

Destiny 1171

Chapter 1171 Overlord Stoneback Gorilla (Part 2)

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Shin quickly used the Elemental Spirit Possession with Hanzo as he also made his move. He charged forward and ran behind Astaroth and Whitie, who were currently taking the vanguard.

The two were exchanging blows against the Stoneback Gorilla, trying to hold the monster in place while Solus cast her spell from the distance.

The gorilla was naturally quite intelligent as it was able to see through the intention of the two. It repeatedly tried to break through the blockade of the two but was constantly met with strong resistance.

Astaroth, being a Hybrid Elemental Spirit between earth and mental element, possessed a sturdy body that was hosting a powerful strength and a strong defensive capability. And using this as the foundation, he was able to contend against the Overlord Rank Monster in front of him despite having a lot of disadvantages from different areas.

And by having a much stronger control over the earth, he was able to nullify most of the elemental attacks of the Stoneback Gorilla as well as weaken its defenses to a certain degree.

On the other hand, Whitie was providing solid support with his well-timed assaults and ambushes.

With his speed, he was able to dodge most of the attacks of the gorilla that was throwing at him. He was also able to escape from the large-scale attacks that the monster was throwing from time to time.

His Light Element was also helped in a lot of ways during the battle. He was blinding the gorilla to disrupt its attacks or using the firepower and slight burning effects that it provided him to increase the intensity of his attacks.

He could also heal with its innate sacred properties, which lessen the risk of injuries that they were getting in battle.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

In the distance, Solus was throwing fire spells one after another. The power of each of her spells was strong enough to damage the Stoneback Gorilla despite the strong defense that its body had.

Each fireball and blazing spear that she was throwing were dealing at least hundreds of thousands of damages, clearly signifying how strong they were.

Shin joined the battle at the frontline. With his speed and the extra mobility that his movement skills were providing him, he was not having any problem keeping up with the rest.

And since he was currently in the state of Reality Manifestation, he was also dealing quite a huge damage to the Overlord Rank Monster. Though, it was also on the same scale as Solus at most.

The defenses of the Stoneback Gorilla were really high, especially its back which was covered with thick stone armor.

This continued for a few moments as Shin and his gang had control over the overall rhythm of the battle.

But it did not last that long as the change of the tides arrived a little too sudden.

Roar!

The Stoneback Gorilla released a world-shaking roar that forced Shin and the others to pause their movements for a brief moment. And before they could even respond to what happened, the gorilla suddenly slammed its arms on the ground like a pair of hammers.

Its action made the ground crumble, sending a strong shockwave that moved outwards. It pushed everything away from the epicenter and dragged the fragmented ground of different sizes alongside it.

Shin, who was able to use a teleportation skill at the last second, still found himself in the middle of the storm-like shockwaves. He did not hesitate to envelop himself with the Power of Eclipse and summoned a dome-shaped barrier around him.

'Slayer Skill: Eclipse Pulse'

Bang!

It has been a while since he had used this skill, but it still came out as naturally as possible.

The black and white barrier shook violently as it was repeatedly bombarded by the storming shockwave and rock fragments of different sizes. Some of the stalactites at the ceiling of the cave were also got affected and started falling toward the ground.

Crack! Crack!

Multiple cracks appeared on the surface of the barrier, signifying that it was already reaching its limits. But Shin quickly responded and swung his sword in a horizontal manner, detonating the barrier before it could fully collapse.

'Slayer Skill: Eclipse Counter'

Swoosh!

Bang!

The explosion produced a strong outward force that fought against the storming shockwave around, which crushed the rampaging rock fragments and falling stalactites with pointed tips.

Shin then proceeded to move with great mobility to avoid the rest, preventing himself from suffering from any damage.

When everything calmed down and the dust settled, he quickly turned his head around and checked the surroundings.

The devastation was pretty huge. That attack even reached the place where Solus was.

Fortunately, the three Elemental Spirits were still fine.

Astaroth summoned a dome that was made of earth and metal that protected him.

Whitie was emitting a golden aura in the distance, which signified that he used his light element to get away from the range of the earlier attack.

Solus, on the other hand, was covered by a raging flame that melted anything that was trying to approach her.

After checking their states, Shin finally turned his head toward the direction where the Stoneback Gorilla was. And once he did, the corner of his eyes and mouth could not help but twitch due to what he saw.

There, standing at the previous epicenter of the attack earlier, the Stoneback Gorilla was currently looking straight into Shin's eyes with a cold look.

The body of the gorilla was currently emitting a visible flow of brown energy that was continuously moving upwards in a slow yet steady manner.

And when Shin got a closer look at it with his 'True Sight' ocular skill, he could visibly see a thin layer of energy enveloping the entire body of the monster.

Shin suddenly got a bad feeling about it as he could guess what that layer of energy was for.

And sure enough, his suspicion quickly turned into truth in the next instant. "My Lord, this monster absorbed a huge amount of Earth Element from the entire cave and further strengthen its body. It even created an extra layer of protection with it."

At the same time, Solus suddenly added. "It can also produce an earth elemental attack on each strike that it will have. You have to be careful, my liege."

Shin curled his lips a little as he knew that the situation was somewhat getting out of hand.

Unfortunately for him, the Stoneback Gorilla would not wait for him to come up with any precautionary plans. It quickly slammed one of its around on the ground, directing a strong shockwave toward Astaroth, who was already preparing to charge again.

At the same time, the monster sank its other hand deep into the ground before grabbing the still intact part of it and flipping it as it pulled upwards. And following that, the ground seemed to be flipped while moving toward Whitie, who was about to charge forward too.

Those two attacks kept the two occupied. Astaroth had to deal with the incoming shockwave that was targeting him while Whitie had to navigate his way forward through that flipping ground filled with broken boulders.

With that, the Stoneback Gorilla was now free to jump toward Solus in the distance. It leaped in the air without any hesitation and raised both of its arms above its head. And as it descended, those huge arms were swung down like a pair of huge metal hammers.

Solus did not even wait as she quickly turned herself into fiery embers that flew backward at a speed slightly slower than Whitie.

Swoosh!

Boom!

Right at that instant, the Stoneback Gorilla landed on her previous spot like a meteor while slamming its arms on the ground.

The collision created a strong current in the air alongside an explosive impact that threw rock fragments in every direction and created a deep crater on the ground.

Shin could also see the yellowish-brown energy that was transferred into the ground, shining through the gaps of the broken ground.

It was clearly the energy that was infused on the previous attack of the monster gorilla, which was the thing that Solus had warned him earlier.

"If each of its attacks is this strong, then our situation is not going to be that good," he mumbled before instructing the three to use their respective transformation right away.

"Don't hold back. Show it your real powers!" he shouted.

Hearing his words, the three did not even hesitate and quickly underwent their respective transformation.

'Elemental Spirit Transformation (Earth/Metal): Earth Warden'

Shin first saw Astaroth gather the earth elemental mana from the surrounding just like what the Stoneback Gorilla had done earlier. And when the accumulation of powers reached its peak, he saw the elemental spirit shine with golden light from head to toe, seemingly transforming his whole body into elemental energy.

A moment later, when the lightly finally subdued, Shin saw Astaroth turned into a knight that was clad with medieval earthen armor that had an exquisite design. Even the helmet that the elemental spirit was wearing looked majestic and magnificent.

The helmet was almost covering his head, leaving only gaps for his huge horns and glowing eyes, and a small hole on its back for his long white hair that was tied into a ponytail.

That was not the end as the metal elemental mana was next to be pulled in and fused with the earthen armor. The grey color that it had filled the exquisite design engraved on the armor and helmet, giving it a dignified vibe.

On the other hand, the simple-looking mental greatsword that Astaroth was using earlier also gained a sublime design due to the earth elemental that fused with it, which also highlighted a striking pattern on its surface. Even the edges of the sword adopted the earthen color.

Shin disregarded all the notifiable boosts in strength that Astaroth had after the transformation. The only thing that entered his mind when he saw the Elemental Spirit was the coolness of the current appearance that he was seeing.

Out of all his Elemental Spirit Companions, Astaroth's transformation seemed to be the coolest.

'D*mn! I think that I am being influenced by Arthur,' he cursed when he realized that he slightly became distracted in the middle of the fight.

'Elemental Spirit Transformation (Light): Divine Ruler'

On the other side, a glowing third eye appeared at the center of Whitie's forehead, boosting his overall strength and battle prowess. It was clear that he was currently the weakest out of all the Reaper's Retainers since he was yet to enter his real evolution phase.

But that did not mean that he could be underestimated, especially since his element was quite special.

Meanwhile, Solus was enveloped by the gorgeous flame with orange and yellow alternating colors when she once again used her real form after a long time.

That armor also turned into a luxurious-looking set of armor that covered her body. But despite the armor covering her entire being, it still failed to hide her perfect figure. It seemed to be even highlighted instead.

Her beautiful face remain bare while her blazing hair continued to dance along with the wind as there was no helmet appeared to cover her head.

Nevertheless, the divine aura that she was releasing intensified alongside the sudden increase in her power.

'Elemental Spirit Transformation (Fire): Firestorm Goddess'

Sensing the change in atmosphere and seeing the sudden transformation of the three Elemental Spirits, the Stoneback Gorilla understood that it was going to be difficult to defeat all of them by itself.

But since it could not do much in its current situation, all it could do was target the weakest person in this place.

Having that thought, the monster suddenly turned to Shin and glared at him with its fierce eyes.

Noticing those actions, Shin fully understood that he was now being targeted. But instead of backing down, he felt rather excited.

"You want to take me down first, big guy? Try me and I will make sure that it will cost you a lot!" he said as he licked his lips and assumed a battle stance.

Chapter 1172 Overlord Stoneback Gorilla (Part 3)

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The Stoneback Gorilla ignored the rest and started charging at Shin with at full speed. Contrary to its huge and heavy body, it was moving with a speed that would not lose to either Whitie or Solus.

It took only a few seconds to reach Shin, who was already getting ready for the exchange.

Shin squatted his hips and held the sheathed sword with his left hand while putting the other on its hilt. The space elemental mana in the surroundings was gathered around him as he guided them toward the sheathed [Yamato].

He waited for the final moment before he moved his feet. He executed one of his movement techniques and disappeared from his spot, dodging the descending fist of the gorilla, before appearing in multiple places while also creating illusionary figures of himself at the same time.

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

'Epic Movement Technique: Ghost Evanescent'

A moment later, those illusionary figures moved as one before launching themselves toward the gorilla all at the same time while simultaneously unsheathing their swords and swinging them forward.

Swoosh!

Click!

'Jade Kirin Scripture: Quick Draw – World Splitter'

Shing!

Multiple lines that were intersecting with one another filled the air as they moved toward the huge body of the target monster at the center.

Cling! Cling! Cling! Cling!

Unfortunately, despite how powerful each strike was, they were still unable to break through the defense of the gorilla. Aside from affecting the glowing aura that was covering its body, which slightly dimmed after receiving the attacks, nothing else had happened.

"Tsk!" Shin clicked his tongue before quickly moving his feet in retreat.

Bang!

The spot where he previously stood suddenly exploded as the Stoneback Gorilla leaped on it and smashed its fists down once again.

It was about to give chase when Astaroth finally arrived and blocked its path in a timely fashion. He then swung his greatsword at the gorilla, which forced it to halt its steps and blocked the incoming strike.

Bang!

