

Destiny 1231

Chapter 1231 Phantom Island (Part 2): Frost Burial Of The Winter Revenant

...

Shin stood rooted in his place due to what was standing right in front of him. It was not because he did not dare to move, but it was due to the immense pressure that he was currently pressing on him. It was a pressure strong enough to make his body freeze for how strong it was.

This pressure might not be as strong as Dracula, who was the strongest being that he had seen up until now. But it was slightly stronger than Draco and Lycan, who were in their peak state. This could only mean that whoever or whatever standing in front of him, was on the borderline between a Sovereign Being and a peak Enlightened Being.

"What kind of place is this?" muttered Shin to himself before focusing his gaze and staring in front of him.

There was a humanoid silhouette standing a couple of meters away from him. Due to the scattered branches of the trees filled with huge leaves, the moonlight was barely able to penetrate it. The combination of the night and the darkness under the shades of these gigantic trees made the whole place much darker than it could be.

Swoosh!

Then a subtle light suddenly came out from the silhouette, giving Shin a clear look at its appearance.

And when he saw what was behind the darkness, he could not help but slightly frown his brows.

He saw a humanoid creature donning a metal armor. The armor looked like the ones that the knights would be wearing during wars but also somewhat different.

Even if the upper body of the armor was similar to the knights the lower part had some clear difference. Despite being made of metal, the armor seemed to be a mixture of a skirt and a robe.

Looking closely, Shin could not see the legs of this humanoid creature. It was currently floating in the air at a very low altitude.

He could also see some blue lights leaking from the small gaps in the armor, giving Shin the idea that this must be a spiritual creature. It was immediately proven when the head of this creature was suddenly lit ablaze by a blue flame.

The head was like a burning ball with a raging blue flame.

It was a head without a face but the dancing flame over it represents its hair. There was a crown of blade on its head that seemed to be made of multiple knives while a metal face armor was outlining its non-existing face.

This spiritual being was holding a huge polearm weapon that seemed to be a hybrid between a scepter and a trident. The edges of the sharp heads of the weapon were glowing with crystalline light while snowflakes were flowing through its surface.

When Shin looked closer, he could see that there were ancient runes engraved on the armor and the crown of this creature as well as its weapon.

Overall, Shin could tell that this must be a powerful humanoid monster.

He could not help but gulp a mouthful of saliva as he stared at this monster. He became extra nervous when he saw its basic information through the panel displayed over its head after he used the 'True Sight' Skill.

Monster Name: Winter Revenant 'Edur'

Title: Watcher of the Frozen Land

Monster Type: Humanoid Monster

Race: Spiritual Being

Bloodline: Monarch

Monster Rank: Emperor (World Boss)

Level: 450

Hit Points: ???

Details: ???

Shin swallowed even harder when he saw these lines. Although most of the important information was nothing but a bunch of question marks, the rest were more than enough to give Shin a serious warning.

The fact that this monster had its own name clearly indicated that this monster was very powerful. Moreover, it also possessed a title, which further informed him that he was in deep trouble.

Despite its size and height being similar to Shin and completely inferior to the black-feathered birds feasting on the huge corpse behind him, this monster was definitely much stronger than them. Its level alone was a clear indication of that.

To make it even worse, the information panel also indicated that this monster had its own race and possessed a bloodline, which was somewhat hinting that this humanoid monster had a certain 'background' unlike the regular monsters that he had faced up until now.

Then there was also its rank which indicated that this monster was one of the endgame bosses of the game.

It was a creature that was supposed to be an endgame content of the current stage of the game.

Shin did not know what to do since he clearly understood his current predicament. No matter what he tried to do, he would still end up dead due to the huge gap between him and this monster.

Swoosh!

Then, while he was trying to think what to do, the Winter Revenant suddenly floated forward. It made Shin become even more tense and frozen in place.

He was already expecting the worst.

But to his surprise, this monster just flew past him, completely ignoring his existence. Instead, it flew towards the black-feathered birds behind him.

He was shocked at first, making him completely stunned and unable to process what was happening.

Then he suddenly turned around to see what was happening. It was at that moment that he saw the Winter Revenant waving its weapon and pointing it toward the sky.

Swoosh!

There was a pillar of light that came out from the top of the scepter and parted the thick branches of the trees. The pillar of light released an intense coldness that froze the leaves of the trees, which quickly shattered in the very next instant.

Then Shin saw the light pierce through the clouds before creating a hole in the atmosphere.

Boom!

Then a deafening thunder suddenly erupted and reverberated. It spread in every direction as the dark clouds slowly gathered around the pillar of light before spinning in a clockwise direction.

The scene that was created was like the formation of a storm in the sky over the sea.

Shin did not know what exactly was happening, but he could not take away his eyes from this scene. He stared at the sky, watching the gathering and spinning clouds with complete immersion.

One of the skills from his arsenal was also activated without him knowing. It was the special ocular skill that he had inherited from one of the most powerful NPCs within the game, which was also the guy who had tested him for the qualification of being a Nephilim.

'Legacy Skill: Duplicator's Eyes'

Then he witnessed the power of a monster close at this plane's peak.

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

A raging blizzard suddenly appeared out of nowhere and assaulted the black-feathered birds. Its hindered movements prevented them from moving freely, much less flying to escape.

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

Then a hail of huge icicles, ice spears, frozen arrows, and other ice-related spells started pouring from the sky and rained down at the huge birds.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

Shriek!

The black-feathered birds cried in pain as they endured the seemingly never-ending attacks that were assaulting them.

The storm lasted for a few minutes before everything settled down and returned to the forest on its usual calmness.

In front of him, Shin saw a field of snow in the middle of the forest with huge and sharp frozen pillars struck on the ground.

He could not see the gigantic birds with black feathers as well as the humongous corpse of the unknown monster that they were feasting on earlier. Aside from the snowfield surrounded by gigantic trees and huge frozen pillars over the snowy field, everything else was back to its usual calmness.

Shin could not even find the Winter Revenant that caused this scene.

Ding

While he was trying to calm down and doing his best to process what he just witnessed, his thoughts were suddenly distracted by the sudden notification sound sent by the system.

And when he looked at it, he could not help but raise his brows while the sound of the system rang in his ears.

System: You have discovered the Phantom Island!

System: You will not get any Fame or Reputation Points due to certain circumstances.

Ding

System: You have witnessed the records of the past.

System: You have witnessed the power of the Winter Revenant 'Edur', the Watcher of the Frozen Land! You received a certain level of insight!

Ding

System: Your understanding of the Water and Ice Elements has greatly increased!

...

It was at that moment that Shin finally understood what just happened earlier. It also had given him the idea why he did not find a single soul within this place as well as why that powerful monster just ignored him earlier.

Everything was coming together.

But that was not the only surprise that he had gotten. It was because another series of notifications suddenly bombarded his ears in the very next instant.

Ding

System: You have activated the Duplicator's Eyes and peered through the secrets of a Monarch of the Ice and Snow, the 'Frost Burial'.

Ding

System: Conditions have not been met. Learning the skill has failed.

Ding

System: Found a suitable skill to act as the substitute model.

Ding

System: Your Insight has uncovered certain secrets of the 'Legacy Skill: Regan's Method'!

