

The Strongest

Chapter 981 – Difference Between Guilds

“As expected of the Blackwater Corporation. Despite paying so little attention to God’s Domain when it launched, it has so many powerful experts,” Shi Feng commented.

Prompted by Shi Feng’s remark, Gentle Snow followed his gaze out the window. What she saw, however, surprised her. U.p.dated by . com

White River City was even more prosperous than Star-Moon City. Even in the costly Noble’s District, she could see plenty of players going about their business.

From her vantage point, she had a clear view of what these players were doing, and very quickly, several players caught her attention. Although these players seemed to be chatting among themselves, they occasionally turned to look at the room she and Shi Feng occupied. These were not low-leveled players, either; the lowest among them was Level 38, while the rest were Level 39. Among these experts, a few neglected to hide their auras. Hence, she could feel just how much of a threat these people posed.

If she left the building...

Needless to say, she wouldn’t leave White River City alive.

The Blackwater Corporation had not prepared overmuch for the first ambush. Shi Feng’s presence must’ve also been unexpected. However, the corporation would prepare from here on out.

“Relax. As long as you’re in here, they can’t touch you. If you stay here until you recover from your Weakened state, they will eventually give up and leave,” Shi Feng assured Gentle Snow. On his way here, he had purchased the latest information regarding Ouroboros from the Secret Pavilion. Although the purchase had cost him a pretty penny, he had learned both bad and good news.

He discovered that the Blackwater Corporation now focused fully on God’s Domain. In fact, it had already dealt with the companies that had backed Ouroboros.

To put it simply, Blackwater now owned Ouroboros. Although, it had not yet declared so publicly.

The good news was that he could finally recruit Gentle Snow.

The bad news was that the Blackwater Corporation was not to be trifled with. Among the various international corporations, Blackwater was relatively overbearing. Moreover, the corporation had a powerful affinity for a game like God’s Domain.

Compared to veteran gamers, fighting experts a much higher starting point when they joined God’s Domain. Their lack of familiarity with God’s Domain’s superhuman combat style was the only thing that held them back. However, once they were comfortable with this combat style, they would quickly become experts in God’s Domain with the combat techniques they had learned in the real world.

The Blackwater Corporation had a perfected system to nurture fighting experts. Moreover, after many years of development, it had various dojos around the globe. Given enough time, even Super Guilds would be no match for the Blackwater Corporation.

Even in the past, shortly after the Mind Space System had launched, the Blackwater Corporation had forced itself into God’s Domain.

Although Blackwater had started later than everyone else, it was one of the first corporations to upgrade its own established Guild into a Super Guild.

In contrast, corporations like Open Source could only invest in Super Guilds and super-first-rate Guilds to establish themselves in God's Domain. It was simply too difficult to nurture their own expert players, much less apex experts. By the time they did so, their competition would've left them in the dust.

When Blackwater had begun to focus on developing in God's Domain, the game had been operating for over a year. After all, nobody would have imagined that the game would be more popular than fighting competitions, so much so that it had ushered in a new era. In reality, God's Domain had not only impacted the fighting industry. The various other industries had been affected as well. By then, God's Domain had become irreplaceable in people's lives. It was similar to humanity's introduction to the internet several hundred years ago. After learning about the benefits of God's Domain, people couldn't live without it. U.p..dated by .com

Meanwhile, among the affected industries, the fighting industry had suffered the most.

When the Blackwater Corporation had officially shifted its focus to God's Domain, it had been significantly weakened. It wasn't even half as powerful as it has been during its peak. Even so, it lorded over God's Domain a decade later.

Currently, Blackwater was still at its peak, yet it had already shifted its gaze to God's Domain. With its frightening financial strength and many experts, the corporation was akin to a natural disaster for Star-Moon Kingdom's Zero Wing. If Zero Wing failed to cope with this disaster properly, it would be nothing more than a stepping stone for the Blackwater Corporation.

"I roughly understand Ouroboros's current situation. May I ask what you have planned? Is there anything I can with?" Shi Feng asked quietly as he turned to the somewhat dispirited Gentle Snow.

“Blackwater has already obtained the majority of Ouroboros’s shares. Even my White Clan Group cannot change that fact. The only thing I can do now is take as many people with me as I leave Ouroboros and start all over again elsewhere. Would Zero Wing be interested in purchasing any other materials? I can sell them to you at a 40% discount,” Gentle Snow offered as she smiled bitterly. “I also have a few plots of Land in Star-Moon Kingdom that I want to sell; although I am not sure if Zero Wing can stomach so much at once.”

She still intended to continue her development in another city in Star-Moon Kingdom. After all, she understood Star-Moon Kingdom’s situation.

However, after witnessing the Blackwater Corporation’s strength, once it secured Ouroboros, she would seal her fate if she remained in this kingdom. Her only choice was to restart somewhere far from here. As for the Shops and Lands she owned in Star-Moon Kingdom, there was no point in keeping them. The Blackwater Corporation would see to it that these Lands became worthless. Hence, she might as well sell them to fund her relocation.

“Which Lands you are trying to sell?” Shi Feng could not help but ask.

If they were high-potential Lands of a major city, they would become more valuable by the day. He would definitely profit if he purchased them.

“Most of the Commercial Lands I possess are in Star-Moon Kingdom’s top ten major cities. I have a total of eleven plots. I also have three plots in the Black Dragon Empire and two in the Purple Thorns Kingdom,” Gentle Snow said as she handed Shi Feng a list. “Here is a list of the Lands’ cities and locations as well as my quoted prices.”

After Shi Feng took a look through the list, he couldn’t help but sigh inwardly.

Zero Wing was no match for a first-rate Guild. If these were only the Lands under Gentle Snow's name, one could just imagine how many Lands Ouroboros controlled. On the other hand, despite having so much money right now, Zero Wing struggled to purchase any Lands in major cities. He was even forced to using the Holy City slots to purchase Lands from Super Guilds.

Based on the current market price, the cheapest Land on the Snow Goddess's list was worth around 3,000 Gold, while the most expensive were worth over 8,000. These Lands had long since doubled their original selling prices.

Based on Gentle Snow's quoted prices, he would need around 80,000 Gold to purchase all 16 plots. Even Zero Wing could not fork over so much money at a moment's notice. Moreover, the prices were very reasonable. If anyone else were selling these Lands, he might have to pay an additional 20,000 to 30,000 Gold. Even then, he would have to fight many others to purchase them.

Chapter 982 – The Tip of the Iceberg

Even to Super Guilds, 80,000 Gold was a considerable amount of money. They couldn't collect so much money within a short period, much less the smaller Guilds.

Gentle Snow had little hope that anyone could afford to purchase all of her Lands.

She would just sell as many plots as she could. Once she collected enough Coins, she could proceed with the next part of her plan more smoothly.

While Shi Feng = carefully inspected the Commercial Lands, Gentle Snow received a call from Zhao Yueru.

“Snow, the Guild has called an emergency Elder Meeting and has officially announced that Abandoned Wave will be replacing you as the Guild Leader. Aside from the raw materials you have, Abandoned Wave has frozen the Guild’s assets. Furthermore, many of the God Slaying Army’s members have reported ambushes in the fields and outside of Dungeons. They’ve suffered grievous damages,” Zhao Yueru reported, shaking with rage.

The Blackwater Corporation was too vicious.

The God Slaying Army was their asset as they left Ouroboros. The Guild had spent many years nurturing these experts. If these experts came them and they had enough funding, the new Ouroboros could quickly establish a firm foothold in another kingdom.

Initially, hiding the locations of the Army’s members had not been an issue. After all, every member was an expert. With their equipment, killing these players would not be easy.

Now, however, the Blackwater Corporation had somehow recruited an army of its own experts and slaughtered the God Slaying Army scattered throughout Star-Moon Kingdom. The loss of a single level might have been fine, but the lost weapons and equipment was horrendous.

When Blackwater’s experts killed them, the legion members would drop at least two pieces of equipment; some would even drop three items.

The God Slaying Army had been equipped with the best items available in Ouroboros. If several hundred members lost an item each, it would severely wound the army, much less if they lost two or three items. They would need a lot of time to recover from the loss.

Normally, the God Slaying Army could simply replenish their equipment from the Guild's Warehouse. However, the Blackwater Corporation had already limited their authority. Now, they could not even take a piece of Common Equipment from the Warehouse.

With the God Slaying Army suffering such a blow, rising in another kingdom in a short time would be impossible.

"I understand. For now, have the army's members be extra careful." Gentle Snow's frown deepened after receiving a more detailed report.

Even Ouroboros's old rival, the Star Alliance, couldn't kill so many of the God Slaying Army's members so quickly.

"Guild Leader Snow, you don't look too well. Has something happened?" Shi Feng asked curiously when he noticed Gentle Snow's troubled expression.

"I've just received news that Blackwater has already begun to exact its revenge. The God Slaying Army that I command has suffered over 700 deaths. Although reports say that they've been ambushed by groups of cloaked players, I'm sure that these players are experts from Blackwater," Gentle Snow helplessly explained, not bothering to hide this fact from Shi Feng. Moreover, it was impossible to keep a tight lid on such a major incident. It was only a matter of time before the truth revealed itself.

"It seems that your victory over Lethal Gale has made the Blackwater Corporation anxious. Otherwise, they'd have no reason to make such an excessive move." The news surprised Shi Feng.

No matter what was said or done, the Blackwater Corporation had already purchased Ouroboros. One could even go so far as to say that Ouroboros was the Blackwater Corporation.

If news spread of mysterious players slaughtering Ouroboros's strongest legion on its own turf, it would damage the Guild's reputation.

"Since Blackwater has already gone to such lengths, I'm betting that even if you leave Star-Moon Kingdom, they will find some way to crush you," Shi Feng said seriously. "How about this? Invest in Zero Wing and become one of its shareholders. With Zero Wing's prestige in Star-Moon Kingdom, the fledgling Blackwater Corporation should hesitate before declaring all-out war."

"This..." Gentle Snow was taken aback upon hearing Shi Feng's proposal.

The symbol of Ouroboros, which the White Clan Group had created, was incredibly important to her. If possible, she wanted to establish a new Ouroboros. However, if she joined Zero Wing with Ouroboros's top players, the Blackwater Corporation would shift its focus to Zero Wing.

"If you're worried about the percentage of shares that you'd control or how your subordinates would be treated, relax. I can give you 15% of Zero Wing's shares. I'll also give you 50 core member slots and the power to form the Ouroboros Legion, which will be under your full control. What do you think?" Shi Feng suggested.

"Are you not afraid of the backlash from Blackwater?" Gentle Snow asked Shi Feng seriously. "With Zero Wing's strength and potential, don't you think that you'd be suffering a loss by offering me 15% of the Guild's shares for the little manpower and resources in my possession?"

Zero Wing was no longer the upstart Guild it had been.

Not only did Zero Wing control Stone Forest Town, but it also owned Star-Moon Kingdom's number one trading firm. Zero Wing was the publicly-acknowledged number one Guild in Star-Moon Kingdom. Even first-rate Guilds were no match for it. There were also many companies and corporations chomping at

the bit to invest in Zero Wing. Some major corporations were offering enough to tempt Super Guilds for as little as 50% of Zero Wing's shares. Unfortunately, Zero Wing had declined every offer, yet Shi Feng had offered 15% of the Guild's shares to recruit her and her people. No one would believe this if she told them.

In response to Gentle Snow's query, Shi Feng shook his head and confidently stated, "No. You are worth it."

Shi Feng's answer confused Gentle Snow. Even she didn't believe that she was worth this price, yet Shi Feng sounded strangely confident. Moreover, the look in Shi Feng's eyes told her that he was not lying.

Gentle Snow also felt a little moved.

After so many years in Ouroboros, her trust had long since ceased to exist, yet she trusted Shi Feng, despite so few meetings with him. Yet, despite only coming into contact with Shi Feng several times before, the man had somehow managed to fill her with trust.

She didn't know what to say.

If Shi Feng were a fool, Zero Wing wouldn't have had so much success.

An indistinct feeling made Gentle Snow even more curious about the Guild known as Zero Wing.

After taking a deep breath, Gentle Snow looked at Shi Feng and replied, "Alright, then. I agree to your conditions. However, you have to promise me one thing."

Chapter 983: Gentle Snow's Condition

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"Guild Leader Snow, feel free to state any concerns," Shi Feng said, chuckling.

Many of Ouroboros's elite and expert players followed Gentle Snow. If he recruited all of them, it would raise Zero Wing's overall strength by a large margin.

Although Zero Wing's member count still wouldn't compare to a first-rate Guild's, it would have far more elites than its competition.

There was also Gentle Snow's potential to consider.

If he could give Gentle Snow access to the Secret Pavilion's simulation training system, with her talent and his other training resources, it wouldn't be long before she became a true apex expert. It wouldn't be long before she surpassed him, either.

What Guild wouldn't want such an expert?

Moreover, Gentle Snow was different from Fire Dance and Violet Cloud, who lacked management experience.

Regarding management capabilities, only Aqua Rose might be a match for Gentle Snow. Before joining Zero Wing, Aqua Rose had only managed her own subordinates in Twilight Echo. Gentle Snow, on the other hand, had managed Ouroboros. Moreover, her previous Guild had continuously improved. The Guild had even shown signs of surpassing the Star Alliance.

Even if Gentle Snow listed three or four conditions, Shi Feng would likely agree.

Only Shi Feng knew exactly how valuable an expert capable of becoming a Tier 6 God-ranked player was to a Guild.

“After so many years of development, Ouroboros has formed its own perfect expert training system. This was the reason that Ouroboros had ranked near the top among first-rate Guilds. Unlike other Guilds, we could produce our own experts without recruiting or poaching players.

“However, the perfected expert training system had cost my White Clan Group too much. Although I can bring the God Slaying Army with me, I can’t take the training center. The White Clan Group only owns 40% of the training center’s shares, while the other companies own the remaining 60%.

“I want Zero Wing to purchase the training center.”

Gentle Snow’s condition stunned Shi Feng for a moment.

For any Guild in God's Domain, constructing their own training center was of the utmost importance. This was also why second-rate Guilds couldn't compete with first-rate Guilds.

The initial cost of constructing an expert training center was already more than what the companies supporting second-rate Guilds could handle. Moreover, even if a second-rate Guild had a training center and established a perfect training system, the upkeep would be astronomically expensive.

Unless a Guild could earn enough to maintain this training system, no Guild or company would be crazy enough to invest in something that would hemorrhage money.

Shi Feng had been contemplating his own training center as well. The Big Dipper Training Center was simply not enough to meet his requirements. The training center did not even have a simple simulation training system. However, as constructing a training center was immensely expensive, he had to tackle this problem gradually.

He had never imagined that Gentle Snow would ask him to purchase Ouroboros's training center.

He would have been lying if he has said he wasn't pleased.

With Ouroboros's training center, Zero Wing could save several years of effort. Unfortunately, there was one big problem.

He didn't have enough money...

Shi Feng had served as the Guild Leader of a second-rate Guild in the past. He had been personally involved in establishing and constructing Shadow's training center. It had happened shortly after

Shadow had officially become a second-rate Guild. Hence, he knew just how much money a training center's construction required. If not for several major companies in Jin Hai City working together, Shadow's training center would never have come into fruition.

The cost of the site and machinery was one thing. However, the various simulation facilities and the required energy to maintain them were a different story. Take the fruit of the Secret Pavilion's research, their simulation training system, for example. Only energy of the highest grade could power this kind of system. Even an inferior simulation system's daily maintenance cost was enough to quickly bankrupt multiple large companies.

With Zero Wing's current financial strength, affording its maintenance was impossible, not to mention purchasing it...

"Guild Leader Snow, you must be joking. Zero Wing can't even afford to operate a training center, not to mention purchasing a perfected one. Even if we could afford it, I doubt that the other companies would willingly sell it. After all, that is Ouroboros's foundation. As long as the training center exists, the Guild can produce more experts," Shi Feng said, smiling bitterly.

Zero Wing had started with nothing. It didn't have the support of any companies. The Zero Wing Workshop in the real world relied on the Guild's daily income. Moreover, Shi Feng also did not dare to convert in-game resources into Credits casually. More major companies were joining God's Domain by the day, and the competition was becoming more intense. The resources in God's Domain were also becoming more valuable.

Converting Coins into Credits would be a devastatingly foolish move.

"I understand that I am being somewhat unreasonable, but now is the best opportunity to buy it." Gentle Snow was also aware of how expensive it was to purchase a training center. "Although Blackwater has purchased Ouroboros, Ouroboros's training center is nothing to the corporation. Meanwhile, the training center's daily operation is a huge burden to those companies. They will try to get rid of it as quickly as possible. If we don't buy it now, another corporation, that wants to nurture its own experts, will.

“If Zero Wing is willing to buy it, I can try to lower the price as much as possible.”

“I understand. Please wait a moment. I have to contact the Guild Leader about this first,” Shi Feng said, creating an excuse to leave the room.

It would be much more convenient to purchase a training center than establishing his own.

If he purchased it now, he could save himself a lot of trouble in the future. Zero Wing would not have to risk stagnation as Shadow had in the past due to a lack of experts. With the training center, he could nurture a large number of experts rapidly, sending them out afterward to capture and defend towns. He could then use the money and resources these towns generated to sustain the training center.

However, Zero Wing couldn't gather so much money in such a short timespan.

“Forget it. Let's give it a try.” After Shi Feng left the room, he contacted Aqua Rose.