The Stoneback Gorilla was still able to block the sudden attack by placing its arm in front of its face, blocking the greatsword with the thick furs and the glowing aura that was layered above it.

The clash of the two sides caused an eruption of powers that spread in every direction. Surprisingly, or unsurprisingly, the monster still did not suffer any damage despite how serious the collision was.

Seeing that, Shin could not help but frown deeply as he found the current situation a little troublesome. "Is this guy invulnerable in his current state?"

Then he saw Whitie suddenly jump from behind the gorilla and swung his glowing fist forward. He sent a strong beam of light with that punch that flew straight to the head of the monster.

Bang!

The explosion that it caused was also quite strong, but the result was the same. The gorilla remained undamaged and unscratched.

Even the pillar of flame that Solus had sent in the next instant did not cause any damage to the monster. Aside from leaving some burned marks on its furs, the gorilla remained unaffected.

The group continued to gang up at the Stoneback Gorilla, but they still could not leave even a scratch on its body.

This was putting a lot of pressure on Shin as he was running out of ideas on how to escape this situation. And since it was already like this, he would choose to retreat if he really did not come up with any solution to this.

Taking down this monster would be the best as he was now sure that this gorilla would have a Beast Core. But he had already spent quite a lot of time here already and wasting more time would only hinder his progress.

He still had to gather the Meteorites that he needed for upgrading his sword before proceeding to take his Tier 3 Promotion Quest after. His schedule was quite tight right now and had a limited amount of time to play the game due to his studies, so he had to make use of his time right.

He was about to give up when his eyes caught the current appearance of the Health Bar of the Stoneback Gorilla floating above its head.

Earlier, when he first saw the monster gorilla enter its transformation, he also saw that its HP Bar glowed brightly. He first thought that it was because of the special effects that were added into the game since most of the monsters that he encountered earlier outside the cave also had glowing Health Bars whenever they entered their berserk states, albeit in crimson color.

That was the reason why he thought that it was just a new effect that the monsters had whenever they entered a special state.

But now that he got a closer look at it, he noticed that the glow that it had seemed to be much dimmer than the first time he saw it. And when he paid attention to it, he discovered that the more attack that it endured from them, the dimmer the glow became.

"Does this signify that it is losing its powers the more attack it endured," he muttered as he paused for a moment and watched the gorilla try to withstand the continuous assault that the three elemental spirits were throwing at it.

"So, it is not an invulnerable state, but an overpowered barrier that lasted for a certain period. Or something that can only endure a certain extent of attacks," he continued as he curled his lips. "The more damage it endures, the weaker that barrier becomes."

"Given how dim it is now, it can only mean that it can only withstand a few more attacks before dissipating completely," he added before giving more instructions to confirm his hypothesis.

"Threw a few of your strongest attacks. I want to test something," right after he said those words, the three elemental spirits quickly exploded with a series of attacks that assaulted the gorilla from every direction.

Shin did not join this time as he wanted to see if he was right. And soon enough, the answer presented itself in front of him.

"So, that is the case, huh," he nodded before complaining a little. "But d*mn! How can the developers create something as unreasonable as this? Isn't a monster like this a little too overpowered? I bet even a strong expedition team will not be able to defeat this guy unless they are all in Tier 3 of their respective classes."

Shin now realized that he was a crazy player who would pick a fight against such a monster. He realized that he belonged to the group of players who have such guts.

Smiling bitterly, he quickly moved and joined the assault and attack the Stoneback Gorilla with a series of skills. He executed a skill one after another under the state of Reality Manifestation, dealing unbelievable damage to the barrier that was protecting the monster.

It did not take long before the aura protecting the Stoneback Gorilla finally collapsed. And with that, the monster had no choice but to receive the combined forces of everyone, making it suffer large damages that chunked out a huge part of its Health Bar.

After suffering their continuous assault, the Stoneback Gorilla put up its final struggle and exploded with another unbelievable boost in strength. It entered a berserk state that give Shin a headache.

Fortunately, it no longer had another phase where it could summon that unreasonable aura barrier that coated its body.

If it really did, then Shin would rather retreat for the time being rather than expending more time fighting such an overpowered monster that entered both berserk and invulnerable states.

In those states, where it had powerful attacks, extreme speed, and a strong body on top of its impenetrable defense, then their group would most likely end up being annihilated.

Shin was thankful that the game developers were sane enough not to design the Stoneback Gorilla that way. Or else, Shin might as well hunt them down and fight them instead in real life.

Roar!

The Stoneback Gorilla released another roar, albeit a painful one, before it collapsed on the ground lifelessly.

Shin did not let his guard down despite seeing that, but he too almost collapsed when all the adrenaline disappeared and the accumulated fatigue kicked in.

But before everything else, he chose to receive their rightful rewards first and walked toward the huge corpse of the monster.

He looked at it for a few moments before exhaling deeply and ordering the others to look out for possible enemies. Then he started working on the corpse and gathered all the materials that he could get from it.

Naturally, the most valuable material that he could think of was the thick furs on its arms and the stone armor on its back. At the same time, its bones were also good materials that could be used for weapons while the rest of the skin were perfect for a set of armor.

As for the meat from its body, he also kept them as he read from the forums that these were good ingredients for cooking alongside the innards and other organs that it had. They could also use for making medicines and concocting potions, so he was sure that they were all valuable.

While he was gathering everything, he finally saw the Beast Core that he was looking for. It was a spherical object that was as large as Shin's entire upper body.

It had a bright yellow color and a golden-brown aura surrounding it. It also carried a hint of suppression that could affect its surroundings.

A single look at it was more than enough for Shin to realize that it was a huge ball of energy. It was completely different from the other cores that they had collected. Its size alone was enough proof for that.

Shin looked at Astaroth and noticed that the elemental spirit was showing some reaction to the Beast Core. He could clearly see that Astaroth wanted to absorb it as soon as possible. But since Shin had not given him any orders, he did not dare to make a move.

Shin smiled before sighing. He still hadn't let Astaroth absorb any Elemental Core or Beast Core yet because he was afraid that the guy would immediately enter hibernation just like what happened to Vladimir.

After all, it would be a little troublesome if his sole support in this place would disappear just like that.

He wanted to collect the necessary number of cores first before letting Astaroth absorb them all at once.

He thought for a moment before keeping the huge Beast Core. "As I said, I will let you absorb all of them later, so I ask you to be patient and wait until it is time."

Astaroth quickly bowed and answered. "I understand, my lord!"

After that, he nodded his head and looked around, and made sure that he did not miss anything. He had already gathered everything here, so it was time to finally head to the innermost part of the cave to get the Meteorites.

This time, he was not planning to fight any Overlord Rank Monster along the way. He would not be too greedy since he only had a limited time playing. He had to wait until tomorrow (real-world time) before he could continue hunting.

He needed to finish his business first before thinking about everything else. Though, he must admit that he was quite excited about this. He had a good feeling about what was going to happen tomorrow.

"After gathering the meteorites, I should go make a few rounds in the cave channels and see if I can find another Overlord Rank Monster tomorrow. I feel that I will find something that will be beneficial to Astaroth."

"After that, I can go outside and hunt a few members of Black Market and deal serious damage to their forces before leaving this place."

He nodded repeatedly after listing out the tasks that he had to finish.

Little did he know, he was already making the game developers crazy in the real world. It was just the first day since the game had been re-launched, yet here he was, giving them a new set of problems one after another.

Chapter 1173 Arrival

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Real World

Headquarters of the World Gaming Organization

Every staff member of the Monitoring Department was currently slumping in their respective seats as they watched a live feed of a certain scene within the game.

The massive screen in front of them projected the battle that Shin had just earlier. And when they saw him succeed, their faces turned pale as if they were turning into a corpse.

"Let's stop this joke already. Let's just resign altogether. Why do I even come back here?"

"I think those two days that are given to everyone as day-off are not enough."

"This is torture. I am telling you; this job is torture. What kind of grave sin have I committed in my past life to deserve this punishment?"

"This does not make sense. How can someone explore such a high-level map instead of exploring the new contents that are just added in the game?"

"Can he follow the script at least once? He is supposed to try looking at the new quests that are released to everyone. Don't tell me he is not interested in the new continent?"

"Forget about that, he is supposed to be taking his Tier 3 Promotion Quest already, so why is he there hunting those monsters and collecting the Elemental and Beast Cores instead? This content is not supposed to be explored yet!"

"He even triggered another Elemental Spirit Evolution Quest. Moreover, this one skips the initial phase! It will directly promote his Elemental Spirit into a real Supreme, unlike the previous one!"

"He already has two Godly Spirits for f*ck's sake! Yet he wants another one?! Can he give us a rest already? Those people from the Quest Generation Team will surely blame us for this again!"

"Oh, great god, it is just the first day. How many problems he has given us already?"

Not long after, a man in his early thirties suddenly entered the monitoring room and saw the current state of the staff members. He then turned to the enormous virtual screen projected in front of everyone and quickly understood what was happening.

He walked toward the person standing at the center of the room before asking. "How is the situation?"

That person was the personal assistant of Carlos. And when he turned to his side and saw the man, who walked up to him, he immediately faced the latter and bowed. "Vice Head!"

Lohengrin, the current vice head of the Monitoring Department, just came back to this team after being instructed to help them. He was supposedly in the Research and Development Department already, but due to Carlo's insistence and repeated complaints to the chairman, he was transferred back to his old team.

He did not oppose the idea since he also had a strong attachment to this department. After all, this was where he started. Carlos was also his direct senior during that time, so he was pretty close to the old man.

Moreover, he also enjoyed monitoring the brightest players of the game, so he was quite supportive of the idea of him returning to his old team.

From what he had heard, Carlos was having a hard time keeping an eye on everything by himself, especially when there were a lot of things that he had to monitor. The overall game progression was already hard to deal with, what was more keeping an eye on the Miracle Players, who were capable of breaking the logic of the game, at the same time.

Lohengrin had already been briefed by Carlos on who were the most problematic kids in the game, so he pretty much had a rough idea of what was going on when he saw Shin being projected on the huge screen.

He then nodded his head at the greeting by the assistant before saying. "Just brief me on what is going on."

The assistant quickly nodded his head and started narrating everything. And when he was done, Lohengrin could not help but shake his head and laugh bitterly at everything.

He now understood what Carlos was feeling, especially the suffering of monitoring such a crazy player.

He turned to the assistant and said. "Have you reported it to the Department Head?"

The assistant shook his head. "Not yet, Sir. The Department Head is currently in a meeting with Sir Troy of the Development Department and Miss Jean of the Design Department."

Lohengrin nodded his head before turning to everyone. "Alright, let's do this. Team One, you guys inform the Quest Generating Team that a special quest has been triggered. If they ask you what kind of quest it is, tell them that they have to enter Code Blue as soon as possible as the quest is about to be completed."

"If we are lucky, then they will be able to take care of the issue that may arise later. And if we are luckier, and our friend here suddenly decided to log out temporarily, then we will escape the crisis of being subjected to the blame once again."

"Team Two, report to the Design Department that another godly spirit is about to be born. Give them a vague answer and say that a Miracle Player has triggered a quest for it. Once they learn about it, they will surely pass the message to Quest Generation Team for clarification. The rest will be their problem and not us."

"Team Three, tell the Development Department that they have to make haste at finishing their plans about the Elemental and Beast Cores. If they ask why, just say that a couple of Powerhouse

Organizations are already researching them. If they delay the release of the news to the public, then the power balance will be broken. At that time, it will no longer be our problem but theirs and the Marketing Department."

