

Destiny 1011

Chapter 1011 The Promise Of The Frozen Kingdom (Part 2)

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After making arrangements for the others, Shin, along with Leonard, headed to where Arthur was. This was the final part of the quest, so they had to end it as soon as possible to wrap everything up.

While running, Shin cast his gaze toward the sky where Dracula was currently standing. The violent current of mana surrounding him was already visible to the eyes from such a distance. He could tell from a single glance that this Vampire Primogenitor was currently using everything he got for it.

Shin could also sense the change in the surrounding air and the mana mixed in it. It was as if something was currently purifying it constantly. The corrupted mana was slowly being erased while steadily being replaced by pure and uncontaminated mana.

"The curse was slowly being lifted," muttered Shin as he understood what was happening.

The Frozen Kingdom was cursed by the Wicked One, making its mana become contaminated. It was also making it hard for most beings to live there. With such an environment, getting stronger was close to being impossible.

The Wicked One, no matter how strong she was, still feared the people of the Frozen Kingdom and their possible revenge. Especially with Dracula being at the peak of the lower plane.

Even if it was impossible for him to ascend to the higher plane due to his contract with the Great Demon King, he was still not restricted to nurturing someone that would have the ability to do so.

To avoid any potential threats in the future, the Wicked One decided to play it safe by casting that curse. She made the kingdom incapable of nurturing people that could ascend to the higher plane.

Having that in mind, Shin fully understood the significance of the Frozen Kingdom to the current progress of the game. And because of this, he had to put more importance on it in the future.

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Not long after, Shin and Leonard saw Arthur in the distance talking with the white dragon. They knew at that time that Arthur would gain another Elemental Dragon as his Dragon Partner.

Arthur and Eira naturally noticed the two when they were heading toward them. They turned their heads toward the pair and waited for them to arrive.

"How was it?" asked Shin right after arriving.

Since this was a quest scenario and Eira was a part of it, Shin knew that she would be lending them a hand at clearing this quest.

For every Elemental Spirit Companion, Shin learned that each of them had certain backgrounds and special situations. At the first encounter, there was a simple quest or test that needed to be cleared before an individual could form a contract. And this encounter would be the clue for the upcoming quest that the Elemental Spirit would give in the future.

Shin did not know what exactly the clue did Arthur get, but if it was still related to the Empire Quest that they were currently clearing, then the opponent that this dragon fanatic would get was related to the higher plane and Divine Beings – that so-called Wicked One, in particular.

Thinking about that, Shin became more and more curious about his own Elemental Companions.

Arthur shrugged his shoulders when he heard Shin's question. "Nothing special. We all have to beat the final boss and everything will finally be over."

"Do you think it is that simple?" said Leonard sneeringly as he chimed in.

Swoosh! Swoosh!

At this moment, Lycan and Duke Bellion finally arrived. The wolf quickly walked over to Shin and spoke. "We have already done the preparations. We can somehow suppress his strength with the protective formation of the city."

Then Duke Bellion quickly cut in. "But its effects will be fairly limited. The formation was not been activated for a very long time, so there may be some complications when we are activating it."

Shin slightly nodded. "That is more than enough. It is better than facing him at his full strength."

At this moment, the three great beings suddenly turned to Shin, Arthur, and Leonard with meaningful eyes.

Then Lycan suddenly walked toward Leonard. "Young man, I trust that you still remember the favor that I've asked."

Shin was slightly taken aback when he saw that and somewhat confused. Then an idea suddenly flashed through his mind before looking at Leonard with complicated feelings. 'Don't tell, me this guy is also receiving another Elemental Spirit Companion.'

And sure enough, his thoughts were clearly on point.

"I've been trapped in here for a very long time and already approaching the end of my life. The curse of this place is the only one that keeps me in a healthy shape since it is preventing us from dying to continue to sorrow and pain of losing our comrades," said Lycan meaningfully.

He paused for a moment before continuing. "But once the curse is successfully lifted, my vitality will immediately burn out as it will match the age that I am supposed to have."

"Even if I used to have the power of the Fountain of Life, it will no longer be able to help me since it is already been exhausted by fighting the curse cast upon me for such a very long time."

"I may have enough strength to hold out for a couple of years, but that is the longest that I can do. And I will not be satisfied with it since I still have important things that I have to do," he added as he looked at Leonard full of determination.

"There is only one way for me to extend my life right now – and that is to become a Spiritual Beast and form a contract with a Transcendent Being."

"Little Cub of the Primordial Beasts, are you willing to be my master? I will lend you my strength and aid you in every battle."

Right after he said those words, a system notification suddenly popped out in front of Leonard's eyes.

He was not that surprised about it since he was already expecting it somehow. Lycan also talked to him inside his mind earlier, so he was already prepared for it since earlier.

Naturally, he would not refuse to have such a powerful Spiritual Beast. And having an additional Elemental Beast Companion was always welcome.

Leonard nodded his head without any hint of hesitation. "You don't have to be polite with your words. I should be thanking you instead for lending me your strength."

Pfft!

There was a subdued sound coming from the side. Both Shin and Arthur suppressed the urge to laugh for cringing at the words that Leonard had said. If they were not in an important part of the quest, then they would be laughing out loud and making fun of him already.

Leonard ignored his two brothers and accepted Lycan as his new Spiritual Beast. And with that, a contract was formed between the two.

Lycan Steel nodded his head and quickly added. "I just have two things that I hope you do for me."

"First, I hope you can help me tell our family about what happened here. You can head to the Steel Family and present this medal to them once you arrive at the Divine Empire," Lycan handed Leonard a silver medal with a wolf emblem engraved at its center.

Then he paused for a moment before continuing. "The second request can wait until you are strong enough to handle it."

'It must be the special quest as an Elemental Spirit Companion,' thought Shin as he watched from the side.

At the same time, Duke Bellion suddenly walked toward Shin and handed a pair of tokens to him while saying. "These tokens were proof of our alliance with you."

"As long as you have this token, everyone in our Kingdom will always treat you as one of us," he added as he pointed at the token that was similar to the one that Shin and the others had gotten during the quest. The only difference was this token had more distinct engravings that symbolized the kingdom.

Duke Bellion paused for a moment and pointed to the other token. "As for this one, our lord tells me to hand it over to you. He said that you will be needing it when facing him later after losing his sanity."

"Once you crushed it, you will receive the blessings of our ancestors and gain a power comparable to mine. Even if it is only temporary, it will be more than enough to help you during the battle."

He then paused for a moment before continuing. "I will be assisting you during the battle, but I hope that you will understand that I will not be able to end the life of our lord with my own hands."

"Even if it is his final order, I will choose to disobey him rather than stab him with the sword that swears to fight for him. Thus, I will be entrusting you to end our lord's sufferings in our stead."

Right after he said those words, a system notification suddenly appeared in front of the eyes of the three.

Ding!

System: Conditional Quest Difficulty Adjustment has been triggered!

System: As a special Quest Scenario, you have the choice to adjust the difficulty of the quest. Will you like to proceed with clearing the quest with your strengths or will you choose to ask for the assistance of the three extreme beings?

System: Please consider your choice properly as it will affect your final score for the quest.

Shin, Arthur, and Leonard were slightly taken aback by the sudden notification before exchanging glances with each other.

They were not sure what the system meant about 'their' strength, but they were confident that it was not talking about their current powers. This could only mean that they would still receive certain assistance from the system during the final boss battle. After all, it would be impossible for their current abilities to clear the quest by normal means.

Then they turned to Eira, to Lycan, then to Duke Bellion before finally resting their gaze on the token in Shin's hands. It was at that time that they came to a realization. In this quest scenario, they would still be the sole actors for the final act that they needed to finish.

Without any hesitation, the three came to a tacit agreement and hit the highest difficulty, completely unafraid.

At the same time, it had been a while since the three of them fought side by side. This would be a great experience, especially when they could do it in the state of Reality Manifestation.

This made them curious about how their teamwork would be after undergoing special training in their respective tutelage.

Chapter 1012 The Promise Of The Frozen Kingdom (Part 3)

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Right after making their choice, the system immediately gave them a follow-up update for the next part of the quest.

Ding!

System: You have chosen to face Dracula, the Vampire Primogenitor, with yourselves. The quest scenario will be making adjustments accordingly.

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"You, little young cubs, are truly the young heroes of this current era. To be brave enough to face such a challenge head-on," said Lycan as the tone of his voice noticeably change.

"In that case, then we will do our part and lend you are strengths in advance," he added as he gave Eira a sidelong glance.

Understanding his intent, Eira slightly nodded her head before lowering her head to Arthur. "I expect nothing less from my new contractor. As your new partner, I will show you what we can do in the future."

After that, those two suddenly turned into a pair of lights that entered Arthur and Leonard. They fused with the two just like when they were undergoing an Elemental Spirit possession.

Arthur's black armor with golden engravings and linings turned into pure white armor that resembled the scales of Eira. His helmet turned into a dragon head with a slightly opened mouth where his eyes were currently peeking.

His red cape was split into two while having tattered edges. Its color turned blue just like the blue sky when it had clear weather.

His round shield remained the same aside from its original color turning white with blue patterns. While taking a closer look at it, the pattern of the shield resembled a snowflake. His spear also went the same color change while its tassel seemed to become a blue flame that was dancing along the wind.

On the other hand, there were no distinct changes on Leonard's side. Aside from the sudden increase in his suppressive aura and powerful bearing, he was no different from his usual self. Instead, an apparition of a huge wolf was constantly flickering behind him. It greatly resembled Lycan, though there were also some small differences between them.

A single look from Leonard was enough to make any opposition tremble in fear. This kind of oppression was commonly seen when anyone encountered their natural bane.

With this current bearing, Leonard was clearly a natural predator who could treat anyone as his prey.

Standing on the side, Shin watched them undergo their respective transformation before turning his gaze to one of the tokens that he was holding. And after releasing a deep sigh, he shrugged his shoulders in a helpless manner.

"It is not like I can't use my Elemental Spirit Possession later. Let's wait for now," he muttered to himself before thinking about which style to use for the next battle. And after contemplating on it for a few moments, he decided to go for the sword-drawing style.

He would not be able to use his Martial Arts for a couple of months since it was currently sealed in the real world. It was a good time for him to work on this Swordsmanship of Mentalism and Familiarized himself more with it so that he would be ready for the situation called for it.

He might have his current style that he was using in the real world, but it would be better if he was more familiar with this current style since he felt that it suited him more.

Having that in mind, Shin decided to go for it.

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Not long after, the trio, along with Duke Bellion, went to the part of the city right below Dracula. They were waiting for the lord of vampires to finish up everything before making their moves.