Chapter 984: Qualifications for Cooperation

Although Aqua Rose was Zero Wing's Vice Guild Leader, her family owned its own large business.

Twilight Echo was a first-rate Guild with an even longer history than Ouroboros. Aqua Rose's family was one of Twilight Echo's major shareholders.

In the past, Shi Feng had learned that Aqua Rose's family owned the Sun and Moon Group.

In ten years' time, the Sun and Moon Group would join the Fortune 500 list. Of course, Aqua Rose had been the main contributor to the company's success.

The Sun and Moon Group and the Open Source Corporation were both involved in the energy industry.

Hence, Aqua Rose's family had been afraid of the Open Source Corporation when they had threatened the family to persuade Aqua Rose. Open Source was one of the industry's giants. On the other hand, Sun and Moon struggled within the middle ranks. If the Open Source Corporation wanted to, it could easily squash the Sun and Moon Group.

However, although the Sun and Moon Group only ranked in the mid-range in the energy industry, it wielded an extraordinary amount of funds. After all, the most profitable resource in the world was energy as it was used in nearly every aspect of life.

It was also precisely this reason that Twilight Echo's members had treated Aqua Rose like a treasure, even making her the Guild's Honorary Elder. Not only was the Sun and Moon Group one of Twilight Echo's major shareholders, but it was also the Guild's biggest shareholder. Without the company's supply of energy, the other shareholders would choke on the daily cost of maintaining the Guild's training center.

“Guild Leader, has something happened?” Aqua Rose asked.

Aqua Rose was still dealing with the list of members they intended to send to other countries as well as various other tasks. She was so busy that her brain was about to short-circuit. Her helpers also rushed about the office, contacting Guild members and dealing with the letters of intent from Guild members who were willing to move to the Branch Guild.

Now that Zero Wing planned to expand to other countries, many players wanted to apply to the Branch Guilds.

Although the Branch Guilds were as safe as the headquarters in White River City, where they didn't have to worry about other Guilds provoking Zero Wing, they would have more opportunities for promotion in the Branch Guilds.

In White River City, there were only so many slots available for the Guild's main force. Becoming a reserve member was nearly impossible, not to mention becoming an official member of the main force. However, once the Branch Guilds were established, the Guild would establish new main forces, and the main force members enjoyed far more benefits than elite members.

Aside from having priority over equipment, just the amount of Magic Crystals each main force member received was enough to make a player drool. Main force members also had the opportunity to obtain the rumored Hundred Berry Wine.

According to rumors, the Hundred Berry Wine was even more effective than the Divine Colosseum's Icefire Spirit. It could help players improve their Skill Completion Rates. Currently, not one bottle was available on the market. No one knew how to obtain their own.

Only official members of Zero Wing's main force qualified to compete for the Hundred Berry Wine.

Since members of the Branch Guilds' main forces would receive similar benefits, why wouldn't Zero Wing's elite members be tempted? When Aqua Rose had announced the news, many elite members frantically applied to join the Branch Guilds.

Although Aqua Rose looked battered, inwardly, she was elated. She dreamed of helping Zero Wing grow stronger. Because of Zero Wing's extraordinary performance, her family now saw her in a different light. In fact, they even canceled her engagement to Brilliant Wargod.

As Zero Wing's performance reached new heights, her status in her household rose. Many large companies had secretly sent upper echelons to ask her family members to contact her, desperately wanting to invest in Zero Wing and offering many impressive perks. As a result, every time she visited home, her parents instantly pushed for her to meet with the companies' representatives. She was even busier than the Star and Moon Group's CEO...

"It's nothing major. Didn't you say that your family has wanted to invest in Zero Wing? And that other companies frequently pester you to negotiate our cooperation?" Shi Feng asked.

"Mhm. More representatives have been showing up lately as well. My family is also constantly on my case. I swear they are even more diligent now than when I had been forced into the engagement with Brilliant Wargod. They almost annoy me to death these days. Do you have a plan to deal with them, Guild Leader?" Aqua Rose asked. Just discussing this topic made her head ache.

She knew where Shi Feng stood on the matter. Thus, she always rejected the offers. To avoid these people, she had no choice but to hide in her virtual gaming cabin. Only in God's Domain would her family leave her alone...

“I have a method. It also isn’t a solution to always have uncle and aunty pressing you for an answer. I can offer them an opportunity to work together,” Shi Feng said, chuckling. “As for whether or not they want to cooperate with us, that will be up to them.”

“Really?” Aqua Rose froze, surprised by Shi Feng’s declaration. She couldn’t believe this was true.

Zero Wing was very famous in God’s Domain. This was because it had rejected countless investment offers. Other Guilds dreamed of having their own investors, yet Zero Wing turned them away. Zero Wing was already known as one of the most difficult Guilds to work with.

“Yes, I intend to rent some plots of Land, so I would like you to find a few partners. However, each company must first invest one billion Credits. I will choose a total of ten partners.” Gentle Snow had already given Shi Feng a rough estimate of the cost. If he wanted to takeover Ouroboros’s training center, he needed at least seven or eight billion Credits. Moreover, this was only the initial estimate. After all, Ouroboros’s training center was massive. It even had its own independent research team. The training center was also located in a top-tier city. Considering, Gentle Snow’s price was exceedingly low.

“Guild Leader, are you talking about Stone Forest Town’s Lands?” Aqua Rose was so shocked that she had to ask for confirmation.

Shi Feng nodded, replying seriously, “That’s right.”

“Guild Leader, although the player traffic in Stone Forest Town is high, as expensive as the town’s Lands are, they will never be worth as much as the golden Lands in kingdoms and imperial capitals. Moreover, even those golden Lands aren’t worth that much money. Only a sucker would accept your offer. No one will agree to that,” Aqua Rose said helplessly.

For some reason, Aqua Rose constantly had the feeling that Shi Feng lived in a different world. She was clearly the rich heiress here, yet when Shi Feng talked about one billion Credits, it sounded as if he were talking about chump change...

That was one billion Credits they were talking about!

While the Sun and Moon Group could collect that much money, the other companies would likely hesitate.

“What if I have this item?”

Shi Feng laughed as he retrieved an old parchment from his bag. This parchment was none other than the Star-Moon Kingdom City Building Order. With this, he could claim one unassigned location within Star-Moon Kingdom and construct a city.

Chapter 985: Shocking Star-Moon Kingdom

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“This is...”

Aqua Rose was astonished when she took a closer look at the old parchment's information on the screen.

A City Building Order!

This item was far more valuable than any captured town.

Yet, while Super Guilds were investing time and effort into capturing towns, Shi Feng had procured a City Building Order...

Aqua Rose rubbed her eyes. She was sure that they were playing tricks on her.

What was a Star-Moon Kingdom City Building Order?

That was proof that one had the rights to construct a player city in Star-Moon Kingdom. Currently, player towns in God's Domain generally accommodated thirty to fifty thousand people. However, none of the Guilds that had captured various towns allowed had built houses in their towns; they had all built hotels. This way, the towns would accommodate more mobile players, which would, in turn, generate more income. Aside from Guild members, players had practically no options to become permanent residents.

Even so, a player town could only handle a limited amount of traffic.

Take Stone Forest Town for example.

Stone Forest Town was very close to the Stoneclaw Mountains. Because most of God's Domain's players had already reached Level 30, the town's traffic grew with each passing day, giving it an even livelier atmosphere than White River City. In the end, Zero Wing had no choice but to limit the amount of time each player could reside in Stone Forest Town's hotels.

This was also why many companies desperately wanted to work with Zero Wing.

However, a town had its limits. Not only was the area around Stone Forest Town small, but the local environment also posed a huge problem. It was not suitable for players seeking entertainment, which greatly limited the benefits a real-world company could reap from setting up a virtual Shop.

A city, on the other hand, was many times larger than a town. Generally, a town could house over 200,000 resident players, not including mobile players. If they chose an appropriate location, they could easily attract many entertainment-seekers, who disliked adventuring and fighting, to live in the city.

"You've seen the City Building Order for yourself. Companies that cooperate with Zero Wing will be given priority when purchasing a large plot of Land in the city. As for the one billion Credits, that is only a deposit. However, before you let them in on this secret, find companies that truly intend to cooperate. Moreover, they must sign a confidentiality agreement. I don't want news of this to leak, attracting everyone's attention," Shi Feng explained.

In truth, he did not want to sell any of the city's Lands because of how much more valuable they would become in the future. If he nurtured his city to have a population in the millions, he could drown Zero Wing in money each day with the profits from renting the city's Lands.

Unfortunately, he had no avenues to earn so much money in such a short time.

“I understand. I will see to the necessary arrangements right away.” Aqua Rose nodded excitedly.

Currently, the value of Stone Forest Town’s Lands could rival those with high potential in major cities. However, if they chose a strategic location to set up their city, the city’s Lands would easily surpass Stone Forest Town’s by several, or even over ten times. If she advertised this news, many corporations would be eager to work with them.

“How many days do you need to get this done?” Shi Feng asked. “I’m in somewhat of a hurry for the money right now.”

“Roughly three to five days. After all, most major companies would be hard-pressed to collect so much money on such short notice.” After giving it some thought, Aqua Rose suggested, “If you are in a rush for money, I can have my family pay for you first, or offer them a few more plots of Land in the new city. I believe they will be more than willing.”

Although the new city had yet to be built, if a company could enter the city and construct its own virtual Shop immediately, it would massively benefit the company’s development in God’s Domain.

After all, once the new city was complete, plenty of entertainment-seekers were bound to visit the city. If a company could leave a deep impression on these players, more people would recognize them as they started Shops in other cities. This would create brand awareness.

“Alright. I await your good news,” Shi Feng said. As long as he gathered the necessary ten billion Credits, he was satisfied.

Following which, Aqua Rose logged out of the game and hastened to make the necessary arrangements. As for Shi Feng, he went back into the room.

“Guild Leader Snow, Zero Wing agrees to your conditions. However, we’ll need some time to collect the required Credits. It is unlikely that we can do so in one or two days,” Shi Feng explained.

“That won’t be a problem. In any case, the training center won’t sell quickly. That will also give me more time to drive down the price,” Gentle Snow said, smiling.

Initially, she had expected Zero Wing to reject her condition. Either that, or the Guild would need a very long time to gather the required funds. She hadn’t expected the Guild to raise the money so quickly.

As she experienced more, she realized how little she truly knew about the Guild.

Following which, Shi Feng and Gentle Snow discussed the details of their contract.

First, Gentle Snow would join Zero Wing with the elites and experts under her command. At the same time, Gentle Snow would transfer all Lands in her control to Zero Wing. In return, Gentle Snow would receive 15% of Zero Wing’s shares and become one of Zero Wing’s Vice Guild Leaders. Simultaneously, she would serve as the captain of the Ouroboros Legion and manage all of the legion’s affairs.

After both parties signed the contract, Gentle Snow logged out of the game and to initiate her plan to purchase Ouroboros. Shi Feng, on the other hand, headed to White River City’s City Hall and took ownership of the 16 plots of Land Gentle Snow had owned.

Afterward, he simply needed to construct the Candlelight Trading Firm on these 16 Commercial Lands.

With the additional coverage, the Candlelight Trading Firm's income would increase significantly.

Gentle Snow's insight is impressive. Of the three Lands in the Black Dragon Empire, one is in Emerald City. I won't have to hunt for an Emerald source. After Shi Feng visited the 11 plots of Land in Star-Moon Kingdom, he could not stifle his grin as he looked at the Deeds for the three Lands in the Black Dragon Empire.

Emerald City was one of the empire's top ten major cities. It was in no way less prosperous than White River City. Players could find many ores around Emerald City, and Emeralds were the most common, hence the name "Emerald City."

Emeralds were generally used as raw materials to produce ornaments as the ore possessed relatively good Mana-storing capabilities. It was rarely ever used to produce other items.

However, aside from requiring Mana Stones, Titan City's Magic Light Set Equipment needed plenty of Emeralds.

With a Shop in Emerald City, he could purchase Emeralds long-term. His Guild members wouldn't need to travel back and forth from the city constantly.

Following which, Shi Feng traveled to the Black Dragon Empire via Star-Moon City's Teleportation Hall.

Shortly after Shi Feng left, a shock tore through Star-Moon Kingdom's various Guilds.

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“What did you say?! Zero Wing now owns Gentle Snow’s Lands?! How can this be?!” Abandoned Wave was flabbergasted when he received the news.

Chapter 986: War of First-rate Guilds

Chapter 986 – War of First-rate Guilds

“Boss Wave, there’s no mistaking it. If you don’t believe me, take a look at these pictures. Our Shops in these locations are now owned by the Candlelight Trading Firm,” the bald, middle-aged man reported as he displayed the pictures his subordinates had taken.

Abandoned Wave’s expression darkened as he looked through the images.

“Gentle Snow!” Abandoned Wave slammed his palm on the wooden table, the impact shook the wine glass and bottle of Witch’s Tear, nearly sending them to the ground.

He had never imagined that, as soon as he forced Gentle Snow out of her position and killed her subordinates, the woman would counter with such a move. He hadn’t even had a moment to enjoy his victory.

In reality, Abandoned Wave wasn't the only person that Gentle Snow's actions had infuriated. The upper echelons from Star-Moon Kingdom's various large Guilds wore twisted expressions when they heard the news.

"What, exactly, is Gentle Snow trying to do?!"

"Has she lost her mind?! She actually sold so many high-potential Lands to Zero Wing!"

The various Guilds loathed Gentle Snow's latest decision. They would rather pay double the price to purchase Gentle Snow's Lands and let them rot in their hands than let them fall into the Candlelight Trading Firm's hands.

These Lands had originally housed Ouroboros's New Moon Trading Firm. Now, however, they housed the Candlelight Trading Firm. Although the Storefronts were the cheapest variations, curious players had already crowded the Shops' entrances, interested in the sudden change and purchasing items.

It was very easy to transfer a Shop's ownership to another player in God's Domain. One simply needed to visit a City Hall and follow the necessary procedures. If one didn't intend to modify the shop, only changing the name, they could immediately have NPCs do so free of charge.

The Candlelight Trading Firm had always been known for its Light Stones and Armor Kits.

The Intermediate Armor Kits, in particular, usually sold out the instant they were restocked. If not for its low production volume, the Candlelight Trading Firm would've long since dominated Star-Moon Kingdom's market. Even so, Candlelight had still become Star-Moon Kingdom's number one trading firm.

Moreover, due to the Candlelight Trading Firm's lack of background, it had only purchased a limited number of high-potential Lands, despite all of its efforts. As for major cities' golden Lands, first, the trading firm could not afford them. After all, one golden Land was worth around three or four high-potential Lands in the same city. Unless Zero Wing intended to set up a particular city as its main headquarters or went on a spending spree, it would not purchase a city's golden Lands. Second, Zero Wing's members did not have the required Reputation to purchase golden Lands in other cities. Therefore, the Candlelight Trading Firm's development in Star-Moon Kingdom was limited.

On the other hand, to avoid competition with the Candlelight Trading Firm, Gentle Snow's high-potential Lands had been purchased in cities that lacked Candlelight's presence or were located far from Candlelight's Shops.

By selling these Lands to Zero Wing, Gentle Snow had just compensated for the Candlelight Trading Firm's shortcomings. Moreover, the Candlelight Trading Firm had recently recruited a large number of Lifestyle players. Once the trading firm nurtured these Lifestyle players, it would be a disaster for their Guilds, who were already limited to a small corner of the market. However, they could not do anything to oppress the Candlelight Trading Firm in Star-Moon Kingdom...

...

While Star-Moon Kingdoms' various large Guilds tried to think of a solution to cope with the Candlelight Trading Firm's new strength, Shi Feng had teleported to Emerald City from the Black Dragon Empire's imperial capital, Black Dragon City.

As soon as Shi Feng exited the Teleportation Hall, he found just as many players in Emerald City as there were in White River City. Only the players' Levels and equipment was slightly inferior to those in his home city.

Currently, due to the teleportation house, one could easily find Level 37 or Level 38 players roaming about White River City's streets. Prior to that, Level 39 experts were as rare as a phoenix feather.

Emerald City, however, was different. Shi Feng rarely saw Level 36 players roaming the streets, much less those who had reached Level 37 or higher.

However, unlike kingdoms, second- or first-tier cities with populations ranging in the tens of millions were designated to God's Domain's empires. It was easy to find many Gaming Workshops and Guilds based in these cities. With Emerald City being one of the top ten cities of the Black Dragon Empire, Shi Feng saw members from no less than ten different Guilds going about their business.

Such a sight was rare in Star-Moon Kingdom. Generally, only three or four large Guilds contested over its major cities. Emerald City, on the other hand, had more than ten, and even the weakest among them were second-rate Guilds. As for first-rate Guilds, Shi Feng counted three from where he stood. Emerald City already had as many first-rate Guilds as Star-Moon Kingdom.

I recall that the Undefeated Dynasty had been Emerald City's ruling Guild in the past. Among the many first-rate Guilds, Undefeated Dynasty was relatively tolerant. I shouldn't need to worry about any trouble if I set a Shop up here. Shi Feng secretly assessed the city's situation as he rode an advanced horse carriage.

Based on what he could see, a large number of the Guild players roaming the streets belonged to Fantasy Shrine and Undefeated Dynasty. The other first-rate Guild was World Dominators, which Shi Feng was familiar with.

Ever since Zero Wing had become White River City's overlord, World Dominators had withdrawn from Star-Moon Kingdom, shifting its focus to the Black Dragon Empire and other kingdoms.