"Team Four, give me a detailed report about the guilds that are not exploring the new contents of the game. Especially the ones that chose to explore the Neutral Regions beyond the borders of the Kingdoms or Empires under the NPC's control."

"I will handle the rest and report it to the Department Head," he added before clapping his head while yelling at everyone. "What are you waiting for? Move! Hurry! We have to make it quick so that we are not going to suffer anymore!"

"Yes, Sir!"

Within a few instructions, Lohengrin 'resolved' the crisis that the department was facing. Though, in actual truth, he just divided the problems and scattered them to different departments. It was no different from passing their issues to the others.

But you put more thought into it, it was not a shameless thing either. After all, the 'Monitoring' Department was only meant to 'monitor' the progress of the game, keep an eye on the problem children, and make sure that there was no foul play going on.

As for solving the problems that they had discovered while doing that? Those were not their problems at all. They were meant to be solved by the respective departments concerned with those issues.

Lohengrin looked at the huge screen projected in front before turning his head to the side and watching the other Mircale Players do their own thing. There were quite a number of them, which was why it was hard to keep an on each of them.

He knew that this was going to be a hard 'battle' for him. But for some reason, he felt a little excited instead.

"It looks like my stay here is going to be fun. I will not get bored in the slightest," he muttered before walking toward his office while laughing to himself.

Souring Continent, Eastern Sea Region.

In the meantime, at the port of the Corner Stone City, a huge travel ship arrived and docked itself on it.

A flow of people quickly disembarked from it right after it had parked itself properly at the docking platform. These passengers were composed of tourists that wanted to visit the Souring Continent, returning citizens that came back from their own travels, foreigners that were migrating, and people who are looking for a new start in life.

Among these passengers, there was a young man, who seemed to be in his late teenage years.

He had purple hair, which was neither long nor too short. Coupled with his pair of sharp eyes that seemed to reflect that he did not trust anyone in the world, he seemed to make himself much more mature than his real age.

Wearing a pair of jeans and a brown leather jacket, he really looked like some other older dudes in the street. If not for his young face which clearly indicated that he was very young, some people might think that he was a mister rather than a young man.

Though, he looked somewhat sickly for some reason. He was a little thin, clearly indicating that he was somewhat malnourished. Even his face indicated it clearly as his cheeks seemed to have lost their fat.

He looked at the surroundings and turned around to observe the busy port. He then nodded his head and mumbled. "So, this is the Souring Continent, huh? It sure is different from the Sun-Moon Continent."

In the place that he came from, there were a lot of advanced gadgets and mechanical machines that were overseeing this kind of place. Even the cameras that were monitoring everyone could be seen flying in the air rather than being stacked on a single corner.

From his perspective, this place seemed to be a primitive one compared to his home.

After getting a good look at the place, he nodded his head before fastening the straps of his travel bag with both of his hands. He then walked toward the direction where the public vehicles were located.

"Are you new here, young man?" asked a middle-aged man, who was waiting inside the car that he was driving.

"Yes, Sir. I am here for my-... studies," said the young man.

"I see," nodded the middle-aged man as he opened the back door of the car. "You should be careful here. There are a lot of people, who like to take advantage of the first-timers here, especially young ones like you."

"I understand, Sir. I will keep that in mind," answered the young man politely.

The middle-aged man nodded his head once again before asking curiously. "How are you able to find that it is me who are you looking for, by the way?"

The young man chuckled a little before answering. "It is because Sir is keeping an eye on me right after I disembarked from the ship. Adding the logo of the World Research Center pasted on the corner of your windshield, I pretty much confirm that you are here to fetch me, Sir."

The middle-aged man chuckled a little when he heard that reasoning. "You are quite sharp, young man. It looks like the professor is not taking an ordinary guy as always. What is your name?"

The young man put his travel bag beside him before smiling. "Wade. Wade Paige."

Chapter 1174 Lesson From Professor Henry

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Shin logged out of the game when it was finally time for him to wake up. And as usual, he did his daily training routine before putting on his uniform and waiting for the others in the lounging area.

He did not wait for long as the group appeared one after another. Arthur and Leonard walked to him with sleepy eyes before sitting on the sofas beside him.

"How is your progress?" asked Shin to the two right after seeing them.

"Hah! Don't get me started. I really want to beat those NPCs up for being too stingy. They did not even give me decent equipment as a reward. The things that we passively have gotten from the Empire Quest are much better!" replied Arthur with a completely annoyed tone.

Leonard, on the other hand, shrugged his shoulders and said. "Don't look at me. I just head to the main base of my NPC Organization to report. I also don't get anything that can be helpful to me. My equipment set and weapons are already better than what they can offer."

"The update is cool and all but gathering the materials from the monsters is a little troublesome," commented Arthur as he was reminded of the things that he had to go through just to gather the materials from the corpses of the monsters that he had hunted.

Shin chuckled. "Well, that is to make the game more realistic. Don't you think it is much more interesting this way?"

He paused for a moment as he remembered something and continued. "Ah! There is an interesting that I discovered!"

He leaned forward and continued with a whispering voice. He narrated the things that he had experienced and even added the ideas that he had when he discovered the Elemental and Beast Cores.

"Oh! That is interesting! Do you think that the game will have that kind of feature in the future? Having battle suits is cool too. Even the idea of engineers having futuristic robots is fine too!" commented Arthur after hearing the idea of Shin.

Though, he quickly calmed down and said. "But it will take some time before it really happens. There are a lot of things to consider before the game reaches that stage. And engineers have to engage in full research about it, which is somewhat impossible right now since the current technology within the game is not that advance."

Leonard then quickly chimed in. "What about those guys from the Black Market that you are talking about? Do need us to support you?"

Shin quickly shook his head. "Nah! I will be fine. I have already gathered the things that I needed. I can focus on hunting them if I want. I will make sure to deal a serious blow on them if they really engage in a full assault on the Starry Spears Mountain Forest."

"I also contacted the Hand of Midas Trading Firm. They will be arriving at the same time as those guys from the Black Market, or at least slightly delayed, but they will be there before things get a little awry," he added with a confident tone.

At this point, Cloe finally reached them and hopped beside Shin. "What are you boys talking about, hmm?"

Arthur laughed and said. "Nothing. We are just talking about the game."

Cloe crossed her arms and squinting her eyes while asking. "Are you sure that you are not hiding something from your commander?"

Shin chuckled and stood up before flicking her forehead. "Stop playing tricks. I know what you are trying to do. Just focus on your personal business and we are going to play together again when exploring the new continent."

He then turned toward the glass door in the distance and saw Alice and Lorraine walking through it. "Those two are already here. Let's get going before we get late."

...

Today was Thursday and it was scheduled for them to attend their department activities. They were not able to do it last week because of the hectic schedule of the academy, especially when most of the students from their respective clubs were undergoing special treatments or interrogation processes due to the special operation that took place just recently.

Most students from the elite clubs were also a member of those departments, so the instructors had to deal with the necessary procedures and make sure that everything was fine before going back to their daily schedules.

Upon arrival at the academy, Shin and the group immediately separated as they headed for their respective departments.

Shin already knew where the main building of his department was located since he had already visited it before. He was quite excited this time since he would be learning new things from his seniors this time. He was very much curious about their respective disciplines which were clearly different from the orthodox method that the common people had.

He stood at the rundown building once again and stared at it. He then took a deep breath before stepping forward.

But before he could even enter the building, Benedict suddenly called him from behind. "Eh? Junior Shin?"

Hearing the voice, Shin could not help but pause his steps before turning around. And when saw Benedict, he quickly bowed and greeted the latter. "Senior Benedict! Good Morning!"

Benedict chuckled as he walked toward Shin. "So, what are you doing here? Visiting the department?"

He then thought for a moment before remembering something. "Ah! It must be that time already! It is Thursday so you must be here for the department activities, am I right?"

Shin nodded his head in acknowledgment.

Benedict clicked his tongue and shook his head. "Tsk! Unfortunately, you will not find anyone here right now. Aside from me, the rest are currently doing their respective missions, which are given to them by Professor Henry. They are currently busy, so they can't guide you."

When he saw the disappointed look on Shin's face, Benedict chuckled as he continued. "On the brighter side, Professor Henry is currently free. He just finished organizing the data that they have gotten from those Artificial Mutants, so he is currently relaxing in his personal shelter right now."

"Come, I am heading there now. This is a good chance for you since it is quite rare for him to be this free," he added, inviting Shin to join him.

"He promised to train me personally, though," Shin muttered as he followed Benedict.

His voice might be soft and hard to hear. But given Benedict's Mentalism Attainment, it was easy for him to pick up his words. "Haha! I see, I see. So, the professor wants to train you personally. I can't say that I am jealous since all of us in the Research Department are learning under him."

Shin awkwardly smiled and scratch the back of his head as he realized that the old professor might have scammed him.

...

Not long after, they finally arrived at the area where most of the instructors of the academy were staying. And after walking for a few more minutes, Shin found himself standing in front of a small and humble-looking house.

Unlike the other houses that he had seen on their way here, which had fancy designs and luxurious appearances, this particular house was way too simple. It seemed to be out of place given the sizes and appearances of those previous houses.

"Interesting, right? The professor doesn't want to spend his money on having such luxurious houses. He is a little stingy when it comes to these things, but if you are talking about his research, then he is more than willing to burn all his money just to finish it," said Benedict when he saw Shin's reaction.

Not long after he said those words, an old voice suddenly sounded from the house. "Stop criticizing behind this old man's back. Bring your Junior in already. I have things to discuss with him."

"Tsk!" Benedict clicked his tongue before inviting Shin to enter.

Upon entering, Shin was immediately greeted by a simple living room, where he found Professor Henry relaxing on his rocking chair. The old professor had his eyes close, but Shin could feel that the professor was currently 'looking' at him.

Professor Henry smiled and said. "Not bad, not bad. It seems like you are already used to passively using your Spiritual Sense right now."

"Come, it is time for you to receive your first lesson from me," said the old professor before telling Benedict to proceed with his task. "Go on already, Benedict! You still have some work to do!"

"Tsk!" Benedict clicked his tongue for another time before bowing to the professor and smiling at Shin. "I guess that's it. Let's talk again some other time, Junior Shin."

Shin nodded his head and chuckled. "Yes, Senior."

After that, he watched Benedict head toward a study before he headed over to Professor Henry.

"Come, sit wherever you want. You can make yourself at home," said the professor and waited for Shin to take a seat on the nearby sofa.

It was only at that time that he opened his eyes and looked at the young man. He observed Shin for a couple of minutes before nodding his head. "I see, so you have already awakened one of your innate attributes. That is much faster than what I expected."

Hearing that, Shin could not help but become a little surprised. From the words of the professor, it seemed like he knew that Shin would be having more than one innate attribute.

Professor Henry chuckled a little when he saw the expression that Shin was making before asking.

"What? Do you think that I will not know about it? I am friends with Benn for a very long time already, so I am very familiar with him, much less the Mentalism Method that he has created."

"I was there when he had completed it, so you shouldn't be too surprised about me knowing a thing or two about his method."

After that, he signaled Shin to talk. "Tell me about your previous experiences these past few weeks that I have not seen you. Let me hear your progress."

Shin hesitated for a moment before nodding his head and started narrating everything. He did not hide anything since he trust the relationship between his masters and Professor Henry. He could tell that their friendship was very deep and surpassed a certain milestone already, so he revealed everything.