System: Regan's Method has created a new path.

The Skills 'Cold Link' and 'Chilling Touch' have created a new skill tree for elements of 'Water, Ice, and Snow'! – Final Form 'Frost Burial'.

...

Shin was unable to move due to the notifications that he just received. He failed to properly process everything due to how shocked he was.

Everything was a little too fast.

He felt that his brain had short-circuited due to how fast the information was entering his mind. There seemed to be a smoke steaming over his head, representing what was happening.

It took some time for him to finally able to calm himself down and process all the information that he had just gotten one by one.

Starting from the very beginning; this place seemed to be called the 'Phantom Island'. He did not know what exactly it was, but from its name, he felt that it might related to Kentas. After all, that cosplaying dude was the one who had invited him here.

Regardless of the reason, he felt that this mysterious NPC had purposely brought him here and wanted him to explore it. Fortunately, Shin did not leave right away when he got out of the Trail Ground previously, or else he would have missed such an important opportunity big time.

Next was the thing that the system had mentioned, which was about 'witnessing the past'.

Shin did not know exactly what it was, but it must be related to what the Winter Revenant had shown him earlier. That Ultimate Skill might be something important aside from being powerful.

Witnessing it once was more than enough for Shin to gain a certain level of insight when it came to Water and Ice Elements. This proved that there was more to it than what he could see from the surface.

And last, but not least, was the final set of notifications that he had received.

This particular skill, which the Winter Revenant had shown, seemed to have affected one of his Legacy Skills, the Regan's Method. And from the look of it, there seemed to be a certain level of connection between the two.

He was not sure about it, but Shin felt that it might be the case.

The 'Duplicator's Eyes' seemed to have played the role of 'building the bridge', but Shin felt that it was not everything. He felt that this 'Frozen Burial' was somewhat connected to this Legacy Skill created by Regan.

Thinking about it, Shin felt that something clicked inside his head; an idea flashed through his mind.

"Don't tell me the research lab of this 'Magic Knight' is hidden somewhere on this island?" muttered Shin as he remembered the historical note written on the description of the 'Regan's Method'.

Skill Name: Regan's Method

Skill Rank: Legacy

Historical Note: Great Swordsman Regan was branded as someone who didn't have any talent in regard to Swordsmanship despite him loving the art of the sword too much.

But even if that was the case, he was too talented in the arts of Elementalism. He tried to find a way to combine his passion for Swordsmanship and his talent for Elementalism.

After years of research, he finally found a swordsmanship of his own.

Hint: Find Regan's secret laboratory to learn the full mystery of this skill.

Reading through this description, Shin could not help but feel excited.

His heart beat fast as he felt that he was going to find an answer to one of his questions. "This must be the solution that I am looking for!"

Chapter 1232 Phantom Island (Part 3): Final Judgement Of The Earth Phantasm

...

Shin felt a little excited after having his suspicion. If it turned out to be true, then he might be able to properly use the fighting style of the Elemental Clone in his promotion quest.

From what he had seen up until now, that style was centered around the two Legacy Skills that he had, Mondi's Style and Regan's Method. The in-game skills were used and fused together with the rest of the in-game skills from his arsenal.

Between the two Legacy Skills, Shin was more familiar with Mondi's Style since he had been utilizing the flexibility of this skill since he had gotten it despite the complexity that it had.

He had tried using Regan's Method before and took advantage of its multiple elemental attacks to confuse his opponents and catch them off guard. But it did not take long for him to realize that the skill was not fit for his overall fighting style. This was the reason why he had neglected it most of the time.

But after seeing how the Elemental Clone utilized it and even fused the skill with Mondi's Style, he realized that the potential of Regan's Method was much greater than what he had expected.

If he was thinking was right, and the secret laboratory of Regan was really on this island, then he might be reaping a lot of benefits in this place.

"Aside from the secret laboratory potentially being here, I also have to figure out the connection between the Winter Revenant and Regan," mumbled Shin with suspicion. "I know that it can be a coincidence, but I keep having a feeling that it is not the case."

"There must be a certain connection," he added before turning his head back in front.

He then saw that everything went back to the original state of the forest. The snowfield and ice pillars were no longer there, and the thick branches of the trees and their huge leaves above were covering what was beneath them once again.

He could no longer see the sky for another time due to them.

After collecting his thoughts and calming his mind, Shin continued exploring the island. He then picked a random direction, following his instincts, before moving ahead

...

Just like what happened previously, Shin spent quite a lot of time walking without encountering a single soul. Not even an insect was present to sing. There were no cicadas, crickets, or katydids to make the symphonic sound of the night.

It was eerily quiet. And this quietness could give a certain unease in the heart, making an individual tense and uncomfortable.

Adding the darkness of the night, Shin felt a confining feeling in his chest. There was a heavy and restricting feeling that was weighing on him, which also made him halt his advance.

He could not explain it, but he felt that his mindset and concentration were being affected by this eerily quiet atmosphere. It was at this moment that he realized that this Phantom Island was not as simple as it seemed to be.

He was starting to understand that his region was one of the high-level maps of the game despite not having any monsters around.

He was then reminded of one of the notifications that he had received earlier. It said that he would not be getting any Fame or Reputation Points for being the first person to discover this island due to certain circumstances.

Now that he thought about it, he felt that Kentas might have done something. However, Shin still thought that it did not necessarily mean that this eerie silence of the forest had anything do to with this NPC.

Crack!

While he was lost in his thoughts, he suddenly heard the sound of dry branches being shattered after being stepped upon.

Being in this place filled with nothing but an eerie silence, this little sound was like a clap of thunder exploding in the sky.

He quickly turned toward the source of the sound while putting up his guard. He stood in his spot for a second when he remembered something. In this forest, where the threes were as huge as skyscrapers and had branches as thick as the trunks of regular trees, something that could step on it and shatter such large branches with a step could only mean a single thing – the monster should be humongous and heavy.

Realizing that he might be putting himself in danger, Shin quickly activated one of his stealth skills and ran behind the nearby trees to hide. He also controlled his breathing as silently as possible and suppressed his presence as little as he could.

But after waiting for a few more minutes without anything happening, he could not help but frown deeply before peeking from behind the tree.

When he realized that there was nothing there, he was reminded of what happened earlier, when he encountered the Winter Revenant 'Edur.'

Thinking that the same thing might be happening, he quickly walked out from behind the tree before deciding to head over to where the sound came from.

Swoosh! Swoosh!

He moved very fast, but he was able to minimize the sound as much as he could through special technique. He also made sure to keep his stealth skills active to avoid being seen by anyone.

After traveling for quite some time, he felt that there was something wrong. He had already covered quite a distance, yet he still had not seen the 'branch' that he had heard being shattered earlier.

And given the 'regular' size of this place, there should be some footprints left on the ground, but he still had not seen one.

While he was lost in his thoughts, a very loud explosion suddenly interrupted him.

Boom!

With how loud the explosion was, Shin was able to instantly pinpoint where it was coming from. Raising his head toward that direction, he quickly kicked the ground and headed straight to it.

Swoosh!

It took him quite some time before he arrived at his destination. To his surprise, he arrived edge of the forest where a barren land was waiting for him.