Mountain ranges surrounded Emerald City, and it produced rare ores and Emeralds. It was considered a strategic city in the Black Dragon Empire. There were only so many Guilds in the city right now because the Dragon-Phoenix Pavilion paid little attention to them.

After Shi Feng alighted from the horse carriage, he saw over a dozen independent players leaving the New Moon Trading Firm. These players had very high levels, with the lowest among them being Level 36 and the rest being Level 37. In a large Guild, they would be elite members. As for their combat standards, at this stage of the game, it was very difficult for independent players who hadn't reached the Trial Tower's fifth floor to reach Level 37.

Moreover, these players were well-equipped. Even the most inferior piece of equipment they wore was a Level 35 Secret-Silver rank. In the eyes of ordinary players, they would definitely be considered experts.

"Damn it, to think that Intermediate Regeneration Potions and Intermediate Mana Recovery Potions would sell out so quickly. If I had known that something like this would happen, I would've stockpiled. Now, I won't be able to earn a little bounty reward no matter how much I try."

"There's nothing we can do. Who would've expected Fantasy Shrine and Undefeated Dynasty to start a war against each other in Emerald City? They are even placing bounties on each other's members."

"Really, though, what is up with these Guilds? Why did they suddenly declare war on each other? Haven't they tolerated each other pretty well until now?"

"Based on some insider information I obtained, it seems that the two Guilds have discovered a town above a Mithril vein. If the town is captured, players can mine the vein freely."

"A Mithril vein?! Won't they be rich if they capture the town?!"

“I know, right? However, the NPCs guarding that town are extraordinary. Capturing the town will be very difficult. If one Guild ambushes the other, the latter’s efforts will go to waste. That’s why both sides are trying to chase each other out of Emerald City.”

“Large Guild members sure have it easy. While independent players like us are exhausting ourselves just to find ordinary ores, they get to mine Mithril Ore in the safety of a town!”

As these players spoke of the Mithril vein, they nearly drooled.

Although Mithril Ore was not particularly valuable, it was frequently used to forge weapons and equipment. Generally, selling the Mithril ore one had was very easy. If they could harvest a steady supply of the ore, they could earn more money than they could imagine.

“A Mithril vein?” Shi Feng’s lips curled into a smile as he watched the departing independent players.

Chapter 987: Branch Residence

Chapter 987 – Branch Residence

After the dozen or so independent players left the New Moon Trading Firm, Shi Feng entered the Shop.

Mithril veins were one of the more common mineral veins in God's Domain.

Large Guilds also fought over them fiercely.

As the producer of ores and Emeralds in the Black Dragon Empire, there was more than one mineral vein in Emerald City's vicinity. This was also why Undefeated Dynasty, Emerald City's ruler in the past, had amassed a fortune.

Meanwhile, the only Mithril vein Emerald City's players knew of was beneath White Bone Town.

White Bone Town had been relatively famous in the past because the mineral vein beneath it was a rich vein, and players could reach it easily to mine Mithril Ore. Although one could not make as much money as they could from the Manatite vein under Raven's control, if developed, the profits would still be considerably shocking.

However, current players were not yet strong enough to capture White Bone Town.

The NPCs guarding White Bone Town were not humans, but Undead. Their levels were all above 50. Moreover, any player that entered the mine would be cursed, causing them to lose 10% of their HP every three seconds. The curse also lasted for an hour...

In addition, several Level 70 Grand Lords lurked within the mine's depths. With players' current strength, even an army of several hundred thousand elites would not be enough to defeat these monsters.

However, this reminded Shi Feng of something.

The Basic Holy Spirit Potion!

This item would give players temporary immunity to curses. However, as the potion was only Basic rank, its effects were limited. Fortunately, the potion could offer immunity to White Bone Town's curse.

Due to the richness of White Bone Town's Mithril vein, many players would take the risk to mine there. The money these players earned from a single day of mining the Mithril ore and its byproducts was even more than those who grinded monsters in the fields or raided Team Dungeons.

Because of that, the Basic Holy Spirit Potion had been extremely popular in Emerald City in the past.

The potion had not been particularly expensive. Initially, each bottle only sold for 2 Silver. Even ordinary players could afford that. The potions' effects only lasted for half an hour; in that time, one could easily earn more than 2 Silver while mining underneath the town.

Although White Bone Town's monsters were very high-leveled, the mine's entrance was located in the town's outskirts. Not many monsters ventured there; so as long as one lured the monsters away, other players could enter the mine freely.

The mine was massive, and its terrain was complicated. Very few monsters patrolled the mine, as well. As long as one didn't explore too deep, they would not find any significant danger. When a player finished their mining, they simply needed to use a Return Scroll to leave safely. Hence, many players had taken the risk the risk to mine there.

As more players headed to the Mithril mine, the Basic Holy Spirit Potion's price quickly rose to 5 Silver. Later, it had even reached 10 Silver per bottle. Alchemist players had been overjoyed.

The Basic Holy Spirit Potion's recipe was not particularly difficult to obtain. Level 30 and above Team Dungeons had a chance of dropping it. Unfortunately, the drop-rate was very low, which resulted in few copies on the market. The potion's materials were also relatively common. Crafting the potion's main requirement was a Holy Spirit Flower, which was considered a rare herb. Making the potion didn't even cost 1 Silver.

Thinking up to this point, Shi Feng burst into action.

This was a valuable opportunity to make a fortune.

Emerald City's player population was in the millions. Once players discovered the method of mining in White Bone Town, swarms of players would flock to the Mithril vein. One could just imagine how large the market would be for the Basic Holy Spirit Potion.

Following which, Shi Feng changed the New Moon Trading Firm's name to the Candlelight Trading Firm and removed the Lifestyle players and products in the Shop. He then made a trip to the City Hall and spent 1,000 Gold to upgrade the Shopfront to the highest-ranking available. He also hired NPCs to purchase various kinds of ores, herbs, and Emeralds.

As for the Candlelight products that would be sold in this Shop and the Shop's personnel, Shi Feng passed the responsibility to the Candlelight Trading Firms' management team. Meanwhile, he visited the Auction Houses in the Black Dragon Empire's various cities to purchase the Basic Holy Spirit Potion Recipe and Holy Spirit Flowers.

After spending most of the day like this, Shi Feng finally bought all the recipes on the Black Dragon Empire's market.

He had managed to collect a total of 776 recipes. Although the method to obtain the recipe was easy, its drop rate was painfully low.

The recipe's current market price wasn't high. Shi Feng only spent around 35 to 40 Silver Coins for each copy. Overall, he had not even spent 300 Gold to buy all of the copies. The low price was mainly due to players not having a major use for the Basic Holy Spirit Potion; it simply wasn't one of Alchemists' hot items. If he were looking for the Intermediate Regeneration Potion and the Intermediate Mana Recovery Potion's recipes, however, they would be much more expensive.

With so many recipes, even after every Alchemist in the Candlelight Trading Firm learned it, he would still have plenty to spare.

Shi Feng had also bought over 6,500 stacks of Holy Spirit Flowers, with 20 flowers per stack. Currently, each stack sold for around 12 to 13 Silver. In total, Shi Feng had spent over 800 Gold on the Holy Spirit Flowers.

For a while, I'll have Candlelight purchase Holy Spirit Flowers. Shi Feng was mostly satisfied with how many Holy Spirit Flowers he had procured.

At the end of the day, the Holy Spirit Flower was a rare herb. Rather than sell it, most Guilds usually opted to store the flowers in their Guild Warehouses. Only independent players sold the herb, thus the limited supply on the market.

If he turned these 6,500-plus stacks of Holy Spirit Flower into Basic Holy Spirit Potions, he would have enough to last Emerald City's players for quite some time. As long as the Candlelight Trading Firm's acquisition of Holy Spirit Flowers could keep up with the potion's demand, Emerald City would become a stable source of income for the trading firm for a relatively long time.

Shi Feng had also spent 3,000 Gold to construct an Advanced Guild Hall in Lake Heart City.

Although the Land he bought from Phoenix Rain could not compare to Zero Wing's main Guild Residence, the towering Advanced Guild Hall was still impressive enough to shock Lake Heart City's players.

"Wow! This Guild has style!"

"I wonder which Guild this is, to think that anyone would want to develop in this backwater city."

"It shouldn't be a large Guild, right? Maybe it's some third-rate Guild."

"I guess you're right. There is no way a large Guild would fancy our Lake Heart City."

There were not many players residing in Lake Heart City due to its location on an island. There were not many good leveling spots around, either. The city's current population was slightly over 100,000. No first-rate Guild would waste their efforts on a desolate city like this. As a result, only a second-rate Guild ruled over Lake Heart City. Moreover, its main headquarters wasn't located in the city. Rather, it was based in a major city with a player population of over half a million.

Furthermore, the Guild Residences in Lake Heart City. They were a far cry from Zero Wing's magnificent Advanced Guild Hall.

"Huh? Wait a minute! Look at the emblem on that Guild flag! Doesn't that look like Zero Wing's six-winged emblem?!"

Chapter 988: The Seven Treasures' First Appearance

Chapter 988 – The Seven Treasures' First Appearance

Upon hearing Zero Wing's name, the players on the street turned to look at the flag flying from the Guild Hall's roof.

"It really is a six-winged emblem!"

"What?!"

"Star-Moon Kingdom's number one Guild is actually starting a Branch Guild here?!"

Many people felt chills crawl down their spines, excitement overwhelming them as they stared at the Guild flag. None of them could believe their eyes.

Although Lake Heart City was in the Black Dragon Empire, the empire neighbored Star-Moon Kingdom. They were up-to-date about the nearby kingdoms. They also frequently purchased a copy the God's Domain Experts List. Everybody knew about Zero Wing's Guild Leader, Black Flame. Moreover, the ruler

of the Black Dragon Empire's imperial capital, the Dragon-Phoenix Pavilion, had suffered at Zero Wing's hands.

With such a powerful Guild appearing in Lake Heart City, how could they contain their excitement?

"Since Zero Wing is coming here... does this mean we'll have a chance to join Zero Wing?"

"I guess so? When a Guild develops in a new city, it normally recruits some of the local players to expand gradually."

"I heard that the benefits Zero Wing offers are awesome; they are even better than what first-rate Guilds offer. In other Guilds, I heard that only core members get to use the Guild Hall's Private Rooms. On the other hand, one only needs to be an elite member in Zero Wing to rent a Private Room and accumulate the Double EXP buff."

"I've always wanted to join Zero Wing. Unfortunately, it costs too much to teleport from the Black Dragon Empire to White River City. Now, though, I don't have to worry about teleportation fees."

Anticipation filled these independent players' hearts as they ogled Zero Wing's new Guild Residence. To ordinary players, traveling to other countries was too expensive. Even if they spent their entire fortune traveling to White River City, there was no guarantee that they would be accepted into the Guild.

Furthermore, they had long since familiarized themselves with Lake Heart City and its surroundings. If they started developing in an unknown city, their leveling speed and daily income would decrease drastically. In addition, unlike in Lake Heart City, they wouldn't have companions to rely on in White River City.

Now, however, times had changed.

Shortly after Zero Wing's Branch Guild had appeared, news of this matter quickly spread throughout the city.

Some rejoiced, while others grew worried. To independent players, Zero Wing's appearance was good news. To the local Guilds, however, nothing was good about this development.

When the Crimson Castle Guild, the second-rate Guild ruling over Lake Heart City, received the news, it had held an emergency meeting among its upper echelons.

"Why has Zero Wing suddenly shown up in a backwater city like Lake Heart City?"

"If Zero Wing really intends on developing here, they will target the high-resource areas we usually occupy."

"What's there to be afraid of? Even if Zero Wing is powerful in Star-Moon Kingdom, this is Lake Heart City. This is our territory. We are far more familiar with the city's surroundings than Zero Wing. Even if a war breaks out between our Guilds, the winner isn't set in stone."

Crimson Castle's upper echelons discussed the situation heatedly.

Although the leveling areas around Lake Heart City were not particularly beneficial, once players familiarized themselves with the area, their leveling speed would increase. Moreover, unlike other cities, there were very few Guilds in Lake Heart City. This allowed Crimson Castle to obtain plenty of raw materials very easily.

“There is no need to get too worked up about this. I have heard that the situation in Star-Moon Kingdom isn’t very stable. Zero Wing won’t focus too much on conquering Lake Heart City. Moreover, the Dragon-Phoenix Pavilion has a grudge against Zero Wing. If we report Zero Wing’s arrival to the Pavilion, the Pavilion will seek vengeance,” the dignified, middle-aged man in the Guild Leader’s seat said as he watched the arguing players before him. In a deep tone, he said, “During this period, keep an eye on Zero Wing’s members. Report everything to the Pavilion.”

Hearing their Guild Leader’s order, the Crimson Castle’s upper echelons fell silent and nodded in agreement.

As their Guild Leader had said, Zero Wing had used the Dragon-Phoenix Pavilion as a stepping stone to become famous, leaving the Pavilion’s prestige in tatters. After that incident, the Heavenly Dragon Pavilion’s Nine Dragons Emperor declared that he would not let the matter rest.

Although dealing with Zero Wing in Star-Moon Kingdom was difficult for the Dragon-Phoenix Pavilion, it was a different story in the Black Dragon Empire.

The Black Dragon Empire was the Pavilion’s territory. It would be child’s play to take care of a measly Branch Guild.

...

While Crimson Castle hashed out a plan to deal with Zero Wing, Shi Feng spent 300 Gold to bind the Guild Transfer Scroll’s coordinates.

Afterward, Zero Wing's members in White River City could simply purchase Lake Heart City's Guild Transfer Scrolls to travel to the city directly.

The Guild Transfer Scroll was one of a Guild's greatest benefits. Unlike NPC cities' Teleportation Halls, which charged a steep teleportation fee, players only needed to purchase the corresponding Guild Transfer Scroll to reach their desired Guild Residence. However, such a major benefit came with restrictions. Players were only allowed to carry one Guild Transfer Scroll at a time. Moreover, the scroll had a very long Cooldown. The Transfer Scrolls' prices also varied depending on the distance between the destination and where it was purchased. Regardless, it was still cheaper than using the Teleportation Halls.

If a Guild had enough Guild Residences, it could easily replace Teleportation Halls.

When Shi Feng finished binding the coordinates, he looked at the time. Glancing up at the already-dark sky, he called up his system interface, intending to log off for the day and rest.

Now that he had established Lake Heart City's Branch Guild, he needed Aqua Rose to transfer the batches of selected members. As for Raven's monster-repelling issue, Shi Feng had already instructed Flying Shadow to handle it.

Originally, he had intended Fire Dance to carry out the task. However, Fire Dance was currently busy leading Zero Wing's members in raiding the Undead Gorge and did not have time to spare. So, he used his next-best option—Flying Shadow.

Flying Shadow was Zero Wing's second-best Assassin. Not only was his Movement Speed quite high, but he could also move about rather secretly. He wasn't easy to detect.

When it was time to repel the monster invasion, Flying Shadow could use the Monster Repellent Scroll without anyone noticing, which would reduce the chances of Raven discovering the scroll.

Although the Monster Repellent Scroll was very rare and few people knew about it, seeing as Quiet Melody, the Sacred Temple's Vice Temple Master, had purchased so many in Blackwing City, Shi Feng deemed it wise to use the scrolls discreetly, hiding the scroll's function. In any case, Zero Wing only needed to repel the invasions. It was not obligated to reveal its means of doing so.

After clicking the "Logout" button, while Shi Feng waited on the logout timer, he habitually used the Golden Stigmata's Detect Skill.

The quest to find the Seven Treasures was truly sinister. With God's Domain being so massive, how was he supposed to locate them?

Fortunately, he had been given a very long time limit to complete the quest. Hence, Shi Feng routinely used the Detect Skill once a day. If not for the Skill's one-day Cooldown, his search for the Seven Treasures would've proceeded much faster.

After using the Detect Skill, Shi Feng heard the sound of a system notification.

System: The Golden Stigmata has detected the Seven Treasures' energy waves. Do you wish to track the energy waves?

Why would the Seven Treasures be here?! Shi Feng instantly tensed.

He had never imagined that he would come across the Seven Treasures' energy waves in Lake Heart City!

Chapter 989: Special Set Equipment

Chapter 989 – Special Set Equipment

Upon hearing the system notification, Shi Feng immediately stopped the logout process and chose to track the energy waves.

The Golden Stigmata's Detect had a 50,000-yard range, which was not particularly large. The Skill just managed to cover Lake Heart City as well as the surrounding forest and fields.

There should not be any monsters within that range, and it was even less likely for there to be any relics. Otherwise, someone would have long since discovered them. After all, it was impossible for an NPC city to be constructed above a relic.

Yet, the Seven Treasures, which had been lost for many years, had appeared in the middle of nowhere. It was inconceivable.

As expected, it is inside the city. Shi Feng could not help his surprise when he saw the perceived location on his map. This should be in the Noble's District.

Although Shi Feng knew that the Seven Treasures could be anywhere, who could've thought that he would find the legendary Seven Treasures in Lake Heart City's Noble's District?

If the War God's Temple knew that the Seven Treasures were in the Black Dragon Empire, they would've turned the empire over in their search, not to mention the insignificant Lake Heart City.

After checking the general location, Shi Feng summoned the Demonic Flame Tiger and charged towards the Noble's District.

"A monster! A monster has appeared in the city!"

"Crap, that's... a Mount!"

"What kind of Mount is that?! It's so cool!"