He even told about his encounter with the Head Priestess and the guidance that she had given him.

The professor did not say anything the entire time and let Shin talk without interrupting. He did not say a single word until Shin was done speaking.

"I see. You are really too fortunate in your encounters, little one. Despite the dangers that you have encountered, you emerge victorious in the end, which also makes you stronger," he commented while nodding his head.

"Misfortunes and fortunes come hand in hand. One of them may come a little later, but it will definitely arrive right now. Whether it is a good or a bad thing, they will come at the best or worst timing possible."

"This is one of the rules of the world. This is karma. And a natural law of nature," he added with a mystifying tone.

He then went silent for a moment and waited for Shin to digest his words a little before continuing. "You are a little different from your seniors, so I will be designing a completely different training routine for you."

"You don't have to worry about your lack of time since I will make sure to match everything with your current schedule. And if there are some changes that need to be done, then I will adjust it accordingly."

"For now, let me ask you a few things. What do you want to focus on right now? Do you want to learn more about your Bloodline? Or do you want to learn how to utilize your Divinity Grade Mental Energy?"

"Or do you want to explore your innate attribute first and awaken them so that you can break through the peak of Grandmaster Realm as soon as possible?"

"You can only choose one as having too much of things on your plate will only be detrimental to you rather than being beneficial. You must take your time when it is needed and take a step one at a time."

The old professor paused for a moment before asking once again. "Now, tell me. Which one of them do you think you need the most?"

Chapter 1175 Lesson From Professor Henry (Part 2)

...

"Now, tell me. Which one of them do you think you need the most?"

Shin could not help but be silent when he heard those words. He felt that he was a test. He felt that the professor was testing him right now to see his insight and understand his disposition more.

He knew that there was no wrong answer here, but he felt that there must be a right one.

From his experiences, he understood a single thing. He might be a little stronger than most of the people in his generation, but it did not mean that he was absolutely at the peak.

He also encountered opponents that he could not defeat with his current strength, particularly Coffin Maker and Butcher, who surpassed his strength far too greatly. Even the Artificial Mutants that they had encountered during the mission were stronger than him.

If he was a little stronger, then he would be able to help his seniors defeat those failed subjects more one-sidedly and avoid the casualties. Lester would also not lose his arm during that mission.

With this line of thought, he could only think of a single thing. He had to become stronger. Much stronger than he currently was.

At that moment, Shin felt that the most immediate thing that he needed was to break through as soon as possible since it would give him more time to study his bloodline and Divinity Grade Mental Energy once he did.

Wasn't this his initial idea anyway? To take care of a problem one at a time.

Since he already had the simplest and fastest way to solve the problem, why not take it and proceed to the next step later?

Thinking about that, Shin turned to Professor Henry with determination and answered. "Please let me discover my innate attributes faster, Sir!"

Hearing those words and seeing the determination in Shin's eyes, the old professor could not help but smile as if he liked the answer that he had gotten very much.

He nodded his head and said. "Alright, I will help you with that."

"You are right to gain power as soon as you can. But let me warn you first, don't be blinded by it, or else you will suffer an end that is worse than death."

"Don't choose power over your friends and family. Don't choose power over your morality. And most of all, don't let it consume you. Don't let it control you, control it instead. Conquer it and govern over it!

"Keep these words in mind and you will be fine," he added as he looked at Shin with full seriousness.

Shin quickly nodded as he could tell that the professor was not only talking about his strength and power but also the things that were within him. He had to conquer his seed of hatred so that he would not be consumed by it and he had to control his usage of the 'Devouring Gift' for him to not lose himself.

Professor Henry nodded his head in satisfaction when he saw that Shin understood what he really meant by those words.

He paused for a moment before continuing. "So, let's talk about the possible innate attributes that you are supposed to get with that Mentalism Method of yours."

"But since it also concerns your habits and view in Mentalism, it can also change as time goes by until you are able to settle with the one that you feel most comfortable with. But still, it is not one hundred percent accurate."

The old professor thought for a moment before continuing. "One of the easiest ways to identify is using the Energy Crystals and infusing your energy in it regularly until it identifies your innate attributes."

"The other way is to practice different kinds of Breathing Techniques and learn which among them is the most suitable for you."

"And by cross-referencing the two, you will be able to identify your innate attribute much faster and more accurately."

Reaching this point, Professor Henry paused for a moment before continuing. "But that is the regular method dedicated to the ordinary people."

He then turned to Shin and continued. "And you definitely not one of them."

Shin knitted his brow when he heard those words, somewhat confused. He already learned the former part of what the professor had said since it was also what Professor Kyrie and Old Man Lin had been doing up until now.

It was also the course that the entire class was currently doing.

Seeing his confusion, Professor Henry smiled before suddenly asking. "I heard that the game that you are playing has recently undergone a huge update."

Shin was caught off guard at the sudden shift of the topic and unconsciously nodded his head while maintaining a confused look on his face.

Then the old professor suddenly leaned forward and continued. "And you also master the 'trick' that I have told you, right?"

Shin nodded his head once again as he was becoming more and more confused at where this conversation was going. He did not know what the connection between the game on the topic they were talking about just now.

Professor Henry ignored his expression and continued. "As I have said before, I can't tell you the secrets of the game because of the oath that I have with them. But I can still guide you on how to utilize it as a perfect training ground."

"Since I have already taught you how to enter the state of Reality Manifestation, I can now tell you how to fully utilize it to make yourself stronger both inside the game and here in the real world."

Pausing once again, he asked another question. "You said before that you have a Transcendent Class, am I right?"

Shin nodded for another time.

"Then it is safe to see that you have your own Elemental Spirit Companions given the time that you have played," continued the old professor.

"Yes, Sir," answered Shin as he started to get what the old professor was trying to imply with this.

Professor Henry smiled profoundly when he saw the sudden change in Shin's expression and continued. "What if I say that you can use the connection between your Elemental Spirit Companions and yourself as a reference to understand your innate attributes in the real world?"

Shin already had the premonition earlier when he heard the old professor mention the Elemental Spirits, but hearing it right now still gave him quite a shock.

"But of course, it will not be that easy. Targeting your desirable Elemental is extremely hard, so I will not expect you to gain perfect elements that can possibly match your innate attributes," said the professor, shattering Shin's fantasy within an instant.

"But I also not saying that it is not that helpful. And if you are lucky enough to stumble upon the best Elemental that you can have, then I must say that you are really a child of heaven," added Professor Henry while laughing.

It took him a while to recover himself before asking. "So, what are the elements of your Elemental Spirit Companions?"

Shin felt somewhat weird at the question before answering. "Space, Blood, Darkness, Light, Shadow Telekinesis, Hybrid of Mental and Earth, and Solar Flame."

This time, it was Professor Henry's turn to become surprised. He did not expect Shin to have that many Elemental Spirits under him, much less have all of them possessing special elements.

"What are you? A child of destiny or something? Are you really a child of heaven? Or just the heir of the World Gaming Organization?" said the old professor jokingly before shaking his head.

"I originally going to suggest you a few Elementals that I think will be good for your training, but I guess this is not going to be bad too."

"You can forget about space, darkness, and light elements for the time being since studying them is a little too much for your level, especially when you are supposedly looking for your innate attributes."

"Unless you have a certain level of affinity with them, like your Senior Benedict who has innate talent when it comes to spatial elements, don't try studying deeper in those elements."

"Of course, I am not saying to neglect them either since you will still stumble upon them when you reach a higher level of attainment in your Martial Arts or Mentalism. Particularly the Space Element when you reach the Void Manifestation Stage or Rulers Realm of the respective discipline."

"For now, focus on studying the rest of the Elementals that you have."

He paused once again before continuing. "They may not exactly help you discover your innate attributes, but they will surely strengthen you when you know how to utilize their attributes properly."

"Take the Blood Element for example. You may not be able to manipulate such energy in the real world, but after you study its properties and usage, you will be able to circulate your blood in the most proficient way during the battle."

"You can also stimulate your organs and use them in a way that will never be imagined before."

"Moreover, you can also learn more secrets about your Bloodline once you understand the Blood Element further. You will be able to utilize its real power and stimulate its full potential after you gain more understanding of it."

"As for the Telekinesis, it can help you practice your control over your Mental Energy. The more control you have over it, the greater the power you can gain. You will also be able to discover more usage of your Mental Energy if you reach a certain level of control."

"Telekinesis is not only about how you are able to make an object according to your will. It is also not measured by how heavy an object you can move through it. It is all about control – your control over your energy and how you govern it."

"Then there is the Solar Flame Element that you have. There is not much to talk about this since I am sure that you already have an idea about this one."

"You can study this element and compare it with the fire element that you have in the real world from time to time."

"You can try applying the Mentalism Techniques that you learn in the real world into the game and also use the knowledge that you got inside the game in the real world, particularly the skills."

"I am pretty sure that you will be up to a surprise once you do it," added the old professor with his usual mystifying tone.

He then waited for Shin to digest everything that he had said before continuing. "I will draw a detailed training plan that you can follow for all of this. But remember, this is only possible if you are able to have perfect control over your Reality Manifestation, so don't give up on studying that state yet."

Shin nodded his head with full seriousness after hearing those words. Ideas were already flying inside his head as he tried to think of the words that Professor Henry had told him.

The old professor left him for a few moments before proceeding with the topic. "As for discovering your other innate attributes, I suggest you use the breathing techniques that Lin Huang has asked you."

"The effects are somewhat negligible here in the real world, but you will be surprised when you try it inside the game. After all, the 'Energies' there are much purer than what we have here in the real world."

"If you reached a certain mastery over those breathing techniques, you would have an easier time discovering your other innate attributes since the Mana inside the game is composed of all elements."

"Once you discover which element is the 'closest' to you, then I suggest you grab that opportunity to build a connection with them and study them further."

"Elemental Spirits are helpful, but I will not suggest you capture them left and right or create a contract with them just for the sake of 'studying' their elements. Having more of them will give you more power, but they can also be a hindrance in the future if you have too many of them."

"Studying the elements, the normal way should suffice for you to awaken your other innate attributes as long as you are diligent enough."

"Of if you have friends who have the Elemental Spirits of the elements that you are looking for, you can ask them to lend you a hand."

"Ask them to have a sparing match against you while using their Possession of that particular element and that will be more than enough for you to gain a certain level of understanding of their elements."

After that, Professor Henry opened a file from his Advanced Watch and asked Shin to receive it. "These are books that contain the topic related to elements and breathing techniques related to them. You can read them when you have the time and ask me if you have some questions that confuse you."

Shin nodded his head and opened his Advanced Watch, linking it with the professor's watch to receive the file. "Thank you, Sir."

After that, Professor Henry stood up and said. "Alright, that should be it for today. I will be resting in my room now."

"You can stay here if you want and read those books. I will give you the detailed plan of your training schedule for the weekend tomorrow when you come back."

"You can also ask your senior over there for some guidance," He then pointed at the study that Benedict was currently cleaning before leaving.

Shin also stood up and bowed. "Please rest well, Sir."

After that, he went back to his seat before opening the file that he just received. And when he saw the number of 'books' inside it, he could not help but gulp a mouthful of saliva as he started to somewhat regret receiving it.

"It is a virtual library or something?" he muttered with a low voice.