As for their strategy, Duke Bellion would be the first one to fight Dracula while waiting for their turn to fight. The protective formation of the city would be suppressing Dracula's strength while the vampire

duke would be fighting his lord, who would lose his sanity, and weakened Dracula further before giving Shin and the others their turn.

Even though Arthur and Leonard borrowed the powers of their newly contracted Elemental Spirits due to the quest scenario, they would still not have enough strength to face Dracula at the initial phase since that was when the lord of vampires would have the strongest outburst of power.

Duke Bellion would be alright to fight on his own but the trio might have a problem with it since their current strengths would not be on the same plane as those two. They might even be a burden to the vampire duke since he needs to constantly protect them at that time.

After the initial outburst, it was time when the three could finally take on the stage. Their current power would be more than enough to protect themselves and handle the battle during that phase.

In the meantime, Duke Bellion would be stepping back at that moment since they needed someone to operate the city formation, maintaining it throughout the battle. And during that time, Shin and the other two would be on their own, but they were not afraid since they could fully trust their backs to each other.

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While they were waiting for Dracula to finish, they noticed that the density of the pure mana was steadily getting higher and totally replacing the corrupted mana that it used to have.

Not long after, they could feel that the presence of the corrupted mana was fully been erased, signifying that the curse cast upon the kingdom was finally lifted.

In the sky, Dracula slowly opened his eyes and looked at the horizon. He slowly swept his gaze at the entire kingdom, seemingly confirming if he overlooked anything. And after making sure that everything was fine, he slowly nodded his head in satisfaction.

Urgh!

It was at that moment when an intense discomfort invaded his body followed by the unbearable headache that seemingly tried to split his head.

"That Great Demon King sure is fast," muttered Dracula as he forcefully endured everything. He then turned at the sky that was slowly getting darker and added. "There is still one more job that I need to do before I enter my eternal slumber."

He knew that those hypocrites residing in the higher plane would notice the change in this kingdom and would try to interfere once again just like what happened during the last war of the kingdom.

This time, he would not give them the chance to send their army and be suppressed by them once again.

Dracula forcefully suppressed the power of the Great Demon King that was invading his body before summoning all of his remaining powers. He stared intensely into the sky with glaring sharp eyes.

He used his remaining powers to seal off the sky of the Frozen Kingdom to prevent the higher plane from invading once again.

With his current powers as a Sovereign Being, who stood at the peak of the lower plane and was close to becoming a Divine Being, those people residing in the higher plane would be having a hard time breaking his seal. Unless they wanted to sacrifice a heavy price in exchange, they would never be able to break that seal and create a portal to send their armies.

In exchange for stopping the forces of the higher plane from descending, Dracula exhausted all of his remaining powers, giving the power of the Great Demon King the chance to finally continue its invasion.

Since Dracula totally exhausted his powers, he could not do anything to prevent that invading power from attacking his mind and core. The power of the Great Demon King was comparable to the high-ranking Divine Beings of the higher plane, so even if it was just a portion of it, it was still powerful enough to crush Dracula's will in his current state.

Dracula tried to fight back but he no longer had the strength to contend against it. It did not long until his mind was fully invaded and started to become corrupted. He was steadily losing his mind every second, so it would not take long before he fully lost control over his body.

Bang!

It was at that moment when Duke Bellion jumped toward the sky. He swung his greatsword and released a powerful sword beam that flew straight toward Dracula, trying to deal serious damage to his body before the battle.

Unfortunately, it was already too late. The Great Demon King could already control a portion of Dracula's body. And with a flick of his wrist, a powerful barrier was suddenly summoned, protecting him from the incoming sword beam.

Duke Bellion was still feeling uncomfortable pointing his sword at his lord even though he knew that it was no longer the person to who he swore his loyalty. But since he received the final order, he could only brace himself and continue attacking.

He would not be using his vampire powers in this battle since it would be foolish in front of the Vampire Primogenitor himself. Instead, he would be pouring everything he had into using the Draconian Swordsmanship that he trained and honed through countless battles.

Roar!

An image of a mighty dragon suddenly appeared behind him as he flew straight to where Dracula was.

Swoosh!

This time, he would not be the Vampire Duke Bellion. Instead, he would be the duke who was the sword that served and protected the fallen Draconian Kingdom. And the duke who had fought countless battles and led the kingdom to its former glory.

Without holding back, the real might of the Draconian Martial Arts would be fully displayed in this battle!

Chapter 1013 The Promise Of The Frozen Kingdom (Part 4)

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Right before Dracula, who lost his sanity, and Duke Bellion, who was currently in a special state after activating his Draconian Powers, clashed against each other, a huge magic formation suddenly shone from the city and created a dome of energy that extend hundreds of meters in the air. It seemed to almost cover the entire sky above the Frozen City.

The moment when the formation was fully activated a powerful suppression force was cast upon Dracula, weakening his overall strength by a large margin. If it was on a normal occasion, then the protective formation of the city would not be able to do anything to him. But since the power of the Great Demon King fully invade his body, his aura completely changed which made the formation unable to recognize him.

Due to the suppression of the formation of Dracula, Duke Bellion would at least be able to fight his lord without being on the back foot. He did not wait for long as he quickly initiated an attack, signifying the start of the battle.

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On the ground, the trio was observing the battle in the air as they patiently waited for their turn to take action.

Arthur, who was a dragon fanatic, could not help but become interested in the Martial Arts that Duke Bellion was showing. "It is really interesting swordsmanship. I wonder if his class will be available once we unlocked this region."

Shin rolled his eyes at Arthur as he knew what this brother of his was currently thinking. Regardless, he still responded. "It will most likely be unlocked given that a certain class and race would always be available for every new region being unlocked."

"And based on the background story that we have, the race will most likely be Draconians while the class will be warrior-related or magic knights. Meanwhile, their religions will definitely be Dragon Worshippers," he added after recalling the fighting style of each of the vampire nobles that his Elemental Spirits fought earlier.

He then paused for a moment and turned Arthur. "But what is it to you? It is not like you are going to change your class with it. You are already a Dragonkin with a Dragon Knight Class, which were a Transcendent Race and Class."

Arthur gave Shin a sneering look before answering. "Of course, I will not choose a weaker race and class to nerf myself. But I am rather interested in their skills and special methods – their energy circulation method, in particular."

"I may be able to learn a thing or two from them and bring it into the real world to enhance my fighting power. It is really interesting."

Leonard, who remained silent up until now, suddenly chimed in. "That is right. The Martial Arts within this game are too realistic that you can mistake them as a major discipline in the real world."

Hearing that, Shin quickly voiced out his doubts. "That is right. I am also quite suspicious about this too. It seems like the game developers are very familiar with Martial Arts and other disciplines in the real world. Some of the Martial Arts of the NPCs here are even comparable to the secret techniques and unique skills of different families with a long history."

After that, Shin also shared the martial manual that he got earlier from his special quest. And when the two read through its details and Shin's analysis, they started to have their own suspicions too.

"This is interesting. This game is starting to become more and more mysterious," commented Arthur after hearing everything.

Leonard could also not help but agree. Everything within the game was becoming a clear reflection of reality to him. It was already like that before, but his feeling became even more distinct after hearing Shin's suspicion.

"Let's talk about this more later when we log out. It seems like it is finally our turn," said Shin as he saw the battle in the sky was reaching its critical point.

The two quickly went into a battle-ready posture in tacit agreement. They also went to different locations, trying to get a good position where they could launch a surprise attack.

Swoosh!

Boom!

Duke Bellion was thrown toward the ground after receiving a powerful strike from Dracula. He was still able to land on his feet after quickly adjusting his body in the air. And right after his feet came in contact with the ground, he quickly bent his hips to discharge the force that came from the impact.

Boom!

What followed after it was a powerful shockwave that extended in every direction, sweeping everything in its path. The ground under the vampire duke's feet also sunk and formed a deep crater in the shape of an inverted dome.

Swoosh!

Duke Bellion heard a sharp sound of the wind coming from the sky and quickly raised his greatsword and placed it above him, using its surface to block the incoming attack from above.

Boom!

His feet further sunk to the ground as blocked Dracula's attack. The weight of that attack was so powerful because of the gravitational force that was involved. Duke Bellion was even forced to kneel on the ground due to it.

But despite that being the case, a huge smile was currently present on his face as this attack was no longer as strong as the previous attacks that he suffered during the aerial battle. This signified that the power of Dracula was fully suppressed by the protective formation of the city.

It was the right time for the trio to make their moves.

Naturally, those three instantly noticed the change and quickly sprung into action without any hesitation.

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

Shin even crushed the token given to him by Duke Bellion earlier just like what was instructed to him earlier. He quickly sensed the overflowing power entering his body right after the token was crushed into pieces. And without further ado, he entered his Elemental Spirit Possession, choosing Hanzo once again for this situation.

They did not wait for any signal from Duke Bellion, the trio charged at Dracula from three different directions. They executed their respective foot techniques, moving at a speed that could not be caught by the naked eye.

'Imperial Tactics: Dragon Dance'

'Blood Sutra: Devil's Footprints'

'Yin-Yang Arts: Mystic Movements'

They arrived at the moment when Dracula was about to swing his crimson rapier made of blood to Duke Bellion. And without any hit of hesitation, they launched a perfectly coordinated attack that covered every possible retreat path that the Vampire Primogenitor could take.

'True Nine Dragon Arts: Talons of the Ice Dragon'

'Blood Sutra: Muerte Sangre'

'Jade Kirin Scripture: Quick Draw – Flash Strike'

Their coordinated attacks come so soon that they almost reached Dracula within an instant. But before their attacks could even touch their target, a spherical barrier made of crimson blood suddenly enfolded the vampire lord and protected him from any harm.

Boom!

Their respective attacks arrived but they could not break through the barrier protecting Dracula. But that was just only the beginning since the battle was just getting started for real. This attack was only to save Duke Bellion and hold Dracula in place.

Shin and Leonard simultaneously retreated right after their initial attacks failed, leaving Arthur to hold the frontline. Their initial goal was already achieved and saved the vampire duke, who quickly went to the center of the city to keep the protective formation active.

Bang!

The blood barrier quickly exploded and sent a powerful shockwave in every direction right after it achieved its goal. The explosion was so strong that it pushed everything around Dracula, away from him.

But Arthur held his ground as he firmly planted his feet on the ground while blocking the explosion with his round shield. There was even a frosty aura shrouding his body, warding off the harmful substance mixed in the explosion.

When the violent wind finally settled, Arthur quickly stomped his foot on the ground before charging forward while keeping his shield in front of him. At the same time, the frost powers shrouding his body suddenly spun around and created a spinning vortex as he advanced forward.

Not long after, the spinning frost aura turned into an image of a white dragon with wide-open jaws, seemingly trying to devour Dracula. The surrounding seemed to become frozen as Arthur charged forward. He left an icy trail both in the air and on the ground while advancing.