When the players on the street saw the Demonic Flame Tiger charge out of Zero Wing's Residence, they were stupefied.

A city like Lake Heart City didn't even have one Level 40 player, much less a Mount. Hence, when these players saw the majestic, towering Demonic Flame Tiger, they grew more enthusiastic to join Zero Wing.

...

Black Dragon Empire, Dragon-Phoenix Pavilion's Guild Residence:

Entering the Guild Leader's office, a beautiful, tall female Summoner reported respectfully, "Vice Guild Leader, the Crimson Castle's Guild Leader requests a meeting with you. He claims that it is related to Zero Wing."

"I understand. It seems that quite a few people are displeased with Zero Wing today," Blood Dragon, the Guild Leader of the Dragon-Phoenix Pavilion's Black Dragon Empire Branch Guild, said, chuckling. "Ghost, bring him in."

The female Summoner, Beautiful Ghost, nodded. She left the office to guide Crimson Castle's Guild Leader.

...

Inside the Dragon-Phoenix Pavilion's reception room, a robust man, standing about two-meters tall, waited patiently. This man was none other than the Crimson Castle's Guild Leader, Crimson Fox.

Why haven't they met with me yet? Crimson Fox was frustrated as he stared beyond the window pane at the Dragon-Phoenix Pavilion's members going about their business.

Sure enough, the Pavilion deserved to be called a super-first-rate Guild. Despite only being a Branch Guild's Residence, he saw plenty of experts moving about the hall, with many of them radiating a significant pressure. Among these experts, he envied a few players' equipment.

The Crimson Castle could never compare to a Guild like the Dragon-Phoenix Pavilion.

Crimson Fox had originally intended to send one of the Guild's upper echelons to the Pavilion. However, when he thought about the violent and arrogant temper of the Pavilion's Vice Guild Leader, Blood Dragon, he felt that it would be safer if he visited the Guild personally. Once he reached the Pavilion's Guild Residence, he firmly believed that he had made the right decision. His Guild's representative would never have been allowed through the Pavilion's gates.

Moreover, not long ago, he received another message from his subordinates stating that Zero Wing's Demonic Flame Tiger had appeared in Lake Heart City. The upper echelons of God's Domain's various Guilds were no strangers to the Demonic Tiger. After all, the Demonic Tiger was known as the best Mount in God's Domain. Many even suspected that it might be a Fine-Gold Mount. Besides, this powerful Mount's owner was none other than Zero Wing's Ye Feng.

Those who understood Zero Wing knew that Ye Feng's position in the Guild was definitely among the top three. He might even be second only to Zero Wing's Guild Leader, Black Flame. Such an important figure in Lake Heart City stressed Crimson Fox.

Anyone capable of leading a large Guild was no idiot. With a figure like Ye Feng visiting the city, it was clear how important Lake Heart City was to Zero Wing. If they did not remove Zero Wing as soon as possible, it would only be a matter of time before Crimson Castle fell from the position of the city's ruler.

While Crimson Fox occupied himself with these thoughts, the reception room's wooden doors swung open. A tall beauty then entered the room. This woman was the female Summoner Beautiful Ghost, who had reported to Blood Dragon.

When Crimson Fox's eyes met Beautiful Ghost's, he shuddered. Alarm bells rang in his mind, warning him to be careful of the woman standing before him.

"You're Crimson Fox? Follow me," Beautiful Ghost said. After sparing Crimson Fox a glance, she turned and left the reception room with an air of indifference. Her eyes hadn't contained a hint of respect when

she looked at Crimson Fox. Rather, they held contempt, as if she had been watching an ant. If not for Blood Dragon's orders, she would not have paid any attention to the man at all.

Although Crimson Foxed wanted to respond, after a moment of hesitation, he chose to shut his mouth.

Aside from the fact that he was on foreign soil, this female Summoner was already stronger than him. Not only was she Level 39, but her equipment also radiated the unique glow of Dark-Gold items. Moreover, the red-blue robes, headwear, and other equipment were clearly pieces of a set. In other words, Beautiful Ghost wore a Dark-Gold Set Equipment. In comparison, he only had individual pieces of Level 35 Dark-Gold Equipment.

A Level 35 Dark-Gold Set Equipment? As expected of a super-first-rate Guild. Crimson Fox smiled bitterly. He had no choice but to endure this woman's contemptuous look. After all, she had more than earned her arrogance.

However, Crimson Fox did not know that Beautiful Ghost's Dark-Gold Set Equipment was not a Level 35 set.

If Shi Feng were present, he would have instantly recognized the equipment. This was the Level 40 Dark-Gold Set Equipment, Life Summons. Only Level 40 and above Field Great Lords had a chance of dropping these set pieces.

Initially, only Level 40 Summoners could equip the Life Summons set. However, this equipment was somewhat special. If one had all five pieces of the set, the level requirement would drop by five Levels.

Under Beautiful Ghost's lead, Crimson Fox quickly arrived before the Guild Leader's office on the third floor. On his way, Crimson Fox had seen many Level 50 NPC guards. Without someone of relevance as a guide, even the Guild's elite members would not be allowed near the Guild Leader's office.

Upon entering the office, Crimson Fox involuntarily shuddered.

He felt an immense pressure, almost as if a Boss monster were in the room with him. Moreover, it didn't feel like any ordinary Boss monster. At the very least, it felt like a Lord Boss or stronger.

How is this possible?! Crimson Fox stared at Blood Dragon, who leaned against his office chair while enjoying a glass of wine, shock filling his heart. Is this the Dragon-Phoenix Pavilion's Vice Guild Leader?

At this moment, Crimson Fox struggled to breathe. Compared to Blood Dragon, the pressure he felt from Beautiful Ghost before was a joke.

Against Beautiful Ghost, he could, more or less, move unaffected. However, when faced with Blood Dragon, his movements were somewhat sluggish. In battle, this pressure would greatly impact his combat power.

However, the scene inside the office was even more shocking. Seated opposite of Blood Dragon was a gorgeous woman who, despite the powerful mental oppression in the room, seemed utterly unaffected...

Chapter 990: Empire's Overlord

Chapter 990 – Empire’s Overlord

Who is she?

Crimson Fox’s attention unconsciously drifted to the leisurely woman.

Currently, Blood Dragon was Level 40, and only a handful of players throughout the Black Dragon Empire had reached this Level.

Level 40 players were much stronger than Level 39 players in terms of Attributes as they could equip Level 40 equipment. If even he, someone who wore a full collection of Level 35 Dark-Gold Equipment, felt such immense pressure from Blood Dragon, one could just imagine how intense of a pressure a Level 20 player would feel in Blood Dragon’s aura.

Yet, the mysterious woman before him treated Blood Dragon’s undisguised aura as if it were a spring breeze.

In addition, the mysterious woman herself exuded a noble and graceful aura that coaxed one into submission.

“Sit,” Blood Dragon told Crimson Fox as he pointed to one of the wooden chairs on the other side of his desk. “Let me introduce you. This beauty is the Blackwater Corporation’s representative, Qin Muyun. Like you, she is here for Zero Wing.”

“The Blackwater Corporation?!” Crimson Fox was taken aback.

Everyone had heard of the Blackwater Corporation. It was a Fortune 500 company. Meanwhile, the young woman before him had been chosen to represent such a major corporation.

“Guild Leader Crimson, if you have any information regarding Zero Wing that you wish to share, please tell us. I believe that Miss Muyun is also interested to hear it,” Blood Dragon said, chuckling.

Crimson Fox nodded nervously. He then relayed everything about Zero Wing’s development in Lake Heart City.

“Vice Guild Leader Blood, you’ve seen Zero Wing’s ambition for yourself. If we let Zero Wing develop any further, no one will be able to guarantee that Zero Wing won’t set its sights on the Black Dragon Empire. If we don’t take measures to contain the Guild, with its development speed thus far, it won’t be long before it grows so big that even you will be helpless against it,” Qin Muyun said, smiling. “You should consider my earlier proposal.”

Qin Muyun had the voice of a siren. Her words were intoxicating. Even an expert like Crimson Fox was not completely unaffected.

Initially, Qin Muyun had worried that the Dragon-Phoenix Pavilion would reject their offer of cooperation. Now, however, her worries had been resolved.

Before this, Zero Wing’s operations had been limited to Star-Moon Kingdom. No matter how strong it became, it wouldn’t impact the Pavilion’s operations in the Black Dragon Empire. However, she had never imagined that, of all places, Zero Wing would choose to expand into the Black Dragon Empire.

The Black Dragon Empire was the Dragon-Phoenix Pavilion's territory!

For the sake of its reputation, the Pavilion couldn't let Zero Wing enjoy itself here. Otherwise, Nine Dragons Emperor's prior declaration would be nothing more than his own disgrace.

"Since Miss Muyun has already said as much, I agree to provide support in resources, products, Coins, and experts to help you defeat Zero Wing. Once the deed is done, however, the Pavilion wants full authority over Stone Forest Town."

"Please rest assured. As long as the Pavilion helps us from the sidelines, the Blackwater Corporation will deal with the rest." Qin Muyun smiled. "If there isn't anything else to discuss, I must leave to report the good news to my superiors."

Blood Dragon nodded before sending Qin Muyun off with his gaze.

"Vice Guild Leader Blood, what about Lake Heart City?" Crimson Fox asked anxiously.

Lake Heart City was an important source of income for the Crimson Castle. Without it, the Guild's development would deteriorate significantly.

"Relax. Since Zero Wing dares to enter the Black Dragon Empire, the Pavilion won't let the Guild off the hook. I will send the Blood Legion to assist the Crimson Castle. We'll make sure that Zero Wing regrets ever setting foot in the Black Dragon Empire." Blood Dragon could not help but chuckle. Turning to Crimson Fox, he spoke in a domineering tone, "I'll appoint my aid, Beautiful Ghost, to command the operation. I believe that you do not have any arguments, right?"

"Of course, of course!" Crimson Fox said excitedly.

The Blood Legion was a legion of expert Assassins that everyone in the Black Dragon Empire knew about. Not only did these experts possess excellent equipment, but every one of them was also adept with ambushes in the fields.

Although the Blood Legion was not the Dragon-Phoenix Pavilion's strongest force, it was the one that the various large Guilds feared the most. Even first-rate Guilds were afraid of the Blood Legion.

Out in the fields, even a single expert Assassin was a force not to be reckoned with. Knowing that a team of 1,000 expert Assassins waited for them, who would possibly be bold enough to venture out to grind monsters?

Even if a Guild dispatched a small army of players to hunt down the Blood Legion, its efforts would be futile.

It was precisely this reason that the various large Guilds paled at the mention of the Dragon-Phoenix Pavilion's Blood Legion. Only a super-first-rate Guild with a powerful foundation was capable of compiling such a force. For a first-rate Guild, even forming a team of 100 expert Assassins was impossible.

Now that the Pavilion intended to dispatch the Blood Legion, Zero Wing's members should not even consider leaving Lake Heart City. If they did, they should not dream of returning alive. If this persisted, Zero Wing would not survive in Lake Heart City. Eventually, it would be forced to withdraw.

"I'll leave the rest to you," Blood Dragon told Beautiful Ghost.

“Vice Guild Leader, do not worry. I will gather the men right away. It will only take a few days to eradicate Zero Wing from the Black Dragon Empire,” Beautiful Ghost said very confidently.

In Beautiful Ghost’s opinion, their opponent was merely Zero Wing’s Branch Guild. Dispatching the Blood Legion was simply making a big fuss over nothing.

...

Lake Heart City’s Noble’s District:

Not many players wandered down the street of Western-European buildings, only NPC nobles.

When Shi Feng arrived before a luxurious mansion atop the Demonic Flame Tiger, he noticed a team of 20 players gathered at its gates. He also spotted a few familiar figures among the team members.

These people were none other than Thoughtful Rain, Blue Bamboo, Gunfire, Death Wind, and Autumn Goose.

“Big Brother Ye Feng! Why are you here?” Blue Bamboo noticed Shi Feng and the towering Demonic Flame Tiger immediately, surprise flashing in her eyes.

Hearing Blue Bamboo’s exclamation, Thoughtful Rain and the others turned towards the Demonic Tiger by the entrance.

Shi Feng was even more shocked by the sudden development than Thoughtful Rain and her companions.

He had only arrived before this mansion due to the Seven Treasures. At this point, the Golden Stigmata's tracker pointed to the Seven Treasures' exact location. He had never expected to find Thoughtful Rain and the others here as well.

However, after Blue Bamboo had noticed him, the rest of the team turned and glared as if he were their greatest enemy, killing intent filling their eyes.

Suddenly, the Shield Warrior Death Wind scattered the heavy atmosphere as he approached Shi Feng and asked pleasantly, "Brother Ye Feng, what a coincidence! Are you here for a quest as well?"

Chapter 991: Cost of Contempt

Chapter 991 – Cost of Contempt

"An acquaintance?"

When everyone in the team saw Death Wind greet Shi Feng, their gazes softened slightly. Even so, they remained very cautious with him.

Currently, Shi Feng wore his Black Cloak, so they could not see his information. However, the fact that he rode a Mount showed that he was extraordinarily strong. Otherwise, he wouldn't have reached Level 40 so quickly.

They wouldn't mind a weak acquaintance. However, Shi Feng's strength was precisely the reason that they remained wary.

"Autumn, you guys know him?" a robust man asked Autumn Goose, who stood beside him.

This robust man's weathered appearance spoke of years of life's vicissitudes. A suit of silvery-gray knight's armor protected his body, and he carried a tower shield that was nearly as tall as he was. At his waist, he carried a luxurious golden knight's sword. Furthermore, he had already reached Level 40.

"Mhm. He's one of Zero Wing's Elders. He is incredibly strong. It was thanks to him that we had completed our previous quest." Autumn Goose nodded to the robust man's question. She did not try to hide anything as the man beside her was none other than the commander of the Wind God's Spear, Fallen Wind. "If we can convince Ye Feng to help us, we'll have a much higher chance of completing this quest."

Hearing Autumn Goose's words, Fallen Wind could not help but reexamine Shi Feng.

Although Autumn Goose seemed approachable on the surface, she was arrogant to the bone. In her eyes, very few people were worth Autumn Goose's recognition.

"Autumn, aren't you giving him a bit too much credit? Isn't he just some expert a large Guild nurtured? How strong could he possibly be? If we take him with us, he'll probably only hold us back," a frosty youth in brown leather armor said dismissively.

Aside from Wind God's Spear's brilliant battle records in the multiple confrontations they have had with several large Guilds, their several new experts were already many times stronger than first-rate Guilds' pampered experts. As for the members here today, they were the crème de la crème of the Wind God's Spear.

Every Wind God's Spear member here was a top-class expert with a list of illustrious achievements. How could someone like Shi Feng possibly compare to them?

To further his point, the youth had never seen Shi Feng's name on God's Domain's Experts List.

Disregarding the cold youth's words, Autumn Goose looked directly at Fallen Wind and said, "Commander, I believe that Big Brother Death Wind will also support my point."

At Autumn Goose's strong recommendation of Shi Feng, Thoughtful Rain's beautiful eyes sparkled with anticipation. Although she did not understand why, whenever she was with Shi Feng, she felt indescribably safe. She didn't even feel like this when she traveled with someone as powerful as Fallen Wind.

"This is interesting." Fallen Wind could not help but watch the cloaked Shi Feng, curiosity flashing in his eyes.

Naturally, there was no need to mention Shi Feng's level. However, the Swordsman's combat standards were unknown. Generally, one could judge a person's strength based on the aura they radiated. The stronger a person was, the stronger their aura was. Such a phenomenon was due to the confidence they gained from experiencing countless battles.

Yet...

Even after observing Shi Feng for a long moment, Fallen Wind could not sense any aura that hinted at Shi Feng's strength.

As to whether or not Shi Feng concealed his aura, this was unlikely. After all, even experts would find it extremely difficult to conceal their aura completely unless their mental fortitude had reached a certain level. However, experts capable of doing so were generally in their thirties or forties. Some only reached this refinement in their fifties. To put it simply, it was impossible for a youth to have enough control to hide their aura.

However, both Autumn Goose and Death Wind seemed to admire Shi Feng.

This was strange indeed.

"Autumn, let's pass on asking him this time. If the opportunity presents itself, we can invite him in the future. We've already determined our team's roster. Sudden adjustments to the team will increase our chances of failure," Fallen Wind said after giving it some thought. "We cannot afford to fail this quest. If we complete this quest, the Wind God's Spear's strength will climb to a new level. The Wind God's Spear won't have to shuffle around in the Dark Night Empire's shadows anymore. Instead, the empire's large Guilds will have to hide like rats."

"I understand," Autumn Goose dejectedly replied.

She understood Fallen Wind's sentiment. They had invested a lot of effort into this quest. Now that they had reached the final phase and were prepared, they would be taking unnecessary risks if they replaced one of the team members.

“Our Commander knows best. If we allow a half-assed expert into the team, I’ll constantly have to worry about him dragging me to the grave,” the cold youth said, nodding.

When Thoughtful Rain and Blue Bamboo heard Fallen Wind reject Autumn Goose’s proposal and Ordinary Blade’s, the cold youth, ridicule, they were annoyed.

However, as they were members of Zero Wing, they did not find it appropriate to intervene in Wind God’s Spear’s internal matters.

Yet, Ordinary Blade’s disrespect of Shi Feng made the somewhat angry.