But to his surprise, the old professor seemed to have heard him and said. "Yes, it is. You can access that file even if you are playing the game. It will turn into a 'physical' book in there once you willed it."

The expression on Shin's face suddenly turned weird when he heard that. He was too speechless to react.

Chapter 1176 Lesson From Professor Henry (Part 3)

...

Shin immediately got immersed in reading the book files that Professor Henry had given him. He did not even notice that Benedict was already done cleaning the study of the professor. He was too immersed in his own world to sense the presence of others, which made him too vulnerable to anyone.

Seeing that, Benedict could not help but shake his head as he suddenly remembered when he first read the first batch of books that Professor Henry had given him. That time, he also entered a similar state as Shin.

It was not a special effect or anything special. It was just the result when someone suddenly entered the answers to his question, which led them to enter a state akin to a sudden enlightenment.

Professor Henry had this mysterious way of doing things. He seemed to be capable of seeing through everything and instantly identifying what his students needed with a single glance. Through it, he was able to see the problems that they were having and the bottlenecks that were preventing them from moving forward.

But instead of giving them a direct answer to their question and problems, he was always choosing the indirect way of solving them. He showed the way to solve those problems by letting them read the books that contained all the answers that they needed.

Though, at the same time, the students still needed to read through everything and find the answers for themselves. They might have a way to solve the problems laid in front of them, but they still had to find the solution for themselves.

Professor Henry believed that the students needed to be guided, but they still had to find the solution for themselves. He was always saying to them that if it was an answer that they found themselves, then they would remember it for a lifetime.

And giving these virtual books to his students was the way that he found to convey this message.

He would be introducing the 'paths' that they could possibly take, but they had to find the one that they felt was the most suited for them.

Just like solving a problem with many solutions, but always coming up with the same answer. This was what Professor Henry wanted whenever he was guiding his students personally.

Benedict could not help but smile while observing Shin. He always found it mysterious how Professor Henry was always achieving such things by just giving them some books.

"I wonder how many hours this junior will take. Our all-time best record is 8 hours," he muttered as he found a spot to meditate.

From his knowledge, staying in this trance was beneficial to the growth of the individual. And the longer they stayed in it, the more benefits they could get.

This did not directly relate to the number of problems that one has or how hard to solve them. But it was targeting the comprehension and insight that one had when facing a particular bottleneck or certain enlightenment.

It was said that the longer one stayed in this state, the more their comprehension would improve and the greater the insight they would get.

There was even an instance that someone broke through consecutively after being stacked in their realm for a long time just by reading the books that the old professor had provided. However, this event had never been repeated since that person was a once-in-a-lifetime genius.

From what he had heard, the person also entered the special state for almost a whole day before the consecutive breakthrough happened.

But it had never been confirmed nor denied since Professor Henry did not say anything about it. They just heard it from their seniors, who studied directly under the old professor when they were staying in the academy.

Even though some of them remained on the professor's side and became his personal assistants at the World Research Center, most of them left to find their respective paths and study their own research.

After quite some time, Benedict discovered that it was already noon. It was time for lunch, so he had to prepare the meal for the professor and himself. But despite Shin was still too immersed in his own world and felt that it was still too early for him to end that trance, Benedict still decided to prepare an extra serving just in case.

A few moments later, he was done preparing everything and brought the meal inside the room of the old professor. When he entered, he saw that Professor Henry had already gotten up and was about to walk toward the end of the room where the table for dining was located.

"How is it? Do you think he will be able to last longer than you?" asked Professor Henry as he took a seat on one of the sofas positioned on each side of the table.

Benedict laid everything on the table one after another before replying. "It is highly possible, though I am not sure if can beat the record of my big sister."

Hearing that, Professor Henry smiled mysteriously and said with full confidence. "He will."

Benedict snapped his head toward the professor and looked at the latter with full shock as he was having a hard time accepting it.

Based on what Professor Henry was implying, it seemed like Shin would not only surpass the 8-hour mark that his sister had set but would also surpass it by a great margin.

He knew how hard it was to maintain that state for long since the great focus that one had would continuously deteriorate as time went by. Especially for the ones with very high comprehension ability since their minds would be able to adapt to that state more quickly.

However, it did not mean that people with low comprehension skills could stay longer either. But they would only last a little longer than 4 hours at most, which was already above the average range.

The only way for someone to stay in that mysterious state for as long as they could. After all, they had immense willpower that would grant them the ability to hold for an extended period of time.

Thinking about this, Benedict quickly realized where the confidence of the old professor was coming from. "So, he is one of those people."

Professor Henry laughed when he saw his reaction and quickly added. "I know what you are thinking. And you are right about that. That kid has the potential to last for as long as he wants."

"But he will not continue after reaching the 12th-hour mark," he suddenly said, which caught Benedict completely off guard.

"Huh?" Benedict was confused when he heard that. It was because he knew that the first time to enter that state was the most important since that was when they could get the most benefit.

Even if they entered that trance once again at another time, the effects that they would get would be far inferior since the 'golden time' had already passed and they had already experienced the state once, which would lead to having a certain level of immunity over it.

This was the main reason why Professor Henry rarely used this method when training and teaching his students.

He would mostly do it the first time they had met or whenever a particular student was facing a very difficult bottleneck that was hard to overcome.

Given the circumstances and the smart head that Shin had, Benedict knew that Shin would be able to tell how much benefit he was getting by staying in that state. And even if he somehow awakened from it, there was still a brief moment when he could reenter almost immediately after realizing what just happened, especially when Shin possessed willpower as strong as the old professor was saying.

Benedict could not wrap his head around the idea of Shin voluntarily giving up that chance and stopping after reaching the 12th-hour mark.

"It is because he has other tasks to do," said Professor Henry while continuing to chuckle. It was as if he could read the line of thoughts that Benedict was having.

And before this student of his could even ask another question, the old professor quickly added. "It is not exactly what you are thinking. That junior of yours is just not fit with this method of mine. It is fine for him to use it from time to time, but it will not give him that much benefits in the long run."

"It is because he is a Battle Genius. Staying and isolating himself from the outside world is not what fits him. It is to go into battle and grow as much as he can in each one that he encounters. The harder the battle, the stronger he can become. That is the path that is more suitable for him."

"Getting insights from reading a book or two is fine, but experiencing a real battle will still give him a different view, especially the life-and-death ones."

"He will instantly realize it once he reaches the 12th-hour mark. Anything more than that will only hinder his progress, which is why he will stop there voluntarily," said Professor Henry, explaining.

After that, Professor Henry picked up the chopsticks laid in front of him and signaled Benedict to join him in eating. "That's it for now. Come on, let's eat already before this meal that you prepare gets cold."

Benedict bowed before sitting opposite the old professor. "Then please excuse me, Sir."

They chatted a bit while eating. Benedict also took that opportunity to ask a few questions that reflected the problems that he was currently facing, but the old professor stuck to his ways and referred to a few books that Benedict could read.

Benedict chuckled and complied.

When they were done eating, Benedict was collecting the plates and cleaning up the table when the old professor suddenly stood up and headed outside.

"You are going back to your lab already, Sir? It hasn't been that long since you came back. You have to rest more," said Benedict, showing his concern to the professor.

Professor Henry chuckled when he heard that as he could tell why Benedict was too concerned about his health. He then waved his hand and said. "Don't worry. It will not take that long this time."

"I just have to check on the kid that arrived earlier this morning and see the changes in his parameters. After making sure that he is healthy and there is no issue for him to continue playing the game, then I can assign your Senior Scarlett to take care of him."

Hearing that Benedict seemed to have remembered something and said. "Ah! It must be that Wade kid that Uncle Brian has brought!"

"I heard that he is able to enter a special state of Hyperactive Immersion, and the unusual one at that. Will he be fine staying in that lab? The facilities there are not fit for his situation," he added with a slight concern.

Professor Henry shook his head. "There is still some risk for him since his cells are in a state of extreme hunger. Fortunately, my friend who used to look after him is able to minimize the damage to his body, so recovering his peak form will not be a problem. A few nutrient serums and energy concoctions will be sufficient to maintain his health conditions."

"As for the special facilities that are meant for him, I can just request it from the management. It is not like they can question my work anyway. Moreover, I can also use this opportunity to design another one for that junior of yours outside."

Professor Henry was also thinking of how he would be designing an activity field for Shin since the first time they had met. It was supposedly a special facility meant for Shin to practice combining his Martial Arts and Mentalism.

And due to the recent incident that happened to the kid that resulted in his Martial Arts being sealed, it was slightly delayed.

But now that he had the opportunity, he was thinking of continuing with his plan.

Thinking about that, the old professor took his coat from the rack and said to Benedict. "Take good care of this junior of yours. He is quite special in a lot of ways. Once he is done, you can ask him to stay here or let him decide what he wants."

"If he wants to leave, then make sure to close everything as usual and activate all the security measures. Then instruct him to come back again tomorrow for his physical training," he added before exiting the room."

Benedict bowed and acknowledged all the instructions left to him. After that, he tilted his head a little before continuing to clean the table full of dishes.

They were quite a lot, but fortunately, he had a high affinity with the space element, so he could put them temporarily in a small pocket space instead of carrying them around while moving toward the kitchen.

"Sigh. Why do I feel that I am a housemaid rather than a trainee assistant of the professor?"

Chapter 1177 Lesson From Professor Henry (Part 4)

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Just like what Professor Henry was expecting, Shin regained himself and snapped out of the trance after a little over 12 hours of reading.

Shin was surprised at the mysterious state that he was in, which made him become even more amazed at the old professor. This pretty much confirmed that Professor Henry was no ordinary individual.

This way of teaching his students was very different from the method that Professor Plum and Grandmaster Benn were using, but they were as effective, nevertheless.

Professor Plum was giving him a training course that he had to follow where he could build a solid foundation while also discovering his strengths and weaknesses along the way. That training course was meant to lead to a specific answer, but he had to work for it to reach that goal.

On the other hand, Grandmaster Benn was always giving him specific tasks that would target a particular ability that he had to learn. Once he repeatedly completed those tasks with increasing difficulty, he would realize that a lot of things were taught to him despite doing a single task.

Professor Henry was a little different since he was more like a lecturer when teaching his students. He would be giving Shin and the rest a specific 'lesson' that they had to learn, which would also target the problem that they were currently facing. But regardless, the students still needed to work hard to find those answers themselves.

The three methods were somewhat different, but their goals were all the same. They would be giving the students the solution that they needed, but they also wanted the students to learn the answers by themselves and solve those problems with their own methods.

Shin was confident that these three old men were close friends after learning this, especially after discovering that their teaching methods were similar, albeit also having a lot of differences.

"Heh! Those three are interesting. Are they some sort of brothers or something?" muttered Shin as he could not help but compare his relationship with Arthur and Leonard with these three old men who were teaching him.

He found that they were somewhat similar.

A few moments later, when he was organizing his thoughts, he discovered that it was already dark outside. He realized that he was already running late for his schedule inside the game.

He abruptly stood up, planning to leave, and wanting to get back in the game as soon as possible. "Sh*t! The 'party' should have started already!"

At this point, Benedict came out from the room adjacent to the living room. He yawned and stretched his waist and arms, seemingly signifying that he had just woken up from sleep. And when he saw Shin finally come out of his trance, he nodded his head and greeted. "You are up? The professor is really on point."

"Do you want to stay here for the night or are you going to head back home already?" he asked immediately after.

Shin thought for a moment before shaking his head. "No. I'm fine. I have other plans already."