It was a variant of the signature move that Arthur loved to use.

'True Nine Dragon Arts: Breaking through of the Frost Dragon'

Roar!

But despite how imposing that incoming attack was, Dracula remained calm while staring at it. He then casually raised his left hand and placed it in front of him, summoning another barrier made of blood. But compared to the one that he had earlier, this particular barrier had golden runes swimming on its surface that reinforced its defensive capabilities that it had.

Boom!

A cold stream of air was scattered in every direction right after the collision of the two opposing powers. It even left frost marks on the uneven ground, signifying how cold it was.

Swoosh!

In the middle of this thick fog, a dashing figure suddenly jumped through it and flew straight to Dracula.

Leonard, who had a flickering apparition of a giant wolf behind him, left a trail in the air as he sprinted toward the vampire lord. It only took him an instant to arrive behind his target while throwing his fist forward.

Roar!

The wolf that was following him behind earlier seemed to disappear and fused with his body. Then its giant head suddenly reappeared, opening its mouth widely as Leonard throw his fist.

'Hundred Beast Method: Haymaker of the Wolf King'

Boom!

Another massive explosion followed after he throw his punch. The impact even created a strong ripple in the air that cleared the fog that was produced by Arthur's previous attack.

But despite hitting something, Leonard wore a deep frown as he saw a huge pair of crimson bat wings right in front of him. It blocked his attacks and seemed to be completely unaffected.

Fortunately, their goal was not only to land a clean hit on Dracula but also to fully lock him in place and give their main attacker a stationary target.

Swoosh!

Shin, who was waiting for his turn, suddenly appeared beside Dracula like a ghost. He was already unsheathing his sword at this moment and was about to strike with it. There was an immense threat coming from his sword that even Dracula could not ignore.

This particular attack contained a power of space and void that came from Hanzo. It was an attack that carried the hint of being able to cut dimensions.

'Jade Kirin Scripture: Quick Draw – Dimensional Cut'

His sword left a trail of purple light, drawing a straight, diagonal line in the air where Dracula stood. Then it was immediately followed by the appearance of cracks in the space accompanied by the sound of shattering glass.

Chapter 1014 The Promise Of The Frozen Kingdom (Part 5)

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The coordinated attacks that were launched by the trio were executed in perfect timing, not giving Dracula the time to respond in time. Even the dimensional cut that was thrown by Shin was strong enough to pose a serious threat to the vampire lord given his current strength.

Even Arthur and Leonard, who fully trusted Shin that could land this attack, were slightly taken aback when they saw Shin cutting through the space with that slash.

But no matter how strong it was, the target of that powerful attack seemed to be completely unaffected. With a casual lift of his hand, Dracula placed his palm at the crumbling space created by the dimensional cut, using his blood elemental powers to ward off the attack. And under his guidance, the space in front of that palm started to fix itself, albeit slowly.

It was at this moment when the three suddenly felt a sense of foreboding coming from their opponent. Such an ominous feeling made them not hesitate to retreat and pull back as fast as they could.

Then Dracula suddenly turned his hand that was pressing on the earlier crumbling space before making a snap with his fingers.

Snap!

'Skill: Blood Combustion'

Boom!

Then it was immediately followed by a powerful explosion that sent a powerful ripple in the air, almost catching up to the three. If they were not so decisive at retreating earlier, then they would have been caught in that explosion.

They were planning to quickly get back in action but they immediately halted their steps when they noticed some substance in the air. They were drops of crimson blood that were scattered in every direction after the earlier explosion.

While they were still hesitating about what to do, Dracula suddenly flipped his free hand once again, producing a gentle ripple in the air. And when it touched the drops of blood hovering in the surroundings, different kinds of weapons were suddenly formed before assaulting the three.

'Skill: Blood Armament'

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

Shin quickly moved his feet and executed a series of dodging maneuvers to avoid a volley of weapons made of blood heading toward him. They might have a decent speed that could easily suppress most of the players, but it was nothing in front of Shin, who possessed an insane innate talent within the game, the Ultra Instincts.

With the help of such an overpowered ability, Shin was able to steadily advance toward Dracula despite the hail of blood weapons flying at him.

On the other side, Arthur took advantage of his class and current form to face the incoming blood weapons. He confronted them head-on without carrying about the damage that they could possibly cause him.

His current transformation might not be focusing on defense entirely, but the ice element did not only focus on sharp attacks and crowd control effects such as slows and freeze. Its defensive capabilities were also strong enough to contend against Earth Element to a certain degree.

By creating a thick layer of ice on his body, he charged through the hail of blood weapons fearlessly and steadily. The frost armor might have gotten destroyed by those blood weapons, but he was constantly repairing them almost within an instant.

Leonard, on the other hand, also chose to take a straightforward approach when facing those blood weapons. He charged forward and continuously swung his fist forward, producing shockwaves that either redirect the trajectories of those blood weapons or destroyed them with each strike.

He was also using a couple of powerful strikes from time to time that produced much stronger air waves forward, completely obliterating the blood weapons on his path. And with such an open path, he was

able to move his head without a problem. He might not be as fast as the other two but he was not lagging that far behind.

Just like earlier, Arthur initiated another charge to be the first to push forward. He used his signature move once again, the 'Breaking through of the Golden Dragon', on its variant version. But this time, he did not run straight to Dracula and instead circle around their opponent, creating an encirclement while clearing the rest of the blood weapons in the surrounding.

At the same time, he was producing cold air during his actions and left it on his path. And when everything was over, everything around Dracula was frozen by that cold energy.

Arthur created a frozen field that could affect the movements of the vampire lord.

After setting up the field, Arthur quickly changed his direction before charging toward Dracula. There was no dragon figure accompanying him at this moment, but the pressure coming from him was no different from when he was using that signature move.

If the one who was facing him was any other opponent, then they would see Arthur as a moving mountain filled with snow while his charge looked like a roaring avalanche heading toward his opponent with unstoppable momentum.

But in front of Dracula, who stood at the peak of the lower plane, was completely unaffected by the pressure that Arthur was releasing. Not even in his weakened state due to the suppression of the protective formation of the city.

Casually thrusting forward, Dracula released a sanguine beam of light from the tip of his rapier, which headed straight to Arthur.

'Skill: Blood Annihilation'

Swoosh!

Arthur raised his shield in front of him and released his dragon aura without restraint. He then channeled it toward the shield, which quickly responded to him. The snowflake symbol of his shield shone brightly before creating a thick wall of ice that blocked the incoming beam of light.

Boom!

Arthur was forced to take a couple of steps back, trying to steady his footing. But at the very least, he successfully blocked the sanguine beam.

Swoosh!

Shin took the opportunity when Dracula's attention was attracted by Arthur to sprint forward and quickly turned into a streak of light, flying straight to the vampire lord.

Swoosh!

'Jade Kirin Scripture: Quick Draw – Flash Final'

Shing!

Sensing the incoming attack, Dracula quickly turned around and raised the rapier in front of him, trying to block the incoming attack. But since Shin's current speed was a little too fast, the vampire lord was a step behind.

Clang!

Fortunately, his rapier was still able slightly to hit the incoming katana, slightly changing the trajectory of the latter. And by slightly leaning his body backward, Dracula was able to avoid getting pierced by that attack.

But at the same time, his current posture became awkward which led to a messed-up center of gravity.

It was at this moment when Leonard suddenly appeared and throw a powerful punch forward, targeting the exposed side of the vampire lord. And to make sure that he would be able to deal as much damage as he could with this particular attack, Leonard channeled a large amount of mana on his fist as he threw it forward.

There seemed to be an image of a demon behind him as he threw that fist, releasing a thick aura of death.

'Blood Sutra: Muerte Condenada'

With such an awkward posture, it was impossible for Dracula to avoid this particular attack. And given how strong it was, he would definitely suffer a serious injury when he got hit.

At least, that was how it was supposed to be.

But right before the final moment, one of the blood wings folded behind Dracula suddenly stabbed its lower tip on the ground. It made the vampire lord regain his balance within an instant.

After regaining a steady footing, Dracula was finally able to cover the opening where Leonard was attacking from and even counterattack if he wanted to.

At that moment, Shin suddenly felt a suction force pulling him forward. And he saw Dracula skillfully turn the blood rapier and guided the [Yamato] downward.

Since Shin was suddenly pulled forward, he was now right in front of Leonard. He was now blocking the attack for Dracula with such an awkward position.

If it was any other player, then they would hesitate in front of such circumstances where they would hit their teammate instead of the enemy. But even if that was the case, Leonard did not even twice as he continued to throw his fist. He fully trusted Shin and was also aware of some of his skills, so he was confident that there would not be any kind of accident.

And sure enough, Shin did not disappoint him. In the midst of such a predicament, he turned his body into an illusionary figure that passed through Leonard, who continued his attack.

Bang!

The first was thrown forward and pushed by Dracula away. But due to earlier actions, the vampire was able to position his blood rapier in front of him, blocking the attack in an accurate and timely manner.

He was about to make his next move when a deafening roar of a dragon rang on his right side. Turning his head toward that direction, he saw Arthur stab in the air with his spear and release a powerful energy wave that quickly turned into a that headed toward his direction.

Another variant version of one of his special moves.

'True Nine Dragon Arts: Ice Dragon soars through the Heavens'

Roar!

Dracula was forced to halt in his tracks because the ice dragon made of frost aura was already upon him at that moment. He could neither dodge nor counter it with his own attack. Left without a choice, he could only curl his body and wrap himself with his blood wings.

Boom!

He was devoured by the dragon like a pill as it continued moving forward and dragging that crimson sphere alongside it.

Shin and Leonard quickly gave case as they were planning to quickly launch another coordinated attack to not give Dracula any chance to fight back. At the same time, Arthur was closely following behind them right after he threw his previous attack.

But they only took a couple of steps forward when they were forced to halt their tracks. It was because they heard a cold voice that sent shivers down their spines. Their feet seemed to be rooted on the ground the moment when they heard the words that it said.

"Blood Field!"

Chapter 1015 The Promise Of The Frozen Kingdom (Part 6)

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"Blood Field!"

Right after those words sounded accompanied by a cold voice, the trio could not help but feel another sense of foreboding. And it did not long for them to see what it was.

At first, there were droplets of blood floating in the air just like earlier. But this time, they didn't turn into blood weapons and instead dyed the whole place red. The whole surroundings turned crimson as if Shin, Arthur, and Leonard were suddenly transported into another world where everything was made of blood.

Sweeping their gazes at their surroundings, they saw that there was a border a hundred meters away from where they were standing. That border looked like a crimson liquid spinning at a very high speed.

It did not take long for them to also sense something wrong with their movements. Their bodies became a little heavy and moving them also became sluggish. It was as if they were moving underwater while going against a powerful current.

