.

Normally, NPC Auction Houses hosted auctions only once a week. However, the Transportation Firm would stock up on new items every day. Moreover, the more prosperous the town or city a Transportation Firm was based in, the better the quality of the items sold. Hence, in the past, any Guild Town or City that housed a Transportation Firm had become a holy land for independent players.

Meanwhile, the airport and Transportation Firm would complement each other. If he could build both in Silverwing Town now, he might not even need a month to upgrade Silverwing Town into an Advanced Town.

However, building these two constructions would cost an astronomical number of Coins. Hence, he needed to take action as soon as possible.

The moment Shi Feng exited the Secret Stone Fortress, the members of the various dark adventurer teams and Dark Guilds immediately shifted their gaze to him.

“Commander, should we move out now?” a Level 54 Assassin asked, licking his lips as he turned to look at the Level 54, Tier 2 Ranger standing beside him. “The other adventurer teams and Guilds seem to be getting ready to take action as well.”

After the battle with the Ores ended, the NPCs following Shi Feng had also disappeared. The various Dark Players hiding in the forest grew restless at this development.

Although they had seen Black Flame’s strength, the remuneration offered by Dark Soul was simply too tempting, so much so that they were willing to risk attacking Black Flame.

After all, so long as they succeeded, what awaited them was a life of glory and financial security.

Chapter 1830 – *Shocking Retreat*

Hearing the words of the Assassin, the other players belonging to the same dark adventurer team started looking around curiously.

Just like the Assassin had said, their adventurer team wasn't the only one taking action. The members of the two dozen or so other adventurer teams and several Dark Guilds around them had also started sneaking closer to Shi Feng.

It was obvious that these dark adventurer teams and Dark Guilds were growing impatient.

In God's Domain, the dark forces were constantly oppressed. During the early stages of the game, players belonging to the dark forces had a much more difficult time getting by than normal players. After all, the dark forces were still incapable of contending against the various kingdoms and empires right now.

Meanwhile, dark adventurer teams and Dark Guilds with the potential to become a superpower were extremely rare. The conditions to join one such power were extremely stringent. Powers like Dark Soul, which was as strong as a superpower and also offered its members the freedom of an adventurer team, were even rarer.

Joining Dark Soul would definitely bring plenty of benefits to their future development. They also wouldn't have to worry about getting hunted just because they killed the members of certain Guilds. Moreover, they could grind in the high-resource maps occupied by Dark Soul and not make do in poor maps.

“Commander?” The Assassin could not help but call out to the silent Tier 2 Ranger once again. “If we don’t make a move now, I’m afraid we’ll lose this chance to the other adventurer teams.”

“Fine. In for a penny, in for a pound. Even if we fail, at worst, we’ll lose a level. If we succeed, we’ll become members of Dark Soul in the future and instantly join the upper ranks of the dark forces,” the gruff man carrying an exquisite crystalline longbow said, nodding. A hint of killing intent flashed across his eyes as he looked at Shi Feng.

Dark Players had a much more difficult time getting by than normal players. The difficulty of finding a strong support to rely on as a Dark Player was also much greater than what normal players faced when trying to join the various superpowers. Now that there was an opportunity to join Dark Soul, how could he possibly let this chance get away?

When the two dozen or so members of the adventurer team heard their commander’s words, they immediately revealed fierce expressions. They then followed their commander and slowly inched their way toward Shi Feng.

At this moment, aside from this one adventurer team, the several thousand other Dark Players hiding in the forest were also entering a combat-ready state. Some stealthed Assassins had even gotten within 200 yards of Shi Feng already.

“Black Flame has many means of escaping! We must not let him get away from us! First, form an encirclement around him.

Then, use War Bondage to trap him here. Once the battle starts, use your Silencing Skills on him right away! We must finish him in the first exchange!” a Level 54, Tier 2 Assassin clad in dark-gray robes said to the 30-plus Assassins around him through the team chat. “As long as we kill Black Flame, everyone in our Poison Blade Guild will get to join Dark Soul! Then, we’ll be able to live like kings in the Dark Night Empire! We won’t need to fear even super-first-rate Guilds!”

When their leader said that, the eyes of the 30-plus Level 53 and Level 54 Assassins glowed with excitement.

Their Guild, Poison Blade, was a relatively ordinary Dark Guild in the Dark Night Empire. Normally, they could fight only second- and third-rate Guilds. When facing first-rate Guilds, they had no choice but to run away.

As for super-first-rate Guilds, these existences were no different from Gods to them. Let alone provoking one, they didn't even dare to come into contact with one.

When they thought about how they wouldn't need to fear Crimson Emperor and Unyielding Soul after joining Dark Soul, they could not help but feel excited.

As they entertained visions of such a future, their footsteps as they approached Shi Feng became much lighter than before. Their auras also became gentler. At this moment, one could say that their focus had reached unprecedented levels. Only Shi Feng existed in their eyes right now.

One hundred and fifty yards...

One hundred yards...

Eighty yards...

As these Assassins closed in on Shi Feng's rear, they also grew increasingly nervous.

When the Assassins were within 50 yards of Shi Feng, a low voice suddenly entered everyone's ears and echoed loudly in everyone's mind.

"Scram!"

Before anyone could react, Shi Feng abruptly turned around and unsheathed Killing Ray. He then swung the Sacred Sword at the air before him.

Suddenly, countless arcs of lightning formed before Shi Feng and joined together to form a blue river. Like a primordial beast, the blue river of lightning scorched everything in its path, spreading out in a cone covering an 80-yard radius.

Before the stealthed Assassins could even react, countless arcs of lightning had already devoured their bodies. After a brief moment of exposure, the Assassins' bodies then transformed into streaks of light and disappeared from the area.

As the lightning river gradually dissipated, the other Dark Players, who were still a distance away, could not help but gasp.

In just one hit, Shi Feng had killed over 70 stealthed Assassins.

Right now, numerous pieces of shiny equipment littered the scorched ground. Meanwhile, due to Shi Feng's sudden attack, the footsteps and breathing of the other stealthed Assassins turned chaotic, their bodies becoming exposed to everyone.

This is the Sword King's strength? A Tier 2 Assassin wearing dark-gray leather armor gulped in fear as he looked at the scorched ground that was just a few centimeters beside him.

Compared to the players hiding in the distance, he had managed to get a much clearer view of Shi Feng's attack just now.

From the moment Shi Feng started activating a Skill until the time the Skill had fully activated, he, a Tier 2 Assassin, had actually failed to react. By the time he realized Shi Feng had attacked, the blue river was already shooting out from Shi Feng's sword. Moreover, despite him being able to clearly see the approach of the blue river, his body had been unable to react at all.

This situation was just too frightening. His mind could not process how Shi Feng had executed such an attack.

An ordinary expert player might not understand the implications of such a situation, but he did.

The requirement for activating a Lifesaving Skill was for players to think the Skill's name. Only after doing so would the Lifesaving Skill activate. However, if one could attack a player before the said player could have such a thought in their mind, then even having the most powerful Lifesaving Skill in the game would be meaningless.

In other words, Shi Feng could kill an Assassin—the class that was famed for having the most Lifesaving Skills—in one attack whenever he wanted.

This discovery instantly crushed any thoughts the Assassin in dark-gray leather armor had of fighting Shi Feng.

In reality, though, Shi Feng's inconceivable attack wasn't entirely impossible to block, especially for experts who understood the principles of the Realms of Truth. This was because the move Shi Feng had just executed applied the Realms of Truth's basics—moving the body before moving the mind. Unless one trained arduously to go up against attacks executed using such quick reaction speeds, reacting to such an attack was simply impossible.

After executing Lightning Edge, Shi Feng took a look at everyone present. Upon seeing no new challengers moving up to him, he sheathed Killing Ray before turning around and leaving.

Due to Shi Feng's attack, the remaining 100-plus Assassins no longer dared to approach him. They simply stood still as they watched him leave the battlefield.

"Guild Leader, Black Flame is leaving. Are we still not moving?" a Level 54, Tier 2 Shield Warrior could not help but ask as he looked at the Level 54, Tier 2 Ranger beside him.

"You want to go? Be my guest," the Tier 2 Ranger said, rolling his eyes at the Shield Warrior.

The Tier 2 Shield Warrior shrank his neck back instinctively and shook his head. The fact that he was able to get promoted to Tier 2 at this stage of the game proved that his combat standard was much better than ordinary experts'. However, Black Flame's attack inspired dread even in him. He definitely wasn't confident of blocking the attack Black Flame executed just now.

Meanwhile, even after Shi Feng's figure disappeared from the battlefield, the thousands of Dark Players remained standing quietly at their original positions with pale expressions. Some independent players that were passing by the area were stupefied when they saw this scene.

Too strong!

With just one attack, Shi Feng had deterred several thousand Dark Players from making a move.

By the time the Dark Players retreated from the area, news about the battle had already been spread like mad on the official forums by the independent players.

Chapter 1831 – *Ore Empire's Number One Swordsman Ore Empire, Silverwing Town:*

After Shi Feng shook off the Dark Players' pursuit, he immediately returned to Zero Wing's Residence in Silverwing Town to make arrangements for the transport and purchase of products from NPC merchants.

Although he had already set up the trade route, the collection of usage fees from the NPCs who used the trade route would have to be carried out by both players and NPC soldiers. In addition, players would need to be present in person to purchase the goods that were meant to be sold to NPCs. Hence, he would need to assign considerable manpower to handle these tasks.

Moreover, in order to make sure the items purchased were useful, he would have to send knowledgeable personnel to deal with the NPC merchants.

However, as soon as Shi Feng returned to the Guild Residence, he was greeted by a boisterous scene. Currently, Guild members were chatting happily and excitedly with each other inside the Guild Hall.

“Guild Leader, you’re back. Everyone is talking about you right now,” Aqua Rose said, excitement sprouting in her heart when she saw Shi Feng. “Because of your performance over at the Secret Stone Fortress, many people have already started titling you as the Ore Empire’s number one Swordsman. Of course, there are some who object to this. They feel that you are unworthy of this title and will accept it only when they have actually fought you. Even so, due to this situation, many more players from the neighboring kingdoms are trying to join Zero Wing now. In addition, several well-known experts from the neighboring kingdoms want to challenge you. However, Fire Dance has accepted these challenges in your place and is currently fighting these experts in the Battle Arena right now.”

“Well-known experts from other kingdoms are challenging me?” Shi Feng could not help but smile upon hearing this. “This is a good opportunity.”

He had never thought that his battle over at the Secret Stone Fortress would spark such a development.

Before today, he had received many challenges from experts before. However, back then, these had been limited to the experts of Star-Moon Kingdom. Now, however, even the experts of other kingdoms were challenging him. This proved that his fame had already reached a considerable degree in those kingdoms. Otherwise, the well-known experts of those kingdoms wouldn’t have come to challenge him.

Meanwhile, the fact that these experts had come to challenge him was a good thing for Silverwing Town.

“Aqua, from today onwards, set up a challenge arena in the Battle Arena specifically for people wishing to challenge me.