Benedict curled his lips a little before offering. "How about a meal before you leave? You have not eaten anything since you came here. You must be very hungry."

Shin shook his head repeatedly as he refused politely. "I am fine, Senior. Thank you for the offer. I will grab something along the way. I am really running late for my 'appointment' already!"

Benedict chuckled and nodded. "Is that so? It can't be helped then."

"Go. I will take care of everything here. You can go to your appointment. Just make sure to come back at the same time tomorrow, alright? I will be overseeing your physical training, so don't be late. I am not fond of being behind the schedule," he added jokingly while waving Shin goodbye.

Shin bowed at Benedict before running out of the house. "Thank you, Senior! See you tomorrow!"

Benedict watched Shin for a moment before chuckling once again. "He must be excited to try the things that he learned from the books that the professor has given him."

He stretched his body for another time as he reminisced about his experience. "The game, huh? It has been a while since I am online. I wonder what chances they have now. I hear that the main servers are already in the middle stages."

"When will the dimensional portals be opened so that 'us' from the secret servers can join the fun?" he mumbled as he went to check if everything within the house was properly locked and if the secret formations were properly working.

At the same time, within one of the largest laboratories within the World Research Center, Professor Henry was reading a series of data from his tablet while nodding his head from time to time.

Not long after, a young man suddenly came out from a huge steel capsule in front of him. The steam coming out from the capsule enveloped the young man as he walked out of him while he was trying to catch his breath.

The old professor did not look at the young man as he said. "Everything is already fine. Your body can now withstand that state for a certain period of time. But I still want to warn you to use it as limited as possible."

"Your Hyperactive Immersion is a very special one given that personal in-game technique that your father has created. I must say that it is somewhat a special program that he personally built without violating any laws of the virtual world."

"He did not infiltrate the main system of the game, but he built a hidden program by just repeatedly doing a specific set of movement practice and training routines. I can't help but be impressed."

"The only suspicious thing is that recording and analyzing system. But it can at most be considered as a special technique or self-created skill after taking a closer look at it, so it is still in the acceptable range of the gaming company."

It was at that moment when Professor Henry looked at the young man and said with full sincerity. "I am truly impressed at your old man, Little Wade."

Wade, who took a towel from one of the research assistants, bowed at the old professor and embarrassedly said. "I should be the one saying that Sir. My father looks up to you very much."

"Your father is a very competent student when he is learning under me. I should be proud of him," said the professor with a smile.

After that, he signaled one of his assistants to give Wade the serum that they had prepared.

"This is a concentrated nutrient serum that can help you stabilize your overall condition. It will help you satiate the intense hunger of your cells," said Professor Henry while pointing at the steel capsule that Wade was currently holding.

He then lowered the tablet before continuing his explanation. "It is the best solution that we have to deal with your current state as soon as possible but there are some risks accompanying it."

"Just like having too much of food intake after you starve for a long period of time and over-exhausting yourself, your body may undergo some indigestion problem after taking them."

"Your body will not be able to keep up with the sudden injection of these concentrated nutrients, which can cause you a lot in the process. It can even cripple you if it is the worst-case scenario."

"But since you are already in very bad shape, if we don't take this risk, then the long-term damages that you will suffer will only accumulate and make it hard for us to treat you."

"So, in order to prepare your body, we have to let you undergo these series of exercises and tests as soon as possible."

Professor Henry paused for a moment and looked at Wade before continuing. "Now, we have prepared your body well enough, and even lower all the risk from the worst-case scenario. You can take this serum without worrying too much about the consequences."

"I assure you that you will be fine," he added, reassuring that everything was under control.

Wade nodded his head and looked at the cylindrical container in his hand before a determined look surfaced in his eyes.

After that, he pressed a button from its side, making a needle appear from one of its ends. Then he injected it into his arm without any hint of hesitation and emptied its contents immediately after.

There was no immediate change after that. But not long after, Wade felt that the temperature of his body was increasing at a rapid rate. He also could feel the minuscule movements within his body as if every cell in it was swelling and shrinking in a chaotic rhythm.

He was starting to panic when he saw that even his skin was moving, seemingly adjusting with the micro-movements of his cells. It was as if those cells were showing their satisfaction after absorbing all the nutrients that he had injected.

It was a scary sight despite fully understanding what was happening. But after seeing the calm expression that Professor Henry had and the assistants standing behind him, Wade was able to calm himself down while immersing himself in the current state of his body.

It seemed like he was trying to feel all the changes that his cells were undergoing and engraving all of it in his mind.

He felt that he might need it in the future.

And when the old professor saw that, he could not help but smile in satisfaction. He clearly acknowledged how sharp this young man was in front of him.

The changes that his body was undergoing were a once-in-a-lifetime experience. It would give him a special ability that he would not be expecting.

Wade might not be able to reach the level where he could control every cellular movement within his body, but it could at least help him have better control over his muscles, which would give him unimaginable flexibility and ability to execute some extremely hard maneuvers, particularly in battle.

'This kid will surely bring the new age of virtual games. He is the same as the troublesome kid of that particular couple,' thought the professor while watching Wade.

It took Wade quite a while before the cells within his body calmed down. He stayed still for a few more moments to make sure that the entire process had already ended before opening his eyes.

Then he heard the voice of the old professor asking him. "How is it? How do you feel?"

He did not immediately reply as he looked at his hands first before opening and closing them repeatedly. After that, he replied with a smile. "I feel much better than before. I feel like I can do anything right now."

Professor Herny nodded his head repeatedly as he commented. "That ends up better than we have expected."

After that, he turned to his assistants and instructed. "Lead him to the exercise room and let him use our equipment there. Start with the most basic ones before proceeding to the advanced equipment. Don't make him overwork himself."

"Make him do each exercise three times so that we can have the smallest margin of error then record all the data that you will gather before sending them to me via email. I'll read through them later."

After that, they turned back to Wade and said. "Follow them for now and finish all the exercises. It will not take much time, so you don't have to worry. When you are done, then you are free to do whatever you want. But I suggest you rest immediately after and relax your body."

He then paused for a moment before quickly adding. "If you don't want to remain idle, then you can also enter the virtual world and play some games there. But limit your usage of the Hyperactive Immersion and your Demon's Eyes until further notice."

Wade felt a little excited to move since he felt too good right now. His body was currently full of energy that he needed to expand.

He was about to follow the research assistants when Professor Henry suddenly remembered something and added. "Ah! I heard that the game you are planning just entered a huge update."

"Then, if possible, look for a 'martial manual' when you get back in the game. But don't pick any random ones, choose the ones that are perfectly suited for your current class and fighting style. It will help you improve much faster both inside the game and here in the real world."

After that, he turned around and headed toward another research laboratory.

In the meantime, Wade put the suggestion to his heart. Even though he was not sure about this so-called 'martial manual' since it was his first time hearing it, he was sure that the professor had his reasons for suggesting such a thing.

"Martial manuals, huh? I guess I need to use my special channels to investigate about them," he muttered as he followed behind the assistants of the professor.

Chapter 1178 Back To The Business

.....

When Shin logged back into the game, he was immediately bombarded by a series of messages. After skimming through every message, he discovered that the Hand of Midas and the Black Market were already at war against each other.

Since the ratio of the time difference between the game and the real world was 3:1, it was quite a long time since the war had started. But forces suffered immense losses already, but the Hand of Midas seemed to be gaining the upper hand.

When it came to numbers, the forces of the Black Market definitely had more members. After all, they had been plotting on this place for quite some time already, so it was natural for them to gather enough forces to conquer this particular region.

But that was all they had. If it was about the quality of people, equipment, and other tools in battle, the Hand of Midas Trading Firm surpassed them by a very large margin. They were the number one trading firm within the game after all, where the best of the best of different fields were gathered, so this should be a natural outcome.

Regardless, the Hand of Midas was still suffering quite a few minor losses since they could not send more reinforcements due to the distance of this region. If not for their advantage in quality, then they would most likely be on the losing end.

Fortunately, the new update of the game prevented the players, who died in battle and failed to get resurrected, from re-entering the game within at least a whole day. And if they died right after being resurrected, then the penalty would be much more severe.

With this setup, the Hand of Midas was at least able to equalize the state of the battle. After continuing this state for a few more days, they managed to gain a slight edge over their opposition and started attacking more aggressively.

"I guess there is nothing for me to worry about," he heaved a sigh of relief after learning the current state of the battle.

At the very least, they were currently winning this battle.

But given the numbers of the opposing side, they still had to expect them to turn the tides if something went wrong.

If the Black Market really went crazy and risked everything on the line, which was not impossible to happen, Shin was thinking that they might gamble with an all-out assault.

Shin had to think of a way for that to happen. And what he had thought was to assassinate the leading figures of the opposing side or at least annihilate one of their main forces, totally crippling them in the process.

If he was successful, then there was a high chance that the Black Market would pull back their forces and stop having any ideas about putting their hands on this region.

Thinking about that, Shin sent a message to the person leading the forces of Hand of Midas, telling them about his plan.

He was very confident about this and himself. He knew that he would be able to pull this off, especially with his current strength. This was also a perfect opportunity to test some of the things that Professor Henry had taught him.

He wanted to try putting those theories into practice!

...

Harmony, who was currently the one leading this operation, knitted her brow slightly when she received the message from Shin.

She wanted to reject his offer first and ask him to continue doing his business since everything was already under control. It would be better for him to do what he needed to accomplish here so that he could proceed with his other plans.

She and the firm were thankful to him for the information that he had provided them. This place was the best mining region that they could find right now. It was even better than the ones that were already under their control.

With the addition of the mines here, alongside the special ores that could be mined in this region, the trading firm would grow explosively when it came to their blacksmithing department.

Even she could benefit from this. She could get some of the flexible ores that she had encountered while battling the forces of the Black Market and turn those into unique cloth and special thread that she could use for her work.

While she was hesitating on her decision, her twin sister, Adept Hands, suddenly hopped beside her and asked. "Does Young Master Shin have contacted you? What does he say? Is he going to join us?"

"Tell me! Tell me! I have some questions I have for him too! Ask whether my new potions are effective or not! I really need his feedback on those before I proceed with my Class Promotion Quest!"

Harmony suddenly felt irritated by her sister's barrage of questions and said. "Why can't you just ask him yourself instead? You can contact him too!"

Hearing that, Adept Hands rolled her eyes and refuted. "Do you think I am not contacting him because I am too lazy? It is not like that! He just blocked me because I kept asking him for his feedback on my new creations! I can't contact him even if I want to."

Harmony sneered at her sister when she realized it. "And now you want me to annoy me instead?"

She then pointed in the distance and ordered. "Just finish your job and clean up this region. There is still a lot of trash that we need to take care of."

Adept Hands pouted her lips when she heard that and protested. "This is supposedly Black Hammer's and Walsh's job to deal with this kind of business for f*ck's sake!"

"It is about a region full of mines! Walsh should be jumping for joy right now if he hears about this. I bet he will treat this place as a paradise!" she added as she continued to complain.

Harmony shook her head when she heard that and said. "Black Hammer is currently in the middle of his research and is about to make a breakthrough in it. He can't be bothered right now."

"As for Walsh. That guy is in another Kingdom right now. He is still dealing with the mines on that side since it is being invaded by our other competitors. He has to oversee everything personally so that nothing unexpected will happen."