Fortunately, there was no significant change in their stats, which would become a huge problem for them. Their opponent was already a powerful old monster even in a weakened state, so it would be much more troublesome if they temporarily boosted strength suddenly became weakened.

At the very least, their movements were slightly hindered by this particular domain skill which they could easily adjust to after moving their bodies just enough within such an environment.

They did not resume attack this time due to the slight difficulty in moving their bodies. In this kind of battle, a single mistake could lead to them to failure. They had to buy themselves enough time to adjust their bodies and adapt to the new environment.

Dracula, on the other hand, took this opportunity to launch a barrage of attacks at them. He might not be in his right mind right now, but his battle instincts were still present. And adding the fact that the power of the Great Demon King was currently controlling his body, his attacks were much deadlier than ever.

He was still using his 'Blood Armament' skill where he could produce countless numbers of blood weapons. But materializing them was much faster this time due to the supplementary effects of 'Blood Field'. With him producing these armaments made of blood at such a speed, sending them toward Shin and the other two would be no different from flipping his hand.

The trio of Shin, Arthur, and Leonard did everything they could to dodge those blood weapons while trying to adapt to the Blood Field. There were times when they were almost caught by those attacks but were skillfully and witty enough to escape such a predicament.

Dracula did not move from his spot during the entire process as if he was not fully concerned about what was happening. But he was throwing a couple of blood elemental spells from time to time, trying to catch the three off-guard.

Unfortunately, those three were not foolish enough to drop their guard in front of such an intense assault. They were always been prepared for any kind of chance that could possibly happen during the battle.

While they were dodging, Shin found it odd that Dracula was not making any other movement aside from keeping the domain skills up and throwing his spells. In his mind, the three of them would be in

deep trouble if the vampire lord tried to launch an ambush when they were busy protecting themselves from the Blood Armaments.

Dracula already showcased such good swordsmanship and battle techniques during their earlier exchange, so Shin had a good idea of how skilled this vampire lord could be in a melee battle. He was at most on the same level as a skilled Martial Artist and powerful Combat Mentalist if Shin compared him to the experts of the real world.

Having such suspicion in mind, Shin used his 'True Sight' skill to have a closer look at Dracula and observe any minute change in his movement. And that was when he noticed some twitching on the hands and arms of the vampire lord.

Those small details were not caused by activating a skill or casting a spell. Instead, they were signs of discomfort when doing something.

Seeing that, a sudden idea flashed through his mind. Shin could not help but furrow his brows and mutter. "Could it be, Dracula is still fighting over the control of his body?"

Thinking about that, Shin found it reasonable why 'Dracula' was not taking another step after summoning the Blood Field and casting a series of powerful spells.

"Then we can take this as our chance," he added before sharing his findings with Arthur and Leonard, who were also busy saving themselves. And after explaining everything to them, he quickly said. "Let's go. We have adapted to the Blood Field well enough."

"Arthur, cover me first," right after saying those words, Shin quickly charged forward, bravely facing the hail of blood weapons in his path.

Arthur quickly complied and threw a series of powerful energy beams that created a clear path for Shin. After that, he swiftly charged ahead and overtook Shin, planning to create a more unhindered path for his brother.

No after from them, Leonard purposely lagged behind before making a detour, trying to find a good angle to strike. He would be ready to jump into action right after the situation called for it.

It did not take long for them to engage in a melee battle once again. The trio showcased their skillful display of martial arts coupled with their perfect coordination. They did not need to voice out their thoughts as each of them fully understood the other.

Arthur would always be protecting them two in a timely manner whenever either of them was in danger. And with his protection, Shin and Leonard could attack without any worry for their safety. Those two were also returning the favor from time to time as they would also arrive at the right moment when Arthur was in a difficult predicament.

As the battle progressed, the improvement of the three was also starting to show. With them being able to properly adjust to the suppression of the Blood Field, their movements were becoming sharper and better. They were even starting to showcase some of their more difficult techniques after a couple of moments.

This resulted in them gaining a better footing in the battle, especially with the help of their seamless teamwork.

But it did not mean that it came without any problem. There were some moments where they almost lost their lives during the battle. The skills and spells were already powerful enough to make them worry, but the martial prowess Dracula had was also somewhat shocking.

Even with their perfect coordination, they did not gain much of an edge in the melee battle. Even if they were working together, they were still having a hard time when fighting Dracula and constantly felt that they were treading on a tightrope between life and death.

If not for them being in extreme focus or if their teamwork were slightly off, then they would not stand a chance in front of such a monstrous being.

Fortunately, they were also not that simple either. And after undergoing their respective hellish training in the real world, their spirits and resolve were forged into an iron will. Facing such a life-threatening situation was not much of a problem for them. They were even working together with their most trusted brothers.

After such an intense battle, the whole that used to be filled with frozen houses and other buildings turned into a fully devastated place. It was now completely different from what it used to be. The group was now full of pits and craters that resulted from stray attacks. The surrounding builds and houses were also turned into piles of rubble, making the previous majestic place a desolate land.

...

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

Another hail of blood weapons rained down from the sky but it was immediately blocked by Arthur raising his round shield and summoning a huge spherical aura that burned into a transparent yet sturdy barrier.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

When the rain of blood weapons finally subdued, Shin suddenly appeared behind Arthur and ran past the latter, sprinting forward with an insane speed. He was holding his sheathed sword in his left hand while locking his gaze on Dracula who was standing in the distance.

Swoosh! Swoosh!

At the same time, Leonard leaped over Arthur's head, high up in the air and arching his body during his flight. He inhaled a mouthful of air which made his chest expanded to a great degree before exhaling it out with a powerful shout – which quickly turned into a deafening bestial roar.

Roar!

His roar produced a powerful shockwave that caused a violent ripple in the air and headed toward Dracula, preventing the latter from producing more Blood Armaments or casting a more powerful spell.

Then Leonard shot down like a rocket and flew straight to the vampire lord. His momentum was so strong, making him resemble a falling meteor from the sky.

Boom!

Dracula swung his blood rapier and confronted the incoming fist with it. The impact of their collision produced another shockwave that spread in different directions while the ground below sank further, creating another deep crater.

Leonard did not dare to linger any longer as he quickly retreated right after his feet touched the ground. And before Dracula could even pursue him, multiple 'Shin' suddenly surrounded the vampire lord and maintained the same sword-drawing postures.

Click!

Then a subtle clicking sound resounded.

Shing! Swoosh!

Then the scene was quickly followed by those figures charging toward Dracula, creating a series of intervening lines in the air as Shin executed one of his quick draw attacks, the 'World Splitter'.

But despite the carefully laid trap, Dracula was still able to avoid the fast attack coming from Shin by spreading his wings wide, flapping them strongly, and flying up in the sky.

Roar!

Though, when he was in the air, he was quickly greeted by a massive head of an ice dragon in the middle of opening its mouth wide and planning to devour him alive.

Boom!

Up until now, this was the only attack that managed to land cleanly on Dracula after expending so much effort. But despite being successful, the trio were still wearing dark expressions on their faces since they knew that this fight was far from over. They were not even at the halfway mark of their opponent's health bar.

The three were already starting to get tired due to the accumulated fatigue from their previous battles and the overwhelming pressure of their opponent, but they could not take a rest yet. They needed to hold for a little bit longer until they took down this final boss.

And to do that, it looked like they had to suffer a little more.

Chapter 1016 The Promise Of The Frozen Kingdom (Part 7)

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As the battle continued, the trio was getting more and more pressured by Dracula even though they possessed borrowed powers. And as if being overwhelmed by the powerful spells and strong combat techniques were not enough, they were also sensing that the control of the Great Demon King over Dracula's body was starting to get stronger.

With this, Shin and the other two could not only worry about their safety during the battle, but they also had to think about the time that was slowly becoming in their favor. It was burning steadily like a dying candle.

Arthur, despite himself getting accustomed to his new form, and Leonard, who fully adapted to his new strength and already found his rhythm, could not help but wear dark expressions on their faces.

What's more, Shin, who only borrowed his current powers from the special token to match those two, was also running out of time. The duration of the borrowed powers was already approaching its end.

With the time being totally against them, their current situation was no different from them having their backs against the wall.

Being in such a situation, the gears within the heads of the three were currently working to the fullest as they were trying to look for solutions to get out of their current predicament. And the more they looked at it, the more convinced they became that there was the only way for them to win this battle.

It was to use their final trump cards and gamble everything with them. It would be an all-or-nothing gamble that would decide everything. They would be betting their fates on it.

Coming up with that idea and steeling up their resolve, they exchanged glances with one another and quickly noticed that their brothers had the same thought as them.

Having a tacit understanding with one another, the three of them quickly went into action and increased their pace. They would be trying to minimize the pressure that they were getting from Dracula and looked for the right opportunity to use their final card.

The battle continued in the same state as earlier where Shin and Leonard constantly tried to set up an opening for each other with Arthur covering them in a timely manner while also launching a good attack when the situation permitted it.

The pressure from Dracula was still present but it was no longer as heavy as before because the three of them were getting more aggressive and intensifying their attacks.

Everything was on the right track when an accident suddenly happened. Due to the accumulated fatigue, there was a slip in Leonard's movement that left him wide open. And with such a sharp battle instinct that Dracula had, it was impossible for him to miss such an opening.

Swoosh!

Dracula quickly seized that momentary slip from Leonard to get close to him right after shaking off Arthur, who tried to block his path. And right after he arrived in front of his target, he quickly threw a forward stab with his blood rapier as it was releasing an intense sanguine glow.

In front of such a dangerous situation where Leonard could neither dodge nor block, he could only face it head-on. With a powerful stomp on the ground, he planted his feet firmly and dropped his center of gravity heavily, rooting himself on the ground like a sturdy tree.

At the same time, he was channeling all of his energy on his entire being. He accumulated all of his negative emotions, particularly his rage, and spread them on different parts of his body.

Due to that, his body released a sanguine glow much stronger than the light that his opponent's rapier was emitting. There was even a scarlet flame burning on the surface of his skin and leather armor. Even the lion's mane of his helmet was flapping violently in the air due to it.

Puchi!

(-10,000,000)

Then the rapier pierced through his heart, dealing massive damage that was supposed to empty his entire health bar. But for some unknown reason, his health bar stopped dropping when it reached the '1' value.

'Primordial Beast Racial Skill: Undying Rage'

He survived with a sliver of health, barely holding on to his life.

With his decisive action, the situation suddenly took a huge turn. Dracula, who was supposedly trying to end his life was now standing right in front of him, wide open and vulnerable to any attacks.

Leonard could only hold his current stance and state for a couple of seconds, so he did not think of anything else and quickly followed his instincts and threw a powerful punch forward, pouring everything on it.