It was a land filled with dry and uneven ground. There were no trees nor any kind of plantations. There were a couple of dry branches and tree trunks scattered in different places, but most of them were buried and on the verge of being completely corroded.

Shin swept his gaze at this barren land for a couple of moments as he sensed the immediate change in the temperature.

If inside the forest was cold and chilly, then it was very hot in this barren land. The heat that was surrounding this place was more than enough for Shin to become uncomfortable. He even felt that it was comparable to the temperature within the volcano where Berlin had set up his personal workshop.

What was surprising was when Shin took a step back, entering the forest once again, the temperature instantly changed and suddenly became cold and chilly once again.

"Interesting," muttered Shin as he stepped between the forest and the barren land. He could feel that his body was submerged between the two opposing temperatures.

The sky was still dark, indicating that it was still night.

BOOM!

It was at this moment that another explosion could be heard. And this time, it was much louder than the previous one. It might be due to Shin being slightly closer to it than earlier.

Turning his head toward the direction where the explosion came from, Shin could not see anything despite activating his 'True Sight' Skill.

He frowned deeply in confusion. With how loud that explosion was, he was supposed to see at least a little commotion despite the darkness of the night or even if he was quite far from it.

He suppressed those thoughts before heading toward where the explosion came from.

Swoosh!

And when he arrived at the center of the earlier explosion, he was immediately greeted by another stunning sight.

Upfront, he saw a huge monster that seemed to be a hybrid between a turtle and a bear. Its body was as mighty and solid as a bear – broad shoulders, slim yet firm waist, powerful arms, and strong legs. On its back, there seemed to be a turtle shell that was able to block all attacks that were coming from behind.

Its size was as huge as the frost dragon that Shin and the others in their group had encountered during the Empire Quest.

And given the pressure that Shin was feeling from this monster, he could feel that it was at least not weaker than Draco or Lycan.

Using his 'True Sight' Skill, he could see that the monster was really quite powerful. It was a level 480 monster called the Great Land Dominator.

What was surprising was that someone seemed to be fighting against this monster alone.

Shin was not able to spot the opponent of the Land Dominator right away due to its speed. If not for his sensitive senses and sharp eyes, then he would not be able to see the moving silhouette circling around the huge monster.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

The Land Dominator slammed its paws on the ground repeatedly, making the ground shake with each strike. The surrounding rock formations and dry hills collapsed due to the shockwave produced by each strike.

Fortunately, Shin was standing on the peak of a small mountain away from the battle, giving him a good vantage point, where he could see the entirety of the battle without being at any kind of risk.

Thick dusk and rock fragments flew in the air, blocking the line of vision of the monster. It moved its head left and right, seemingly looking for its prey.

Swoosh! Swoosh!

Not long after, a pair of spinning objects suddenly flew out of the thick dust from below. It hit the chin of the Land Dominator, pushing its head to bounce up and stumble back.

Bang!

Swoosh! Swoosh!

While the Land Dominator was trying to regain its footing, the pair of objects flew back down and cleared the cloud of dust on their path.

It was at that moment that Shin finally saw who was fighting this humongous monster.

Just like before, it seemed to be an armored knight. However, instead of being a slim knight, this one had a larger and rounder physique. If it was not a spiritual being under that armor, then Shin would think that it was a fat person.

Setting that aside, Shin observed the humanoid monster. The set of armor that it was wearing seemed to be made of rare ores instead of metallic materials. It did not give any kind of metallic luster but had an earthen and rough texture instead.

Just like the Winter Revenant, Shin could see some light leaking out from the gaps of the armor, clearly indicating that this was another spiritual being. But this time, this humanoid monster was wearing a helmet that was covering its entire head and hiding its face.

Looking a little closer, Shin could see that its head had a pair of horns that looked like the antlers of a fully grown deer. But these horns were made of Mana instead of any physical materials.

Then Shin's eyes were attracted to the pair of axes on the hands of this humanoid monster. It was at that moment that he realized what were the spinning objects that hit the chin of the Land Dominator earlier.

Activating his ocular skills to inspect this monster, the information panel was presented in front of Shin once again.

Monster Name: Earth Phantasm 'Lur'

Title: Guardian of the Barren Land

Monster Type: Humanoid Monster

Race: Spiritual Being

Bloodline: Monarch

Monster Rank: Emperor (World Boss)

Level: 450

Hit Points: ???

Details: ???

After Shin confirmed his suspicion, he quickly fixed his gaze on the Earth Phantasm as he knew that this situation would be similar to what happened with the Winter Revenant earlier.

At that moment, he saw the Earth Phantasm put its axes together. Or to be more precise, it combined the huge blades of the axes together and formed a large shield.

Raising that shield, the Earth Phantasm blocked the incoming strike from the Land Dominator.

Bang!

The ground shook as the two sides collided.

Then something unexpected happened.

The Land Dominator was suddenly thrown in the air right after the collision. Its huge body was thrown high up in the sky by a repulsive force that came from the ground. It seemed like gravity had gone reverse and sent it upward instead of pulling it down.

The gigantic Land Dominator paused in the air momentarily when it reached the apex before started falling toward the ground.

Then Shin saw the Earth Phantasm slam the bottom of its shield toward the ground before expanding its chest and shouting toward the sky.

Roar!

Accompanying its roar, the ground suddenly shook violently as if an earthquake at the highest intensity assaulted it.

Then Shin saw huge spears made of dense earth elemental mana sprouting out from the ground and shot toward the sky like modern rockets.

During the flight, they gathered around and fused with one another, forming a much larger spear. Then this gigantic spear spun with great speed, drilling in the air and forming a raging spiral storm.

The gigantic spear flew straight to the sky while piecing the humongous body of the Great Land Dominator, dragging it toward a higher altitude.

The huge monster roared at the top of its lungs, trying to fight back, but its power collapsed in front of the mighty spear while its body was shredded into pieces.

Watching the scene with full attention while also activating the 'Duplicator's Eyes' in the process, Shin heard the familiar notification sound of the system.

Ding

Chapter 1233 Phantom Island (Part 4): The Five Great Elements

...

Just like what Shin had suspected, he had encountered a few more spiritual knights as he explored the Phantom Island.

After encountering the Earth Phantasm earlier, Shin had received another set of notifications from the system, which informed him about the 'insights' that he had gotten from watching such an advanced elemental skill as well as the new evolutionary paths of the 'Legacy Skill: Regan's Method'.

At that time, Shin had gotten the final form called 'Final Judgement'.

He did not dwell too much on reading the description of the skill since he would not reach that path any time soon. At the very least, he would need to upgrade the legacy skill to level 5 before he could unlock that form just like the 'Frost Burial'.

Following the clues that he had, Shin went to explore the other places on the island.

Shin had already expected that this map would be huge, but he did not expect that it would be this huge. Aside from the previous two regions that he had seen, he had discovered five more regions when he was exploring.

The third region was a scorching desert filled with black sand. Or to be more precise, the sand was from powdered metal and ores.

Shin found this desert strange and thought that the black sand was real sand with a different color. But Astaroth suddenly told him that the sand was from powdered metal, which surprised him greatly.