“Commander Fallen, I apologize, but Blue and I won’t be participating in this operation. After all, this is the Wind God’s Spear’s affair. It wouldn’t be proper for us to take part,” Thoughtful Rain announced.

They had simply tagged along for this quest due to Fallen Wind’s invitation and their friendship with Autumn Goose and the others.

Now that Zero Wing’s Elder had been belittled, how could they, members of Zero Wing, remain on the team?

“Ordinary, apologize to Miss Rain and Miss Blue!” Fallen Wind growled as he glared at the frosty youth. How could he not understand the meaning behind Thoughtful Rain’s words?

The sudden development stupefied Ordinary Blade.

He was simply trying to make himself look good before Thoughtful Rain and Blue Bamboo. How had things ended up this way?

What was going on here?

“Miss Rain and Miss Blue are members of Zero Wing!” Fallen Wind softly reminded the boy.

This was the first time Ordinary Blade had met Thoughtful Rain and Blue Bamboo. In addition, as the two women were participating in the quest as individuals, they had not worn their Guild Emblems. Hence, Ordinary Blade had not realized that the duo was from Zero Wing.

“Miss Rain, I misspoke. Please, forgive me,” Ordinary Blade quickly apologized after realizing his blunder. He very much felt like digging a hole and jumping in.

Seeing Ordinary Blade’s distress, Autumn Goose, who was familiar with the youth, could not help but giggle.

In the Wind God’s Spear, Ordinary Blade was famous for his indifference. However, when the youth had met Thoughtful Rain for the first time, his eyes had nearly fallen from their sockets. It was obvious that the youth was interested in Thoughtful Rain. Unfortunately, his attempt to impress her had backfired magnificently.

This time, even their commander couldn’t save him.

She and Thoughtful Rain were as close as sisters. She was very familiar with Thoughtful Rain's personality.

When Thoughtful Rain made a decision, even a force of nature wouldn't change her mind...

She remembered Thoughtful Rain's decision to join Zero Wing. No matter how much she had tried to dissuade the girl, hadn't Thoughtful Rain still joined the Guild?

Chapter 992: Legendary Difficulty

Chapter 992 – Legendary Difficulty

Thoughtful Rain's resolute refusal gave Fallen Wind a headache.

Ordinary Blade truly knew how to give him trouble.

Thoughtful Rain was a God's Domain player who had come into contact with virtual reality games just recently. However, when Fallen Wind watched the battle video Autumn Goose sent him, which showed a duel between herself and Thoughtful Rain, a shiver had crawled down his spine.

If not for Autumn Goose telling him about Thoughtful Rain's situation, he would not have even imagined that God's Domain was her first virtual reality game. Within just a few months' time, she had actually managed to grow to a point where she could hold her own against Autumn Goose. Her improvement speed was simply godly.

Compared to Thoughtful Rain, those players who were held up as geniuses in God's Domain were simply garbage.

Recently, Autumn Goose had been improving very quickly, and right now, her strength already ranked steadily within the top ten of the Wind God's Spear.

Although the Wind God's Spear was only an adventurer team, its members were all battle maniacs and extremely proud. Members of the team would frequently spar with each other. They would also often pick fights with members of large Guilds. As a result, their strength increased continuously every day. Rather than passing their time leisurely in God's Domain, they desperately sought all sorts of means to improve themselves. Hence, ranking within the top ten of the Wind God's Spear was a challenging proposition, not to mention maintaining a position there.

Yet, when Autumn Goose reunited with Thoughtful Rain after not meeting her for a short time, Autumn Goose had actually lost to Thoughtful Rain, who was significantly weaker than herself before, in a duel. Moreover, when Thoughtful Rain defeated Autumn Goose, it was obvious she had not used her full strength.

Fallen Wind found it truly hard to fathom what heights Thoughtful Rain's combat power had already reached. However, he estimated that she should be able to rank within the top five of the Wind God's Spear. In contrast, although Ordinary Stranger was very talented and his improvement speed was very fast, he only ranked within the top 20 even now.

Losing a combatant like Thoughtful Rain would greatly hamper their quest.

Just as Fallen Wind was about to say something, a crisp voice suddenly came from within the mansion, echoing throughout the entire courtyard and making everyone's souls tremble.

“What a lively day it is today. I never thought that even an important person from the War God's Temple would be willing to pay me a visit. However, since you've already arrived, I'll have to ask you to remain and head to another world to enjoy.”

After the sound of this voice dissipated, a magic barrier enveloped the entire mansion.

“What's going on?”

This sudden development threw everyone for a loop, Fallen Wind in particular.

Their quest had tasked them to visit Countess Katie Green of the Black Dragon Empire. The Countess would then bring them to a secret location. However, based on the words she had just spoken, it was clear that she was trying to make them suffer.

While everyone was panicking, Shi Feng remained relatively calm.

It was very obvious to him that the Countess's words were intended for him. Otherwise, she would not have mentioned “War God's Temple.”

While Shi Feng and everyone else were thinking of how to deal with their current predicament, their vision immediately filled with darkness. Every one of them transformed into a streak of light and disappeared from the luxurious mansion. It was as if none of them had ever appeared there. The NPC guards patrolling the streets did not even sense the existence of the barrier magic array.

...

“What is this place?”

“Why have my movements turned sluggish?!”

“Commander, I can’t use my Return Scroll!”

“Me too!”

...

As soon as everyone could see again, they discovered that the scenery before them had changed. Their bodies also felt leaden. Many in the team could not help but grow anxious at this situation.

Meanwhile, this sealed space had only a set of open, pitch-black stone doors, a few hundred meters in height, standing right before them. Beyond these doors was a wide and spacious passage, the walls of which boasted countless carvings of Gods and Demons, the images depicting the ancient war between Gods and Demons.

This passage led directly to a towering temple in the distance.

Upon seeing the massive stone doors, a name immediately appeared in Shi Feng's mind.

The Trial of God!

To players, the Trial of God was an opportunity. It was extremely difficult to encounter one. Previously, Blackie and the others had only managed to enter one due to luck.

However, great rewards also came with great risks.

Maybe it was also due to their luck, but Blackie and the others had encountered only a four-colored trial. It was also precisely because it was only a four-colored trial that they had managed to deal with the challenges and safely clear the Trial of God.

However, the Trial of God before him right now was no four-colored trial.

Generally, players could determine the rank of the trial they were taking through the transfer gate in the outside world. However, after entering a trial, there was still another method to determine its rank.

And that was the size of the Trial Gate.

Trial Gates that were around ten meters tall signified that one was undertaking a one-colored trial, after which came 20 meters, 30 meters, 50 meters, 100 meters, 300 meters, and 999 meters.

Meanwhile, the Trial Gate before them was clearly over 100 meters in height, perhaps around 300 meters in all. In other words, this was a six-colored trial, and its difficulty could rival Legendary Quests.

Shortly after Shi Feng realized that this place was the Trial of God, Fallen Wind and several other experts came to the same conclusion. Immediately, their expressions turned very gloomy.

“Why is it a six-colored Trial of God?” As calm as he was, even Fallen Wind’s mouth twitched involuntarily when he noticed this fact.

The Trial of God was no secret in God’s Domain. With so many players playing the game, there were bound to be quite a few players who had encountered it. As more and more players discussed the trial on the official forums, details about the Trial of God became public.

After the others heard Fallen Wind mentioning the Trial of God, they promptly looked it up on the official forums.

However, once everyone understood what exactly a six-colored trial was, their hearts grew very heavy.

“Commander, what should we do now?” many members of the Wind God’s Spear asked worriedly.

There were only two methods to leave a Trial of God. One was to clear the trial, while the other was to give up on it. There was no third possibility. Those who died inside the trial would be resurrected and forced to continue.

Those who completed the trial would be showered in glory, their strength increasing significantly. However, those who chose to give up would have to pay a heavy price. Moreover, the higher the rank of the trial, the greater the price exacted.

If one forfeited a six-colored trial, the consequences were unimaginable. There was a great chance that their account would be crippled permanently.

Hence, most players who encountered a Trial of God would first determine the trial's difficulty before deciding whether or not they should challenge or distance themselves from it.

In their case, however, they had been forcibly transported to this place. They did not even have a say in the matter.

To the Wind God's Spear, if the trial had the difficulty of only an Epic Quest, they would still be confident of clearing it. However, for a Trial whose difficulty approached that of a Legendary Quest, they had no confidence whatsoever that they would succeed.

After taking a deep breath, Fallen Wind said, "Calm down. Since we've already entered the Trial of God, what we need to do now is think of a solution to clear it. We don't have any other choice."

As soon as Fallen Wind finished speaking, numerous silver-armored knights with glowing red eyes started emerging from the walls of the passage. In the blink of an eye, the entire passage was packed full of knights, every one of them charging towards Shi Feng's ground.

[Undead Fanatic] (Dark Creature, Elite) Level 50 HP 200,000/200,000

This scene caused everyone's scalps to go numb.

"Form a defensive formation!" Shi Feng shouted hurriedly.

At this time, everyone finally reacted.

Currently, everyone no longer considered whether they could succeed or not. Instead, they wondered how long they could survive.

When the tide of Undead Fanatics reached the team, the MTs at the front felt greatly pressured.

Despite these Undead Fanatics being Elite rank only, they possessed great Strength. Not only was every one of their attacks capable of pushing the MTs back, but it also caused nearly -1,000 damage even when blocked. With multiple Undead Fanatics attacking at the same time, the MTs lost HP by the thousands. The healers standing at the rear simply couldn't keep up.

Although everyone from the Wind God's Spear was doing their best to retaliate, their attacks inflicting several thousand damage to the Undead Fanatics, there were simply too many monsters. No matter how much they attacked, their efforts did not seem to be making a difference.

When the team was close to succumbing, a streak of light suddenly cut across the monsters.

A large number of Undead Fanatics in a cone-shaped area died instantly. Everyone was stupefied by this scene.

At this time, everyone could not help but shift their gaze towards the cloaked Shi Feng, the origin of this phenomenon.

Chapter 993: Soaring Life Force

Chapter 993 – Soaring Life Force

Is this the person that caught Autumn Goose's eye? Fallen Wind was astounded at the sight.

He was a Level 40 Guardian Knight as well as the lead MT of the team. He had been fighting at the frontline all this time, so he knew very clearly just how powerful these Undead Fanatics were.

If there was just one of these Elites, anyone on their team could easily solo it.

Although the Undead Fanatics possessed great Strength, far surpassing even that of their team's Level 40 Berserker, Autumn Goose, their Attack Speed and reaction speed were not particularly fast. Given enough space, even an MT could slowly wear one down by themselves.

However, it was terrifying if they had to go up against over 10,000 of these Elite monsters. The tide of Undead Fanatics surrounding them gave them no room to maneuver whatsoever, so they had no choice but to clash directly against these Elites. Moreover, the Undead Fanatics possessed 200,000 HP—above average HPs for Level 50 Elite Undead. In addition, the inherent Magic Resistance of Undead was very high. Even when someone in their team used an AOE Attack Spell, they only managed to deal around - 2,000 damage to the Elites. Even after multiple applications, they barely did any damage to the Undead Fanatics.

It was only a matter of time before the team would get annihilated.

Yet, with just a single swing of his sword, Shi Feng had vaporized nearly a thousand Undead Fanatics.

Aside from Fallen Wind, everyone else in the team was stupefied by Shi Feng's performance as well.

"Autumn, just how did you get acquainted with such a monster?" a Level 39 female Cursemancer asked softly.

"I met him when I was doing a quest with Rain. Back then, just like you guys, we thought that Guild experts were merely pampered players." When Autumn Goose recalled how she had the same thoughts that the members of the Wind God's Spear had right now, she could not help but feel ashamed of herself.

Hearing the conversation between the Cursemancer and Autumn Goose, Thoughtful Rain and Blue Bamboo felt a surge of pride overwhelm their earlier anger.

"I've said it before, right? Big Brother Ye Feng is very powerful. Some time ago, Big Brother Ye Feng managed to kill a Level 50 Field Great Lord with just me and Rain in the party. It is naturally not a problem for him to deal with these Level 50 Elite monsters right now," Blue Bamboo said proudly, puffing out her chest.

Although they had relied mainly on Shi Feng's two Personal Guards to defeat the Level 50 Great Lord, Blue Bamboo considered the Personal Guards part of Shi Feng's strength. After all, she had never seen anyone else with the ability to recruit such powerful Personal Guards.

“What?! He managed to solo a Level 50 Field Great Lord with just you two magical classes?!”

“That’s impossible, right? Previously, even after our Wind God’s Spear had gathered a team of 100 players, we managed to defeat a Level 40 Field Great Lord only after utilizing many rare tools.”

Everyone from the Wind God’s Spear was shocked by Blue Bamboo’s revelation. The feat of killing a Level 50 Great Lord was much more amazing than directly wiping out hundreds of Undead Fanatics.

After entering God’s Domain, they had fought against plenty of monsters. Hence, they knew full well just how frightening a Level 50 Field Great Lord could be. Current players simply had no chance of contending against such a Boss.

Level 50 was a major milestone. Players could begin challenging their Tier 2 class-change at this level and greatly improve their Attributes. Their Skills could reach Tier 2 as well. Overall, upon reaching Level 50, players could receive a tremendous boost to their combat power. Hence, the system had made it so that Level 50 monsters were stronger than Level 49 monsters by a large margin.

This gap was also the reason why even a Berserker expert like Autumn Goose was no match for the Level 50 Undead Fanatics in terms of Strength.

Immediately, everyone looked at Shi Feng with astonishment.

Meanwhile, when Ordinary Blade, who previously still felt contempt towards Shi Feng, noticed Thoughtful Rain constantly looking at Shi Feng, jealousy sprouted in his heart.

Just you wait. I will definitely surpass you one day! Ordinary Blade swore to himself.

He had only been in contact with God's Domain for a short time. His strength was still rising rapidly. Besides, he had recently managed to apprentice himself to a martial arts master in the real world. Said master had even acknowledged him as a martial arts genius. With the virtual environment of God's Domain practically the same as the real world, he refused to believe he would fail to surpass Shi Feng in the future.

"We can't always stay on the defense. I'll open a path for us. Melee classes, protect the magical classes from the sides and follow me," Shi Feng said hurriedly when he noticed that Undead Fanatics were still pouring out from the walls of the distant passage. "Magical classes, don't bother attacking. Try to use Movement Speed Reduction and Imprisonment Skills as much as possible."

After Shi Feng was done speaking, he cast Firestorm ahead of him.

A towering inferno promptly devoured everything. Although the Undead Fanatics possessed high Magic Resistance, Shi Feng's Killing Ray doubled his damage towards Dark Creatures. As a result, by the time Firestorm's duration ended, none of the Undead Fanatics caught within the range of the flames remained alive.

Unfortunately, as this place was the Trial of God, regardless of how many monsters players killed here, they would not receive any EXP. Similarly, the monsters here also did not drop any loot. The only thing players could gain from fighting against the monsters here was Skill Proficiency. Generally, players would receive rewards only after they cleared a stage.

Shi Feng, however, got an additional benefit from killing these Undead Fanatics.

Previously, when he used Lightning Blade to kill the Undead Fanatics, he discovered that Icarus's Heart had absorbed plenty of Life Force.

After he had used the Holy Grail to evolve Icarus's Heart, the necklace no longer required him to kill Bosses to upgrade it. Instead, he only needed to kill players and absorb their Life Force. The only downside was the amount of Life Force required. Currently, he needed 5,000 units of Life Force to upgrade the necklace to Epic rank.

Although Shi Feng had killed plenty of players after evolving Icarus's Heart, he had also used the necklace's Skill numerous times, particularly when he was opening Treasure Chests and killing Bosses. Each use cost him 100 units of Life Force. He had practically used up all of what he had collected. Hence, he had never been able to upgrade Icarus's Heart to Epic rank during this time.

However, for every two or three Undead Fanatics he killed, Icarus's Heart's accumulated Life Force actually increased by one.

After just two attacks, Shi Feng had gained over 800 units of Life Force. The rate at which he was gathering Life Force right now was much faster than when he was killing players.

Following which, Shi Feng activated both Defensive Blade and Thunder God's Descent. He then started brandishing his swords, executing Sword's Orbit as he slaughtered his way forward.

The Undead Fanatics might have had an advantage in Strength over Shi Feng's team members, but the same could not be said for Shi Feng himself.

When comparing Strength Attributes, Shi Feng, who possessed a Fragmented Legendary item and multiple Epic weapons and equipment, only needed a single attack to send the Undead Fanatics flying. In terms of speed, he was many times faster than the Elite monsters. Before the monsters could even touch him, his swords would've already struck their weak points, repelling them.

Shi Feng was like a meat grinder when he went up against the endless Undead Fanatics. His swords madly devoured the Elite monsters charging at him. With no exception, all Undead Fanatics within 15 yards of Shi Feng would have their HPs reduced at a speed visible to the naked eye.

In the blink of an eye, numerous Undead Fanatics had their 200,000 HPs depleted completely.

Following which, Icarus's Heart's accumulated Life Force rapidly increased. In just a few moments, the counter had crossed the 1,000-unit threshold.

"Autumn, is he really a player?"

The members of the Wind God's Spear following behind Shi Feng gulped involuntarily. They could not bring themselves to believe what they were seeing.

Chapter 994: Rising to Epic

Chapter 994 – Rising to Epic

Everyone had already seen for themselves just how strong Shi Feng's Basic Attributes were.

Even the Level 50 Undead Fanatics were no match for him in terms of Strength. He could easily send the Elites flying with a casual attack.