However, they cannot just issue a challenge without restrictions. Before I accept their challenge, they’ll have to win ten consecutive matches against people of our choosing. For now, select our fighters from

our main force members. The challengers have to pay 5 Gold for each match. If the challengers win, they'll get 20 Gold in return," Shi Feng said.

"I understand," Aqua Rose replied, her eyes glowing.

With Shi Feng's plan, they could not only increase the popularity of Silverwing Town's Battle Arena but also earn a lot of money and train the main force members, killing three birds with one stone.

Following which, Shi Feng turned to Melancholic Smile, who stood beside Aqua Rose, and asked, "Melancholic, how is the production of the All-rounded Devices and Elven Silver coming along?"

Before he embarked on his quest to set up a trade route, he had left matters regarding the All-rounded Devices and Elven Silver to Melancholic Smile to handle.

The All-rounded Device was an item he personally created. Hence, he could make as many copies of its design as he wanted. The only reason he had not bothered trying to mass-produce the All-rounded Device until now was the much lower success rate other people would have when producing the All-rounded Device compared to him, the creator. In addition, the production costs for the All-rounded Device were also extremely high.

However, now that everyone's forging techniques had improved, it wasn't entirely impossible to mass-produce the All-rounded Device.

"Currently, only I have a feasible success rate when producing the All-rounded Device. Hence, I am the only one producing it right now. I have already made 53 All-rounded Devices. I am still far from fulfilling the 200 pieces you requested. However, Cocoa has become a Master Forger in Titan City. If we include her help, I believe it'll take only one more day for us to get the required 200 pieces. As for the Elven

Silver, we already have over 200 bottles produced. We can deliver them to you at any time,” Melancholic Smile reported joyfully.

“Cocoa has already been promoted into a Master Forger?” Shi Feng was overjoyed at this piece of news.

A Master Lifestyle player would be welcomed by any major power, not to mention a Master of the forger subclass, which was one of the three most popular subclasses. Now that Cream Cocoa had already become a Master Forger, the Candlelight Trading Firm’s forging standards would also improve.

Although Candlelight had two Master Forgers, as he was a Guild Leader, he was always busy with one thing or another. He simply could not afford to stay cooped up producing items. Likewise, Melancholic Smile had to manage the Candlelight Trading Firm. The time she could spend producing items was also very limited. However, Cream Cocoa was different. She did not have to manage any personnel or deal with Guild affairs. She could focus fully on forging.

“Guild Leader, this isn’t everything. While you were away doing your quest, the people from the Ice Crystal World sent over another large batch of materials. Save for some of the specialty materials, I split the other materials into batches and had them brought to other kingdoms and empires to be sold. I also reserved a portion for our own use. After deducting our purchasing costs and the cost of the products brought over to the Ice Crystal World, we netted over 53,000 Gold from this batch of materials,” Melancholic Smile said.

“That much?” Shi Feng was a little surprised when he heard Melancholic Smile’s report.

While it had been several days since he returned from the Ice Crystal World, he had emptied the market of all the rare materials he could find in the two NPC cities before leaving. He had never imagined that the players there would refill the market with materials so quickly.

He had to admit that the wealth earned by selling the rare materials obtained from Otherworlds was truly amazing.

Of course, a large part of the success this time was due to the Asura adventurer team and Adventurer Alliance. Without these two organizations, collecting so many rare materials from the Ice Crystal World wouldn't have been possible.

Meanwhile, they had already generated such massive wealth despite occupying only two NPC cities. If they could occupy the entire Ice Crystal World, the wealth they could generate would be many times more than even what the Secret Pavilion's Magic Crystal vein could provide.

It was no wonder the various superpowers fought heavily over Otherworlds during his previous life. Back then, the intense competition for Otherworlds didn't allow second- and third-rate Guilds to poke a hand into the competition. Even first-rate Guilds could only fight for the scraps left behind by the various superpowers.

"Alright, I got it" After pondering for some time, Shi Feng turned to Aqua Rose and said, "Aqua, contact Phoenix Rain and Unyielding Heart and tell them that we'll have their items ready by tomorrow. If they are lacking in Magic Crystals, they can pay a portion of the bill using Coins."

"I'll notify them right away." Aqua Rose nodded.

After Shi Feng was done dealing with these matters, he promptly headed to Silverwing Town's Advanced Smithy.

Currently, the Advanced Smithy was overcrowded with players. The majority of these players were here to disassemble their obsolete weapons and equipment, after which, they would use the materials they obtained to order custom-made weapons and equipment.

Whenever these players used the services offered by the Advanced Smithy, 10% of the total bill would go into Zero Wing's coffers. For the item breakdown service, Zero Wing would receive around 10 to 15 Copper for Bronze Equipment, 20 to 30 Copper for Mysterious-Iron Equipment, 40 to 50 Copper for Secret-Silver Equipment, 70 to 80 Copper for Fine-Gold Equipment, and 1 Silver to 1 Silver, 50 Copper for Dark-Gold Equipment.

While this might not seem like much, there were tons of people coming to get their old equipment disassembled. Including the money received from repairs and custom orders, Zero Wing earned over 400 Gold from the Advanced Smithy every day. However, this was only the beginning. As players reached higher levels and the fame of the Advanced Smithy spread, more and more players would come to order custom-made equipment. At that time, the Advanced Smithy could earn 1,000 to 2,000 Gold per day.

After Shi Feng took a look at the Advanced Smithy's situation and had his weapons and equipment repaired, he used a Return Scroll and teleported back to White River City. He then made his way to Star-Moon City's Adventurer's Association.

...

Star-Moon Kingdom, Star-Moon City:

Inside one of the Adventurer's Association's VIP rooms...

"Lord Protector, how may I be of service to you today?" the NPC senior administrator asked as he looked at Shi Feng.

"I wish to construct a Transportation Firm in Silverwing Town. Here is the design for it. I hope that you can start construction as soon as possible," Shi Feng replied before placing the Transportation Firm Design on the table before him.

Previously, as his funds had been insufficient, he had planned on setting the Transportation Firm aside for the moment. However, now that he was rich again, he naturally had to get it constructed as soon as possible.

“That won’t be a problem. The construction fee will be 20,000 Gold,” the senior administrator said, nodding after confirming that there was nothing wrong with the design Shi Feng presented.

Shi Feng then took out 20,000 Gold and handed the sum over to the senior administrator.

After Shi Feng completed the transaction, a system notification suddenly entered his ears.

Chapter 1832 – *Three Great Trading Firms*

System: Congratulations! You are the first player to have constructed a Transportation Firm. Rewarding one Silver Twin Lions Trading Firm Token.

The system announcement repeated three times, the system’s emotionless voice echoing in Shi Feng’s ears. Upon hearing these words, Shi Feng fell into a daze that lasted for a long time.

A Silver Twin Lions Token? Shi Feng stared in shock at the silver token in his hand.

Carved on this circular silver token was the image of two lions. There were also golden divine runes etched along its rim. It radiated an extremely ancient aura, obviously having existed for a very long time.

“Lord Protector, congratulations on obtaining this Twin Lions Trading Firm Token. You are now a Silver VIP of the Twin Lions Trading Firm, one of God’s Domain’s three most ancient trading firms. It is very difficult to become one of the trading firm’s VIPs. This token will be of great help to you when you are doing business or transporting goods. Lord Protector, please make sure to keep the token secure. You will not be given a new one if you lose it,” the NPC senior administrator explained.

However, at this point, Shi Feng wasn’t even listening to the NPC’s explanation anymore.

After all, he had a clearer understanding of the value of the Twin Lions Trading Firm’s token than even the NPC administrator, having long familiarity with the ability and influence of the trading firm.

The Twin Lions Trading Firm was one of the oldest trading firms extant in God’s Domain. Its origins were unknown.

However, rumor had it that the Twin Lions Trading Firm had a hand in the establishment of the famous War God’s Temple. Although the Twin Lions Trading Firm currently did not possess as extensive an influence as the War God’s Temple, whose influence spanned the entire continent of God’s Domain, it was still more influential than an ordinary empire. Only the Four Great Empires of God’s Domain could possibly rival the trading firm in influence.

Meanwhile, to Guilds, the Twin Lions Trading Firm was much more important than even the Four Great Empires. In fact, the trading firm’s importance to Guilds surpassed the War God’s Temple’s.

This distinction was because the Twin Lions Trading Firm’s trade routes covered over half of the entire continent. Anyone ferrying non-bag space items would prefer to use the trade routes of the trading firm, as these were much safer than the trade routes operated by players. Aside from the greater danger, player-operated trade routes were far less efficient. By using the Twin Lions Trading Firm’s trade routes,

one could save more than half the travel time they would normally need when using a player-operated trade route.

However, getting to utilize the Twin Lions Trading Firm's trade routes was not an easy task. One had to be a member of the Twin Lions Trading Firm. In other words, they needed to obtain one of the trading firm's tokens. Only then could they transport goods through the trading firm's trade routes.

Hence, the various large Guilds and merchant players in the past all sought to join the Twin Lions Trading Firm.

Of course, the benefits and treatment one received depended on one's status in the Twin Lions Trading Firm. VIPs not only got more discounts but also had access to trade routes that were normally not open to lower-ranking members. This was especially true for trade routes in neutral maps. In addition, higher-ranking members also had the privilege of hiring NPC escorts from the Twin Lions Trading Firm.

For example, in the past, due to Shadow's low ranking in the Twin Lions Trading Firm, Shi Feng had no choice but to lead the Guild's delivery runs himself. As a result, they frequently came under attack from NPC bandits. Had Shadow's ranking been enough in the Twin Lions Trading Firm to hire NPC escorts to serve as a deterrent, the Guild's caravans wouldn't have come under attack so frequently.

In the Twin Lions Trading Firm, the token one held represented their rank in the trading firm. From lowest to highest, the ranks were Common, Bronze, Silver, Gold, and Elder.

Although there were only five ranks, even the lowest Common Token was extremely difficult to obtain. On the market, a Common Twin Lions Token had been worth around 10,000 Gold. Even so, nobody who had a token would be willing to sell it. One could easily imagine the difficulty of acquiring a Common Token. In addition, the Twin Lions Trading Firm acknowledged only the token and not its owner. There was no way to upgrade a token's rank. The number of tokens distributed also had a limit, and the tokens would all drop upon death. Hence, many players and powers had sought to steal the tokens in the past.

From what Shi Feng knew, there were only 99 Common Tokens, 49 Bronze Tokens, 24 Silver Tokens, and twelve Golden Tokens in the game at any time. As for the Elder Token, he had never heard any information about it. However, he expected it to be limited to ten.

With the billions of players in God's Domain, this small number of tokens simply wasn't enough to satisfy the demand.

Hence, every token was extremely valuable, regardless of its rank.

In the past, Shi Feng had managed to get his hands on a Common Token only by a stroke of good luck.

He had never dreamed of obtaining a Silver Token in this life.

With this, transporting important items across neutral maps will no longer be a problem. Looking at the Twin Lions Token,

Shi Feng cooked up many new plans.