She paused for a moment before continuing. "Given the current update of the game where the raw materials that we can get from nature is a little more important than the set of equipment themselves, the competition when it comes to controlling these resource regions will only intensify."

"We have to be decisive and show our might to everyone to make sure that they will not challenge our authority. If we show them a single hint of weakness, then they will jump at us with the intention of snatching our controlled regions."

Adept Hands understood it very well, which was why she did not try to refute her sister's words. She just clicked her tongue and continued to pout her lips on the side.

Harmony gave her a sidelong glance before saying. "I heard that the young miss will be done with her business in the real world after a few more days. So, we have to endure until then."

Adept Hands nodded her head before asking. "How about Young Master Shin? Are you going to let him join this war?"

Harmony smiled bitterly when she heard that before turning to the series of messages that she was receiving. She then shook her head and answered. "Even if I want to refuse his offer, I can no longer do it since he is already hunting his prey at this moment."

"The Black Market is already in a state of panic after suffering from his ambushes. I think this war will end much sooner than we are expecting," she added with a complicated tone.

Adept Hand shrugged her shoulders and commented. "He is really fast at doing his job. He makes sure that everything will be done as soon as he makes his move."

Harmony nodded her head. "Let's go. We must make our move too. We can't let the young master have all the fun, can we?"

...

On the other side of the Starry Spears Mountain Forest, the Black Market had also set up a temporary headquarters that they could use for this war.

It was heavily guarded by their most elite members stationed in this region. They were currently on the losing end in this war, so they had to be careful in their every move.

Aside from enduring the repeated losses that they had suffered during this war, they also had to control the information that might leak to the outside. It was to prevent more competitors from joining this war.

They could spread the information about this place to the other powerhouse guilds within the game to lessen the advantage the Hand of Midas currently had. But if they did that, they would lose more control over the place since they had to concede some of the mines within the region to the joining party.

That was one of the problems while the other was the fact that the Hand of Midas would like this war to be more chaotic since it would be more favorable to them.

As the leading lifestyle guild and the wealthiest merchant group, the resources that they had far surpassed most of the guilds.

Moreover, the majority of the powerhouse guilds and super guilds within the game were also good customers of theirs. Their supply would easily be cut off or controlled by the Hand of Midas Trading Firm once such a chaotic war occurred.

Regardless of the outcome, the Hand of Midas would still be the one who would reap the most benefits if such a war really happened.

This was why the Black Market was currently in a difficult dilemma.

And while they were racking their brains to think of a solution for their current predicament, another problem suddenly arose out of nowhere.

Their elite squads that were meant to ambush the forces of the Hand of Midas were ambushed instead. And the worst part of this was the fact that there was actually only a single person who annihilated their group.

"Have you found out who the man attacking our people is?" said Arlott, the person who was currently the officer-in-charge of this operation.

He was a skilled assassin player, who was known as the Twin Lancer in the previous game. He was always playing thief-related classes but always wielding a pair of short spears rather than daggers or shortswords.

He was not good at giving out orders or commanding a troop since it was not his specialty. But given their current situation, where most of their commanding officers were taken down by Harmony and Adept Hands in these past few days, he had no choice but to take on the reign.

The other two staying with him in the commanding tent were the other experts that were working under the Black Market, the pair known as the Calamity Brothers, Illumi and Izumi.

"Based on the information that we have, it is most likely be the person, who first entered this region before us. The one that is encountered by those people Azure Wind Guild" said Illumi, another assassin-type of player but fonder of using flails and sickles as his main weapon.

Izumi, the sniper-type archer sitting beside his brother, suddenly commented. "I am wondering where he is hiding after disappearing for a few days right after entering this region. So, he finally decides to reveal himself, huh?"

(He is talking about the time inside the game)

"If it is really that guy, then don't underestimate him. From the data that we have, he is most likely a very skilled Godlike Player," warned Arlott, reminding the two to not be too conceited.

"Hah! He has been hiding from us for such a long time already, so what is there to be afraid about? He is nothing but a fraud! I am telling you!" said Izumi.

Unknown to them, their conversation was clearly being reflected right in front of Shin through his shared vision with Blackie.

"Found you!" he muttered as he stood up from the top of a spear-like stone mountain.

He stretched his body a little before jumping down from his location, diving straight to the ground.

Chapter 1179 Stalking The Prey

.....

Shin arrived at the place where the main forces of the Black Market were hiding. He looked down on it from the peak of a stone mountain, watching each of their movements.

He could see them sending out unit after unit of players that were heading to continue their assault against the forces of the Hand of Midas. Based on the auras that surrounded those players, Shin could tell that all of them were elites among elites.

Seeing that, he knew that the Black Market was starting their final struggle. Based on the movements of their forces, he could tell that they were plotting something that could cause serious damage to the Hand of Midas.

He could see what kind of net the Black Market was trying to make. They were planning to lure the forces of their opposition toward the area where those high-level golems were located before surrounding and trapping them.

It might look like a simple plan, but it was not easy to see through since those golems were not moving from their respective places due to some unknown reason. All Shin knew was that there were certain conditions that needed to be met before they were awakened from their slumber.

If not for Astaroth telling him about it, then Shin would not be able to learn such methods.

Aside from this, those problems were also very tricky to deal with. Even with Shin and Astaroth working together, the two of them were still having a hard time taking down a single of them.

Shin practically knew a lot of spots that were too dangerous to approach even with his current strength. It was because he had hunted in this place for quite some time already, which was why he had become familiar with most of the map.

Adding the assistance and information that Astaroth had given him during their hunt, he pretty much knew the inside and out of the outer region of the entire map.

He was not sure how the Black Market had become familiar with the method of waking up the Earth Elemental Golems, but he was confident that it was their plan given the strategic movements that they were showing.

Thinking about that, he quickly warned Harmony about the scheme that the opposing side was plotting and even informed them about the method of how to awaken those sleeping golems.

After that, he was about to proceed with his initial plan of launching a direct attack on this temporary headquarters and dealing serious damage to them. But before he could even make his move, he suddenly noticed a strange movement from the innermost part of the camp.

He saw three people, who seemed to hold the highest authority within the forces of the Black Market, walk out from the largest tent and meet with a group of scouts.

Feeling that something was not right, he quickly connected with Blackie and used their shared vision. Within an instant, what was happening in front of their tent was suddenly projected in front of Shin through a virtual screen.

...

In the camp of the Black Market, Arlott stood in front of a scout, who seemed to be leading an elite scouting group.

"What do you say? Your group has discovered a mine rich with Mana Crystal?" he asked with a tone that could not hide his astonishment.

The scout leader lowered his head and continued his report. "While we were scouting the area in the eastern region, we found a simple-looking cave. We are about to ignore it when one of our members discovered the high density of concentrated mana coming from the cave when he got near it."

"When we investigated inside, we discovered that there is a large Mana Crystal Mine inside. And that is only when we look at the outer layer of the mine; we suspect that there is a larger mana crystal deposit in its deeper parts."

Hearing that, Arlott could not help but be shaken a little. This was a Mana Crystal Mine that they were talking about. It was a strategic resource that had a lot of usage. It could even be considered as a universal resource due to the current update of the damage where raw materials were much more important than rare weapons found in the chests of the dungeons.

If the Black Market took control of this Mana Crystal Mine, then they would surely become a true powerhouse inside the game within a very short time. They could even rival the Hand of Midas in terms of wealth if they played this right.

The only problem was they were currently at war with the Hand of Midas, and if those people got wind of this, this war would only escalate to the point it was very hard to control.

"What is the situation inside that mine?" asked Arlott with a deep frown.

The scout leader hesitated for a moment before replying. "Entering the outer layer of the mine is relatively easy, but if we want to deeper into it, then we have to prepare for a large sacrifice."

"Why is that? Is there a powerful monster guarding inside?" asked Illumi from the side, unable to suppress his curiosity.

The scout leader nodded his head as he answered. "There is indeed a powerful monster inside, but it is not an ordinary one. It is a level 165 Overlord Monster."

"And it is not just one but two of them," he added after gulping a mouthful of saliva. Then he quickly named the monsters. "Those two were both beast-type monsters named as the Steelfist Ape and the Ironhead Chimpanzee."

"Our team has already investigated these monsters, and it turns out that they are known as the three kings of the outer region of the Starry Spears Mountain Forest."

"Aside from those two, there is another one known as the Stoneback Gorilla."

"We are doing everything we can to track down this monster, but up until this point, we still haven't seen any sign of it. But we are suspecting that it is hiding in the deeper parts of the mines."

...

Shin, who was watching everything with the help of Blackie, could not help but become surprised at the sudden revelation.

As it turned out, the Overlord Stoneback Gorilla that he had fought earlier alongside Solus, Whitie, and Astaroth was one of the kings of the outer region of this map.

He was not sure how to feel about it. He also did not know whether he was lucky or unlucky to encounter such a monster when he was looking for the Meteorites that he needed for the upgrade of his weapon.

"No wonder, it is too overpowered. It turns out that it is one of the lesser leaders in this region," mumbled Shin to himself as he recalled the battle against that humongous gorilla.

Fortunately, he was strong enough to fight it, or else he would most likely lose his life inside the game and be banned for reentering it for the next 24-hour period (real-world time).

"But how come I only encounter it when the three of them are supposedly moving together," he thought confusedly as he clearly remembered that he could not find any sign of other monsters when he explored the rest of the cave.

From what he had heard from the scout leader, these three kings of the outer region were supposed to work together guarding the Mana Crystal Mine.

"How come that Stoneback Gorilla is the cave where the Meteorites are located when the Mana Crystal Mine is clearly on the..." he was in the middle of his thoughts when a sudden idea flashed through his mind. "...unless the two cave channels are interconnected."

Having that thought, Shin could not help but draw a virtual map inside his head. He first marked the cave where he encountered the Stoneback Gorilla then also marked the cave that the scout leader had pointed out.

And when he connected them inside his head, his eyes suddenly turned wide as he realized how large the mine could possibly be. "The heck!? That is too large!"

When he realized that, he quickly started formulating a plan inside his head while continuing to watch what the opposing side was saying.

...

"This is a huge opportunity. Should we contact the headquarters and ask for more reinforcements?" asked Izumi as he realized the importance of this operation reached a point that they could never have imagined.

"That is a good idea. But we can't risk it altogether. We can't afford to let those people from the Hand of Midas learn about this matter?" commented Illumi.

Arlott, on the other hand, fell into deep thought before saying. "We have no choice but to be on the defensive and buy as much time as we can until the reinforcements arrive."

He then paused for a moment before continuing. "And we also have to take control of the mines and build a temporary base inside. It is even better if we manage to seal off the cave entrance altogether."

Hearing that the brothers Illumi and Izumi turned to him simultaneously as they could read what he was trying to say.

"You want to hunt down those Overlord Monsters? That is too risky. Given the information that we have about them, our forces are not enough to hand the two of them. We will only suffer more losses if we try to fight them," said Illumi, trying to discourage Arlott with his plan.

"If it those two monsters are together, then it will be impossible to defeat them. But if we separate them from each other, then we can at least work together to deal with one before proceeding with the other," countered Arlott as if he finally made up his mind.

But Illumi was still not fully convinced. "But what if the Hand of Midas discovered us and interfered during the battle? We will only be putting ourselves in our deathbeds."

"That is why we are going to seal off the entrance before they can even approach it. They don't have any mining or digging tools with them, so it will take some time before they can reopen the entrance," refuted Arlott.