However, being able to make it so that not a single monster could get within ten yards of himself was impossible just by relying on Attributes. Combat techniques and experience played important roles as well.

While players could improve their Basic Attributes through equipment upgrades, combat techniques and experience could not be easily improved. This was also the Wind God's Spear's greatest point of pride.

The various large Guilds were all busy raiding Dungeons to upgrade their weapons and equipment. They did not place much attention on improving their techniques and accumulating combat experience.

Hence, the Wind God's Spear would manage to safely break away the encirclement of the Dark Night Empire's various large Guilds time after time and continue existing with relative ease until now.

Previously, when the members of the Wind God's Spear witnessed Shi Feng killing hundreds of Undead Fanatics with one attack before, the most they felt was shock. After all, that was something he achieved through relying on powerful items and Skills. However, now that Shi Feng was using an inconceivable combat technique to slaughter the Elite monsters, the feeling everyone felt when they looked at Shi Feng was no longer that of shock but admiration and worship, instead.

Many members on the team had already become deeply mesmerized by the Sword's Orbit. If not for the Undead Fanatics constantly charging at them, they would definitely place all their attention on observing Shi Feng's technique.

"With such a sword technique, I'm afraid that even One Sword of the Eight Sword Heroes can't compare to him." When Fallen Wind looked at Shi Feng, his eyes blazed with the urge to fight.

In the entire Dark Night Empire, the number of experts that received his acknowledgment could be counted with his fingers. Among them, One Sword, whom the Secret Pavilion had dubbed one of the Eight Sword Heroes, was someone Fallen Wind admired greatly. Now, the number of people he admired had increased by one more.

If not for the Undead Fanatics, he really would have wished to fight Shi Feng to his heart's content.

"If he keeps on using such a powerful combat technique, will his Stamina and Concentration be able to handle it?" Autumn Goose asked somewhat worriedly as she looked at Shi Feng.

She was not an ordinary player. Previously, when she had gone up against the encirclement of the Dark Night Empire's various large Guilds, she had also encountered players wielding special combat techniques.

While these special combat techniques were indeed powerful, they also had a fatal flaw—they were extremely taxing to use. Utilizing a special combat technique was akin to sprinting all out. The burden it placed on a person's Stamina and Concentration was many times greater than jogging.

In God's Domain, even if players only had 1 HP remaining, they could still move freely so long as they did not receive heavy injuries. However, when players' Stamina and Concentration fell below a certain level, they would no longer be able to enter combat.

If Shi Feng exhausted his Stamina and Concentration right now, the consequences would be unimaginable.

In reality, however, Autumn Goose's concerns about Shi Feng were unnecessary.

While Sword's Orbit did indeed place a huge burden on Shi Feng's Stamina, the technique's consumption of Concentration was minimal. Moreover, before using Sword's Orbit to defend against these Undead Fanatics, Shi Feng had already activated the Basic Tyrant title, increasing his Fortitude by 30, maximum Stamina by 20%, and all Basic Attributes by 5%.

The additional 30 Fortitude reduced his Stamina and Concentration consumption significantly. Coupled with the increase to his maximum Stamina, Shi Feng could persist for much longer than Autumn Goose thought.

Moreover, even if Shi Feng's current Stamina and Concentration could not last him until they reached the distant temple, he still possessed the Blood Refining Stone.

The Blood Refining Stone was something he obtained from the Blood Refining Passage. It could absorb the Life Force of powerful monsters and turn this into Blood Energy. He could use every 100 points of Blood Energy he accumulated to produce a drop of Life Essence. When consumed, the Life Essence could increase a player's Stamina and Concentration recovery speed rapidly for two hours. Moreover, the effects were stackable up to three times.

This was an item Shi Feng always kept on his person. Although not every Elite or above monster provided him with Blood Energy, after long periods of accumulation, he now had 827 drops of Life Essence. He did not need to worry about running out of Stamina and Concentration any time soon.

Time passed quickly. Whenever everyone thought that Shi Feng's Stamina would not hold up, Shi Feng would consume Life Essence. However, the recovery speed provided by a single drop was not enough. Only after consuming three drops would his recovery speed exceed his consumption speed.

As Shi Feng continued slaughtering the Undead Fanatics, the amount of Life Force Icarus's Heart accumulated increased rapidly.

Two thousand points...

Three thousand points...

Four thousand points...

By the time the team arrived before the dazzling, golden temple, Shi Feng had long since accumulated 5,000 units of Life Force.

Without hesitation, Shi Feng upgraded Icarus's Heart.

[Icarus's Heart] (Necklace, Epic Rank) Equipment Requirement: All Attributes 120 Level 40 – Level 100 (Currently Level 44) All Attributes +44 Luck +18

Additional Skill 1- Divine Providence: Temporarily increases player's Luck by 50 points for 30 seconds. Cooldown: 30 minutes Luck, Duration, and Cooldown can be increased, prolonged, and reduced by sacrificing Life Force. Maximum of 200 points of Life Force allowed to be sacrificed at a single time.

Additional Skill 2- God's Blessing: Forcefully upgrades all Lifestyle classes learned by the user by one rank (up to a maximum of Master rank) for one hour. Cooldown: 5 hours Duration and Cooldown can be increased, prolonged, and reduced by sacrificing Life Force. Maximum of 500 points of Life Force allowed to be sacrificed at a single time.

Passive Skill- Life Storage: Player can accumulate up to 10,000 units of Life Force. Current amount (0/10,000).

Shi Feng was momentarily stunned when he saw the improved Attributes of the Epic ranked Icarus's Heart.

Although Icarus's Heart did not receive much of an improvement in terms of Basic Attributes, it was definitely a godly item all players would want to have.

Setting aside the increased Luck Attribute Icarus's Heart provided, just the necklace's ability to forcibly upgrade a Lifestyle class's rank could easily skyrocket a Lifestyle player's worth. Particularly during this period when Lifestyle players were still low-leveled, being able to upgrade an Advanced Lifestyle player to the Master rank, even if it was only for one hour a day, would help a trading firm massively.

Currently, Shi Feng could not help but wish he could fly back to the Candlelight Trading Firm right this instant. Unfortunately, he first needed to clear the Trial of God.

When everyone arrived before the temple, they were still thinking of a way to shake off the Undead Fanatics' pursuit. However, once everyone entered the main hall of the temple, the mob of Undead Fanatics suddenly transformed into mists of blood before vanishing into nothingness. There were no signs that those monsters had ever existed.

"Are we safe?" Blue Bamboo looked at her surroundings. After failing to find even a single Undead Fanatic in the vicinity, she automatically breathed out a sigh of relief.

Had the battle dragged on any longer, her Mana would've definitely run out.

Before, in order to keep everyone's HPs above a safe margin, she had never once stopped casting her Healing Spells. On their way to this temple, she had consumed over a stack of Intermediate Mana Recovery Potions.

Not only were Intermediate Mana Recovery Potions expensive on the market right now, but their supply was also very low. The ones that appeared in trading firms or Auction Houses would sell out almost instantly. After all, Mana was the second life of magical classes. Without Mana, magical classes were no different from rubbish. Hence, those who played a magical class would always carry around three or four bottles of Basic or Intermediate Mana Recovery Potion at the very least.

She had obtained these Intermediate Mana Recovery Potions using the Guild Contribution Points she had earned with great difficulty. Now, however, she had used up half of her stockpile in just this short time—truly a disheartening situation.

Just when everyone thought that they were finally safe and could obtain the Seven-colored Treasure Chest sitting atop the towering altar located at the very back of the main hall, the steps of the staircase leading up to the altar suddenly released red beams of light, which then formed into three-meter-tall, fully armored Undead Guardians.

[Undead Guardian] (Dark Creature, Chieftain) Level 50 HP 2,400,000/2,400,000

Although there were only several hundred Undead Guardians standing on the staircase—a far cry from the endless flood of Undead Fanatics from before—everyone could clearly sense that these Undead Guardians were many times more powerful than those Elite monsters.

Currently, three Undead Guardians stood on each step of the staircase, and if the team attempted to lure any one of the Chieftains, no doubt the other two Undead Guardians would follow. In other words, the team had to go up against three Undead Guardians simultaneously at the very least.

Their team's average level was ten Levels lower than the Undead Guardians'. In addition, each Level 50 Undead Guardian could most likely rival a Level 40 High Lord in strength; only their HPs were lower.

With so few players on the team, going up against three Level 40 High Lords at the same time would be extremely difficult.

"It seems we won't be able to clear this stage without defeating those Guardians," Shi Feng said. He could not help but wet his lips as he looked at the Seven-colored Treasure Chest sitting atop the staircase.

This was not his first time challenging a Trial of God. However, having a lucrative reward like the Seven-colored Treasure Chest appearing in the first stage of the trial was definitely a first for him.

Chapter 995: Guardian

Translator: Hellscythe_ __ **Editor:** FluffyGoblyn

Chapter 995 – Guardian

"Commander, these Undead Guardians are too close to each other. Even if we lure them over, we'll have to fight a minimum of three at a time," Death Wind said, frowning.

While he might be able to hold his ground against a Level 40 High Lord for a short time, he couldn't handle three. He would be lucky if he did not die instantly. Meanwhile, their team only had two MTs; himself and the team's leader, Fallen Wind.

However, even an expert like Fallen Wind couldn't hold off two Undead Guardians simultaneously.

"Starfish, can you handle kiting one?" Fallen Wind asked as he turned to a lean, muscular Ranger.

The Ranger class possessed high Movement Speed. In addition, the class had quite a few Control Skills. Rangers were perfect for kiting monsters.

Starfish happened to be one of the top ranking Rangers in Wind God's Spear. If Starfish could lure one Guardian away from the team, the MTs could handle the rest.

"If Control Skills work on these monsters, it should be doable," Starfish said after observing the hall. He had plenty of space to run, so kiting the Undead Guardian shouldn't be a problem for him.

"I don't think Control Skills are effective against them. None of our Control Skills worked on the Undead Fanatics. Only the Elementarists' Ice Walls slowed them down. The stronger Undead Guardians should have the same settings as the Undead Fanatics," Autumn Goose said.

The other team members agreed with Autumn Goose's deduction.

Generally, unless a Control Skill were very high-tiered, it would have no effect on Boss-level monsters.

“We don’t have another choice. Use a Tier 2 Summoning Scroll, then,” Fallen Wind said, gritting his teeth.

He had thoroughly prepared to tackle this quest. The Tier 2 Summoning Scroll was one of his trump cards. Unfortunately, Tier 2 Summoning Scrolls were rare, and he had only brought four with them.

Suddenly, Shi Feng offered a suggestion, “No need. I can handle one of them. However, we will need to prioritize killing mine.”

“Are you sure? That’s a Level 50 Chieftain we’re talking about,” Fallen Wind questioned.

As high as Shi Feng’s Basic Attributes were, they should not be higher than a Level 50 Chieftain’s. Moreover, a Swordsman was not an MT. The class’s impact resistance and damage reduction were far weaker than the tank classes.

“I can handle it,” Shi Feng said, shrugging.

“Commander, leave it to Brother Ye Feng. While he might be a Swordsman, he is even more capable as a tank than I am,” the Shield Warrior Death Wind piped in.

During one of their last meetings, he had watched Shi Feng tank a Level 44 Lord ranked Ice Cheetah. A lot of time had passed since that day. Shi Feng’s equipment had definitely improved during this period. He should have no problems tanking a Level 50 Chieftain.

“Alright, I’ll have to trouble you with it, then,” Fallen Wind said. After hearing Death Wind’s confidence and witnessing Shi Feng’s shocking performance earlier, Fallen Wind could not help but believe in Shi Feng.

Once everyone knew their responsibilities, the team began to move.

To start things off, the Ranger Starfish stretched his bow into a full moon and fired three arrows at the Undead Guardians patrolling the staircase’s first layer. Not only did his arrows hit all three Undead Guardians, but the arrows also struck the three Chieftains when they were furthest from the second level. As a result, the attacks had not attracted the second level’s Guardians.

The instant the arrows struck the three Undead Guardians, a damage of around -500 points appeared above each of their heads. Their Defense was frighteningly high.

Aside from the high Defense, these Chieftains were also very fast. When they moved, they were as swift as cheetahs. If not for Fallen Wind using Justice Roar in time, pulling the three Undead Guardians’ aggro, Starfish would not have been able to escape.

As the three Undead Guardians turned towards Fallen Wind, Death Wind used Charge from another side. The Shield warrior then slammed his sword into the nearest Undead Guardian.

—

Peng! _

The sharp sound of clashing metal echoed throughout the hall.

The Undead Guardian had blocked Death Wind's slash with its greatsword, not receiving a single point of damage. On the other hand, the impact forced Death Wind to retreat by two steps, and a damage of over -5,000 points appeared above his head. The Shield Warrior instantly lost a quarter of his HP.

Everyone watching was appalled.

Among the MTs in Wind God's Spear, Death Wind's equipment was only second to Fallen Wind's. He was also a Level 40 MT, yet not only had the Undead Guardian discovered his sneak attack, but it also had more Strength than any of them had expected.

"Its Strength rivals a Level 40 Strength-based High Lord! And its reaction speed is incredibly high! Melee players, approach it with care! Don't try to fight it head-on!" Fallen Wind hurriedly shouted.

"Understood!" the melee players promptly answered, tensing.

A Level 40 Strength-based High Lord could kill any class except for plate armor classes instantly, not to mention a Strength-based High Lord with such quick reactions.

In their opinion, Death Wind had timed his attack perfectly, yet the Guardian had still blocked his blade. If they crossed weapons with the Chieftain, they would lose far more than 5,000 HP.

Just before the other two Undead Guardians reached Fallen Wind, a streak of red light struck one of the Chieftain's sides.

-43,246.

The terrifying critical damage rendered everyone speechless.

Starfish's attacks had only dealt around -500 damage, yet this attack had inflicted over -40,000.

Moreover, the impact had sent the Undead Guardian flying, its body slamming into the ground.

Instinctively, everyone turned towards Shi Feng, the source of the attack, mixed feelings filling their hearts as they looked at the Swordsman.

—

It's Magic Resistance sure is high. _ Shi Feng frowned at the Undead Guardian that he had hit.

Others might not realize it, but the Skill he had used was Flame God's Fury, a Surekill Skill. In addition, his Sacred Sword doubled his damage against Dark Creatures, yet his attack, even after achieving a critical hit, had only inflicted over -40,000 damage. One could just imagine how high the Undead Guardian's Defense and Magic Resistance were.

Shi Feng's terrifying damage instantly drew the Undead Guardian's aggro. Raising its greatsword, the Chieftain leaped into the air and landed before Shi Feng.

Suddenly, crimson flames burst from the Undead Guardian's originally silver greatsword as it swung the weapon at Shi Feng in a horizontal arc.

Tier 1 Skill, Flaming Cross Slash!

“Crap! This monster actually knows a Surekill Skill!”

Seeing the towering pillar of fire, the other players realized that this was many times stronger than the Berserker’s Flame Slash. They could see how much range the attack had from the height of the flames. This attack was impossible to dodge. Coupling this Skill with the Undead Guardian’s horrific Strength, even an MT like Fallen Wind would be hard-pressed to survive the attack.

—

You want to compare brute force? _ Shi Feng chuckled. He then activated Flame Burst.

Suddenly, the Sacred Sword in Shi Feng’s hand released a blinding light. As if he wielded a miniature sun, he swung Killing Ray at the incoming pillar of fire violently.

Chapter 996: New Guild

“Dodge!” Fallen Wind shouted when he saw the Undead Guardian’s pillar of fire.

The Guardian’s Attributes were no laughing matter. Now that it used Flaming Cross Slash, it had an attack range of at least thirty to forty yards. With such an attack range, the Guardian’s attacks could reach over half of the team’s members.

Even after casting Protection Blessing on himself, Fallen Wind doubted he could survive this attack. Even if he did, he would be very close to death. As for his team members, if they didn’t have Skills that granted invulnerability or damage immunity, they would not be able to survive the attack at all.

“We’re doomed!”

Everyone felt the threat of death loom over them. Although they tried to dodge the Undead Guardian’s Flaming Cross Slash, the Chieftain’s Attack Speed was simply too high. By the time they turned to run, the Undead Guardian had swung its pillar of fire horizontally.

As the pillar was about to devour the team...

Shi Feng’s Sacred Sword released a brilliant glow.

Boom!

The massive pillar stopped abruptly as it struck the ground, scorching the earth black and gouging a two-meter deep trench. Overall, however, the pillar of fire hadn’t damaged the team. Only Shi Feng had

been thrown like a cannonball due to the impact; he crashed into one of the temple's support pillars before he slid to the ground.

The other players gaped at this scene.

Despite receiving the Undead Giant's terrifying attack, Shi Feng had only lost around 2,000 HP...

When Death Wind had received one of the Undead Guardian's attacks, the Shield Warrior had lost over 5,000 HP, yet despite receiving a far more powerful Skill, Shi Feng had only suffered minuscule damage.

Although most of the players hadn't seen exactly what had happened, Fallen Wind had.

As the Undead Guardian's attack had descended, Shi Feng struck at the Chieftain's greatsword, sliding the blades along each other and altering the weapon's trajectory slightly; in doing so, he forced the Chieftain's Skill to an abrupt end. Not only had he managed to save half of the team from instant annihilation, but he had also reduced the impact on himself significantly.

However, this feat was easier said than done. The Undead Guardian had immense Strength and top-class Attack Speed and reaction speed. Finding the perfect location to strike against such a powerful monster's attack was harder than threading a needle.