He ventured into this desert while advancing with full caution. Despite knowing that he would most likely not encounter any danger along the way, Shin chose to put his guard up all the time.

This continued until he reached the center of the black desert.

There, he witnessed another battle. It was between another Spiritual Being wearing a set of full-body knight's armor. And this time, it was holding a banner on its left hand and a sword on its right.

Using his 'True Sight' Skill, Shin found out that the Spiritual Being was called Flame Ghost 'Su', the Wrath of the Forsaken Land.

After an intense battle against a huge monster with a body that seemed to have merged with the desert itself, this Spiritual Being suddenly stabbed the bottom of its banner on the ground while pointing its sword toward the sky.

Then Shin saw a rain of blazing fireballs. They filled the entire sky and dyed it red with their fiery light before descending toward the desert as if it were the end of the world.

When they got closer to the ground, Shin finally saw that they were actually huge meteors that bombarded the entire desert land.

In this encounter, Regan's Method created an evolutionary path with the final form called 'Meteor Shower'.

The next region where Shin arrived was a frozen mountain.

There seemed to be nothing out of the ordinary when Shin first saw the mountain. In fact, he felt that it must be slightly taller than the forest filled with giant trees.

But when Shin set foot on it, he immediately realized that he was completely wrong. Not only this mountain was much more dangerous than the previous three regions, but it was also the one that could kill him without fighting.

The coldness of this frozen mountain was out of his Imagination. It almost turned him into an ice statue and froze him to death the moment he stepped on it.

Fortunately, he was fast enough to respond and used the power of the Brilliant Sun to protect himself. He melted the deadly ice and prevented himself from being frozen once again.

He then maintained a special state where his body was blazing intensely while keeping the Solar Breathing Technique active. With his current strength, he could maintain this state for an extended period of time while exploring the frozen mountain.

Following the pattern, Shin climbed the mountain and reached its peak in the fastest and most efficient way. He used the Nephilim's Wings and flew straight to the peak without pause.

When he reached the peak of the mountain, he was immediately greeted by yet another sight. Just like the previous encounters, he had met another scene where an armored Spiritual Being was fighting against a huge and powerful monster.

This time, the Spiritual Being was called Sword Wraith 'Zilar', the Keeper of the Sword Graveyard.

From the set of armor that it was wearing and the way that it fought, it was clear that it was a swordsman. And the swordsmanship that it was using seemed to be quite exquisite but possessed a very solid foundation.

Comparing it with the swordsmen that Shin had seen in the real world, this Sword Ghost should be a Swordmaster with the highest level of sword mastery. A swordsman, who controlled his own sword field and was a step below a Sword Saint.

An expert was comparable to the Domain Realm Martial Artist and Venerable Realm Mentalist.

Its opponent was a creature that seemed to be a plant-type monster. It had a snow-white trunk and branches that could stretch thousands of meters in length.

The monster whipped its branches at the Sword Wraith like crazy, covering all retreat paths and any possible maneuvering spaces. But despite that being the case, the latter was still able to not avoid all branches without a problem.

At the same time, the Sword Wraith was also swinging its sword occasionally to cut everything that would most likely catch it.

Looking closely at the battle, Shin quickly realized that the element that the Sword Wraith represented was the element of metal.

A few moments later, the Sword Wraith finally showed the ultimate skill that it was supposed to 'show' to Shin.

First, it jumped in the air while swinging its sword multiple times, sending a series of sword waves that cut and shredded the white branches that were trying to wrap themselves around it.

Then, the Sword Wraith suddenly pointed its sword toward the sky before shifting its grip into revers and swinging the sword down.

Then Shin saw the clouds in the sky suddenly parted and revealed a blinding light behind it. Following it was the appearance of the gigantic double-edged sword. It was descending rapidly with its tip crushing towards the peak of the frozen mountain.

Shin thought that he would die at that time, especially when a powerful explosion swept through him when the giant sword in the sky landed.

But when he opened his eyes and his vision came back, he found himself standing alone at the peak of the frozen mountain.

It took him quite some time before he was finally able to regain his composure and process everything inside his head.

Looking at the notification window, Shin saw that the evolution path that Regan's Method had created for Metal Element had the final form called 'Divine Punishment'.

Shin did not immediately climb down the frozen mountain after that. Instead, he walked toward the edge and looked at the horizon, appreciating the view before looking for his next destination.

The next place that he found was a lake. An ordinary-looking lake with a very calm surface.

This lake was near the frozen mountain, so Shin could easily reach it by gliding down from the peak of the mountain.

He first thought that there was nothing eventful to see in that lake. But right after reaching a certain altitude from the surface of the water, two explosions suddenly erupted right below him.

Bang! Bang!

The curtain of water slightly blocked his line of vision, but he could already see a pair of huge silhouettes behind it.

When everything settled down, Shin first saw a huge sea serpent with smooth and white scales. This sea serpent had sharp fins running on its back and a thick mane around its neck.

Turning his head toward the other side, Shin saw another serpent. But instead of a living creature, what he saw was a huge wooden construct.

Sitting calmly at the head of that wooden construct was another armored Spiritual Being with a pair of glowing green eyes.

Looking at it with his 'True Sight' Skill, Shin quickly got the name of the Spiritual Being. It was called Wood Spirit 'Zur', the Protector of the Divine Forest.

It did not take long for the staredown to end as the two huge monsters quickly entangled against each other and coiled their bodies to try crushing one another.

Shin watched in the air with his wings spread wide behind him.

After letting the sea serpent wrestle with the wooden construct that had the form of another serpent, the Wood Spirit finally made its move. It spread its arms wide and floated toward the sky while watching its construct be crushed by the opposing side.

It then put its hands together before forming a series of seals in quick succession.

A few moments later, the lake suddenly became chaotic as if something underneath was making its way up to the surface.

Then, at the very next instant, Shin saw a huge tree suddenly shot from the lake and headed straight to the sky. Its thick roots were as large as the body of the sea serpent while the branches were full of giant leaves that seemed to be able to cover the sky.

A moment later, the roots of the giant tree wrapped themselves in the body of the sea serpent, completely restraining it. Then the tip of the branches suddenly turned sharp before stabbing the poor serpent from every direction.

Every time the pointed branches pierced through the body of the sea serpent, the latter cried in pain and agony while its blood dyed the lake completely red.

Looking at the notification widow, Shin found another evolutionary path added to Regan's Method as expected. It was a Wood Elemental Evolutionary Path with the final form called 'Flora Emergence'.

The next two strange regions that Shin found were an erupting volcano and a huge river of flowing lava.

When Shin reached those two regions, he thought that he would have another strange encounter. But to his surprise, nothing happened when he passed through the two regions.

Aside from the raging lava flowing out of the mountain of the volcano and the blazing river, he found nothing but disappointment.

But when he put more thought into it, he realized that these Spiritual Beings were most likely representing the five elements of the world just like what his 'Perfected Four Symbol Scripture' had.

When he thought about this, he became even more determined to look for the secret laboratory of Regan. He felt that it would be the key for him to properly use his perfect mentalism inside the game.

Unfortunately, after properly exploring different regions and thoroughly combing through every place that he went through, he still could not find the place he was looking for.