Non-bag space items were always worth a fortune; this was especially true for specialty products that were unique to a certain area. The main reason for their high value was the high cost of transporting them. However, many items important to players generally required the use of these materials.

Moreover, as players reached higher levels, the development of Guild Towns and Cities would also start to require more and more non-bag space items. In addition, some special weapons and tools would necessitate the use of non-bag space items. Hence, the Twin Lions Trading Firm had been extremely popular among the various large Guilds and merchant players.

Now that Shi Feng had a Silver Token, he would have no problem traveling across many neutral maps. He could also use these specialty non-bag space items to make a fortune.

In addition, the Twin Lions Trading Firm would hold an auction once a month. The standard of this auction far surpassed any auction hosted by players and empires. One could say that the Twin Lions Trading Firm's auction was the highest-standard auction in the entire God's Domain. In the past, even Legendary items had appeared in the auction, as well as Fragmented Legendary items in significant quantities. As for Epic items, they were no different from commonplace items in the auction.

In the past, every Twin Lions Trading Firm auction was a time for the various large Guilds to increase their combat power.

However, participating in the auction was not easy. At the very minimum, one needed to possess a Common Token. Depending on the rank of one's token, the number of people one could bring into the auction would differ. The Common Token allowed only one person entry into the auction venue, whereas the Bronze Token allowed two people, the Silver Token allowed three, and the Gold Token allowed five. As for the Elder Token, as nobody had ever obtained one even after ten years had passed in God's Domain, nobody knew how many people the token allowed entry to.

It seems I can have Aqua start tasking some people with transporting the Diamond Wood we have stockpiled to the Apocalypse Empire's shipyard. Shi Feng smiled as he looked at the Silver Token.

Previously, as he had been worried about having insufficient strength to protect the shipment, he had not bothered transporting the Diamond Wood they collected. Now that he had a Silver Token, he could borrow the Twin Lions Trading Firm's power. By spending a little money, he could easily send the stockpile of Diamond Wood over to the Apocalypse Empire. Although he didn't have a Bronze

Speedboat Design right now, using Diamond Wood to construct Advanced Speedboats would still increase the Attributes of the speedboat somewhat

Afterward, Shi Feng contacted Aqua Rose and had her dispatch some Guild experts to make the necessary preparations. As for himself, he returned to the Candlelight Trading firm and started producing All-rounded Devices.

Although Cream Cocoa and Melancholic Smile could indeed produce enough All-rounded Devices for the Dragon-Phoenix Pavilion and Unyielding Soul, he was also in dire need of the All-rounded Devices himself as he planned to head to the Flame Demon's Valley and activate the World Gate as soon as possible.

Only with the help of the Philosopher's Hand could he increase the development speed of Candlelight's Lifestyle Players.

The production of ships required a large number of Master Engineers, not to mention the production of the Hell Chariots and Guardian Puppets. Having just two or three Master Engineers simply wasn't enough.

Meanwhile, over at Silverwing Town, the Transportation Firm's construction was just completed. The sudden appearance of the three-story, stadium-sized building immediately caused a commotion among the players in the town.

Chapter 1833 – *Gathering at Silverwing Town*

The three-story-tall Transportation Firm was located close to Siverwing Town's main entrance. Meanwhile, ten Level 100 NPC guards stood before the entrance, one of which was a Tier 3 Guard Captain.

The Guard Captain carried a greatsword on his back and wore silver armor. Due to the strict atmosphere around him, players kept a wary distance from the Transportation Firm, only daring to glance at the building from far away.

However, although players did not dare approach the building, one NPC merchant after another nonchalantly entered the firm. Large caravans also moved their goods into the building on a regular basis. After several minutes, the stadium-sized building was crowded with carriages and NPCs.

Many players mustered their courage and entered the building after such a lively scene.

"Amazing! There are so many NPC merchants here!"

Upon entering the Transportation Firm's first-floor hall, the curious players immediately spotted many NPC merchants lined up at the front counter, handling some formalities. There were easily over a thousand NPC merchants in the building, some of which had set up stalls in front of their parked carriages, selling a variety of precious items. The scene was simply dazzling.

Meanwhile, the most eye-catching thing in the Transportation Firm had to be the gigantic crystal hovering in the center of the hall. The crystal displayed the Transportation Quests available today and their corresponding rewards. The quest difficulty and requirements were also listed.

Players' jaws dropped after they inspected the colossal, translucent crystal in the hall.

Delivery to Bronze Teeth Town: Difficulty – two-star. Requirement – Tier 2, must have completed five one-star quests. Remuneration – 3 Gold, 300 Contribution Points, and one Void Magic Gold. Recruiting six people.

Delivery to Bronze Teeth Town: Difficulty – one-star. Requirement – Level 50 or above. Remuneration – 80 Silver, 50 Contribution Points, and one Smart Armor Kit Recruiting ten people.

Every quest offered tempting rewards. Many expert players drooled over the two-star quests, in particular.

At this stage of the game, many expert players wouldn't earn 3 Gold even after a full day of grinding. Although the reward items might not be as valuable as the Gold, they were also highly sought after. For example, Void Magic Gold could be used to increase a weapon's sharpness and lower its Durability consumption. However, Void Magic Gold wasn't normally sold on the market.

To the expert players present, the Void Magic Gold was far more valuable than 3 Gold Coins.

Naturally, the three-star quest rewards even tempted players from the various major powers.

Three-star quests actually awarded rare Tier 2 Skill Books upon completion. Even the various major powers' experts lacked Tier 2 Skills. Aside from purchasing such Skills with Legacy Points, players could only obtain them by farming monsters for Skill Books. However, even the drop-rate for Tier 1 Skill Books was extremely low, not to mention Tier 2 Skill Books.

After everyone finished gawking at the quests on the giant crystal, they noticed an exchange counter. This exchange counter allowed players to spend the Contribution Points and Coins they earned to purchase rare items the NPC merchants sold.

The available rare items were impossible to purchase elsewhere. In fact, the NPC merchants even had Epic items for sale. Upon seeing these items, the players in the hall immediately went into an uproar.

“Quick! Notify the Guild Leader! We must get those Epic items before the other Guilds!”

The members of the various major powers immediately contacted their respective Guilds’ upper echelons and notified them about the Transportation Firm.

As for the independent players present inside the Transportation Firm, their eyes glowed with excitement upon seeing the item list.

Epic items!

Independent players only dreamed of obtaining such items, yet as long as they earned enough Coins and Contribution Points, they could purchase these items. In other words, they now had the possibility of acquiring an Epic item.

For a time, news of the Transportation Firm spread like a plague throughout the Ore Empire and the neighboring countries.

“We can purchase Epic items just by collecting enough Contribution Points from quests? There’s no status restriction? In that case, our adventurer team can contend with the various large Guilds for these Epic items!”

“The rewards for Silverwing Town’s Transportation Quests are actually so bountiful? That’s at least triple the amount we get from the usual Transportation Quests! We need to head to Silverwing Town to develop right this instant!”

Many adventurer teams and independent players decided to shift their base of operations to Silverwing Town. Setting aside the fact that they could earn more money by developing there, the fact that they could purchase top-tier weapons and equipment was the final push.

For a time, players swarmed toward Silverwing Town.

...

“Vice Guild Leader, what should we do? The number of players trying to enter the town has suddenly increased by more than 200,000. By the looks of it, even more people will show up later. However, we’ve already reached the town’s entry limit of 1,500,000 players, and the players waiting outside are making a huge fuss,” Yaya, Aqua Rose’s assistant, said as she ran up to Aqua Rose, who was currently swamped with work.

“I understand. Temporarily increase the town’s entry limit to 1,800,000,” Aqua Rose said, nodding as she pinched the bridge of her nose.

Due to the Transportation Firm’s appearance, many merchant players had contacted her, expressing their interest in renting a Shop in Silverwing Town long-term. Some top adventurer teams had even asked to garrison in Silverwing Town. These top adventurer teams had declared their willingness to purchase private houses at a high price and sign a garrison agreement with Zero Wing.

She never thought that Silverwing Town would become the focal point of the Ore Empire and its several neighboring countries.

This had all happened so suddenly, and she hadn't been prepared.

Meanwhile, Shi Feng, who currently forged All-rounded Devices in the Candlelight Trading Firm, remained ignorant of the situation. He simply focused on forging and increased the pile of All-rounded Devices on his table.

After working for more than half a day, Shi Feng received joyous news.

Liang Jing, his temporary assistant, had finally come to a compromise with Xiao Yu and would officially join God's Domain today. Moreover, she had already joined Zero Wing and used a Guild Transfer Scroll to teleport to White River City's Guild Residence.

To help her acclimate to God's Domain, Shi Feng decided to have her assist Melancholic Smile in managing White River City's Candlelight Trading Firm for the moment. This way, Melancholic Smile could somewhat relax.

"So, this is the Candlelight Trading Firm?" Liang Jing, who wore a set of long, white robes and held a wooden staff, couldn't help but gape at the towering building before her.

In her opinion, a virtual reality game was only a form of entertainment. However, after logging into God's Domain, she discovered that this game was no different than reality. In fact, she felt that her senses in the game were much sharper than her senses in the real world.

If not for the diamond markers and HP bars hovering above the players around her, she'd even have suspected that she had been transported into another world.

Aside from God's Domain's realism, the number of players she saw in the city also shocked her.

She had never thought that White River City would have so many players. The city's commercial district where she currently stood was even livelier than Jin Hai City's commercial district.

Meanwhile, the most eye-catching building in the district actually belonged to Zero Wing. This was simply inconceivable. "Are you Liang Jing, the person the Guild Leader mentioned?"

While Liang Jing tried to process the new information and environment, she noticed a mellow voice. Turning towards its origin, Liang Jing discovered a beautiful young woman in a luxurious dress.

Upon hearing this woman greet Liang Jing, nearby players shot the new woman envious glances.

"What's going on?"

Liang Jing was even more confused upon noticing players' reactions.

Chapter 1834 – *Frightening Zero Wing*

Looking at the woman approaching her, Liang Jing could feel the weight of the surrounding players' gazes. The long line of players waiting to enter the Candlelight Trading Firm turned to look at her, as well.

If these people were focused on the woman approaching her, she'd could, more or less, understand their reactions.

After all, the woman before her was tall and elegant, with a face and temperament to match. It was only natural that such a graceful woman would attract attention.

But these players were focused on her, not this woman. A moment ago, these people had ignored her, yet she had instantly become a sensation the moment this beautiful young woman had called out to her...

The beauty greeting Liang Jing was none other than Melancholic Smile.

According to Shi Feng, he had found her a capable assistant, although her Guild Leader had asked that she show Liang Jing the ropes first.

"Hello, I am Melancholic Smile. I will be helping you learn about the Candlelight Trading Firm and all there is to know about our business. If there is anything you don't understand, feel free to ask me," Melancholic Smile introduced herself.

After Melancholic Smile's introduction, the nearby players went into an uproar.

"Crap! Who is that woman!? Melancholic Smile actually came out to greet her?!"

"Could she be some sort of Master Lifestyle player?"