Shi Feng's counterattack had been far from risky. Had he deviated in the slightest, he would have failed to save his team members and paid for his mistake with his life.

While Fallen Wind was confident in achieving a similar feat, he wouldn't have been able to do so as easily as Shi Feng.

So, that is the rumored Flowing Water Realm? After seeing Shi Feng's powerful deflection technique, a flash of inspiration struck Fallen Wind. Shi Feng's attack had also blown away the roadblock that had hindered his progress.

When Shi Feng had executed Sword's Orbit, Fallen Wind could only tell how powerful Shi Feng's combat technique was. He could not understand the techniques underlying principles. However, the technique Shi Feng used to counter the Undead Giant's attack had fully displayed the properties of the Flowing Water Realm, which helped Fallen Wind finally understand why he had been stuck in the Refinement Realm all this time.

Reaching the Refinement Realm required precise control of one's body. The Flowing Water Realm, on the other hand, required precise control over the opponent's body.

Until now, Fallen Wind had focused too much on his own body, so he hadn't truly observed his opponents and understood them. However, after seeing Shi Feng effortlessly deflect the Undead Giant's sword, he finally understood that he didn't have to spend so much energy on his own movements. Rather, he needed to put that energy and focus into his opponents.

Although this situation had only changed his views slightly, Fallen Wind's aura began to change rapidly. Unlike his previous battle-ready state, his aura relaxed, contained.

"Commander, be careful!" Autumn Goose shouted a warning as she noticed Fallen Wind slipping into a daze.

There was still an Undead Guardian looming before Fallen Wind. If the Guardian Knight did not deal with the Chieftain properly, it was very likely to kill him.

Just as the Undead Guardian before Fallen Wind swung its greatsword, the Guardian Knight lifted his massive tower shield.

Peng!

The descending greatsword slid across the shield smoothly before smashing into the ground. Although the blade had scored a deep trench in the ground, Fallen Wind had only been forced back a step, a damage of over -2,000 points appearing above his head. The impact had only taken one-tenth of his HP.

“Commander! You... Did you...” Autumn Goose’s jaw dropped in shock. She couldn’t believe her eyes. Although it wasn’t as refined, Fallen Wind had used almost the same defense technique that Shi Feng had employed.

Seeing Shi Feng easily handle his Undead Guardian in the distance, Fallen Wind bitterly commented, “Sure enough, it’s difficult. However, the Flowing Water Realm really is something. It’s no wonder why I couldn’t defeat One Sword. This is the most I can handle for now. I’ll have to adapt to this new sensation.”

Now, he could barely estimate the Undead Guardian’s attack trajectory to deflect it. Even so, it made his fight against the Chieftain a lot easier.

Fallen Wind’s sudden rise in strength alleviated the healer’s burden slightly. They could now shift more focus to keeping Death Wind alive. Meanwhile, the rest of the team launched their attacks against Shi Feng’s Guardian.

As the seconds ticked by, the Undead Guardian’s HP decreased.

70%... 60%... 50%...

No matter how much the Undead Guardian retaliated, Shi Feng neutralized one of its attacks after another.

Finally, after a pained shriek, the Undead Guardian, which had 2,400,000 HP, exploded into a blood mist and vanished from the large temple. The players released sighs of relief.

After the Undead Guardian disappeared, Icarus's Heart absorbed a large amount of Life Force, climbing from zero accumulated units up to 30.

Although we won't find any loot or gain any EXP here, this is a good place to collect Life Force. Shi Feng was somewhat surprised when he saw his stored Life Force.

After Icarus's Heart had risen to Epic rank, its description no longer stated whether Life Force could be collected from players or monsters. It simply stated that it was capable of storing Life Force. In other words, he should be able to gain Life Force from both. Unfortunately, it was unlikely that he would gain anything from lower-level players and monsters.

Learning that the Undead Guardians would provide so much Life Force, it would be a waste if he did not take advantage of this situation to farm them properly.

Following which, Shi Feng rejoined the battle and dealt with the remaining Undead Guardians gradually. Unknowingly, two days passed outside the trial. The team finally defeated all of the Undead Guardians and arrived at the top of the staircase.

We're finally here. Shi Feng breathed a deep sigh of relief.

Contrary to expectations, the temple's Undead Guardians could respawn. A few new ones would appear every once in a while. The team had fought day and night, afraid that they wouldn't keep up with the Chieftains' respawn rate.

Only after two days did they finally reach the top of the staircase. Unknowingly, Shi Feng had also filled his Life Force storage. Once he returned to the Candlelight Trading Firm, even forging the Magic Light Set Equipment would be a trifling task.

Meanwhile, God's Domain had undergone massive changes. Particularly in Star-Moon Kingdom, something had happened that had shocked the entire kingdom.

The first-rate Guild Ouroboros officially disbanded, and a new Guild had absorbed its members.

This new Guild was called Blackwater. Furthermore, as the Blackwater Guild appeared before the public, four second-rate Guilds and over a dozen third-rate Guilds merged with Blackwater. Blackwater had also formed a strategic alliance with Heaven's Burial and declared all-out war against Zero Wing!

Chapter 997: Cast Steel Armor Kit

Chapter 997 – Cast Steel Armor Kit

The alliance between Blackwater and Heaven's Burial had a huge impact on Star-Moon Kingdom's players.

Originally, Heaven's Burial's influence in Star-Moon City rivaled that of the Star Alliance. Now that it had joined hands with Blackwater, who had annexed Ouroboros, it took control of Star-Moon City. Even the Star Alliance would not dare to challenge Blackwater and Heaven's Burial.

Almost all of the high-resource maps within the Star-Moon City region had fallen under the two Guilds' control. If anyone unaffiliated to these Guilds trespassed in these maps, regardless of whether they were there for monsters, Field Bosses, or herbs and ores, they would run the risk of falling prey to these Guilds' players, dying upon discovery. As a result, the other Guilds now struggled to survive in Star-Moon City. U.p.dated by . com

To independent players, though, nothing much had changed. To begin with, they never visited high-resource areas as these maps always belonged to some Guild. Normal leveling spots were their bread and butter. Moreover, even if Heaven's Burial and Blackwater had joined hands, the two Guilds wouldn't have enough manpower to occupy every map.

The various large Guilds were trying to monopolize high-resource areas because they could send their members there to level quickly, maintaining their Level advantage. At the same time, they could harvest plenty of raw materials. Large Guilds had no interest in monopolizing normal areas.

Aside from obtaining Ouroboros, the Blackwater Guild had annexed many other large Guilds as well.

In one night, Blackwater had taken control of nearly 30 NPC cities in Star-Moon Kingdom.

When Aqua Rose notified Shi Feng of the news, he, too, had been surprised. He had never expected the Blackwater Corporation would actually be this swift and decisive. Moreover, it had annexed so many Guilds without self-imploding. The corporation's Guild could still function in an orderly manner. In fact, it had already begun to recruit new members in the various NPC cities. Usually, a Guild needed to spend quite some time to stabilize its rule after taking over an ordinary NPC city before it could begin its recruitment. Even Zero Wing was no exception.

The fact that the Blackwater Corporation had achieved such a feat showed just how frightening its foundation was.

This sudden development gave Aqua Rose a massive headache.

Just when Zero Wing had earned its title as Star-Moon Kingdom's number one Guild and was about to expand, in came a giant like the Blackwater Corporation. Blackwater even publicly declared war on Zero Wing, stating that it would not rest until only one of their Guilds remained.

Sadly, this was only the beginning. Their Guild members were dying like flies in the fields. As Blackwater grew stronger, field battles between Zero Wing and Blackwater's members occurred more frequently. This would definitely affect their Guild members' leveling speed.

However, Blackwater's actions had not particularly surprised Shi Feng.

In the past, despite the Blackwater Corporation joining God's Domain so late in the game and with only half of the strength it had during its peak, it had nurtured its Guild to become a Super Guild. The main reason for its success was its powerful foundation. It also had an advantage that other corporations lacked.

Now that the Blackwater Corporation had joined God's Domain at its peak, this performance was no surprise.

While Shi Feng rested at the top of the staircase, Aqua Rose contacted him again.

"Guild Leader, a short while ago, Blackwater's Blackwater Trading Firm and Heaven's Burial's Heavenly Trading Firm have begun to drop their prices. They have also introduced two new, highly-competitive products. One is the Cast Steel Armor Kit, and the other is the Mana Mixture. Although they aren't selling these items in high quantities at the moment, many of Candlelight's customers have begun to turn to the two trading firms for products," Aqua Rose reported worriedly. "Should we lower our prices as well? After all, we have more Advanced Lifestyle players than these two firms combined. Our production cost is slightly lower than theirs."

Within these two short days, the Blackwater Corporation had rendered Aqua Rose speechless.

Every move the corporation made disregarded cost. Blackwater was simply using overwhelming force to deal with Zero Wing. Now, it had begun to move on the Candlelight Trading Firm. If Zero Wing lost this revenue source, it would only be a matter of time before it fell to the Blackwater Corporation.

Now that she was in this predicament, Aqua Rose had to admit that, while Guilds with starting capital were amazing, Guilds with both strength and capital were incredible.

Blackwater even produced its own armor kit and potion. Even the Candlelight Trading Firm's Advanced Lifestyle players hadn't accomplished this.

The Cast Steel Armor Kit was much stronger than the Basic Strengthened Armor Kit. Each Cast Steel Armor Kit increased Defense by 180 points. It could rival already rival the Intermediate Mana Armor Kit.

As for Basic Attributes, it increased roughly the same amount as the Basic Strengthened Armor Kit. However, the Basic Strengthening Armor Kit could not replicate one aspect of the Cast Steel Armor Kit.

Damage reduction!

With each kit that players bound to their armor, they could reduce the damage they received by 1%. As players could bind a maximum of three kits, one could gain a maximum of 3% damage reduction.

Although 3% did not seem like much, the kits would perform magnificently against Bosses. An MTs' ordinary Passive Skill only provided 5% damage reduction. Unfortunately, such Passive Damage Reduction Skills were extremely rare and precious. These Skill Books easily sold for 10 Gold or more.

However, even at that price, these Skills were hard to find; Guilds and Workshops normally kept these for their own use. After all, unlike weapons and equipment, Skills would never be outdated. Many Skills were still useful after players reached Level 200; unless, of course, players found a stronger replacement. However, doing so was easier said than done.

As for the Mana Mixture, it was invaluable to magical class players.

When consumed, the Mana Mixture increased a player's maximum Mana capacity by 10% for two hours. While the potion did not possess a Cooldown, its effects would not stack.

Mana was magical classes' second life source. The importance of being able to raise one's Mana capacity by 10% went without saying. Healers, in particular, would increase their healing abilities by 10% with a 10% Mana boost. They could last longer in Dungeons.

With the revelation of these two products, Candlelight instantly lost nearly half of its customers...

The Candlelight Trading Firm wasn't worried about a price war. The two exclusive products, however, posed a huge threat. In addition, with the Blackwater Trading Firm and the Heavenly Trading Firm working with each other, their Shops covered far more ground than Candlelight. With this, the increase in their market share would be even more frightening.

"Do you know their prices?" Shi Feng asked casually.

These two items had also appeared in God's Domain in the past. However, they hadn't appeared this soon. Heaven's Burial had relied on these items as trump cards to take control of Star-Moon Kingdom.

In this life, Shi Feng hadn't expected Heaven's Burial create these items so soon.

"Currently, they're selling each Cast Steel Armor Kit at 1 Gold, 50 Silver, while one bottle of Mana Mixture costs 12 Silver. Moreover, as they created these items personally, they can produce as many designs and recipes as they want. As more people learn these designs and recipes, their production volume will increase," Aqua Rose said.

"They're selling them so cheaply?" Shi Feng's curiosity grew.

He clearly remembered that these two items had sold for a considerably high price in the past. Heaven's Burial hadn't been so consumer-friendly.

Chapter 998: Confidence

Chapter 998 – Confidence

“Cheap?” A hint of doubt flashed in Aqua Rose’s eyes.

Although players could earn more money now, their daily expenditures were increasing just as fast as was their reliance on various tools when grinding monsters. After all, nobody wanted to die, wasting several days of effort, in the fields.

Ordinary players would have to save for quite some time before they could afford a bottle of Mana Mixture. The Cast Steel Armor Kits, which cost 1 Gold and 50 Silver, were simply a luxury item. Only fairly powerful teams, independent experts, or those who bought Coins with Credits could afford the kit.

“What is their sales volume?” Shi Feng simply chuckled at Aqua Rose’s confusion, not bothering to explain.

Both the Mana Mixture and the Cast Steel Armor Kits were considerably good items at this stage of the game. They were also player creations, so they could be mass-produced. However, how could such valuable items not have drawbacks?

If one pointed out these items’ greatest drawback, it would have to be the items’ required crafting materials. There were also the low production success rates to consider.

In the past, although Heaven's Burial had opened the market using the Cast Steel Armor Kits and Mana Mixtures, due to the items' low production volume, the Guild hadn't been able to dominate Star-Moon Kingdom's market completely. Based on Shi Feng's understanding, both items required rare materials. With the few materials available in Star-Moon Kingdom, it was impossible to produce large quantities of these items. In addition, based on the rumors of the past, it seemed that even Advanced Forgers only had a 20% success rate with the Cast Steel Armor Kit. The Mana Mixture's production success rate was roughly the same.

To outsiders, a 20% success rate might seem high, but the Lifestyle players involved in producing the items knew how low the success rate really was. With a 20% success rate, they would only have a chance of succeeding once out of ten tries. Most of the time, they failed to produce anything at all.

With Lifestyle players' current standards, Blackwater and Heaven's Burial wouldn't even come close to covering the production costs if they sold the Cast Steel Armor Kits and Mana Mixtures at such a low price. In fact, for every item they sold, the firms took a major loss.

"I've already sent people to investigate. Currently, they're selling roughly ten Cast Steel Armor Kits in minor cities, while there are roughly 30-40 kits available in each major city. It's the same case for the Manna Mixture." Aqua Rose gave Shi Feng a run down of the situation after glancing through the investigation reports she had received. Based on these numbers, it was obvious that these two items were not easy to produce. Either that, or the Guilds had very few people who could produce them.

"Since they want a price war, we'll play along. Reduce the price on everything except for the Light Stones. Lower our prices to match theirs." Shi Feng chuckled.

Although the Candlelight Trading Firm had earned plenty from the Basic Strengthened Armor Kits and Mana Armor Kits, the Light Stones, which were essential items that could be produced in large quantities, were the main reason for Candlelight's position as Star-Moon Kingdom's number one trading firm. The total profits from their other items was just slightly more than what the firm earned from the Light Stones.

Meanwhile, the designs for Light Stones mainly dropped around the Level 50 large-scale Team Dungeon, the Towers of Death. Current Guild players had not reached that area yet, so no one else had gotten their hands on the Light Stone Forging Designs.

Due to its affordability, the Light Stones had a competitive edge. Unless the two trading firms got their hands on the Light Stone Forging Design or an exclusive product that they could mass-produce, Candlelight's position would be hard to shake.

Furthermore, the Candlelight Trading Firm was no longer Zero Wing's main revenue source. Now, the Guild relied on the teleportation houses leading to the Twin Towers Kingdom. Due to the Monster Repellent Scroll, monsters tried to invade Raven's town more frequently, now invading the town once per day. In two short days, Zero Wing had earned a total of 12,000 Magic Crystals. With the teleportation houses, these Magic Crystals easily transformed into a mountain of shiny Gold Coins. Even after deducting the cost of the Magic Crystals, they earned close to 6,000 Gold every day.

The Candlelight Trading Firm's current income was nowhere near to catching up with the teleportation houses'.

"I understand. Also, Guild Leader, when will you be returning? I've already found several companies who wish to meet with you to discuss our cooperation. After all, you are asking for a large investment. They could easily establish their own Guilds or invest into multiple large Guilds with that kind of money.

"They're also not very optimistic about Star-Moon Kingdom's current state of affairs. Now that Stone Forest Town's protection period has ended, other Guilds could attack and capture it at any time. They have expressed their concerns, and they hope that you can provide some assurance. At the moment, they are only willing to consider your offer until they have a clearer view of the situation."

When the Sun and Moon Group had taken the lead, many major companies were desperate to cooperate with Zero Wing, even after hearing Shi Feng's conditions. However, due to the Blackwater Corporation's sudden appearance and Stone Forest Town's protection period ending, these companies had become cowardly...

At this point, she could only name a few companies that were willing to work with Zero Wing. Moreover, this was only due to the revelation that the Sun and Moon Group had joined hands with the Guild, insinuating that there were profits to be gained. Otherwise, these companies would've long since ghosted them.

"They want assurance?" Shi Feng smiled disdainfully. Sternly, he commanded, "Tell them this: If you want me to reassure you, sure, but you must sign the cooperation agreement first. Otherwise, don't bother!"

The Star-Moon Kingdom City Building Order was a core secret. Aside from himself, only Aqua Rose knew of its existence. If this information got out to the public, the consequences would be unimaginable.

Shi Feng had no doubts that even Super Guilds wouldn't be able to sit idle if they learned of this matter, much less the Blackwater Corporation. They would try to eliminate Zero Wing at all costs. At that time, Zero Wing would be on a one-way trip to hell.