This made him think that his guess might be wrong and that the secret laboratory might not be in this place.

But despite that thought crossing his mind, he still could not give it up. He was still stubbornly hoping that Regan's laboratory would be here.

He had spent two days (in-game time) looking for this laboratory and he did not know whether it really hidden in this place or not.

During his free time, when he was resting, he was also studying the evolutionary paths that the Legacy Skill, Regard's Method, had.

He was also experimenting with it to see if he could really use it to mimic the Mentalism Techniques that he had in the real world.

Surprisingly, he produced a positive result. The Regan's Method really helped him a lot when exploring the five elements, particularly the Fire, Earth, and Metal Elements. He was making huge progress with these three elements due to the special techniques that he was practicing complementing them.

Obviously, Fire Element was way ahead compared to the others since he already had awakened it in the real world and even had an advanced Mana that perfectly matched the Mentalism Method within the game.

"If only I can train the other elements within a special environment where I can awaken another-..." his words trailed in the air for a while as completed it. "...elements."

A sudden thought flashed through his mind. And when it fully sank in his head, he could not help but slap his forehead for his slow-wittedness.

"Aren't I in a perfect place for that? It may not be as good as the rebirthing place of an Elemental Spirit, but they are still good enough nevertheless," he mumbled while shaking his head with a bitter smile.

He then stood up and stretched his waist. This time, he would explore the Phantom Island, but with a different purpose.

He would be staying in different regions a little longer and meditating.

Chapter 1234 A Tomb Of An Ancient Cultivator

.....

As Shin was immersing himself in his training in the virtual world, something happened in the real world.

On the outskirts of the Soaring Continent, in the borders of the Western Plain Region, an ancient tomb was dug by archeologists and professional excavators.

The tomb was situated in the middle of a valley surrounded by towering mountains.

In the modern times, this place was called the Five Sword Peaks. It was called like that because those five tall mountains looked like five different swords sticking out from the ground.

At the same time, the surrounding place was filled with dense sword intent, making the expert suspect that a powerful ancient cultivator had died in this place.

Due to this reason, a lot of swordsmen and sword practitioners were visiting this place to practice their swordsmanship.

What was even surprising about this place was when someone was standing on a different peak. Each mountain seemed to be able to give a different insight when it came to the path of swords.

...

The ancient tomb situated in the valley in the middle of the five mountain peaks was only discovered by chance.

An expert swordsman, who was a frequent visitor of the mountain peaks, was trying to look for a different inspiration and decided to climb down the mountain, planning to look at it from a different angle.

The valley at the center of the five mountains was the perfect spot for his sword training.

At first, everything was going smoothly. The expert swordsman was able to get the inspiration that he was looking for and able to progress his swordsmanship to another level.

But during his training, when he was in the middle of his breakthrough, something unexpected happened.

The five mountain peaks seemed to have responded to the expert's swordsmanship, making the surrounding sword intent to gather, creating a storm in the sky.

Then, unexpectedly, the gathered sword intent suddenly formed a sword formation that assaulted all the swordsmen and sword practitioners training on the mountain peaks.

If not for Sword Immortal 'Eugene White', who was sensitive to such dense sword intent and large movement, rushing into the place and breaking the sword formation, then everyone present in the Five Sword Peaks would most likely be dead.

After investigating the mountain peaks and the valley at the center, Eugene was able to discover the tomb hidden underneath the ground

Eugene then contacted his friends, who immediately reported it to the government and called the departments responsible for such events, especially the Department of Cultural Relics and National Treasures.

This was the modern times, so the discovery of such tombs and similar ruins needed to be reported to the government to prevent the people from creating chaos due to the competition for the possible inheritance left behind by the ancient expert or cultivator.

Instances that happened with the Black Serpent Mafia were special occasions since it was a private discovery and also concerned different crimes.

The Military Forces had the right to move on their own and launched a special operation to subdue the criminal organization and save the victims.

As for the discovered inheritance, it was another case and the military could do anything about it as they saw fit since it was a private discovery.

But if it was a public discovery like this case with the ancient tomb in the Five Mountain Peaks, where a lot of people were involved, the government needed to make it fair for everyone.

They could give certain organizations a certain quota of people that they could send to investigate the tomb. The people, who were present within the vicinity during the discovery of the tomb were also granted the right to enter according to the law that was created for this kind of occasion.

The government would oversee everything and make sure that no one would commit any crime during the exploration.

Competitions and fighting over the discovered relics and inheritances would be permitted, but the senseless massacre was strictly prohibited.

If someone was caught in action, then the punishment and consequences would be as heavy as the death penalty.

Of course, to make sure that there would be absolute fairness, the government would invite some third party to help oversee the entire situation.

Experts like Sword Immortal Eugene would be invited by the government as the overseer of the entire situation.

He would be joined by other Peak Domain Realm and Peak Venerable Realm experts, who would not be interested in this kind of inheritance.

After all, experts like them had already been following their own paths in their respective disciplines and only a step away from reaching the absolute peak, so these kinds of inheritances would be useless to them.

They would be the perfect candidate to oversee such events.

...

Regarding the entries that would enter the tomb, the experts of the government discovered something unusual.

After entering the tomb, the experts who were sent by the government noticed that there was a powerful 'law' that was restricting anyone who entered.

Even though they were able to enter without problem upon entering the outer layer of the tomb, they were suddenly stopped by an invisible wall when they tried to advance further.

Upon further investigation, the experts discovered that only individuals beneath the Void Manifestation Stage Martial Artists, Rulers Realm Mentalists, and Advanced Level Swordmasters could enter.

After learning about this, the government quickly issued a summoning command to the entire Continent. It was to call upon all the powerful families, private organizations, and government-related departments.

The summon was issued for two reasons, one was to discuss the distribution of the entry quota and how they were going to prevent the other Continents from interfering.

If it was an ordinary inheritance and a tomb of a regular ancient cultivator, then they would not mind letting organizations from other countries join the fun. However, after the initial investigation, they discovered that the tomb was related to one of the famous experts of the past, who was also quite known in the current era.

One of the old experts from the Department of Cultural Relics and National Treasures read through all the records that they had and discovered that the owner of this tomb was related to an ancient cultivator known as the 'King of Blades'.

The historical records stated that the 'King of Blades' had suffered a crushing defeat against another expert known as the 'Blind Immortal'.

Aside from being defeated, the 'King of Blades' had also suffered a grievous wound that led to his death.

And after doing some comparison, and based on the evidence left in the tomb, the expert had confidently concluded that the tomb was most likely related to the 'King of Blades', even if it was not his tomb.

The 'King of Blades' might not be as strong as the 'Thunder Lord', and their inheritances could not be compared to one another, there was a high chance that the former had a complete inheritance given that there was a tomb.

And since it was from a famous expert of the past, the possible inheritance that was left behind would have a certain level of importance.

Even if this was not the case, the treasures that could be found inside the tomb would be helpful for the current era. At the very least, they could be an important subject for research and experiment.

After all, the 'technology' of the previous eras was still a mystery for the experts of the current age.

Although the secret of spatial attributes had already been uncovered by the current era, especially when it came to spatial storage and teleportation methods, there were still some things that were not clear to the current experts.