With the 'rage' that he gathered earlier with the help of his racial skill, he tightly grabbed the wrist of his opponent with his left hand, refusing to let it go. At the same time, he guided all of his remaining powers toward his right hand as he clenched it into a fist and took position on the side of his waist.

His fist seemed to turn into a black hole that was pulling all of the surrounding mana and devouring them to become its nutrients. A spiraling energy was created around his clenched fist as he threw a rotating punch forward, straight to his chest of Dracula.

'Hundred Beast Method: Vengeance of the Beast King'

Boom!

His actions produced a sonic boom that reverberated in the whole place followed by a strong shockwave that pushed everything in every direction.

Fusing the special effects of the 'Undying Rage' skill and the martial prowess of his martial arts, this attack reached a whole new realm without Leonard knowing.

Dracula tried to block that attack but it was already too late for him to fully negate the force accompanying that attack. And because of it, the incoming fist slipped through his free hand and shot straight to his chest, dealing significant damage.

At the same time, Leonard let go of his wrist at that very moment as he was catapulted away due to the powerful force from the impact. It was impossible to nullify that force in his current position, so he could do nothing but get swept away by it.

But Leonard did not fare well either. He had been pushed away toward the opposite direction, drawing a long and deep trail on the ground. Fortunately, he was still in the state of 'Undying Rage' at that time, making him unable to die. If not, then he could say goodbye to his current progress in the game despite landing such a powerful strike.

Though, he quickly kneel on the ground after he stabilized his footing. He was panting heavily as he struggled to catch his breath.

All of his accumulated exhaustion finally exploded at this point in time. Even if his body could somehow continue to fight by borrowing more strength from his current Elemental Beast Companion, Lycan, his mind could no longer support it due to extreme mental fatigue.

He could no longer continue this battle. The only thing that he could do right now was to entrust the rest to his two brothers.

Struggling with his breathing, he was forced to raise his head and looked at what was happening in the distance.

...

Right after Leonard landed a powerful strike at Dracula and sent the vampire lord flying, both Shin and Arthur quickly sprung into action. How could they let this opportunity slip away from their grasp? This was the opening that they were waiting for up until now.

Arthur squatted his hips for a moment and put a lot of strength on his legs before catapulting himself high up in the air, positioning himself right above the place where Dracula was about to land.

Since they decided to gamble everything on this final exchange, Arthur decided to bet everything had.

Due to them being in the special quest scenario where they could borrow some of the strength of special NPCs assigned to it, he could retain some of those powers when initiating a powerful move.

He divided the powers that he was receiving from Eira before distributing them to the other three Elemental Dragons that he had – the Infernal Dragon Vulcan, the Ocean Dragon Oceana, and Storm Dragon Tempest.

He then summoned them simultaneously as he also released his current Elemental Dragon Fusion.

It weakened the strength of his current form significantly, but their combined forces would definitely be much stronger.

This was a very risky move for Arthur since he would lose the support of his current form, designated for this quest scenario after he launched this attack. Especially when this was going to be a one-time trick.

Regardless of the outcome of this move, he would no longer be able to regain the strength that he was supposed to have for this scenario.

Failure was not an option!

He summoned his golden dragon and rode on it while taking a deep breath. He still had the lingering powers from Eira after he released her from their fusion form, so he could not waste any more time and continued.

Steeling his resolve, Arthur gritted his teeth and let the four elemental dragons position themselves behind him, forming a diamond formation with him standing at the center. Then they released their respective dragon auras that produced a visible flame shrouding their bodies.

Their auras formed lines that connected them to each other as they chanted out a series of incomprehensible words in dragon language. And quickly after that, magic runes flew about from their mouths before forming a huge magic circle behind Arthur.

Boom!

Heavy pressure was quickly produced right after the magic formation was formed in the sky, locking on Dracula and pressing him to the ground. And since the vampire lord suffered a serious injury from a previous attack, he could not properly protect himself and was forced to stay in his current position.

Seeing that, Arthur quickly pointed his spear in the sky which produced a reaction from the heavens. A huge hole was suddenly created in the Blood Field that trapped them as a flash of multicolored lightning struck down from the sky and landed on him.

Without waiting for Dracula to react, Arthur quickly swung the spear down and pointed its tip toward the vampire lord below him.

'Elemental Dragon Formation (Four Dragons): Wrath of the Heaven'

Boom!

Compared to the first time when Arthur used this special skill, the might that it currently had was much more powerful and domineering. It was because four elemental dragons formed this formation.

Swoosh!

A huge pillar of light suddenly fell from the sky and struck down Dracula, who was currently in the middle of summoning his blood-elemental powers to contend with the incoming attack. But due to the injury that he received from the previous strike of Leonard, he found it hard to regulate his powers and was a step too late to summon the full might of his attack.

Boom!

A beam of sanguine light and a pillar of majestic light from the heavens collided with each other. They pushed each other while creating an intense collision in the air. But the difference between the two immediately showed itself after a couple of seconds.

Dracula did not have enough time to accumulate the right amount of power for his attack, so the sanguine beam of light was immediately pushed back. His injuries also played a big effect here since he could not maintain his stance with such a heavily injured body.

Boom!

Then he was immediately devoured by the remaining powers of the descending pillar of light. It might be not its strongest power, but it was still enough to deal a massive amount of damage to the already injured vampire lord.

It worsened the injuries on Dracula's body and left him hanging with a quarter of his total health.

...

Hu~!

In the meantime, not far from where Dracula was standing, Shin took a deep breath to regulate his breathing and focused his mind. It was his turn to throw his trump card.

In normal circumstances, he would not be able to use this particular skill since he did not have enough strength to wield it yet, which was why he could not use it yet since the time he acquired it.

But now that he had the borrowed powers from the special token, he could barely touch the threshold where he could use this skill.

First, he needed to use his strongest Elemental Spirit Possession to turn his sword into a strong catalyst that could use the Ultimate Skill.

Releasing Hanzo, Shin muttered in a quiet voice and summoned Solus. "Solar Reaper!"

Chapter 1017 The Promise Of The Frozen Kingdom (Part 8)

...

"Solar Reaper!"

Right after Shin called out his Reaper's Retainer, Solus, who was silently circling around his body in the form of a speck of light, quickly broke free from the cycle and manifested herself behind Shin in her human form.

She stayed in there for a couple of seconds before turning herself into a light that suddenly fused with the [Yamato] that Shin was holding in front of his chest. And right after that, the sword took some changes from its appearance just like Shin's other Elemental Spirit Possession.

The blade of the [Yamato] suddenly turned gold as the life where the sharp edge and blunt part of it formed a pattern of a dancing flame. It was the same for the guard on top of the hilt as it turned into an ember of a flame. At the same time, there was a series of glowing runes on the surface of the sword, making it look exquisite.

In the next moment, the sword was suddenly set ablaze with a golden flame that dance violently alongside the wind.

'Elemental Spirit Possession (Solar): Divine Constellation'

And when the sword was done with its transformation, a holy aura suddenly shrouded Shin, increasing his overall stats. It was twice higher than when he was using his Elemental Spirit Possession with Hanzo. There was even a hint of divine powers on his body when he was in this form.

Shin did not wait that long to proceed with using his other skill because he did not want to waste the opening that Arthur and Leonard had given him. They had also chunked down the health bar of Dracula down to a quarter of its total value after their powerful attacks alongside the accumulated damages that the three of them had dealt earlier.

Arthur and Leonard had already used their remaining strength in exchange for their final attacks. It was clear that they would no longer have the ability to continue the battle, so he would be the only one who was capable of fighting later.

He had to make sure to land his Ultimate Move and further lower the Health Bar of Dracula. He had to make it as low as possible to lessen the pressure that he would be getting if he had to fight this Vampire Primogenitor alone later.

Of course, if he could kill Dracula with this particular skill, then he was more than willing to accept it with open arms.

Hu~!

Taking a deep breath, he held the [Yamato] in its different form with both of his hands. He then raised his arms in the air, making the sword to be held invertedly behind, as he absorbed the surrounding mana greedily.

Swoosh!

A swirling vortex was formed around him, signifying the speed and intensity of how he devoured the surrounding. And as he accumulated his powers, his entire body released a glowing aura that resembled the burning gases of the sun while gently flowing toward the sky.

Bang!

A loud explosion quickly followed as spiderweb cracks started to appear on the ground underneath his feet and spread in every direction.

At the same time, the speck of lights revolving around his body, representing each of his Elemental Spirits, suddenly broke free from their cycle before floating behind him in an orderly manner. They formed a circular formation before spinning rapidly, leaving visible trails in the air with their respective colors.

Not long after, a circle with overwhelming elemental power was formed behind Shin due to the actions of his Reaper's Retainers. A series of glowing runes with different colors were even added into that magic circle after those Elemental Spirits chanted out their respective mantras.

Then the shadow of each of his Elemental Spirits, aside from Solus who fused with the [Yamato], started to appear one after another in a flash while merging with Shin's body.

Shin waited patiently for Arthur's attack to exhaust every last bit of its powers, maximizing its damage, before making his move. And when the pillar of light disappeared, the accumulated powers that Shin had gathered already reached their peak, so he quickly swung his blazing sword downward, seemingly trying to cut the world.

Swoosh!

He could not showcase the real strength of this skill even in his Reality Manifestation since it still hadn't integrated with his Martial Arts, but it was more than enough for their current situation.

Shing!

Shin's movements seemed to come in slow motion as he swung the [Yamato] down. There was even a series of afterimages of his arms and sword when he was doing then vertical stroke in the air.

Then a thin, glowing straight line was drawn in the space as if it was separating the world into two dimensions. That line started in front of Shin and extend toward the distance, sweeping and cutting through everything on its path. This included Dracula who was still in the middle of regaining himself after suffering the attack from Arthur. Even the powerful Blood Field that was suppressing them earlier was cut in halves.

'Elemental Spirit Ultimate Skill (Fusion): Ragnarök'

Swoosh!

There was stillness for a brief moment before all of the light in the world was seemingly sucked toward the line that Shin had drawn within an instant.

Then it was quickly followed by a golden spark of flame in the middle of the monochrome world. And as if the wick of a bomb was burned up, a deafening explosion quickly followed up and lightened up the whole world with its blinding light.

Boom!

The line that Shin had drawn earlier was suddenly set ablaze with a violent yet sacred fire, burning up everything on its path.

Ahh~!

Dracula, who was standing weakly right in the middle of that blazing line, seemed to have met his bane after he was hit by the golden flame. His powerful body that reached the stage of Sovereign Being had a deep wound that could not be healed. It was a mixture of a power cut and a scorching flame.

The damage of Shin's attack only managed to lower the Health Bar of Dracula down to 5% despite how powerful-looking it was. Fortunately, the sacred attribute of the golden flame had a significant effect on the vampire lord, burning his remaining health steadily.