“That can’t be it. She’s only Level 10, and she isn’t wearing a Lifestyle Insignia. She’s definitely a newbie, but she must be someone important if Melancholic came to welcome her personally. Maybe she is the heiress of some major corporation, here to visit the Candlelight Trading Firm?”

For a time, the Lifestyle players seeking to join the Candlelight Trading Firm quietly discussed Liang Jing’s identity, glancing at the woman with envy and admiration.

Not only was Melancholic Smile the Candlelight Trading Firm’s manager, but she was also a Master Forger. She was one of Zero Wing’s core upper echelons. Rumors had it that many superpowers and major corporations had even offered astronomical prices to hire her, but she had rejected them all.

Melancholic Smile was an idol to Lifestyle players like them.

Not only was she very beautiful, but her forging standards also ranked at the apex of God’s Domain. They all dreamed of a life like the one Melancholic Smile enjoyed.

That was also the reason that so many Lifestyle players had come from neighboring kingdoms to join Candlelight

Meanwhile, overhearing the nearby Lifestyle players’ discussions, Liang Jing was inwardly shocked as she examined the player before her. She never thought that this woman held such a high position.

She also blushed with embarrassment as she heard the players guess her identity.

The heiress of a major corporation? She was only the assistant of the Big Dipper Group's Chairman. She was insignificant compared to an heiress.

After Melancholic Smile and Liang Jing introduced themselves, they entered the Candlelight Trading Firm.

White River City's Candlelight Trading Firm was the sole 3-star Shop in Star-Moon Kingdom. When Liang Jing entered the building, she felt as if she had stepped into a modern shopping mall. Only, the Shop had magical elements, unlike a mall in the real world.

Customers crowded the first-floor hall, stupefying Liang Jing. She hadn't imagined that a Shop in God's Domain could be so lively.

Melancholic Smile simply smiled at Liang Jing's reaction before leading the new recruit to the third floor.

The third floor and up were not open to the public; only Candlelight's members had access.

"Currently, the Candlelight Trading Firm has over 20,000 Lifestyle players. They're split across multiple branches. Among them, over 4,000 have officially signed a contract to become internal members. You could say that Candlelight is the bona fide number one trading firm throughout Star-Moon Kingdom. This Shop alone houses a little over 2,000 Lifestyle players. In the future, you will manage this Shop and its employees," Melancholic Smile explained as she gestured to the various workshops, which contained Candlelight's Lifestyle players hard at work. "Although you won't have to manage a lot of people at first, once you get used to the job and perform well, I'll have you take over managing Silverwing Town. Things are getting hectic in Silverwing right now. We just increased the entry limit to 1,800,000 people. We'll have to increase this number slowly in the future, so we have a lot to do."

As Liang Jing listened to Melancholic Smile's explanation, she wondered if she had heard wrong.

Candlelight had over 20,000 employees?

Moreover, over 4,000 were officially contracted to the trading firm?

In other words, there were over 4,000 players working as full-time employees for Candlelight. This was several times more than the Big Dipper Group's employees.

Later, she'd even have to manage a town with 1,800,000 players...

This was simply madness...

If the situation was as Melancholic Smile had described, as the assistant of the Big Dipper Group's Chairman, she was certain that Zero Wing was far wealthier than the Big Dipper Group. There was simply no comparing the two.

She had always wondered why Shi Feng acted so nonchalantly towards the Big Dipper Dojo's offers. It had offered a salary and benefits that countless people dreamed of, yet Shi Feng had settled for a temporary position, focusing his efforts on God's Domain.

Now, she finally understood.

It turned out that the Big Dipper Group's offers, which it had deemed quite generous, were little more than a farce to Shi Feng. He had only been working for the Big Dipper as a pastime.

Meanwhile, Shi Feng had offered her a position with Zero Wing in God's Domain because he had appreciated her management skills, and Xiao Yu wanted to use the opportunity to learn more about Shi Feng's affairs. Whether she chose to work for the Big Dipper Group or Zero Wing Workshop in the future would be up to her. However, right now, she had no idea how she was supposed to report her discoveries to Chairman Xiao.

What Liang Jing did not know was that Silverwing Town wasn't Zero Wing's most populated territory. Rather, Star-Moon Kingdom's Zero Wing City saw far more traffic with a player population several times higher than Silverwing Town.

Elsewhere, Shi Feng, ignorant of Liang Jing's thoughts, still focused on forging All-rounded Devices.

Finally, after a full day of work, he had crafted over a hundred All-rounded Devices. He had also made quite a few standard Level 50 Fine-Gold and Dark-Gold Weapons. Thanks to all the EXP from forging, he had finally reached Level 68.

Although he had killed plenty of monsters when setting up the trade route, due to the NPCs' participation, the EXP reward had been significantly reduced. He had only received a lot of EXP after he completed the quest. Even so, it hadn't been enough to push him to Level 68.

However, compared to his recent level-up, the Philosopher's Hand's ability truly surprised Shi Feng.

When he used the Philosopher's Soul to help guide him in forging Level 50 Fine-Gold and Dark Gold Weapons, the designs he had obtained from Titan City, the finished products had ranged between Level 50 and 55. It was a massive improvement.

Although a standardized Level 55 Fine-Gold Weapon was slightly weaker than Level 55 Fine-Gold Equipment acquired from monsters, it was still considerably stronger than a Level 50 Fine-Gold Weapon. This was also the case for standardized Level 55 Dark-Gold Weapons.

The highest-leveled players in the various large Guilds were currently Level 55. Hence, trying to acquire Level 55 weapons was extremely difficult. Currently, most of these Level 55 experts still used Level 50 Fine-Gold Weapons. If given the choice,

these experts would definitely wield a standardized Level 55 Dark-Gold Weapon.

If he sold these standardized Dark Gold Weapons in bulk, he could fetch a higher price than normal.

Suddenly, Melancholic Smile contacted Shi Feng and reported, "Guild Leader, the representatives from the Dragon-Phoenix Pavilion and Unyielding Soul have arrived. They're waiting in the second-floor VIP reception room."

"Alright, I'll head over now." Nodding, Shi Feng collected his forged items and headed to the reception room.

Chapter 1835 – *Massive Profits Candlelight Trading Firm's VIP reception room:*

Currently, Phoenix Rain, Blue Phoenix, Unyielding Heart, and Mu Lingsha waited in the reception room.

“Uncle Heart, are the items you mentioned really that effective?” Mu Lingsha asked worriedly. “The Guild has employed various methods, but we still haven’t made it into the Dark Battlegrounds’ inner region. Moreover, the Silent Water’s corrosion is extremely powerful. Even the rare Advanced Toughness Potion only extends our survival rate a little.

“We’ve shed all pretenses with the Starline Corporation already and are engaged in an all-out war with them. We can only spare a very limited amount of resources. If we spend so many Magic Crystals, and these items end up being useless, it’ll be disastrous.”

When she had asked Unyielding Heart to lead a team in assisting Zero Wing, she had assumed that the Guild only needed some help with a slightly difficult quest, yet when Unyielding Heart had returned, he had told her that Zero Wing had secured the Hell Mode Eclipse Throne’s First Clear.

The report had left her flabbergasted.

She had never realized that Zero Wing’s main force was so powerful.

Moreover, Unyielding Heart had praised Zero Wing’s Black Flame. His praise was rare, even in Unyielding Soul. Unyielding Heart had gone on to mention that Zero Wing possessed some special tools that could help them deal with the Dark Battlegrounds’ severe environment. This revelation had further increased her shock.

Truthfully, she wanted to believe Unyielding Heart’s claim, but she couldn’t bring herself to do so. Their Guild had expended a lot of effort to reach the Dark Battlegrounds’ inner region, but every method they tried had been a failure. She had even worked herself to the bone to find a solution to this problem.

Yet, Unyielding Heart had told her that Zero Wing had two items that could help their survival in the map. Moreover, Zero Wing could produce enough of these items for a 100-man team.

“Miss Mu, you can rest assured,” Unyielding Heart said with a bitter smile.

Over the past few days, Mu Lingsha had repeatedly asked him the same question, yet no matter how many times he explained the situation, the young lady refused to believe him. However, it wasn't as if he couldn't understand her feelings.

At this point, Unyielding Soul and Starlink, the Starline Corporation's Guild, were engaged in a bitter war. As a result, Unyielding Soul spent a frightening amount of resources each day. Meanwhile, purchasing 100 All-rounded Devices and 100 bottles of Elven Silver would cost them 40,000 Magic Crystals, and since Zero Wing had produced the items within three days, as per their agreement, Unyielding Soul had to pay an additional 5,000 Magic Crystals. For the Guild, 45,000 Magic Crystals were by no means a small amount.

If after paying so many Magic Crystals, the items were useless, they'd cry with regret.

Mu Lingsha found it difficult to respond to Unyielding Heart's comment. She could only hope these items would be as helpful as he claimed.

“Big Sis Rain, Unyielding Soul's representatives seemed worried about something. Do you think they plan on backing out of the purchase?” Blue Phoenix asked as she eyed Mu Lingsha's worried expression. Giggling, she continued, “If they do, we'll get to purchase their share as well. Then, we'll have a much easier time exploring the Sea of Death's inner islands.”

“Why would they possibly back out?” Phoenix Rain asked, chuckling. “Unyielding Soul has fought several large-scale battles against Starlink in the Dark Night Empire and desperately needs weapons, equipment, and war weapons. Both Guilds are furiously fighting for the high-resource maps that yield weapons and equipment. If Unyielding Soul wishes to obtain these items, it'll have to farm high-resource maps with hostile environments. The Guild will have a higher chance of securing the items in those maps.”

“Unyielding Soul needs 加 All-rounded Devices and Elven Silver more than anything right now. It can’t afford to back out ^ this deal.”

Blue Phoenix saw the reasoning in her Pavilion Master’s words.

The more hostile a map’s environment was, the more treasures it would have to offer. Take the Sea of Death, for example. After exploring the sea zone’s dangerous islands, the various superpowers had acquired a significant harvest. Now, all of the various superpowers were organizing large, powerful teams to explore the Sea of Death. However, to explore the map’s islands effectively, the superpowers would need items that could reduce the hostile environments’ impact on their players. While acquiring a small number of such items was not a problem, acquiring them in bulk was almost impossible.

If they could get their hands on the All-rounded Devices and Elven Silver, even if they didn’t use the items for themselves, they could earn impressive profits by reselling them.

While both Guilds’ representatives quietly talked among themselves, the reception room’s door swung open. Following which, a cloaked, middle-aged man entered the room, and the occupants fell silent when they saw him.

He is Black Flame? Mu Lingsha was shocked when she looked at the new arrival. What a powerful aura!

Shi Feng radiated an extremely strong, violent aura. In Mu Lingsha’s eyes, Shi Feng felt like a primordial beast, rather than a player.

What Mu Lingsha did not know was that the aura didn’t belong to Shi Feng. Instead, it radiated from the Abyssal Blade at his waist.

The Abyssal Blade's aura could no longer be contained after Shi Feng had upgraded it to Level 50. Because of this, Shi Feng had chosen to appear as Black Flame for this meeting.