"And are we going to trap ourselves with those two monsters? Then what about the people that are going to be left outside?" Illumi insisted.

Arlott understood Illumi's concerns but he still tried to be patient and explain his plan. "That is why they have to continue with our initial plan before playing the turtle-defense game."

"They can also play guerilla tactics if needed, as long as they can buy us enough time until the reinforcements from the headquarters arrive."

"The rest of the officers will be leading their troops and proceed with the plan while the three of us will bring the best of our elite members to the cave and secure the mines."

Illumi knitted his brows and reminded. "There are three level 165 Overlord Monsters, not just three. We may be strong, but we are still not on the level where we can fight either one of those monsters by only leading a single elite unit, much less ourselves if things go wrong."

This time, Izumi, who remained silent up until now, finally joined the conversation. "Then we have no choice but to use that 'thing'."

Hearing that, both Illumi and Arlott turned to him almost at the same time before wearing serious expressions.

Seeing that, Izumi shrugged his shoulders. "Don't look at me like that. I know the consequences are dire, but it will be worth it if we successfully take over the mine containing such a huge Mana Crystal Vien."

"I will not mind being banned from entering the game for a whole day or two if we really can capture such an important resource. I think it is worth the sacrifice," he added, making the two remain silent for a while.

This time, Illumi finally became convinced and nodded his head.

With that, Arlott started finalizing the plan and gave a series of orders to the rest of the officers that were going to be left outside. At the same time, he also sent an urgent message to their headquarters, informing them of the current situation.

...

In the meantime, Shin could not help but laugh so hard after listening to them. He was not sure how to react to this, but he really found the situation rather funny.

He was suspecting them of being too cautious when fighting the two Overlord Rank Monsters as they were expecting the third one.

But unknown to them, that Stoneback Gorilla would never come, but a much more dangerous and more scheming 'monster' would be stalking them instead.

"They may be able to seal off one of the entrances, but they will never know that there is another channel connected to it from deep inside the cave," he chuckled as he could already imagine their faces after realizing how foolish they were.

"It has been a while since I have stolen a kill from my enemies. Let's try enjoying this one before I proceed to put those theories into practice," he muttered as he stretched his waist lazily while informing Harmony of everything alongside his plans.

"This is going to be much funnier than I expected!"

Chapter 1180 Stalking The Prey (Part 2)

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Boom!

The battle within the outer region of the Starry Spears Mountain Forest was getting much more intense as time went by. Due to the repeated collisions of the forces between the Hand of Midas Trading Firm and the Black Market, most of the terrains in the outer region of the map were starting to change.

At the same time, the monsters within the area of their battles were also starting to get wiped out. These monsters that were giving most of the players a hard time fighting were slowly being cleared by the two forces. Due to their low spawn rate, the number of monsters could not keep up with the clearing time of the two groups, making the map as clean as possible.

Harmony, who was overseeing everything from the side of the Hand of Midas, stood at the peak of one of the stone mountains while watching the clash in the distance.

Moments later, Adept Hands suddenly appeared beside her and said. "Sister, everyone is ready. They are only waiting for your orders."

Harmony nodded his head and said. "Make sure to warn them not to approach the marked regions that Young Master Shin had given us. Those are obvious traps."

"Aside from the stealth units, who are responsible for triggering the conditions of waking up the sleeping monsters, no one is to enter those areas," she added as she squinted her eyes while watching the battle in the distance.

Adept Hands nodded her head. "I already informed them about it. We are to trap the people from the Black Market inside those regions and not let any of them escape."

Harmony slightly tilted her head to the side before asking. "What about the cave entrance where the most elite units of the opposing side had entered?"

"It has already been sealed by them. There is no need to worry about them since the young master is already marking them," responded Adept Hands immediately.

Harmony repeatedly nodded her head and said. "Then it is time to execute the plan. We have to finish this before the reinforcements of the Black Market arrive here."

"We need to control the strategic spots within the region before they arrive so that we can have the advantage of the terrain."

"I heard that Walsh and Tinker will be coming here too once they wrap up everything on their side. Securing this region will go without a hitch once we regroup when they arrive. Walsh will take care of the mines while Tinker can install the necessary tools for security purposes."

After that, the two of them jumped down from the stone mountain peak, planning to personally join the battle.

In the meantime, the forces of the Black Market that entered the cave were already engaging in an intense battle against the Steelfist Ape and Ironhead Chimpanzee.

The battle was already in a chaotic state where the people from the Black Market had to repeatedly save their lives from the brink of death.

They knew that these two monsters were powerful, but they were not expecting that they were 'this' powerful. If not for them using their special tools repeatedly, then most of them have already been lying on the ground since the very start of the battle.

What was even more worrying was the fact that the two Overlord Rank Monsters seemed to be in an agitated state. It was as if those two were in a constant state of berserk mode.

Moreover, they were also refusing to get separated from each other as if they were afraid of something.

Due to this, the forces from the Black Market were having a hard time keeping themselves alive. Surviving this battle was already in question, much less killing these two overpowered monsters.

Fortunately, both Illumi and Izumi decided to join this operation, or else the state of their people would be in a much more desperate position.

This pair of brothers led their units to fight against the Ironhead Chimpanzee, who seemed to be a magic-type beast monster. It was sending rock boulders and earth spikes toward them as its main offensive measure. Though, it was also doing some powerful melee attacks from time to time.

There was also the time when this monster used a series of AOE (Area of Effect) skills while slamming its fists on the ground, taking down a significant number of the forces of the Black Markert.

However, after getting accustomed to its attack pattern, the people of the Black Market were able to quickly adjust themselves and able to have a steady footing during the battle.

With Illumi and Izumi taking the lead, their group was able to lock down the Ironhead Chimpanzee in place even though they were barely holding on.

On the other side of the battlefield, Arlott was leading his own team to keep the Steelfist Ape busy. And since his group had the greatest number of tanks and healers, they were doing relatively 'well' compared to the other team.

And since Arlott was a pretty strong player, he was able to save most of his subordinates at the most critical time. He was able to repeatedly cancel some of the skills of the overlord monsters with his perfect timing. However, it also required him to use most of his Tier 2 Skills in the process, which had a very long cooldown time.

Aside from this, the other reason why they were doing much better compared to the other team was because of the fact that the Steelfist Ape was a melee-type monster.

Fighting this type of monster was much easier than magic-type ones. As long as they kept a certain distance and held the monster in place, the rest of the team would be able to attack it freely.

And with the number of tanks on their team, holding the aggro of the monster was not a problem. They also did not have to worry about being one-shotted because of the number of healers behind them.

However, they still had to worry about the more powerful skills of the monster since those ones could still kill them within an instant.

Fortunately, Arlott was always on the lookout for those skills, so he would be able to cancel it in time or warn the others if he could not.

As for the AOE skills of the Steelfist Ape, their group was having it much easier compared to the other group since there was a significant sign when it was about to do a large move. The entire team had ample time to respond to it before the large-scale skill descended.

Just like that, the hunt for these two Overlord Rank Monsters continued.

But they were not lowering their guards since they were expecting another monster to appear out of nowhere.

The Stoneback Gorilla was still not making its appearance. This was their thought since they were unaware that this monster had already been hunted down by a certain someone.

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Watching from the sidelines, Shin could not help but be impressed at the three leaders of this particular raid party. He must admit that he somewhat underestimated their capabilities due to them being much weaker than him.

At the same time, he also witnessed how a proper raid took place.

He was always fighting powerful monsters himself, after all. He did not have much experience commanding such a large party since he was mostly playing solo. And if ever he did work with the others, they were all powerful players themselves, so commanding them did not take much of an effort.

But after seeing Arlott, Izumi, and Illumi leading the 'above average' players to hunt down such a pair of powerful monsters, he came to realize the importance of sound and proper leadership.

Even though Arlott and Izumi were somewhat lagging behind compared to Illumi, who was perfectly leading his unit, those two were still able to cover their shortcomings by putting extra effort into canceling the skills of the monsters in front of them.

Shin found it interesting that he learned a thing or two from these enemies. He even chuckled to himself when he thought about that.

After a few more minutes, he discovered that the state of the battle was steadily being under control. The three leaders of the opposing side were able to familiarize themselves with the two monsters, making it much easier for them to fight.

Shin also saw that they were slowly gaining their confidence, especially when they saw the slow yet steady drop of the health bars above the heads of the two monsters.

Once they reached below fifty percent of the total HP Bar of the two overlord monsters, the morale of the raid team reached an unimaginable level.

They became more motivated and started unleashing their best performance.

Little did they know that the actual hell was just about to descend. The water of realization would wake them up from their fantasy and pay a hefty sum for it.

Shin sneered at the sight of the group increasing their pace as he kept an eye on the health bars of the pair of monsters. "So, the number of players also plays a role in triggering that particular state? If only I know, then I should have brought a few more people with me."

He could not help but shake his head as he remembered how much he suffered at the hands of the Stoneback Gorilla.

As he continued to watch the health bars of the two monsters drop at a steady pace, he suddenly grinned evilly. "That strange berserk mode is not a time-based one, so I guess I have to let them deal with it for the time being before I step in."

"I hope that they will be able to hold out at least until they lower the durability of those protective auras by half. Lower than that will be much better," he added as he sat on a rock boulder in a more comfortable position as if he was anticipating a blockbuster movie.

A bucket of popcorn and a huge cup of soft drinks was the only thing that he was lacking.

As if getting the cue, a pair of deafening roars quickly resounded in the entire cave and shook its walls.

Roar! Roar!

The people from the Black Market already noticed that there was something strange from the Steelfist Ape and Ironhead Chimpanzee. But they were already a step too late when the unexpected happened.

Boom! Boom!

A strong shockwave swept the nearby players away, dragging them in the distance. It even continued rolling outwards, trampling everything in its path.

Fortunately, the quick ones instantly used their lifesaving skills without any hesitation and saved their lives from getting killed by those shockwaves.

Their actions saved their team from getting wiped out but the damage from the unexpected attack almost crippled everyone altogether.

Arlott, Illumi, and Izumi – these three leaders – were able to distance themselves from the epicenter of the shockwaves, saving themselves from suffering the same fate as their fallen comrades.

They looked at the devastation that the two overlords had left and saw that almost half of their forces had been annihilated. This sight made them curse under their breaths.

The hard work that they did up until now to prevent this outcome from happening was all for naught. All of their efforts seemed to have been wasted after seeing the current state of their forces.

And when they directed their gazes at the two humongous figures standing in the stance, their already solemn expression immediately turned grim.

That scene that they were seeing left a sour and bitter taste in their mouths.

They saw the Steelfist Ape shrouded by a grey metallic aura that was constantly flowing upwards, giving it a heavy and dangerous feeling. A single glance at it was more than enough to tell them that this particular state was much more powerful than an ordinary berserk mode of a monster. Especially when they saw the glowing health bar that it had.

And to make it even worse, the other monster, the Ironhead Chimpanzee was giving out the same feeling.

Its entire body was giving out a metallic luster similar to the one that the Steelfist Ape had. But instead of having a grey color, its aura had a mixture of black and brown colors. A thin layer of aura was covering its body while a continuous flow of it was constantly moving upwards.

Seeing the sudden transformation of these two Overlord Rank Monsters, almost crushed all the hopes that the people from the Black Market had.

They all knew that the situation was already out of hand.

Meanwhile, on the darker side of the cave, a certain someone seemed to be enjoying the misfortune of these poor people.