Dracula was trying to fight back the scorching golden flame with his overwhelming blood powers, but after losing the assistance of the Blood Field, his magic powers suffered greatly. Moreover, he was currently in a heavily wounded state after suffering the previous consecutive attacks from Arthur and Leonard, so his recovery powers were currently at their weakest.

Shin felt that all of the strength in his body left him after executing such an advanced skill. His current stats and state might have permitted him to use it, but it did not mean that his current in-game avatar was strong enough to withstand the drawbacks of the skill.

If not for his monstrous willpower, then he would most likely have collapsed on the ground already and was forcefully logged out of the game by the system.

He really wanted to take a rest right now, but he knew that there was still one more step to wrap everything up.

He gritted his teeth and forced his body to move. Stomping on the ground, he launched forward, dragging his blazing sword alongside him. Despite being in a completely exhausted state, his speed still remained at its peak. He even left a long trail of blazing light behind him as he moved toward Dracula.

The Vampire Primogenitor quickly recognized the threat that was approaching him at an insane speed. Drove purely by instincts, he forgot about healing his wounds and concentrated his remaining powers on his blood rapier. He then threw a quick stab forward, targeting Shin, who was in the middle of brandishing a blazing sword during the charge.

Despite being in a heavily wounded state, Dracula's speed still surpassed Shin's. The tip of his blood rapier was already in front of his opponent's eyes before the blazing sword of the latter could even reach him.

The pupils of Shin's eyes contracted greatly as he started at the sharp tip rapidly magnifying right in front of his eyes. He knew that he already lost in that exchange. Even if he tried to move his head to dodge, his head would still be pierced by that rapier.

But despite standing in front of a hopeless situation, he continued to persevere and bravely brandished his sword. He still possessed a couple of skills that could save him from a sure-kill fatal strike.

Though, he might not be able to deal the killing blow to Dracula with his current attack since the force that it had would greatly decrease while its trajectory would be slightly altered once his head was pierced by the incoming rapier. This would give the vampire lord enough time to adjust his body and minimize the damage that he would get.

During this critical moment, the muscle of Dracula's body suddenly became tense and made his movements slow down momentarily.

With Shin's innate talent inside the game, the Ultra Instincts, he naturally noticed the slight change in Dracula's movements. It might be brief and small, but it was more than enough for Shin to completely move his body and avoid the fatal strike.

Puchi!

The blood rapier slightly grazed Shin's cheeks, drawing a bloody line on them. But it was not deadly enough to threaten his life, nor hindered his moment.

He completely understood what just happened. Dracula's soul took advantage of the weakened state of his body that was being controlled by the Great Demon King to hinder its movements.

Shin was thankful. And as a form of respect, he steeled his resolve and poured his remaining strength on his arms as he slashed out with the blazing [Yamato]. The blazing trail of the sword drew a beautiful arc in the air as it made its way toward Dracula.

Swoosh!

The two brushed past each other as the final strike landed. Shin stayed still on his spot after stopping. He maintained his last posture as he tried to catch his breath after that exchange.

It was the same for Dracula for a couple of moments before he retracted his posture and stood up straight. He then turned around and looked at Shin with clear eyes. This time, there was no black and eerie aura shrouding his eyes, indicating that he somewhat regained his control over his body.

"You've performed more than I expected," said Dracula with a smile.

Shin wanted to turn around and look back, but his body refused to move. He felt that he would suddenly faint once he tried to make any kind of large movement. With it, he could only slightly nod his head and forced out a couple of words between hard breaths. "I-... am-... glad that-... I did not-... disappoint you, Your-... Majesty."

Dracula smiled gently before turning his head at the deep wounds on his body. They still had lingering golden flames on them and were slowly spreading everywhere. He could even see the burned parts slowly turning into ashes that were scattering in the air.

Fully satisfied with the outcome, Dracula smiled even brighter before turning to Shin once again. "I want to say a few more words, but it seems like I no longer have enough time for it."

Pausing for a moment, he looked deeply at Shin with meaningful eyes before summarizing everything in two words. "Thank you!"

Right after saying his thanks, the golden flame burning his body suddenly become fierce and slowly turned him into black ashes being swept by the wind. Shin did not see his final moments, but he knew that Dracula would leave this world with lesser regrets.

It was only at that time that Shin found the strength to stand straight and turn around. He stared at the spot where Dracula last stood and the scattering ashes before muttering with a quiet voice. "You can leave it to us."

He then raised his head and looked at the sky, trying to calm his mind. 'This was clearly a game, yet we can clearly feel the emotions of each NPC that we encountered.'

It was at that moment when his ears were bombarded by a series of notifications from the system. And almost at the same moment, every player who was currently online in the game also received the world-shocking news simultaneously.

Chapter 1018 The New Age Of Virtual Games (Part 1)

...

Real World

Headquarters of the World Gaming Organization.

The heads of all of the departments of the organization were currently gathered in a spacious auditorium to have an important meeting. And at this moment, they were in the middle of watching an intense battle projected by multiple virtual screens at the front of the auditorium.

The expression on their faces was dark and solemn as they could not take away their eyes off the biggest screen in the middle where a monstrous trio was engaging in a battle against Dracula.

In their minds, Dracula was supposedly one of the end-game bosses that the players could only hope of contending after their reached peak Tier 4 of their respective classes. He was a powerful being that was close to reaching divinity.

But after a series of variables, it became possible for a group of Miracle Players to fight such a powerful being.

The developers from different departments were already cursing these troublesome players and even killing them in their minds multiple times. Unfortunately, these Miracle Players would never stop at breaking the plot that they had written regardless of their feelings.

The department heads gathered within the auditorium were even silently cursing the trio working together to defeat Dracula on the screen. If only they could shout out their current feelings right now, then the room would already be flooding with curses.

But none of those department heads dared to voice out their inner turmoil as the chairman of the organization was currently seeing at the highest end of the auditorium and watching the battle alongside them.

Chairman Choi was currently tapping his index finger on the desk in front of him as he watched the intense battle between a powerful boss and the monstrous trio. He was maintaining an expressionless face on the outside, but he was actually enjoying the show deep inside.

Though, at the same time, he also did not forget his reason for gathering everyone there. They were to make a decision on important matters as soon as possible. They had to do it before the battle was projected in front of them.

Shin, Leonard, and Arthur might be having a hard time in the fight right now. But the chairman was confident that they would be able to emerge victorious when the battle ended.

If it was on a normal occasion, then he would not believe that such a thing was possible. But after a series of twists and turns alongside the influences of other factors, he was confident that this battle would be for the trio to take.

After thinking deeply about it, the chairman closed his eyes before saying in a deep tone. "Release it."

The department heads stared blankly in the air for a moment when they first heard those words. Then they suddenly started reacting violently when they realized what Chairman Choi was trying to say.

"But Sir-...!"

"Chairman! It is too early for that!"

"I don't think this is a good idea, Mr. Chairman!"

...

They tried to voice out their concerns but they quickly shut their mouths when they saw the solemn expression that the chairman had.

Chairman Choi did not say anything for a moment, waiting for the department heads to calm themselves down. And when he saw that they finally recollected themselves, he finally continued. "It is not like we

are not planning to release the information yet to the public. It just happens a little too early than we have expected."

"Moreover, with the battle between the Battle God Sickarius and the Great Devil Diablo, such news will be destined to be released to the public. Sooner or later, those big guilds and other organizations will be able to dissect the information of that fight once the Emyrean Talons release it on their fan page."

"At that time, those guilds and organizations would try to monopolize the information and keep it to their members, leaving the average and independent players behind. This will cause a huge shift in the game, affecting the balance that we are maintaining."

"I don't have to explain what is going to happen when the balance is broken, right? The fate of the game that we work so hard to build will suffer the same fate as those games that fail to keep their players playing it."

The department heads lowered their heads and kept quiet. They knew about it, but they refused to accept the fact because of their pride.

It was at this moment, Troy, the head of the Development Department, finally opened his mouth. "The current situation is not that bad. In fact, we can even use it to our favor."

He was reluctant to attend this meeting earlier since the quest that Shin and the others had already reached its most crucial stages. But after learning that they were actually going to watch the group during the meeting, he hastened his steps and arrived in the auditorium earlier than the others. He even found a place where he could watch everything with a perfect view.

With his words, he quickly gathered the attention of everyone. He paused briefly to clear his throat before continuing. "This news comes at the right time. We are already releasing the Major Regions of different races later alongside the more detailed information about Ascended Beings and Classes."

"The requirements of entering that 'Continent' will also be released to the public â€" reaching level 150 and at least being promoted to Tier 3 of their respective classes. That is the bare minimum. And the players who will be unable to complete those prerequisites will be forced to stay on the original continent."

"With it, the average players, which is still the majority of the game population, will most likely be disappointed. After all, not everyone is as gifted as those monsters. In this case, a clear dividing line will be separating the average players and the more skilled players."

"Based on our calculation, we are expecting that only Rankers, official or maverick, were the only ones that can reach the Awakened Continent where the major regions are located."

Reaching this point, he took another pause and make sure that everyone was paying attention to him before continuing. "At first, the players will idolize and worship those players who entered the second continent, but that will only last for a certain period before all of the hype die down."

"In the long run, the average players will get tired of it and become envious of those Rankers, who are enjoying the benefits of the second continent. People are greedy in nature and they will instinctively want to get something the others have."

"There is still a clear difference between the two continents, particularly those resources and powerful monsters. The progress in the Awakened Continent will be much faster compared to the first continent which will enlarge the gap between the average players and the more skilled ones."

"The players will then start making demands on us at that time. Though, we already have created places for them to develop at a similar pace as the ones who are on the second continent. It just they will not be skilled enough to unlock certain regions because of their lack of skills."

"But if we released the information about the Frozen Kingdom a bit earlier and let the players become aware that the Awakened Continent is not the only place where they can progress fast, a spark of hope will sprout in their hearts which will drive them to work harder."

"And when they reach a certain level, they will be able to take the tests that will let them enter the second continent later. Thus, maintaining the balance that we are protecting."

Hearing his explanation, the department heads started nodding their heads in contemplation. They immediately became convinced and started to calm themselves.

After a few moments of silence, one of the department heads finally talked about the other issue. "Then what about the state of 'Reality Manifestation' and 'Hyper Active Immersion'?"

The department heads nodded their heads once again as this was one of their main problems. Such an important piece of information was hard to release to the public. Even though there were a lot of players who were already aware of the 'Hyper Active Immersion, due to the legends of the 'Irregulars', the newly developed 'Reality Manifestation' was still important and sensitive news.

Troy gave everyone a mocking look before answering. "We obviously should release it. Knowing about it does not mean that anyone can enter those special states. Jealousy and envy still have their own limits, when you realize that it was impossible for you to get something, all you can do is worship someone who owns it."