"Sorry for the long wait; I had some business to deal with," Shi Feng apologized.

"It's fine. We just arrived as well," Unyielding Heart said, chuckling. "Moreover, if it means we can obtain the All-rounded Devices and Elven Silver, even a several-hour wait would be worth it."

Phoenix Rain, who sat close to Unyielding Heart, could not help but smile when she heard the man's words. She hadn't expected Unyielding Heart to be so direct about his desire for the items.

"Alright, since everyone is here for these two, let's get straight to business," Shi Feng said. He then took out the All-rounded Devices and Elven Silver he had prepared and placed them on the table before him. "After working around the clock with my people, we forged a total of 400 All-rounded Devices and 450 bottles of Elven Silver. According to our previous agreement, 200 of each item will go to the Phoenix Pavilion Master, while 100 of each item are reserved for Brother Heart. As for the 5,000 Magic Crystals we agreed on before, we'll just forget about that. I'd like to sell the remaining 100 All-rounded Devices and 150 bottles of Elven Silver via a private auction. You may bid for these extras with Coins.

"May I know your opinions about this arrangement?"

"Alright. I have no problems with that" Upon hearing that Shi Feng had so many extra items, Phoenix Rain could not help but inwardly celebrate.

“I don’t have any arguments, either.” Unyielding Heart nodded in agreement. Only, he slightly regretted his previous decision. Had he known Zero Wing was capable of producing so many All-rounded Devices and Elven Silver, he would’ve ordered more. However, when he considered his uncertainty about how useful the Elven Silver would be against the Silent Water, he dismissed his regret

Hearing the two players’ agreement, Shi Feng proceeded with fulfilling their previous arrangements. In the end, Shi Feng received 80,000 Magic Crystals from Phoenix Rain and 40,000 Magic Crystals from Unyielding Heart.

He then allowed both to bid for the additional All-rounded Devices and Elven Silver, auctioning the items off in batches of ten. As the transaction could be completed using Coins, both Guilds bid on the items without issues. In the end, Phoenix Rain had purchased 80 All-rounded Devices and 120 bottles of Elven Silver, while Unyielding Heart bought the rest.

When comparing foundations, Unyielding Soul was definitely superior to the Dragon-Phoenix Pavilion. However, Unyielding Soul didn’t have as much financial freedom due to its war with Starlink. Meanwhile, Phoenix Rain had earned quite a bit from the authority she wielded on Thunder Island and the harvests from the Sea of Death. Hence, in terms of financial strength, the Dragon-Phoenix Pavilion was currently stronger than Unyielding Soul.

After selling the extra items, Shi Feng had made over 20,000 Gold. Both super-first-rate Guilds were also quite satisfied with the outcome.

As the representatives of both Guilds were about to leave...

“Since we’ve sold the All-rounded Devices and Elven Silver, let us start the auction for today’s main course,” Shi Feng said, intentionally dragging out his statement.

“Main course?”

“You have something even better than the All-rounded Devices and Elven Silver?”

Phoenix Rain and Unyielding Heart gave Shi Feng confused looks. How could he possibly have something more valuable than the two items?

“Correct.”

Shi Feng then began to pull the standardized Level 55 Dark-Gold Weapons from his bag, putting them on display before his guests.

Chapter 1836 – Arming Teams

The one-handed saber Shi Feng placed on the table looked quite modest like a very ordinary weapon, yet it radiated the glow unique to Dark-Gold Weapons.

“A Dark-Gold Weapon that can be used up to Level 55?”

When Phoenix Rain and Unyielding Heart looked at the Dark-Gold Weapon, they could not help their confusion.

In terms of Attributes, it was only slightly better than a Level 50 Dark-Gold Weapon. While it might be very tempting to ordinary expert players, to Guild upper echelon like themselves, it was nothing special.

Although a Level 55 Dark-Gold Weapon was indeed very valuable, in terms of usefulness, there was simply no comparison between it and the All-rounded Device or Elven Silver.

Not to mention, the Level 55 Dark-Gold Weapon Shi Feng just took out did not possess any special traits. It neither added any Resistances nor granted extraordinarily high Attributes. Hence, they found it truly confusing that Shi Feng was treating this weapon as the finale item.

Just as Phoenix Rain and Unyielding Heart were wondering what Shi Feng's intention was by taking out such a plain Dark- Gold Weapon, Shi Feng took out another weapon from his bag and placed it on the table.

This time, it wasn't a saber but a greatsword, instead.

He's selling two items? Blue Phoenix, who was watching from the side, was also baffled by this situation.

Let alone two Level 55 Dark-Gold Weapons, even two Epic Weapons wouldn't be enough to tempt representatives of super-first-rate Guilds like Phoenix Rain and Unyielding Heart.

However, just as Blue Phoenix was having such thoughts, Shi Feng proceeded to take out another weapon from his bag. Moreover, he showed no signs of stopping, even after revealing the third weapon.

Three... Five... Eight...

By the time ten Level 55 Dark-Gold Weapons were laid out on the table, Phoenix Rain's and Unyielding Heart's expressions had changed.

While Level 55 Dark-Gold Weapons were not that easy to obtain, with the current strength Zero Wing's main force possessed, they understood that Zero Wing definitely could acquire some.

If it were only two or three Dark-Gold Weapons, they wouldn't have felt particularly surprised by the situation. However, having ten Level 55 Dark-Gold Weapons was an entirely different story.

"As you can imagine, I am able to obtain quite a number of these Level 55 Dark-Gold Weapons. These ten articles are merely samples for you to see. What do you think of these weapons?" Shi Feng asked, smiling as he looked at the two people wearing serious expressions before him.

Currently, he had produced only ten Level 55 Dark-Gold Weapons.

It wasn't that he did not wish to produce more but that he lacked the materials to do so. While the materials needed to produce these weapons were not very rare and were available in the market, they were not usually sold in large quantities. Collecting a sufficient amount would take considerable time.

This was also the reason why the various large Guilds that could produce Dark-Gold Weapons made only a very limited quantity.

In the current God's Domain, having ten Level 55 Dark-Gold Weapons was already a staggering feat.

"You still have more of these?" Phoenix Rain asked, pleasantly surprised.

“May I know how many more of these weapons Brother Black Flame has?” Unyielding Heart asked hurriedly.

A single Level 55 Dark-Gold Weapon was indeed nothing significant to them because one weapon could improve the combat power of only one player. The improvement would be minimal.

However, after reaching a certain quantity, these Level 55 Dark-Gold Weapons would have much more of an impact. With enough of these weapons, one could elevate the combat power of a team to a whole new level. Meanwhile, this increase in combat power would be very useful when a team was raiding Field Bosses.

“Not many,” Shi Feng said. Raising three fingers, he added, “I only have enough to equip a 300-man team. May I know if the two of you are interested in this transaction?”

“Guild Leader Black Flame, you’re not joking, right? Enough to equip a 300-man team? Doesn’t that mean you have over a hundred Level 55 Dark-Gold Weapons?” Mu Lingsha, who sat at a side, asked, her face twitching involuntarily.

The weapons placed on the table were all meant for physical classes; none were for magical classes. Even so, trying to equip every physical class in a 300-man team would still require over 100 weapons.

Currently, she wasn’t even certain whether the various superpowers possessed Level 55 Dark-Gold Weapons. At the very least, Unyielding Soul definitely did not. No matter how she looked at it, she simply could not accept that Zero Wing could actually take out over a hundred of these weapons.

Meanwhile, Phoenix Rain’s and Unyielding Heart’s lips also twitched slightly when they heard Shi Feng’s words.

This revelation truly came as a shock to them.

With so many Level 55 Dark-Gold Weapons, they could construct three very powerful 100-man teams. So long as each

team had sufficient Tier 2 players, even raiding Level 50, 100-man Team Dungeons wouldn't be a problem.

If they had three teams capable of consistently raiding Level 50, 100-man Team Dungeons, their Guilds' income of weapons and equipment would increase drastically. They could even acquire Level 50 Dungeon Set Equipment within one Cooldown cycle.

"May I know how Brother Black Flame plans on selling these weapons?" Unyielding Heart asked, a passionate flame burning in his eyes.

"Right, Guild Leader Black Flame, how do you plan on selling these weapons?" Phoenix Rain asked in a serious tone as well.

She could not help but admit that this finale item was truly a finale among finales. After all, while the All-rounded Devices and Elven Silver only provided them with a chance of obtaining top-tier weapons and equipment, placed right before them was a guarantee of doing so.

"Simple." Shi Feng then took out two sets of documents listing some rare materials and handed these to the two people before him. "Using the listed materials as the standard and 300 sets of them as one batch, so long as you collect one batch of materials, you may purchase 40 weapons. We'll use these 300 sets of materials as the starting bid. You can then increase the price using Magic Crystals or Coins, with each increment being worth no less than 100 Gold."

After reading the list of materials Shi Feng provided, Phoenix Rain and Unyielding Heart gasped involuntarily.

Although the materials listed were not particularly rare, one full set was already worth quite a lot. Yet, now, they needed 300 sets just to qualify to participate in the auction. Shi Feng's asking price truly wasn't low.

"I don't have any problems here," Phoenix Rain said, nodding.

A first-rate Guild would indeed face great difficulty collecting 300 sets of the listed materials. It wasn't a matter of money but of the rarity of the materials. With the Dragon-Phoenix Pavilion's huge sphere of influence, however, collecting 300 sets within a short period was still doable.

"Deal!" Unyielding Heart was also determined to go through with this transaction. So long as he could obtain 40 of these Level 55 Dark-Gold Weapons, he would have the confidence to lead his Guild's main force to obtain the First Clear of a Level 50, 100-man Team Dungeon.

Moreover, in terms of ability to collect resources, his side was much stronger than Phoenix Rain's. After all, the Dragon-Phoenix Pavilion was an alliance of two Guilds. Phoenix Rain could mobilize only half of the Guild's resources at most.

"Since both of you are fine with this, let us start the auction now, then." Upon seeing that both sides found his proposal acceptable, Shi Feng grew even more joyful.

Truthfully, even he felt that the amount of materials he was asking for was a little excessive, and he expected that the two Guilds might balk at the condition. After all, even the current Zero Wing wasn't capable of collecting 300 sets of the materials at short notice. However, when he thought about how

both the Dragon-Phoenix Pavilion and Unyielding Soul were super-first-rate Guilds, he concluded that acquiring 300 sets of the materials shouldn't be impossible for them, although it would hurt their pockets slightly.

By setting such a high price in the first place, so long as he could acquire 300 sets of the materials required, given his production success rate, which was above 30%, he could instantly earn not only his cost but also quite an amount of materials to arm Zero Wing.

Now, however, it would seem that he had somewhat underestimated the foundations of the two super-first-rate Guilds. After all, the two representatives before him didn't even frown as they agreed to his proposal. Apparently, they were more than capable of acquiring over 300 sets of the materials.

Chapter 1837 – Titan Guard Upgraded

As Shi Feng started the auction, Phoenix Rain and Unyielding Heart placed bids in a frenzy without any concern for each other.