One example of this was the relics and artifacts of the previous era, particularly those sacred weapons of the past.

...

Within the Magic Ace Academy, all professors with the highest martial and mentalism attainments were gathered in a conference room along with the deans of different departments.

The one leading this conference was the vice-headmaster of the academy since the Headmaster was already in the meeting place where the discussion between the top families and organizations of the Soaring Continent would be taking place.

Inside the conference room, Old Man Lin was currently sitting on his seat in a lazy manner while saying. "Why do we even have to take this much preparation for just an 'insignificant' inheritance?"

"It is just the tomb of an ancient cultivator who managed to somehow make his name known in the past. And we are not even sure if it is really his tomb. Aren't we just wasting our time and effort for it?"

"If it is another 'Lord' or a 'Conqueror' of that era, then I will say that it will be worth it. I will not only support them wholeheartedly, but I will even volunteer to become the overseer of the entire exploration."

As he was rambling everything he wanted to say, no one in the conference room dared to voice out their complaints. They did not dare to interrupt him because they clearly knew his temper. If they tried to stop him, then no one would be willing to handle the consequences.

They could forget about the conference and get ready for a war instead.

All they could do right now was to endure hearing his ramblings and wait for the old monster to calm down.

It was until when another troublesome old monster joined them in the conference room. "Stop complaining already, Lin Huang. It is not like you are obligated to join this conference."

Hearing that, Martial King Lin Huang suddenly turned toward the source of the voice before snarling back. "Hah! Manuel Morales! Don't act like a big shot just because you become an executive of this academy. If not for us wanting to settle down and laying low, you will never be able to have that seat!"

Hearing that, the muscular man sitting opposite Old Man Lin immediately shot back. "Hah! Don't make me laugh! Just admit that you are already too old to be on active duty!"

"I am even wondering why the Headmaster chose to leave those children under your care. Isn't it a little too much for your old bones to look after those younglings?"

Ling Huang laughed heartedly when he heard that and started mocking the other party. "Just admit that you feel bitter because you were not chosen by Mr. Stone to train those candidates for the next Battle for Supremacy."

As the two old monsters were bickering with each other like children, the head instructors, leading professors, and the rest of the executives of the academy were wearing bitter looks on their faces.

Some were just ignoring the two and did not care. The others were doing their own thing while the rest just did want to get involved.

It was not that they were afraid of the old men, but they were just unwilling to take part in the issue. They did not want to tire themselves and calm the two down when the situation got out of hand.

That job was supposedly for the Headmaster of the academy. But since that person was currently not present, no one would be willing to 'babysit' these troublesome men.

The Vice-headmaster was currently having a headache as he did know what to do. He wanted to start this conference and end it as soon as possible, but he did not dare to provoke the two monsters since he was not their match.

On one hand, there was the legendary Martial King, who was notoriously known as one of the most brutal and strongest Martial Practitioners when it came to body refining.

Old Man Lin was also famous for his strange Martial Arts. But most importantly, this old man was a complete madman, who would not care who was his opponent and loved to fight. Trying to fight him was practically a suicide.

On the other hand, there was a crazy demon known to many as the 'Undefeatable General'. One of the most powerful generals, who fought at the frontline when there was a war between the Soaring Continent and the primitive people beyond the Forbidden Valley.

During the first discovery of that place, an unknown number of experts with strange discipline suddenly started swarming toward 'General's Gate' – the huge entrance of the said valley – and killed their way over.

The war between the seven continents and those unknown people lasted for at least a hundred years before the alliance between the continents had won and built the current World Government.

As one of the great generals, who was at the forefront of the battle during his younger years, Manuel Morales had earned his name and title by slaughtering countless enemies and killing a lot of generals from the opposing side.

The war was at the most crucial stage at that time, which was why his contribution was widely accepted by everyone, especially when the war had ended during those years.

He also had a very troublesome temperament, making it hard to control him.

It was still a mystery why he had chosen to join the Magic Ace Academy during his retirement on the frontlines instead of the rest of the famous and prestigious schools around the world. Especially the Top Military School, which was centered on producing talents with similar training methods as the military forces.

Between these two experts, the Vice-Headmaster felt like he was stuck between a rock and a hard place.

In this time of crisis, he could only turn his head in a certain direction, looking at Professor Henry. Out of all the people in the conference room, this person was the only one who could help him solve his current predicament.

Seeing the pleading look that the Vice-Headmaster had, Professor Henry could only shake his head and smile bitterly.

He then turned toward the two bickering old men before hitting the table with his palm. "That is enough for the two of you. Let's start this conference already and set up the trap for those people hidden in the dark."

The first part of his words was basically ignored by everyone, showing their lack of interest in it. But when they heard the latter part of what he just said, they could not help but turn to him almost simultaneously, including the two old men, who were already about to start a fight.

Everyone inside the room possessed high status and great strength, which made them qualified to learn about the hidden dangers lurking in the dark, aside from the underworld organizations around the world, who were also giving them a certain headache.

This was the reason why their faces suddenly became serious when they heard Professor Henry mention those 'enemies'.

They turned to him and waited for his next words in silence.

Chapter 1235 Yet Another Special Mission

.....

Despite Professor Herny being known to most people that he could not use any martial arts or mentalism, he was still highly respected by everyone.

Only a limited number of people knew about it, and they were also the closest friends that the old professor had and those people he could fully trust.

It was a form of protection due to his special circumstances.

All the people who were currently inside the conference room were experts in their respective disciplines and could look down on others due to their powerful martial and mentalism attainments.

But despite that being the case, none of them interrupted Professor Henry when he was talking about the plans regarding their current situation.

Professor Henry might be known as a 'cripple' to many, but these old and powerful experts respected him due to his great insight and deep knowledge when it came to the three major paths that the current era had.

Others might think that he was just an ordinary person, but to these experts, his status as the head researcher of the World Research Center was more than enough to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with them.

Professor Henry continued talking when he saw that everyone was now listening to him. "I know that most of you don't want us to get involved in this matter since it only hinders our plans. But I can assure you that this is also a good opportunity for us."

"This tomb may be nothing to you who already attained greater heights on your respective disciplines and even created your own path. But it is a different matter when it comes to those 'people'."

"We all know how obsessed they are when it comes to matters concerning the previous civilizations, particularly during the era of cultivators."

"Since this tomb is the first big tomb that we have since ten years ago, I can confidently say that those people will make their moves."

He then paused for a moment to sweep his gaze at everyone before continuing. "We are having a hard time looking for the traces of those people since the great war has ended. We all know that we have not totally eradicated them during that time."

"We have pushed most of their forces back to the other side of the Forbidden Valley while the rest manage to hide themselves among our people."

"And because of their special methods, we are unable to identify them."

With a deep sigh, Professor Henry took another pause before continuing. "There are only a few individuals who can identify them, but due to the greediness of the current leaders sitting on the throne of the World Government, we have 'lost' those people."

When he said those words, the experts sitting around the table fell into silence. Others even lowered their heads, feeling ashamed about what happened back then.

But they could not do anything about it during that time since they could also somehow understand the thoughts of the World Government.