Pausing for a moment, he turned to one of the department heads, a mature woman wearing circular glasses, and continued. "What's more, I am sure that our Research and Analysis Department will already have to finish their studies about those states and recreated a weaker version of it for average and less skilled players."

At that point, everyone shifted their gazes toward the head of the Research and Analysis Department, waiting for her response.

That woman threw a sharp glare at Troy for a moment as she knew that he was only passing the topic to her to escape the attention of everyone. She then cleared her throat and responded. "That is true. With the current data that we have, our researches are already on its critical conjectures where we can complete them."

Then they took another pause as she turned to Carlos, who was in a corner to avoid everyone's attention, and passed the baton to the poor guy. "Not only that but there are also other states and special methods that are worth mentioning. Just like Magic Freak's magic and Demonic Players' bound contracts. Either of those two was not that lagging behind the 'Reality Manifestation' and 'Hyper Active Immersion' when it comes to potential and special occasions."

The corner of Carlos' mouth suddenly twitched when he heard those words. It was true that there were also other special methods that could possibly contend against the two godlike states that they were researching, but the information that they have about those was not that deep.

He could only curse his luck for having such friends in this life. All of the troublesome jobs were always been being passed to him.

Fortunately, Chairman Choi, who was listening to them the entire time, finally opened his mouth. "It is decided then. Release all of the said information to the public once this quest, the Promise of the Frozen Kingdom, has ended."

Hearing those words, everyone quickly sat back in their seats properly and started typing on their virtual screens and contacting their subordinates, passing down the words of the chairman.

Among them, the people of the Media and Public Affairs would be the busiest since they were the ones responsible for releasing the news on the official site.

They had to handle this right and released it fast before the Monster Trio could finish off Dracula.

And as if it was predetermined, the news was immediately released right after Shin took down Dracula and triggered the system at making world-shaking announcements.

Chapter 1019 The New Age Of Virtual Games (Part 2)

.....

System Regional Announcement: Congratulations to the Emyrean Talons Adventurer Team, Slayers Adventurer Team, and their other companions on completing the 'Empire Quest: The Promise of the Frozen Kingdom'!

They will all receive bountiful rewards for their bravery and might!

...

System Regional Announcement: With the efforts of the young heroes, the Advance Grade Region – Frozen Kingdom is now free from the curses and will be available to everyone once the 'Divine Wall of Sealing Ice' has melted.

Approximate time: 1 month (in-game time)

...

System Regional Announcement: The neighboring kingdoms around the Frozen Kingdom will start making their respective stances about this Sleeping Giant.

Investigative and Exploration Quests will be released from various Adventure Guilds branches of the said kingdoms. Rewards and other benefits can be received based on performance level.

...

These three announcements shook every player who was residing in the said regions as they stared at the notification panels flashing in front of their eyes. It was impossible to ignore such messages when they rang in their ears and notified time not just once or twice, but three times!

Some of the people who were currently in the middle of something could not help but stare blankly at those notifications due to how the system put a lot of importance on it by announcement with a volume much louder than ordinary news.

A lot of the players, who were in the middle of dungeon runs and in critical stages of their quest, were caught in accidents and almost failed due to the sudden notifications that they received. Those most unfortunate ones were even wiped up during the process, making them cry in both blood and tears.

The players wanted to curse whoever triggered such a notification, but when they looked closely at the notification screens and saw the two adventurer teams mentioned on it, they were forced to swallow their worlds despite knowing that those guys could not hear them.

Both of those Adventurer Teams were something that they could not be taken lightly. Most of their members were all celebrities in the virtual world and had a lot of fans everywhere. If they accidentally say something bad about those people and some crazy fans happened to hear them, then the outcome would have been something that they would not want to imagine.

Moreover, those two teams could even make the big guilds wary of them. Even the Powerhouse Guilds could not afford to provoke them.

After a brief moment of shock, the players started paying for the 'Frozen Kingdom' mentioned in the announcement. Given the importance that it had, it would definitely be something special, especially when the 'Empyrean Talons' and 'Slayers' had to team up just to clear the quest for unlocking it.

On the other hand, the players from the Saint Heaven Kingdom received more detailed news about it. Moreover, the series of big events and recent wars that took place in the kingdom was too coincidental.

It did not take long for the players to put two and two together, realizing that everything seemed to be all connected.

This aroused the interest of many people, especially the big guilds that quickly started investigating the matter.

But when the players were starting to recover from the shock, another series of system notifications bombarded them. And this time, the news that they got was much bigger than the ones that they recently received.

System World Announcement: An Advance Region has been successfully unlocked!

Legends about different Advance Regions are now available on the official website! Please look into it for more information.

...

System World Announcements: The Racial Major Regions are officially opened!

Location: (Second Continent) Awakened Continent

Players who are fearless and want to prove themselves, please talk to 'Mysterious Instructions' of their respective cities to see if you are qualified to enter this 'Lands of Legends'.

...

System World Announcements: Ascended Classes and Races have been discovered, please visit the official website for more information.

System World Announcement: The game has already reached its critical milestone, the 'World Metamorphosis' update will now take place.

Players are advised to settle or pause every business (Quest, Dungeon Runs, etc.) that they are doing within the game in the span of a day (in-game time). Servers will be undergoing week-long maintenance (real-world time) in preparation for the large-scale update.

Note: Every progress will be frozen during the time of maintenance.

Please visit the official website for more information.

...

Every player stared blankly at the notification panel in front of their eyes as they could not understand what was happening. Most of them could not understand the notifications sent by the system, especially the ones who just got online and were about to enjoy the game.

It did not take long for them to start opening another panel and search for the official website of the game to see what the developers were up to.

On the other hand, the players residing in the surrounding regions near the Frozen Kingdom, especially in the Saint Heaven Kingdom, were dumbfounded. They just received a regional announcement from the system when they got there. Even an idiot could easily connect the two and understood what was going on.

The Emyrean Talons and Slayers just did something crazy!

They not only unlocked a special region, but they also triggered a huge update that could change the flow of the game.

This was f*cking amazing!

Without further ado, these players quickly stopped what they were doing and immediately opened up the official website of the game to see what kind of update these legendary figures had triggered.

They were very excited to see the content of this new update. But after skimming through it later, they became even more shocked and could only stare blankly at their virtual screens.

"What kind of update is this!?"

While everyone was going crazy for the updated information on the official website, the guys who were responsible for everything were currently resting in the Frozen City, especially Shin, Arthur, and Leonard who already collapsed on the ground and breathing heavily.

It did not take long for the rest of the group to arrive at the scene and became dumbfounded yet also amazed at the current state of the place. Earlier, they were still a lot of frozen houses and other builds in here even though some of them collapsed due to their previous battle. But right now, the entire was almost flattened.

The frozen houses and buildings were reduced to a pile of rubble while the ground was full of deep pits and large craters. They could easily imagine how intense the battle that took place here even if they just stared at the current state of the place.

Earlier, they wanted to quickly head back and help the trio in the battle when they noticed that the Pandemonium Descendants did not appear despite waiting for a long time. For some unknown reason, none of them showed any movements or announced their presence.

After hesitating for a couple of moments, the group strategically retreated to the city while keeping their guards up and surveying the surroundings.

But when they arrived at the center of the city, they discovered that the place was currently sealed by a powerful barrier made of blood. Their attacks and any kind of advances were ineffective against it, so the group could only wait patiently for the battle to be over while also hoping for the best outcome.

Fortunately, the trio did not disappoint them and managed to emerge victorious in the hard-fought battle.

Shin, who was staring into the sky while lying on the ground, ignored the others and quickly opened the notification panel, and skimmed through everything. He just took a quick glance at the rewards before opening another panel to look for the updated information released by the World Gaming Organization.

He was more curious about the changes that the game would be undergoing after learning some of the secrets that he learned during the quest.

The first that attracted his attention was the 'Advance Regions'. And just like what he had thought, regions similar to Frozen Kingdom were starting to pop out of the game after this event.

On the official website, these 'regions' were comparable to the Major Racial Regions. Though, the unique quests and other special training and hunting grounds were only available to the second continent. Even though there were some differences, the benefits that the players would get from either map were pretty much similar to each other.

The only thing that the Major Racial Regions had would be the Advance Training Grounds that it had and the special environments that should be perfect for respective races.

Such news made everyone excited, especially the skilled and independent players that were already reaching the current peak threshold of the game. This included the major powers within the game.

Though, the information about the Advanced Regions was fairly limited. They were no different from being a clue for the Empire Quest that would the players from unlocking them. The required methods on how to unlock those regions or their exact locations were kept hidden by the sly developers.

It was as if those cunning foxes were saying – "There is a treasure somewhere here, but you have to look for it yourselves." –

Forget about looking for it – triggering the quest alone was already hard enough, much less clearing it. Only the naïve players would be tricked by such 'clues.'

It was practically a scam.

Shin could only pray for the poor souls who would be tricked by the hidden schemes of the game developers.

Regardless, there were a couple of regions that made him interested. They were the 'Forbidden Purgatory Desert', the 'Sea of the Endless Boundary', the Maze Forest of Forgetfulness, and the 'Forgotten Land of the Kings'.

Such names were very intriguing. Shin could not help but become a little curious about them after skimming through the background stories of each region. But it did not mean that he would be looking for those places. After the experiences in this Advanced Region, the Frozen Kingdom, he was very much unwilling to go on another adventure – at least for now.

Continuing on, Shin proceeded to the next set of information. The clues about the Major Racial Regions and the Awakened Continent.

Based on what was written on the official website, the Awakened Continent, which should be the second continent, was divided into different regions ruled by different races. They were the regions that were already mentioned previously.

Players had to pass certain series of tests conducted by the 'Mysterious Instructions' scattered in different regions of the first continents. These special NPCs could only be found in cities that were on Capital Rank and above.

But before everything else, the players needed to be on their Tier 3 Class before they could receive their respective evaluations.

The tests would determine the 'Potential' of players. And if they met a certain score, they would receive the qualification to enter the 'Lands of the Legends', the Awakened Continent.

This 'Potential' was a special stat that would be categorized into 'Novice', 'Intermediate', and 'Advanced' as basic levels, while the more advanced ones were called 'Expert', 'Master', and 'Ascended'.

There was not much information about these labels yet, but based on the names that they had, it should be related to the 'strength' and the 'apex' that the players could potentially get in the future.

After the players got their 'evaluations' from the 'Mysterious Instructions', they would be given a choice on whether they would be going to the second continent or staying for the time being and retaking the test once they became more confident at getting a much higher score.

It was mentioned that the players would not be able to take the test once again once they set foot on the second continent.

They could freely come traveled between the two continents back and forth once they got their qualifications, but they would not get another chance at promoting their 'Potential' stats if they chose to become content with their score, so the players were advised to make a thorough decision before making their choice.