“Two thousand Gold!”

“Three thousand Gold!”

“Five thousand Gold!”

Whether Phoenix Rain or Unyielding Heart won the items, 40 Level 55 Dark-Gold Weapons would serve a great purpose. These weapons were of the utmost importance to their respective Guild's development. Naturally, they wouldn't hold back. Rather than increasing the bid in 100-Gold increments, they increased it by 1,000-Gold increments.

In just a few minutes, the price had reached 24,000 Gold with Unyielding Heart's bid. Including the cost of the materials, the total value of his offer was far more than what these 40 Dark-Gold Weapons were worth.

However, Unyielding Heart did not care. Even Mu Lingsha had hinted that Unyielding Heart had to acquire the weapons regardless of the cost.

Their Guild currently competed with Starlink to obtain the First Clear of a Level 50, 100-man Team Dungeon. Both Guilds had already reached the Final Boss in their respective Dungeons, and these weapons would ensure Unyielding Soul's victory.

Even if they had to spend a little more Coins than expected, they could easily earn back the cost.

"Thirty thousand Gold!" Phoenix Rain instantly raised the price by a significant margin. She had already acquired the All-rounded Devices and Elven Silver, but if she had these Dark-Gold Weapons as well, capturing the Sea of Death's inner islands would become far easier.

After competing for several more minutes, Phoenix Rain won the first batch of weapons for 40,000 Gold and 300 sets of materials. Unyielding Heart then claimed the second batch for 43,000 Gold and 300 sets of materials. Although he wanted to win the last batch as well, due to lack of funds and these weapons' ordinary nature, he didn't go all out in the bidding.

As a result, Phoenix Rain won the third batch of weapons for 41,000 Gold and 300 sets of materials.

Super-first-rate Guilds really are rich. After Shi Feng signed a contract with both sides, joy filled his heart, although he didn't show it.

He had to admit that becoming a Master Forger really was beneficial. Just by selling three batches of standardized Dark- Gold Weapons, he had earned 124,000 Gold and 900 sets of materials. This price far exceeded his initial expectations. ^

Now, he had the money to construct the airport and repair the Secret Stone Forest, in addition to enough materials to arm Zero Wing's members.

Had he sold these weapons in single units or to small Guilds, he would never have gotten such a good price.

However, the Dragon-Phoenix Pavilion and Unyielding Soul couldn't collect the required materials as easily as Shi Feng had suspected, either. This was especially true for Phoenix Rain, who would need roughly one day to collect all 300 sets. Unyielding Heart similarly needed a little time to collect all the materials.

Shi Feng could not help but breathe a sigh of relief. He could only start crafting the weapons after he obtained the materials, and if the two Guilds paid him in one go, he wouldn't have their purchased items ready. Hence, as a compromise, Shi Feng had asked both Guilds pay a portion of the required materials as a down-payment. Only after they brought the remaining materials and funds would he hand over the weapons.

With this compromise, not only would he have materials to produce the weapons, but the two Guilds would also have extra time to collect the remaining materials.

Neither Phoenix Rain nor Unyielding Heart had any issues with this arrangement. They hadn't brought enough money for the purchases, to begin with, so it was expected that Shi Feng ask for a down-payment. Doing so would also ensure that Zero Wing couldn't sell the 120 Dark-Gold Weapons to anyone else.

Neither Phoenix Rain nor Unyielding Heart had suspected that Zero Wing had crafted these weapons; they had assumed that the Guild had acquired the items from farming monsters. Since their Guilds didn't have the full payments ready, a down- payment was understandable.

Phoenix Rain and Unyielding Heart had their subordinates deliver the agreed-upon down-payment, which was 30% of the full amount. In return, both Guilds would be granted a full day to collect the remaining funds and materials.

When the 270 sets of materials were delivered, Shi Feng recruited Melancholic Smile and Cream Cocoa to help him craft the weapons.

Although standardized Level 55 Dark-Gold Weapons required a lot of time to produce, with three Master Forgers working around the clock and the Philosopher's Hand's guidance, it took them no time at all to complete the 120 weapons.

After less than half a day, the three had used all 270 sets of materials and produced 114 weapons. Including the original ten Shi Feng had made, they had a total of 124 Level 55 Dark-Gold Weapons now.

Once the weapons had been forged, Shi Feng left the transaction's follow-up work to Melancholic Smile. He then contacted Aqua Rose and had her gather 20 main force members. He planned to head to the Level 70 neutral map, Flame Demon's Valley.

After his trade with the Dragon-Phoenix Pavilion and Unyielding Soul, Shi Feng realized that he had to prioritize unsealing the Philosopher's Hand fully.

Partially unsealing the Philosopher's Hand had already been so profitable. If he could fully unseal it, he could nurture a large number of Master Lifestyle players. Not only would he be able to arm Silverwing Town to the teeth, but he'd also be able to fortify the Lost Town.

Then, he wouldn't have to worry about the Evil God's Temple, which grew stronger with each passing day in the Ore Empire. He wouldn't have to worry about Blackwater, either. He could definitely afford a battle of attribution with both the Evil God's Temple and Blackwater simultaneously. After all, war was a competition of wealth and resources.

Thinking up to this point, Shi Feng felt even greater need to head to the Flame Demon's Valley.

In less than half an hour, Aqua Rose had gathered Cola, Fire Dance, Violet Cloud, and the other core upper echelons. As the group approached the Guild's meeting room, they chatted and discussed the recent challengers they had faced in Silverwing Town's Battle Arena.

After Shi Feng had set the Battle Arena's new rules, quite a few famous experts from the neighboring kingdoms and empires visited Silverwing Town to challenge Zero Wing's Guild Leader. Some experts had also visited the town purely to spar with Zero Wing's experts. The Battle Arena's popularity in Silverwing Town had skyrocketed, and it was now even more popular than the Battle Arena in Zero Wing City.

Meanwhile, Cola and the others' arrival in White River City's Guild Hall had caused a commotion among the other Guild members.

"Now that I'm so close to them, I can really feel how powerful our Guild's main force members are. Commander Fire Dance is especially powerful. Recently, I've heard that of all the challenges she

accepted, she won every single one of them. I've even heard that she defeated the fifth-ranked Assassin in the Black Dragon Empire. Commander Fire Dance has a three-digit winning streak."

"That's right! I've also heard that on the latest issue of the God's Domain Experts List, Commander Fire Dance ranks as the 319th expert thanks to her excellent battle records. But I still think that she hasn't revealed all of her strength yet. Her rank will definitely climb in the future."

"That's only natural. However, the current God's Domain Ranking List has changed. Now, if you want to earn a spot on the list or improve your rank, you have to be strong enough and have a dazzling battle record."

"I wonder when I'll become a main force member. I really want to train directly under Commander Fire Dance."

"The Guild holds a qualifying tournament once a month. You can participate as long as you become a core member."

"Right! I'll work hard to become a core member first!"

As the players in the Guild Hall talked about Fire Dance and the other main force members of the Guild, a desire to join Zero Wing's main force overwhelmed them.

Meanwhile, Shi Feng, who had hidden his appearance under a Black Cloak, couldn't help but chuckle as he overheard the various conversations. He then made his way toward the Guild Hall's meeting room.

"Guild Leader, are we going on a major operation this time?" Cola asked eagerly after Shi Feng entered the room.

He had improved significantly in the Battle Arena lately and itched to display his new strength.

“Of course. However, we have to replace your equipment first,” Shi Feng said, nodding.

“Replace my equipment?” Cola was confused. He currently wore the Dark Corrosion Set, the best available Dark-Gold Set Equipment in the game right now, and quite a few of his other pieces were Epic rank. He didn’t understand what Shi Feng wanted to replace.

“Give me your shield first,” Shi Feng said.

“Shield?” Cola revealed an excited expression as he guessed, “Could it be...”

“That’s right. We didn’t have enough Magic Crystals before, but we do now,” Shi Feng said, nodding.

Cola eagerly handed his Titan Guard to Shi Feng, anticipation filling his eyes. Although he had been saving his own Magic Crystals, it would take him forever to collect 100,000 on his own. Moreover, the Guild always needed Magic Crystals, making it almost impossible for him to upgrade his shield.

After Shi Feng received the Titan Guard, he immediately chose to upgrade it.

Chapter 1838 – Fragmented Legendary Shield’s Hidden Effect Inside the resplendent meeting room...

After Shi Feng clicked to upgrade the Titan Guard, the shield began to glow with a brilliant light that forced the players in the room to close their eyes.

By the time everyone reopened their eyes, they felt a horrific pressure wash over them. Instinctively, these players took up a defensive stance.

“What’s going on? What’s with this powerful aura?”

“Could it be from that shield? This can’t be possible, right? This aura is as intense as that of a Mythic monster.”

All of these players were experts, and they had experienced countless life-or-death battles. They had long since developed senses that surpassed that of a wild beast

If they hadn’t known that they were absolutely safe in this meeting room, they would’ve pulled out their weapons and prepared for combat

Once the intensity of the Titan Guard’s aura reached its peak, it began to fade.

So, this is a Fragmented Legendary Shield? Shi Feng was inwardly shocked as he felt the Titan Guard become lighter than it had been.

Although the shield had never been particularly heavy, holding it still restricted his movement

Now, however, the Titan Guard was as light as a feather. It felt as if the cold, tough metallic frame were merely an illusion. The shield's hidden effect was truly frightening.

It was common knowledge in God's Domain that shields were so large so the MTs could effectively block a Boss's attacks. In return, the shields were considerably heavy. Of course, there were lighter shields, such as wooden or steel bucklers.

Although a buckler was easier to use and gave MTs more freedom of movement, its flaws were apparent. With a buckler's small size, blocking attacks properly was strenuous. This was especially true during a high-speed fight. Hence, the various large Guilds' MTs usually used large, heavy shields.

However, now, not only did the Titan Guard possess a huge defensive area, but it was also light. It was a dream shield for any MT.

Moreover, compared to the Titan Guard's hidden effect, its new Attributes were truly frightening.

...

[Titan Guard] (Shield, Fragmented Legendary Rank)

Minimum Equipment Level: 50 Equipment Requirement: Strength 1,400 Attributes adjust according to user's level.

Defense +9,450 (Level 50)

Block Rate: 39%

Strength +245, Endurance +224, Agility +190 Defend Skill +3 Levels Reaction ability +2

Strength increased by 35%, Agility increased by 30%, and Endurance increased by 30%. Ignore Levels +20;

All item level requirements reduced by 5 Levels;

When equipped:

All magic damage received reduced by 50%;

Reaction speed increased by 20%;

Paralysis effects reduced by 40%;

Frontal damage received reduced by 30%;

All Resistances increased by 30%;

Additional Passive Skill 1-

Guardian Shield: Automatically generates a layer of Guardian Energy, which can block an attack and absorb a portion of the attack's Strength to recover user's Stamina every 10 seconds.

Additional Passive Skill 2-

Iron Wall: Reduces the impact from incoming attacks by 50%. If attacks are of a lower tier than user, reduces damage by 70%. If attacks are of the same or higher tier than user, reduces damage by 30%.