Professor Henry waited for everyone to remember their current situation before continuing. "Since this tomb is most likely related to one of the famous cultivators of that era, we can use it to lure some of those people and set up a trap at the same time."

"This is what the government wants us to do while using the forces from the other continents as an excuse for our movements. If we are successful, then this can be a huge leap in our plans to eradicate these hidden enemies."

Reaching this point, one of the elders suddenly raised another concern. "But they are not the only ones that we need to consider. Those forces from the underground organizations are also getting bolder recently; we can't be sure if they are plotting another scheme in the dark."

Hearing that, the vice headmaster finally finds the time to chime in. "That is not our concern. The Elder's Council will take care of those people. I heard that Old Monster Plum and Grandmaster Benn are keeping a close eye on their movements."

"The 'Hermit' and Blood Slaughtering Fist 'Galileo Freeman' are also sent out as a reinforcement, so there is nothing to worry about that side."

Reaching this point, Professor Henry suddenly added. "The Demon Fist General 'Samuel Springfield' is also making arrangements with the Military Forces, so there is no need for us to think about them."

Hearing that the old monsters from the Elder's Council were making their moves, the experts within the conference room did not raise their concerns any longer.

However, some of the troublemakers were voicing out a completely different matter.

"Hmm... it has been a while since I have exchanged blows against that Old Monster. Should I visit him and ask for a little 'exercise'?" muttered Old Man Lin while stroking his eyebrows.

"I have been thinking about this for quite some time already – I really want to know how strong this so-called great general of the Soaring Continent is. Should I take this chance and see for myself if he is worthy of his title?" said Manuel Morales with a quiet voice.

Hearing their words, the rest of the experts could not help but shake their heads at these madmen. The only thoughts that these two had were fighting someone strong.

Knowing that the conference would not end up well if they continued listening to the rumblings of these two, Professor Henry and the school's vice-headmaster continued discussing the plans with the rest of the experts.

Everything went smoothly until Martial King 'Lin Huang' suddenly slammed his palm on the table and said with a booming voice. "This can't do. Just follow my suggestion and everything will be fine."

Hearing that, one of the academy's executives shook his head and said. "I can understand you, Lin Huang. I know that you want to use this opportunity to hone those students from the special training program, but this is not the right time for it."

Another executive nodded his head and agreed. "That is right, Lin Huang. This is not the right time to involve those children. This plan concerns the future generation, we can't risk sending them to such a dangerous event."

"This not only concerns the exploration of the tomb, but it also involves the hidden treat from that primitive civilization," added another.

They might be unwilling to provoke Ling Huang due to his temper, but they could not back down from this since it concerned the safety of the younger generation.

Lin Huang shook his head and insisted. "You don't understand. This is a perfect opportunity to let those fledglings fly on their own. This will also open their eyes about the true cruelty of the real world!"

"What's more, those forces from the other continents will not risk the lives of their young talents. After all, some of the students from the special training programs are also their people. They will not risk getting involved because of it!"

The others knew that Old Man Lin was only being stubborn since his training method fitted the current situation. But they also could not refute his words right away since there was some sense in it.

If the geniuses from the other continents were involved with this, then those sly foxes from those forces would have to think twice if they wanted to foil the plans of the Soaring Continent. This could also act as a 'leash' that would restrict those people.

Even the Undefeatable General, Manuel Morales, who was always at odds with Old Man Lin could not discredit those thoughts straightaway. He agreed that this was a good opportunity for those younglings to improve themselves greatly.

The only problem was the consequences if something happened to these young geniuses. After all, this exploration of the tomb would involve a lot of conflicts and competition between everyone who would enter. There was no guarantee that nothing would happen to everyone, especially when some of their enemies could use this chance to plot against them.

Professor Henry and the Vice-Headmaster were feeling the same. They felt quite conflicted about how they were going to deal with the situation.

Another of their concerns was the previous events that happened recently. The Magic Ace Academy had been involved with too many matters these past few weeks, making it hard for them to deal with the aftermaths.

Up until now, the students from the elite clubs had yet to fully recover from the previous incident when they clashed against the forces of the Black Serpent Mafia. They still needed some time to recuperate from their injuries and mental burden.

And even at this moment, the Student Council and the Disciplinary Committee had joined forces with the elite clubs – the Wings of Dawn, the Sleeping Dragons, and Hand of Midas – for another secret mission and had yet to return.

Thinking about this, the academy was currently in the most hectic and busiest time that they could have, so they could not afford to send any elite seniors to oversee the squads that would enter the tomb.

If they sent the students enrolled for the special training program, there would be huge risks along the way.

Unable to decide on what to do, the Vice-Headmaster turned everyone and said. "Let's set aside this topic for the time being. Let's wait for the headmaster to come back from the capital and discuss this again."

He then turned to Old Man Lin and said before the latter could even refute. "Elder Lin, I hope you can understand our predicament. We are currently short on manpower. Given the events that we have gotten involved with, we can't arrange an elite team to oversee these children during the exploration."

"The idea is there, but we can't do anything about it due to the recent events that happened. We can just say that the timing is not right."

He then paused for a moment to clear his throat before continuing. "How about this? Let's wait for the members of the Student Council and the rest of the elite squad to return and ask for their opinion."

"After all, they are our main candidates for the quota that we have. If they agree with your idea, then we can give them the go signal. But if they are too tired from their mission or seriously injured, then we can forget about this and just send the regular groups instead."

"There is still a week before the government opens the tomb to everyone, so we still have the time," he said, trying to convince Old Man Lin.

Hearing that, Martial King 'Lin Huang' could only click his tongue. He could also understand the predicament of the academy. Even if his idea was good, there was still no guarantee that the young geniuses would be safe if they were not accompanied by great leaders and elite seniors who could protect them when the situation went wrong.

Those experienced seniors were a crucial part of his plan. If there was no one who could fill in the leading role and protect, then he could not convince the others to agree with him.

For now, all he could do was wait for the elite squads to return and hope that they were fine.

For the time being, he could train the young geniuses and temper their bodies and minds to prepare for this operation. He had to thoroughly hone their skills and greatly improve their mindset before sending them for this mission.

Having that thought, Old Man Lin started to formulate a detailed training plan that would target how these fledglings would survive the upcoming mission.

Those poor children would suffer miserably for the next few days without knowing the reason for their suffering.

Yet another torturous experience was waiting for everyone once again.

Seeing that Old Man Lin was lost in his thoughts, the Vice-Headmaster could only shake his head and smile bitterly. He could already read the mind of the old man just by looking at the current expression that the latter had.

He could only feel pity for those children.

After that, he turned to others and dismissed everyone, concluding the conference. They were to wait for further instructions before making their moves.

Chapter 1236 The Incident at the Sacred Light Kingdom (Part 1)

...

Atlas World, Phantom Island.

Shin was currently sitting cross-legged in the middle of the black desert, meditating. He was practicing the special breathing techniques that Professor Henry had given him, particularly the 'Golden Immortality Technique' while studying the properties of the Mental Element.

He might not be successful at creating a higher form of Mana despite spending great effort and a lot of time in studying the elements, but he still had made some great progress.

His mastery over the 'Golden Immortality Technique' had reached a satisfactory level even though it was still not enough for the standards that Professor Henry had sent. At the very least, he would not have to encounter any problems when using the technique and able to use it properly.