Once they were in the Awakened Continent, everyone would have the same starting point. Everyone would have to start in the Divine Empire before proceeding to explore the other major regions and sacred lands.

...

Shin speculated that these 'Potential' stat would be somewhat related to how far they could improve their classes, especially when he saw the 'Ascended' rank at the end. He did not believe that it would just be a coincidence to have the same 'labels.'

He became even more sure about his suspicions when he saw the next information. It was about the Ascended Classes and Races.

Shin did not read through this set of information since he already heard about the earlier from Arthur and the others. Ascended Class was a path to becoming an Ascended Being, a race that was comparable to Transcendent Beings.

What made Shin interested was the information about the common classes. There was a rumor before that the Tier 3 Classes of the common classes could contend against the Transcendent Races, but it was never been confirmed.

But when Shin connected the 'Potential' Stat with those rumors, things became much clearer to him. Players could evolve their class on their own as long as they received a high evaluation from the 'Mysterious Instructions'.

This could mean that the fate of everyone was practically in their hands. If they work hard enough, then their efforts would be rewarded, and become more powerful despite not having a stroke of godly luck like 'certain' people. But if they chose to take an easy route and waste the chance given to them, then they could only blame themselves for not being motivated and wise enough.

Shin liked this approach very much as it would give everyone a fair chance. This would also give those skilled players but unfortunate enough to get a lucky encounter.

This would clearly divide the players into real and hardcore game experts and casual gamers.

Only the qualified and dedicated ones could enter the Awakened Continent and struggle against their fellow game enthusiasts. And that was where the real battles and adventures would start.

After skimming those sets of information, Shin now proceeded to the most important matter at hand, the so-called 'World Metamorphosis' Update. Chapter 1020 The New Age Of Virtual Games (Part 3)

...

Game Update for the upcoming patch – World Metamorphosis.

Shin skimmed through the title of the topic on the official website before continuing on reading the patch notes.

...

Battle Updates:

1. Wound State Status had been improved.

- During the battle, players would constantly suffer and deal with injuries. Focusing on this matter, the players would now receive wound status according to their current health.

For every 20% decrease in the player's health bar, a corresponding injured status would appear.

80% - Slightly Injured: Movement and action speed will slow down by 5%.

60% - Moderately Injured: Movement and action speed will slow down by 5% while self-regeneration will decrease by 5%.

40% - Heavy Injured: Movement and action speed will decrease by 10% and self-regeneration by 10%.

Affected with internal injuries – Attack Power decreased by 20% and suffer from bleeding damage.

20% - Gravely Injured: Movement and action speed will decrease by 15% and self-regeneration by 20%.

Affected with weakened status – Attack Power decreased by 50%, suffer from bleeding damage, and received cripple status.

5% and below - Fatally Injured:

Affected by paralyzed status – unable to move for a period of time.

Affected by extreme bleeding status - suffers fix damage over time until the injuries were healed.

Note 1: These conditions could be cleansed or totally/partially negated by certain skills and abilities.

Note 2: These conditions could be worsened by certain skills and abilities.

2. Fatal Attack: Players could instantly kill their enemies by dealing with a sure-kill attack like beheading, head blasting, body severing, heart destruction, etc...

Note: Such attacks could be negated depending on the overall defensive and special constitution.

3. Death Additional Penalty: Dying would now have a much more serious penalty. Dying once would automatically log out the player and be banned from entering the game for 1 day/ 24 hours (Real World time)

Upon reviving on the next day, players would suffer a weakened state for 24 hours (in-game time).

Weakened state: -50% on all of the stats and -50% on all experience points when hunting monsters and doing dungeons.

Note 1: This penalty would only be applied when dying in the wild. Dying inside an instance dungeon would be the same as before.

Note 2: This could be worsened by certain skills and spells that have specific curses when killing someone.

Note 3: This could be nullified by reviving skills and similar spells.

...

Shin could not help but raise his brows when he saw that set of information. The Fatal Attack effect was no longer surprising since most of the players already knew and could execute it. It was already a thing way before because of the overwhelming damage of the powerful players.

The developers just emphasized it now as a form of formality.

What really piqued his interest was the enhanced negative effects of the wounded state. With such effects, the battles in the future would be even more interesting.

The details on it might be a little simple, but the hidden meaning behind it gave all of the classes some indirect buffs such as Berserkers, who could become stronger the more they fought and the lower their health bar, Assassins, and other thief-related classes, who could deal constant status effects such as bleeding and poison damages.

Some of the classes would also benefit from these new features, but those two classes were the greatest beneficiaries of the wounded statuses. The longer the battle, the stronger they could become.

These negative statuses also increased the importance of priests and other support classes in battle. They were already an essential piece in every battle, but with the wounded state statuses, it became impossible for any team to venture out into the wild or in dungeons.

Some of the people, who were too confident in themselves, would dare to grind in the wild and run dungeons without a healer – as long as they were careful enough and brought a lot of potions, then everything would be fine.

This was especially true for the grinding teams that were speedrunning dungeons with speed and maximizing damage. For them, bringing a healer during those dungeon speed runs would only slow them down. It might be risky but it could also be rewarding since they could clear dungeons in a much faster way.

But with the appearance of this new feature of the game, doing such risky runs would no longer be possible unless they were so godly that they could avoid their health bar from falling into a dangerous level.

In the meantime, the marksmen and mages would benefit a lot from the second feature. The former could eliminate their targets with a single shot as long as they were accurate enough at hitting the vitals while the latter could instantly blast their opponents with their powerful spells like usual but with a much high probability.

Overall, these two new features in the battle would force the players to be more careful during PvP and PvE. Their battle styles could also be affected, especially tanks since they now have to consider getting one-shotted despite their high defense if they were not careful enough.

Shin thought that this was even more fun since the battle became more realistic yet again.

Continuing on, he also noticed that fighting monsters and NPCs were also somewhat affected by these two new features, particularly the humanoid since both cases could apply to them in normal circumstances. As for monsters, it was also somewhat the same with the only difference was them having slightly different vital parts and weaknesses.

As for the third note, the death penalty, it would make the players play more safely when they were hunting in the wild. Such penalties would hurt their progress seriously and could even cost them being left behind by everyone, especially when dying more than a single time.

This particular further enhanced the importance of priests and support once again, especially the ones who had Revive and similar skills. It was already an important piece before, but the game developers were now basically saying – "You better bring someone with revive skill when hunting in the wild, or else, you will regret the consequence." –

Shin could not help but smile bitterly. He could clearly see what the game developers were trying to do. They were indirectly telling everyone that teamwork was important in this game. That was unless you were confident in their abilities on surviving in the wild alone.

After reading more and making sure that he did not miss anything, Shin continued to read through the rest of the patch notes.

...

Life Style changes:

1. Monsters would no longer drop any kind of items after dying.

- Players were now required to gather the corpses of the monsters and harvest the important parts, turning them into materials.

Note 1: This had to be done before the monster corpse 'decayed' (or turned into specks of lights).

Note 2: Corpses could also be preserved by using certain means.

- Certain monsters, such as humanoid creatures that wielded weapons, could 'drop' their items. As long as those weapons and items were not badly damaged, players could take them.

2. During dungeon runs, a chest would now appear at the end as a form of final reward. These chests could contain Blueprints, materials, skill books, weapons, and various items.

3. System Generated Set Items could only be gotten from the dungeon chests and equipment blueprints. It could also be dropped by some powerful humanoid monsters or NPCs.

...

Looking at these notes, Shin became even more sure that the developers were slowly turning the game into a second world. The realistic features that they were adding were becoming more and more similar to the real world.

With these new lifestyle changes, the non-combat professions would be getting more attention. At the same time, the players also needed to train their gathering skills as it now became a new core in hunting.

These changes were already been brought out before during the previous patch. But not a lot of players were focusing on it since they could still get the drops from the monsters even if they did not harvest the corpses.

Unfortunately, everyone was now forced to gather the monster corpses if they want to get the rare materials unique to those monsters.

Shin could not help but laugh after thinking about it. The game developers were actually getting ruthless. It seemed like they were trying to get on the players or something. Fortunately, his gathering skills were at a decent level of mastery.

Little did he know, he was one of the reasons why the developers were turning into heartless 'monsters.'

After recovering himself, he quickly continued.

...

Mystical Battle State:

- Players were encouraged to explore their potential more. There were secret mechanics within the game that could make everyone even more powerful.

1. Hyper Active Immersion: a state where a player could use their imagination to the limits and turn their in-game avatars into their 'ideal' self, especially in battle. In this state, anyone could turn their skills into a form of Martial Arts or Mentalism Techniques.

Historical Note: This mystical state was first introduced to the virtual world by the legendary group, the 'Irregulars'.

2. Reality Manifestation: a state where a player could summon their true 'self' from the real world to the virtual world. In this state, players, who were Martial Artists or Mentalists in the real world, could use their martial prowess in the game and use their character skills as the base of their real abilities.

Historical Note: After years of research, great scholars and researchers managed to get a glimpse of the truth behind Hyper Active Immersion.

In an attempt to control such a mystical state, the researchers discovered this special state as a new form of the battle state within the virtual world.

- These were only a few of the mysteries of the Virtual World.

- Adventurers of the fantasy world, your fate is in your hands and you are in control of your destiny. Embark into a new journey, surpass your limits, and discover a whole new world with us!

...

Even though Shin was somewhat expecting this information, he was still shocked that the game developers would directly disclose it this early in the game.

Even if they did not directly say the way how to enter those two mystical states, this set of information was still enough for those players who were talented enough to trigger it. And when he thought more deeply about it, this would instantly increase the gap between the average players and the real experts of the game.

There would be a clear dividing line between the players who were not able to enter such a state and the ones who could use it during the battle.

Moreover, it was also mentioned that there were also other states that were yet to discover. Shin was not sure why the game developers would disclose these two states but not the others. This piqued his interest even more.

And while thinking about that, he was suddenly reminded of his fight against Diablo previously. From what he remembered, that guy was in a state that was similar to his 'Reality Manifestation' but also different. Now that he thought about it, he discovered that it was most likely the so-called 'Hyper Active Immersion'.

This was his first virtual game, so he was not aware of it. But based on the 'historical note' of this mystical state, it seemed like it was already common knowledge among the players. And according to the information, it was first used by that legendary group, the 'Irregulars'. This made him more interested in this famous yet mysterious group of players.

After contemplating for a moment, Shin suspected that the reason why these two mystical states were revealed was because of his battle against Diablo. He might be wrong and it might not be the exact reason, but his instincts were telling him that they were somehow connected.

Shin fell silent for a moment as he digested the information in the patch note before coming to a conclusion. From this point on, the virtual world would enter a new stage.

This was going to be a new age of Virtual Games!