Additional Active Skill 1-

Titan's Heart: Generates three layers of Protective Energy that absorbs damage equivalent to ten times of wielder's maximum HP, increases physique by 30%, reaction speed by 20%, and Movement Speed by 20% for 45 seconds. During this period, battle recovery improved by 800%, and healing received increased by 100%.

Cooldown: 5 minutes

Additional Active Skill 2-

Titan's Will: Becomes immune to all control effects. Reduces all damage received by 95% and weakens negative effects by 90%. Increases Attack Speed by 100% and Movement Speed by 30%. Starting Movement Speed set at 80% of maximum Movement Speed.

Duration: 30 seconds

Cooldown: 3 minutes

(Cannot stack with other Defensive Skills.)

Additional Active Skill 3-

Titan's Domain: Every non-friendly target within a 100-yard radius will increase wielder's Basic Attributes by 2%, reduces damage received by 1%, and heals wielder by 0.1% HP every second.

Duration: 1 minute

Cooldown: 2 hours

(Maximum number of targets: 100)

With these Attributes, an ordinary MT could immediately become a peak MT by equipping the Titan Guard.

"Guild Leader, how are the Attributes?" Cola asked excitedly.

“Take a look for yourself,” Shi Feng said, chuckling. He then passed the Titan Guard back to Cola.

When Cola received the Titan Guard, he noticed the change to the shield’s weight. When he saw the shield’s Attributes, even his breathing became harsh.

“Guild Leader, can we go find a Mythic Boss?” Cola asked, staring at Shi Feng with desire in his eyes.

He was like a Swordsman that had just acquired a treasured sword and was eager to test out his new weapon.

Cola had worn the best equipment in God’s Domain. Even while wielding the Epic ranked Titan Guard, he could tank a Mythic monster of the same level. Now that Titan Guard had been upgraded, he felt that he could face a Mythic monster head-on.

Of course, he knew that was a misconception. After all, a Mythic monster was still a Mythic monster.

Although he couldn’t face a Mythic monster in a direct confrontation, he was confident of tanking a Mythic monster by himself. Whether or not he could kill the monster would depend on his team’s DPS.

“Relax. You’ll have plenty of opportunities later,” Shi Feng assured his guildmate, smiling.

Shi Feng had already been roughly 50% certain that he could complete his quest in the Flame Demon’s Valley, but with the Fragmented Legendary ranked Titan Guard, his success rate had risen to 80% at the minimum.

Following which, Shi Feng had everyone switch to Fire Resistance equipment. He also allocated several All-rounded Devices, Elven Silver, and the Master ranked Fire Resistance Potion, which Silent Wonder had crafted.

His teammates were confused.

After equipping the Fire Resistance equipment, they had over 100 points in Fire Resistance. With so much, they shouldn't have any issues raiding the current large-scale Team Dungeons with high-temperature environments, yet Shi Feng wanted them to use Master Fire Resistance potions as well...

Just where were they going?

"We're heading to the Flame Demon's Valley. Before we go, I have to remind you all that once we're in the valley, you must follow me closely. You absolutely must not get lost," Shi Feng said.

"The Flame Demon's Valley? Isn't that a Level 70-plus danger zone?" Aqua Rose, who was relatively familiar with God's Domain's maps, asked, shocked.

The other players gasped when they heard Aqua Rose's question.

While they weren't familiar with the Flame Demon's Valley, they knew what a danger zone was.

The Black Dragon Empire had quite a few danger zones, as did Star-Moon Kingdom. However, they had never heard of a Guild successfully exploring either countries' Level 30 to 40 danger zones. At most, some Guilds had played around in these danger zones' outer regions, but they didn't dare venture to the inner areas as death was almost certain upon entry.

While part of the reason was the danger zones' extraordinarily harsh environments, the maps' monsters were far more dangerous and extremely powerful.

Not only did the danger zones' monsters have incredibly high Basic Attributes, but they also displayed very high combat standards. Even the weakest monster in danger zones had combat standards at the Trial Tower's third floor. Meanwhile, as one ventured further into the zone, they'd face even stronger monsters. Near the inner regions, one would begin to encounter monsters that could reach the Trial Tower's fifth floor. Just thinking about a group of several hundred of such monsters would make any expert player shudder with fear.

Yet, Shi Feng had so casually mentioned that they were about to head to a Level 70-plus danger zone. If Aqua Rose hadn't told them about the Flame Demon's Valley, they would've assumed that they were going to some ordinary map based on Shi Feng's tone...

"Relax. I've already investigated the area. Once we enter, you just need to follow my lead." Naturally, Shi Feng knew what kind of horrors to expect in the Flame Demon's Valley. "Danger zones are also blessed maps. They are the best places to refine your skills. Don't you want to grow stronger?"

Hearing Shi Feng's explanation, everyone's eyes glowed with excitement and anticipation.

While they had fought in Silverwing Town's Battle Arena, they had realized how vast God's Domain truly was. Although many of the challengers hadn't been famous, their combat standards had been extraordinary. They had only managed to defeat these experts thanks to their superior equipment

Now that they had learned of a place where they could train and improve their abilities, of course, they wanted to visit it.

Shi Feng then led his team to Star-Moon City before teleporting to the Flame Dragon Empire and again to one of its border towns. In the end, Shi Feng used the Seven Luminaries Ring's Spatial Gate to transport everyone across the remaining distance. After several hours, the team finally arrived before a valley that radiated waves of heat.

Despite just standing at the valley's entrance, the area was hot enough to sting their skin. They did not even dare to imagine how high the temperature would be once they entered the valley.

"Guild Leader, there seem to be some people ahead," Minor Wind, who had used Eagle Eyes to observe their surroundings, suddenly reported as he pointed at the smoke-choked path ahead of them.

"People?" Shi Feng was astonished.

Just getting to the Flame Demon's Valley was a difficult task for current players, not to mention fighting in such a harsh environment.

"Amazing! They're fighting a Level 72 Boss! And they're overwhelming it!" Minor Wind exclaimed as he watched these players fight. "Guild Leader, some of our Guild members are among them!"

"Our Guild? How?" Shi Feng was even more surprised to hear that his people were present.

Following which, Minor Wind sent Shi Feng a recording.

“Why are they here?” As Shi Feng watched the video, he discovered that there really were Zero Wing members among the group.

One of them was the Elementalist Thoughtful Rain, and the other was the Cleric Blue Bamboo. Both wore Zero Wing’s sixwinged emblem. Currently, Thoughtful Rain was Level 56, while Blue Bamboo was Level 55. In terms of levels, these two could already contend with the various superpowers’ experts.

“Guild Leader, what should we do?” Aqua Rose asked.

Normally, players would be on guard when they encountered others in the fields. After all, PKs were far from uncommon. If one were not careful, other players might even mug them. Furthermore, the unexpected party was engaged in a Boss fight. They should be even more on guard.

However, the Flame Demon’s Valley only had one entrance. They couldn’t just wait until the other party finished their raid. Moreover, they had already used their All-rounded Devices, Elven Silver, and Master Fire Resistance Potions, all of which had time limits.

“Let’s wait and watch them for now,” Shi Feng said after giving the matter some thought.

Chapter 1839 – Neutral Races

Piles of large rocks decorated the scorching valley. Due to the constant screen of black smoke from within the valley, it was extremely difficult to examine the area with the naked eye. One would be fortunate if they could see up to 200 yards away. Even those with stronger physiques would only see an additional 20 or 30 yards. Only with Skills like Eagle Eyes could players see up to 700 to 800 yards.

While 700 or 800 yards might seem far, it was nothing to monsters in a Level 70-plus danger zone. These monsters could normally see up to 500 yards. Due to the level difference between these monsters and Zero Wing's players, the monsters would have an easier time discovering them. If they were not careful, the monsters might even notice them from 800 yards away.

Under Shi Feng's lead, Zero Wing's team quickly moved to 200 yards away from Thoughtful Rain's team. Rocks and smoke obscured their position, so the other team would find it difficult to notice their presence.

"Isn't that Rain?" Aqa Rose was a little surprised as she watched Thoughtful Rain in battle. "Her combat standard has improved by quite a bit."

Thoughtful Rain dealt with three Level 70 Lord ranked Flame Demon Guards, which moved alongside the Boss monster, by herself, yet despite being outleveled and outnumbered, she faced the three Lords on equal footing. She had thoroughly distracted the three flaming humanoids, allowing her teammates to focus on the Boss.

It was evident that her combat standard had already reached the Refinement Realm.

However, Thoughtful Rain's teammates were even more surprising.

None of these players were human, but foreign races. They were either Half-beastmen with tiger ears and tails or Half-elves with snowy-white skin and pointed ears.

"What is going on? They're not actually human?" Fire Dance exclaimed in shock.

Every player on Zero Wing's team was shocked.

As far as they knew, it was only possible to play a human when starting the game. There weren't any other races to choose from. Although they had encountered Demon Players and monster players, they were transformations. Technically, they still identified as human.

However, the players on Thoughtful Rain's team were different. Their initial statistics showed that they weren't humans who could transform. Instead, their races identified as Half-beastmen or Half-elves.

While Shi Feng found the situation surprising as well, he did not find it particularly strange. Moreover, he finally understood why these other players were here.

In God's Domain, players were only allowed to play as human at the start of the game; there were no other racial options to choose from. However, after reaching Level 30 and beyond, players could head to neutral races' habitats to complete conversion quests, becoming Half-beastmen or Half-elves.

Although players would gain some racial abilities after becoming Half-beastmen or Half-elves, they'd abandon their identities as human and lose the protection of God's Domain's ruling race. These players would find it far more difficult to move about on the continent and in the game.

Not all kingdoms and empires permitted entry to neutral races. Only a very small number of countries did so.

Even so, there were still many expert players that willingly converted.

Neutra races' racial abilities were very tempting, and although these abilities wouldn't improve one's Basic Attributes directly, they would improve one's physical abilities. For example, Half-beastmen generally gained more mobility, reaction speed, and perception. Half-beastmen were natural-born warriors. As for Half-elves, they were magic's favored children. They would find magic-related tasks far easier than the other races. Both the Half-beastman and Half-elf races also provided higher innate Resistances.

As a result, neutral players could survive and fight in maps with harsh environments, such as danger zones.

In addition, like Demon Players, Half-beastmen and Half-elves were differentiated based on their Bloodline purity. The purer one's Bloodline, the stronger their racial abilities would be.

In exchange for these benefits, not only would players face racial discrimination, but they'd also have a more difficult time upgrading their tiers.

With the same combat standards and combat power, a human might be promoted to Tier 3, but a Half-beastman or Half-elf might only reach Tier 2. This was one of the main reasons that the human race oppressed the various neutral races. The human race had far more apex members than the neutral races.

This was the law of equivalent exchange in God's Domain, and it would be up to players to decide which path they would take.

Those who were confident in their strength could definitely challenge the limitations neutral races faced. If they successfully broke past those limitations, they would no doubt become much stronger than human players of the same tier.