Currently, Zero Wing only dared to provoke Super Guilds because the latter had already deemed that dealing with the Guild was a waste of energy. Moreover, if they weakened themselves in the process of dealing with Zero Wing, other Super Guilds would have an opportunity to strike. However, the City Building Order was enough of a temptation for the Super Guilds to take the risk.

Whether it was in the real world or a virtual reality game, even an innocent man would find trouble with enough money.

Shi Feng still had much to prepare. He still needed to build his strength. Otherwise, he would've started the city's construction long ago.

"This..." Shi Feng's words left Aqua Rose dumbfounded. If she really relayed this to the company representatives, they would most likely explode with anger. But she also understood why they couldn't reveal their trump card.

However, there were too few companies that were both trustworthy and capable of investing such a large sum. If they chased these people away, it would be very difficult to find other collaborators within a short time. After all, Star-Moon Kingdom's situation had changed.

"Don't worry about it. Just tell them," Shi Feng said, shaking his head. If it didn't work out, he'd find someone else to work with.

"Alright, then. I'll contact them right away," Aqua Rose said, sighing.

She had to admit that Blackwater's timing was truly horrendous. Had the corporation established its Guild a few days later, Zero Wing would be in this predicament.

Following which, Aqua Rose contacted the representatives of the several major companies.

...

Inside a certain high-class restaurant's VIP room:

“Miss Aqua, our companies understand your current predicament; hence we have thought of another method. If Zero Wing is willing to hand over 60% of its shares to our management, our companies will invest two billion Credits. What do you think?” a tall, thin man proposed.

The upper echelons of the other companies nodded their agreement.

With the Blackwater Corporation’s sudden appearance, Zero Wing wasn’t as attractive as it had been. Regardless, it was Star-Moon Kingdom’s number one Guild, so it still had some value.

Aqua Rose was stunned. She had not expected these companies to change their minds so quickly and try to strike at Zero Wing while the iron was hot.

Two billion Credits was a lot of money. It was enough to purchase prime corporate real estate in a major city’s center in the real world. One could even establish a large Guild with plenty to spare. However, Zero Wing was no ordinary large Guild. It was a large Guild capable of challenging Super Guilds. Currently, its foundations and number of Lands were only slightly inferior to first-rate Guilds. It was also the ruler of White River City, Star-Moon Kingdom’s most populated city, and controlled the strategic Stone Forest Town. Zero Wing was worth far more than two billion Credits. Including its potential, even an offer of 20 billion was an insult.

“I think you have misunderstood something. Zero Wing is not selling any of its shares. Here is our previous proposal. If you are not willing to sign it, Zero Wing won’t force you. If that is all, I’ll be taking my leave,” Aqua Rose said, smiling. After placing the agreement on the table, she turned and left the VIP room without hesitation.

Aqua Rose’s extraordinarily calm performance stupefied these company representatives.

The Blackwater Corporation had already allied with Heaven's Burial to deal with Zero Wing. Just where did Zero Wing find the confidence to speak to them like this?

"Aqua Rose's behavior is out of line! She dares to treat us like this!"

"Has she forgotten that she approached us, not the other way around?! Now, she isn't even willing to offer any guarantees! Does she think Zero Wing is a Super Guild?!"

"Hmph! I want to see just how long Zero Wing will last! Once Zero Wing's funds run out, it will come running back to us!"

"That's right. We're not in a rush. I refuse to believe that anyone other than fools or spendthrifts would be willing to work with Zero Wing. When the time comes, we only need to spend a little money to takeover Zero Wing."

The several representatives sneered. In their opinions, Zero Wing only behaved as such because of its pride. Once the Blackwater Corporation gave Zero Wing a beating, the Guild would crawl back to them, begging for help.

Chapter 999: Divine Treasure Chest

Chapter 999 – Divine Treasure Chest

Star-Moon City:

After dismissing Ouroboros, Blackwater took over the Guild Residence.

Compared to Ouroboros's Residence, Blackwater's was far more lively. Among the players moving about the Residence, quite a few were only between Level 10 and Level 20. However, not a single person looked down on these low-leveled players.

These players' auras were different from ordinary players. They all felt hostile. Their bodies were also tall and robust. Despite such low levels, even Level 30-plus ordinary players avoided them.

"Who are these people? They've just joined the Blackwater Guild, yet despite such low levels, they have been inducted into the Guild's Blackwater Legion, which the Guild has been heavily cultivating."

"You might not know this since you've just joined Blackwater, but they are all experts from the Blackwater Corporation. Although their levels are low, their combat standards are very high. A few elite members even challenged them to a level adjusted match. In the end, these people defeated the elites in two or three moves. A few of them are even stronger than Ouroboros's original experts."

"What?! They're actually stronger than Ouroboros's experts?!"

"Of course. In Ouroboros, I was also an elite member. To convince us that joining the Blackwater Guild was the right decision, the Blackwater Corporation had allowed Ouroboros's experts, who were displeased by the change, to challenge its experts. In the end, Blackwater's experts won every match. Afterward, Ouroboros's experts were demoted from core members to elite Guild members. Elite

members like myself were demoted to normal members. If we want a promotion, we have to take Blackwater's new test."

"And here I thought that the Blackwater Guild lacked experts after forcefully taking over Ouroboros. I never thought that it would have so many experts so soon. Once these experts catch up in levels, won't the Blackwater Guild easily become the number one Guild in Star-Moon Kingdom?"

"I know, right? Initially, I had been rather worried about the sudden change. Now, however, it seems that remaining in the Guild was the right decision. Blackwater has more potential than Ouroboros ever did. Even the Star Alliance's members avoid us in the fields."

Many Blackwater members discussed their Guild's situation as they relaxed in the Residence. They were quite confident about Blackwater's future.

...

Blackwater's Residence, Guild Leader's office:

Entering the Guild Leader's office, the bald, middle-aged man greeted Abandoned Wave respectfully before reporting, "Guild Leader, there's movement in Zero Wing. Aside from the Light Stones, they've lowered their prices to match ours. Moreover, not long ago, I've received news that discussions between Zero Wing's Vice Guild Leader, Aqua Rose, and several major companies have failed. With this, Zero Wing won't receive any major funding. Only the Sun and Moon Group remains a problem."

"There is nothing to worry about with the Sun and Moon Group. They have their hands full with Twilight Echo. Furthermore, now that more players are reaching Level 40, Guilds are in urgent need of funds to supply their members with Mounts. Sun and Moon doesn't have much to spare for Zero Wing. What we need to focus on now is exhausting Zero Wing's funds and forcing the Guild to take the first swing. After

that, we will deal Zero Wing a fatal blow,” Abandoned Wave laughed. He then asked, “How is the material delivery going?”

“The Dragon-Phoenix Pavilion has already sent the materials. They will last us a relatively long time. In addition, the Pavilion sent an additional 20 Advanced Lifestyle players, stating that these people can help us mass-produce the Cast Steel Armor Kits and Mana Mixtures. Should I reject their offer?” the bald man asked.

“No need. Isn’t it just a few designs and recipes? They can have them. It won’t affect our operations in any way. In fact, I have been trying to figure out how to obtain more Advanced Lifestyle players. Blood Dragon is simply helping the Blackwater Trading Firm. With this, it will be much easier for the Blackwater Trading Firm to corner more of Star-Moon Kingdom’s market.” Abandoned Wave shook his head and laughed coldly. “However, we can’t let the Pavilion learn those designs and recipes for nothing. Have the Pavilion sign an agreement. After learning the designs and recipes, they have to remove Zero Wing’s Branch Guild from Lake Heart City immediately. I don’t want Zero Wing to have any chance of making a comeback.”

“Understood. I’ll get it done right away.” The bald man bowed before leaving.

...

Inside the Trial of God’s temple, Shi Feng and the players from Wind God’s Spear were trying to think of a way to deal with the Undead Commander that had suddenly appeared before the Seven-colored Treasure Chest. The Undead Commander wore exquisite golden armor. Two longswords radiating cold area hung from the Commander’s waist. Despite standing quite a distance away from the Undead Commander, the team members could feel the chill from the two swords.

As long as the team came within 100 yards of the Undead Commander, they immediately gained the debuff Chilling Field, which reduced their Movement Speeds by 50% and their Attributes by 20%. In addition, their Stamina consumption and the frost damage they received doubled.

[Undead Commander] (Dark Creature, Great Lord) Level 50 HP 27,000,000/27,000,000

For a Level 50 Great Lord, the Undead Commander's HP was relatively low. However, the Great Lord's Chilling Field gave everyone a headache. Their levels were already lower than the Undead Commander's, but now that their Basic Attributes had decreased by 20%, they were even less of a match for the Great Lord. They also had to deal with double the frost damage. Even a Level 40 MT like Fallen Wind couldn't tank the Great Lord.

If nobody could tank the Undead Commander, they would have no way of clearing this trial.

Sure enough, a Seven-colored Treasure Chest isn't easy to obtain. Shi Feng smiled bitterly as he observed the Undead Commander.

In the Trial of God, every stage would provide rewards. This reward came in the form of Treasure Chests. However, depending on the trial's rank, the Treasure Chests would differ. Generally, the best that would appear in a four-colored Trial was a five-colored Treasure Chest. The best in a six-colored trial would be a seven-colored chest.

Based on rumors Shi Feng had heard, a seven-colored trial's top reward was a Yin Yang Treasure Chest, also known as the Divine Treasure Chest. According to the official forums, the Divine Treasure Chest was even superior to a Legendary Treasure Chest. Unfortunately, no one had ever managed to open a Divine Treasure Chest, even after a decade in God's Domain.

The Seven-colored Treasure Chest before him was definitely the highest-ranking Treasure Chest Shi Feng had ever encountered.

“Commander, should we use a Tier 2 Summoning Scroll and give it a try?” Autumn Goose suggested as she watched the three-meter tall Great Lord. No matter how she thought about it, they could not handle the Undead Commander without a Tier 2 summoned creature.

With their current level, the Tier 2 creature they summoned would also be Level 50. In other words, they would have a Level 50 Lord tank. Although she did not think that a Lord could survive against the Undead Commander for long, they had four Tier 2 Summoning Scrolls.

Fortunately, if they died here, they wouldn’t lose an entire Level like they would in the outside world. Like Dungeons, they would only lose 10% experience if they died in the Trial of God. They could afford to try.

“I guess that’s our only choice. I’ll use the summoned creature to test the Undead Commander’s strength first. If it seems doable, we’ll start the raid immediately,” Fallen Wind said after giving it some thought. Otherwise, they would have to give up on the trial and pray for a lenient punishment.

Chapter 1000: Near-invincible Skill

Chapter 1000 – Near-invincible Skill

“May I know what Brother Ye Feng thinks of this plan?” Fallen Wind turned to ask Shi Feng, who quietly observed the Undead Commander.

Although they hadn't spent much time together, the strength and leadership abilities Shi Feng had displayed during the past two days had earned him Fallen Wind's respect.

If not for Shi Feng, they wouldn't have reached this point. They might have been forced to use up their Summoning Scrolls against the Undead Fanatics.

Hearing Fallen Wind's query, Wind God's Spear's members stared in shock, looking like they had seen a ghost.

"What? The commander actually knows how to ask others for their opinion?!"

After joining the Wind God's Spear, everyone learned that their Commander, Fallen Wind, would never ask for someone else's opinion, regardless of whether they were raiding a Dungeon or adventuring in the fields. He always found a solution by himself.

However, when they thought about it, they saw nothing wrong with this situation.

After all, none of them could compare to their Commander's experience or abilities.

In the entire Dark Night Empire, Fallen Wind was famous for both his strength and leadership. Very few people in the empire qualified to offer him guidance.

However, it was reasonable that Fallen Wind would ask for Shi Feng's opinion, given the strength the Swordsman had displayed. After all, among the Dark Night Empire's many experts, they could not think of one that was more capable than Shi Feng.

“My opinion?” Shi Feng was also surprised. He hadn’t expected Fallen Wind to ask this of him. After some thought, he answered, “We don’t understand enough about the Undead Commander right now. It is best if we let the summoned creature fight the Great Lord until its last breath and collect as much information as we can. We will then draft up a raid plan. In any case, the Trial of God doesn’t have a time limit. Unfortunately, by doing so, we will be wasting a Tier 2 Summoning Scroll.”

The team members had mixed feelings about Shi Feng’s suggestion. After all, a Tier 2 Summoning Scroll was incredibly precious. Moreover, a Tier 2 summoned creature would be helpful during the fight against the Boss.

“Alright, let’s do that, then. Everyone, step back,” Fallen Wind said. While Fallen Wind also understood the value of a Tier 2 Summoning Scroll, his team members lacked leadership experience. Their considerations were short-sighted. They usually looked out for themselves and ignored the team’s overall situation.

They were not in a Team Dungeon. They could not afford to lose. If they disregarded the team’s survival for a single Tier 2 Summoning Scroll, they might throw away their chance of clearing this stage.

Although taking a risk and dying once might seem inconsequential, everyone had forgotten about a particular death penalty.

The loss of equipment Durability!

They were trapped in the Trial of God. Who knew how long they had to fight to clear the trial?

The more deaths a player suffered, the faster their equipment's durability would run out. If their equipment's durability hit zero midway through the trial, they would have to switch to weaker spares. How would they clear the Trial of God then?

After Fallen Wind finished speaking, he took out a golden Magic Scroll and activated it.

Everyone immediately widened the distance between themselves and the Undead Commander.

As for Shi Feng, he, too, hid in a corner. The Level 50 Undead Commander was foreign to him. If they charged into battle without analyzing the Boss, they would easily team-wipe. Without a doubt, sacrificing a Tier 2 summoned creature to analyze the Undead Commander's combat style and Skills was the best decision.

Fallen Wind summoned a Level 50 Lord ranked Thundercloud Tiger.

[Thundercloud Tiger] (Elemental Creature, Lord) Level 50 HP 9,000,000/9,000,000

The Thundercloud Tiger was much larger than the Undead Commander, standing well over five meters. Blue lightning arched around the tiger's body, giving it a very handsome and fierce appearance.

Under Fallen Wind's command, the Thundercloud Tiger charged at the Level 50 Great Lord.

When the Thundercloud Tiger was within 40 yards, a greenish light glimmered in the Great Lord's eyes. Unlike its previous red glow, the Undead Commander's current gaze felt eerie and horrific. Moreover, the instant it opened its eyes, its Chilling Field expanded to 200 yards. The already cold temperature around it dropped further. Suddenly, the Undead Commander waved its hand. Icicles sprouted from the ground and pierced the Thundercloud Tiger's massive body, forcing a pained cry from the Lord.

-32,814.

-31,974.

-32,427.

...

The massive icicles dealt horrific damage. This scene sent chills down the players' spines. Before the Thundercloud Tiger had even reached the Undead Commander, its HP had already begun to fall. Against the Commander's icicles, the Thundercloud Tiger's 9,000,000 HP was a joke.

"What kind of Skill is that?!"

"Is that really a Great Lord?! How are we supposed to raid it with that kind of Skill?!"

"Fortunately, we're 300 yards away from it. If we hadn't moved, it would have killed it before we could fight back."

Everyone was stupefied when they saw the icicles.

How was this a dual sword-wielding Boss? It was a magical turret with infinite ammunition! Anyone that rushed at it would be throwing their lives away. They doubted that they could even land a hit before the Undead Commander annihilated them.

It's just a Great Lord, but it possesses a Domain Skill? Shi Feng was shocked.

Domain Skills were extraordinarily rare. This held true for both players and monsters. Any monster that had learned a Domain Skill was practically invincible among the same Level and Tier. Unless they had a death wish, players should take the long way around such a monster.

However, after giving it some thought, Shi Feng realized that it wasn't unreasonable.

The Treasure Chest before him was a Seven-colored Treasure Chest. How could the final monster guarding it be a simple Level 50 Great Lord?

Fortunately, the Thundercloud Tiger had plenty of HP. Despite the significant Movement Speed reduction, it reached the Undead Commander before using the Tier 2 Skill Thunder Claw.

Boom!

The Thundercloud Tiger's Thunder Claw struck an icicle that had suddenly appeared, shattering it. However, the Undead Commander, who stood behind the icicle, remained unharmed. The Great Lord hadn't even drawn its swords yet. It waved its hands gracefully before more icicles lanced into the Thundercloud Tiger.

Although Fallen Wind controlled the Thundercloud Tiger to the best of his ability, launching one attack after another, the Undead Commander had no interest in fighting the Lord. It focused on evading the Thundercloud Tiger's attacks and using its icicles to deal damage.

Very quickly, the Great Lord whittle down the Thundercloud Tiger's 9,000,000 HP to a critical low. With no other choice, Fallen Wind canceled the summoning and allowed the Thundercloud Tiger to disappear, dispelling the majority of the aggro he had on the Great Lord. As for the remaining aggro, he dealt with it swiftly by using an Isolation Scroll and the Cleric's Disperse Spell. Once he dropped the Undead Commander's aggro, the Great Lord returned to its original position and reverted to its calm state.

"It is simply too powerful. Not only does it have such a powerful Skill, but its intelligence is also high. Defeating it is impossible." The corners of Autumn Goose's mouth twitched as she stared at the motionless Undead Commander.

Although she had seen more powerful monsters than the Undead Commander, this was the first time she had seen a Boss with such an outrageous Skill.

If they did not have an appropriate method to cope with these icicles, they would have no hope of defeating the Undead Commander.

Everyone began to consider giving up on the trial.

"Big Brother Ye Feng, do you have any ideas? Are we really going to just give up?" Blue Bamboo turned to Shi Feng, who was in deep thought.