After Shi Feng's team observed these neutral players for some time, the Level 72 Great Lord ranked Flame Demon Commander's HP finally fell to 50%.

Suddenly, a Level 56, Half-elf female Elementalist shouted, "Melee players, pull back! Dodge the Boss's Teamwipe Skill!" Hearing this Half-elf's command, the nine Half-beastman players fighting the Flame Demon Commander darted back from the Boss.

The six-meter-tall Flame Demon Commander roared. Towering pillars of fire rose from the ground around it, melting the earth until it was molten lava. In the blink of an eye, the monster had formed a field of lava void of life.

As the lava field continued to expand, the Half-elf Elementalist used a Tier 2 Ice-type Curse, Ice River.

The lava then stilled, cooling until only frozen dirt remained. The Flame Demon Commander was also frozen, becoming an ice sculpture.

"Attack with everything you've got!" the Half-elf Elementalist shouted.

With the Half-elf Elementalist's command, everyone bombarded the Level 72 Great Lord with their most powerful attacks, decreasing the Great Lord's HP much faster than before.

Frightening damages appeared above the Great Lord's head, one after another. Even the weakest attacks dealt over -10,000 damage, whereas the stronger blows dealt over -20,000 damage.

In two short minutes, the Flame Demon Commander's HP fell to 30%.

Once it did, the Great Lord's flaming body split into balls of flame, forming miniature Flame Demon Commanders. There were 50 miniature versions of the Great Lord, and each one had half of the Flame Demon Commander's Basic Attributes. They were still stronger than the Lord ranked Flame Demon Guards, but they only had 600,000 HP each.

Despite so many miniature Flame Demon Commanders, the Half-beastmen and Half-elves coped. Each player fought two or three copies and steadily shaved away the copies' HP.

Once every miniature Flame Demon Commander had died, the flames gathered and merged once more. In the blink of an eye, the real Flame Demon Commander stood before the team. This time, however, it only had 10% of its HP remaining.

It took less than two minutes for the team of neutral players to kill the Flame Demon Commander. As the Great Lord's flaming body dissipated, it left behind five items and flaming wreckage.

Even a large Guild's main force would be awed by how fast these players had dealt with a Level 72 Great Lord.

After watching these neutral players slay the Boss, a voice called out to Shi Feng as he prepared to lead his team over to greet the other players.

"You guys have been watching us fight for quite some time now. It's about time you show yourselves, don't you think?" the female Half-elf Elementalist asked coldly as she turned towards the rock Shi Feng and the others hid behind. "If you refuse, we'll come to you."

Hearing the female Half-elf's statement, the other Half-beastmen and Half-elves turned towards Zero Wing's members with frosty expressions.

Chapter 1840 – No Need for Explanations

“Guild Leader, it seems that we’ve been discovered,” Aqua Rose said as she felt the killing intent radiating from the female Half-elf Elementalist. However, she did not reveal any signs of panic at being discovered. Instead, she calmly smiled and said, “It also seems that the other party doesn’t appreciate our good intentions.”

“Forget it Since they don’t, so be it,” Shi Feng said, shaking his head and laughing. “Since they’ve spoken, let’s head over.”

Kill-stealing was a frequent occurrence in the fields. For such expert neutral players to come all the way to such a high-level danger zone, it was highly unlikely that they were just here to kill Bosses. The only possibility he could think of was that these players were here for a high-ranked quest or had found a clue leading to one.

Either way, they wouldn’t like being discovered by other players.

For example, Shi Feng didn’t want anyone to learn about his quest to unseal the Philosopher’s Hand. If they did, it would definitely cause trouble for him and his Guild. Even now, he hadn’t told anyone about the quest, not even his teammates.

Any players that had an important quest or were trying to pick one up would conceal their activities. When discovered, they’d greet the offending players with hostility. It wouldn’t even be surprising if these players attacked without warning.

Hence, to avoid a misunderstanding, Shi Feng had decided to maintain his distance, hiding his team throughout the raid.

First, he wanted to avoid unnecessary combat.

Second, Thoughtful Rain and Blue Bamboo were members of this neutral team. If Zero Wing's members suddenly showed up in this deserted area, the team would suspect Thoughtful Rain and Blue Bamboo of leaking information.

Third, he didn't want others to know what Zero Wing was doing in the Flame Demon's Valley.

However, the female Half-elf Elementalist's perception had exceeded Shi Feng's expectations. He had never expected the woman to sense them 200 yards away despite her involvement in the intense battle. Even with his physique, he had barely seen the battle from this distance. The only other player that had seen the battle clearly was Minor Wind, who had activated Eagle Eyes.

The other team's members had been busy with the fight, making it impossible to maintain Eagle Eyes. Hence, he hadn't expected to be discovered.

However, since the team had noticed them, he had no choice but to reveal himself and see how events unfolded.

Meanwhile, the Half-beastmen and Half-elves warily watched Shi Feng's group approach.

“Guild Leader, our tracks have been discovered. Should we kill them?” a Level 55, Tier 2 Berserker, a Half-beastman in armor and wielding a white bone spear, asked, lacing his words with killing intent.

“Let’s hear them out first. At the end of the day, this map is controlled by the human race. Moreover, we’re already half-way through our quest. An interruption will only make it more difficult to complete,” the female Half-elf Elementalist quietly responded.

During the battle, she had discovered Shi Feng’s group, but she had remained silent about it to see what the other players intended. At first, she had assumed that the team was here to kiH-steal, but even after the Boss had died, Shi Feng’s group had been motionless. This proved that Shi Feng’s group had no designs on their loot.

Even so, she couldn’t let the other party follow them. After all, she had an important quest to complete. She could only expose the team and persuade them to leave.

Of course, the decision had some risk. If negotiations soured, it was likely they would have to fight each other.

If Shi Feng’s group insisted on following them, she would have to act.

Her quest offered an extraordinary reward, which would qualitatively transform their Guild. With this reward, it was entirely possible that their Guild would instantly become as strong as a first-rate Guild.

As Shi Feng’s group increasingly closer to the female Half-elf’s team, Thoughtful Rain and Blue Bamboo, who were busy with three Flame Demon Guards, stared with wide eyes.

“Rain, aren’t they from our Guild? Even Vice Guild Leader Aqua and Commander Fire Dance are here,” Blue Bamboo said, stupefied. “What should we do? Will Big Sis Melody suspect us of leaking information?”

The team they had joined on this expedition to the Flame Demon’s Valley for a quest was extremely important to Melody, the Guild Leader of Ninth Heaven. This quest could even determine the life or death of Melody’s Guild. Hence, the woman had repeatedly forbidden them from telling anyone about the quest

Neither she nor Thoughtful Rain had spoken a word of their actions, yet their Guild members had shown up here. At this point, avoiding a misunderstanding was almost impossible.

“We don’t have a choice. We have to explain to Big Sis Melody and hope that she understands. But this is really a terrible coincidence,” Thoughtful Rain, who kept the three Flame Demon Guards busy, said helplessly.

Unfortunately, as Shi Feng’s group approached, Melody and the other Ninth Heaven members noticed the six-winged emblem on these players’ chests.

“A six-winged emblem? Isn’t that the same one that Rain and Blue wear? Could they be Zero Wing’s members?”

“Guild Leader, we haven’t said anything about this operation to anyone. How could Zero Wing’s members be here?”

“Could it be... Did Rain and Blue...”

“I knew outsiders couldn’t...”

Suddenly, the Half-beastmen and Half-elves turned to Thoughtful Rain and Blue Bamboo. Although they did not question the two directly, they watched the women with questioning gazes.

“Enough! I’ll handle this!” Melody roared as she shot her team members a chilling look. “Let’s find out why they’re here first.” Suddenly, this team of neutral players heard a deep voice.

“I am Black Flame, Zero Wing’s Guild Leader. My team and I have a task in the Flame Demon’s Valley. May I ask you to remain here for some time? Once we’re done, we’ll invite you in.”

Shi Feng’s voice was sonorous, echoing throughout the valley. Moreover, his aura was imposing. He felt like an ancient behemoth that had just woken.

“Damn it! It’s true!”

When Melody’s team members heard Shi Feng’s statement, they glared at Thoughtful Rain and Blue Bamboo with indignation.

Meanwhile, Thoughtful Rain and Blue Bamboo were at a loss for words. They felt as if any explanation would be useless.

“Guild Leader, since they’ve come to steal our quest, we should kill them!” one of the Tier 2 Berserkers said, exuding killing intent “I want to see just how powerful Zero Wing truly is!”

They had more or less heard of Zero Wing. This Guild, which had started with nothing, had gone on to take control of Star- Moon Kingdom. The Guild was powerful enough to rival a first-rate Guild, many times stronger than Ninth Heaven.

However, they didn't think that they'd lose to Zero Wing's experts in terms of individual combat standards.

They had the innate advantage of Half-beastmen and Half-elves, which would be particularly prominent in PvP.

Waving to her teammates for quiet, Melody turned to Thoughtful Rain and Blue Bamboo. In a low tone, she asked, "I just want to ask one thing. Did you two leak our secret?"

"Big Sis Melody, we didn't say anything about this," Thoughtful Rain insisted.

Blue Bamboo nodded repeatedly, firm resolution in her eyes.

"Alright, I believe you," Melody said, revealing a gentle smile. She did not think that Thoughtful Rain and Blue Bamboo would betray her trust. She then turned back to Shi Feng and said, "Hello, Guild Leader Black Flame. I am Melody, the Guild Leader of Ninth Heaven. May I know why we cannot enter? That way, I'll understand what I should do."

Although there was no arrogance in Melody's voice, her voice held no deference, either. Rather, her tone contained questions and threats.

Depending on Shi Feng's explanation, she wouldn't shy from a battle to the death or mutual destruction.

Thoughtful Rain and Blue Bamboo tensed.

"The reason?" Shi Feng suddenly laughed. "I'm afraid that you don't qualify to demand answers from me. Moreover, Zero Wing has never needed to explain itself! All you need to know is that you are not allowed entry for the moment. If you refuse, I'll simply treat you like the other monsters!"

Shi Feng then swung Killing Ray at the Flame Demon Guards chasing Thoughtful Rain, tearing the space before him. A golden lightning bolt struck one of the three Lords from over 60 yards away.

The powerful Flame Demon Guards then fell to one knee, the strike leaving a deep gash in their flesh. All three Lords were heavily injured. Meanwhile, a damage of over -100,000 appeared above the Flame Demon Guards' heads. Among the three Lords, one even suffered nearly -300,000 damage.

But compared to Shi Feng's damage, what truly surprised the other Guild Leader was his ability to land his attack against the three moving Lords without harming Thoughtful Rain, despite being over 60 yards away. Moreover, Shi Feng had sent his attack through the other team, striking the Flame Demon Guards before they had been able to react...

Shi Feng's timing and Skill usage were godlike.

This stunned Melody and the Ninth Heaven members, who had planned to put up a fight.

Without another word, Shi Feng led his team into the Flame Demon's Valley, leaving the dumbstruck members of Ninth Heaven behind.