This was not all as he also went to the peak of the frozen mountain whenever he was done with meditation. After studying the element, he would head there to practice his swordsmanship in both Martial Arts and Mentalism. However, he was focusing more on the swordsmanship that concerned the latter.

Both the quick-draw techniques and thirteen sword movements under the Jade Kirin Scripture were advancing in great degree along with the other sword techniques that Grandmaster Benn and Shin had created for the Four Symbol Scripture.

With the cold environment at the peak of the frozen mountain, Shin seemed to be able to polish his swordsmanship to a great degree, especially when he was reminded of the scene of the Sword Wraith displaying such amazing swordsmanship against that huge white plant creature.

Out of all the strange regions within the island, Shin neglected the volcano and lava river since his familiarity with the Fire Element was already at the level that he wanted.

As for why he picked the black desert and the frozen mountain, it was already obvious. The former was for understanding the element of metal while the latter was for wanting to experience the same atmosphere as that Sword Wraith and get inspiration for his swordsmanship.

Everything was going according to the plan, but Shin still felt that there was something missing. While trying to figure out what was the missing piece this time around, he suddenly turned to his skill panel and looked at the Legacy Skill Section.

Starting at the 'Regan's Method' Legacy Skill, Shin could not shake off the feeling that he must explore the Phantom Island thoroughly just to be sure that the secret laboratory was not in this place.

But given the fact those Spiritual Beings appeared in this place, and they somehow affected the evolution path of his legacy skill, Shin felt that there must be some connection between the two.

That was what he believed at the very least, especially that Kentas had chosen to be in this place.

While he was thinking about it, his eyes were suddenly attracted to the virtual map that he had drawn earlier during his initial exploration. It was a pretty detailed map of the regions that he had already visited within the Phantom Island.

The traveling paths that he had taken, which also connected each region were drawn in a skillful manner, signifying how skilled he was when it came to this matter. His training with the Springfield Family and his talent in arts clearly reflected in this virtual map.

But that was not the reason why he was staring intensely at the map. It was because, upon closer inspection, he had noticed something that he had overlooked earlier.

He had yet to fully explore the entire Phantom Island, but he had already visited quite a lot of places on it, particularly the six strange regions that he had seen.

When he looked at the positions of the strange regions, he noticed that they seemed to be forming a strange diagram once they were connected to each other.

Shin quickly noticed that he was currently staring at an incomplete diagram once he connected the strange regions with one another. There seemed to be a couple of missing parts that needed to be filled in to get the complete diagram.

Seeing that Shin quickly decided to visit the places he suspected to be part of the diagram. If his guess was right, then in those places lay another strange region that was waiting to be discovered.

Shin did not immediately head over to those unexplored regions as he thought about something. Instead, he sat on the ground and opened a virtual screen before opening a file that Professor Henry had sent him earlier.

It was a file that contained the ancient knowledge and religious teachings of the past.

After learning the secret about the Four Symbol Scriptures, Shin became interested in these topics so that he could have in-depth knowledge about them. He needed to learn more about these ancient teachings to understand more about the Mentalism Path that he was taking.

When he opened the file, Shin went straight to one of the folders which was named the Elemental Cycle.

This folder contained the different cycles of the elements, particularly the two major cycles of Creation and Destruction.

There, Shin first read through the Creation Cycle.

"Wood feeds fire, fire creates earth, earth bears metal, metal collects water, water nourishes wood."

Reading through this, Shin seemed to have become more enlightened. He thoroughly read through everything before proceeding to the Destruction Cycle.

"Wood parts earth, earth absorbs water, water extinguishes fire, fire melts metal, metal chops wood."

Shin quickly fell into deep thought after reading the details of the two cycles. Then he was quickly reminded of the strange encounters that he had recently.

But he quickly became puzzled after comparing them with one another.

Aside from his encounters in the black desert filled with iron sand where he met Flame Ghost 'Su' and the Iron Sand Demon, and the one in the frozen mountain where Sword Wraith 'Zilar' cut the White Tree Demon, the rest of the encounters were not related to these cycles of elements.

The encounter with the Flame Ghost represented the 'fire melts metal' while the one with the Sword Wraith stood for 'metal chops wood'.

As for the rest, they all seemed to become a lot stranger, the more he thought about them.

It was at this moment when Shin realized something. "There must be more encounters waiting for me around this island. What I have seen up until now is merely a glimpse of the whole picture. I am still missing the pieces that will connect them with one another."

Shin became more confident about his findings and decided to investigate further.

But before he could make his move, he suddenly thought of another important matter. He could not spend all his time finding these 'encounters' as he still needed to study more about his elements.

Aside from that, he also needed to find Berlin and ask the Saint Blacksmith a favor for making him the dimensional key that would lead him to the independent world where the rebirthing places of his Elemental Spirits were located.

Of course, he could also ask Kentas about it since that guy was the one who first sent him to that place during his Second Awakening. Unfortunately, that NPC had already disappeared somewhere and was nowhere to be found, so he could only think of a temporary solution.

If Shin was able to explore the entire island and found a teleportation gate somewhere that he could use, then he would be able to find this place again in the future since his log would record the coordinates of this place.

The other matter was about his Tier 3 Promotion Quest.

Even though he was confident that the other players were still having a hard time trying to clear their respective portion quest, Shin was still not sure if the other top Godlike Players would not be able to clear theirs.

He did not know about their circumstances, but he was sure that they were also making progress no matter how big or small it was.

Feeling the pressure of time, Shin decided to give himself a deadline. If he still had not found the places that he was looking for or at least uncovered the secret of this place within the next week (in-game time), then he would leave straightaway and deal with the other matters instead.

He just hoped that he would be able to come back here again in the future after he left.

While Shin and the rest of the Empyrean Talons were busy with their respective quests and other business, the pair of Owen and Ithilien went back to their home kingdom to clear their unfinished quest there.

Before Owen and Ithilien had decided to join Shin in the creation of the Empyrean Talons, the two had mentioned that there were some enemies that they had to deal with, and those enemies were quite powerful.

Owen even told Shin that they would need their help in the future when they needed to face their old friends who betrayed them.

But after interacting with the rest of the Empyrean Talons and doing adventures with them, the two had grown much stronger and became more confident in themselves. Due to that, Owen did not mention their problems with Shin again as he felt that they would be able to deal with it by themselves with their current strength.

This was why Owen had never mentioned that matter again to Shin. Moreover, they also did not want the others to be distracted by this, especially when everyone was busy with their respective problems and focusing on their promotion quests.

When they were back at the Sacred Light Kingdom, a neutral kingdom at the center of the boundless forest, Owen and Ithilien felt a little nostalgic. This was the very kingdom that they were situated in when they first entered the game.

Of course, they had already traveled quite a lot of places and went through quite a number of kingdoms due to the nature of Ithilien's race and class.

Her race was a White Elf but she had unlocked the hidden talents of the race that could let her evolve even further.

She also built quite a solid connection with the noble elves which was why she was regularly traveling between kingdoms under the rule of the Elven Race; she was some sort of a messenger of the Elven Nobles between different kingdoms. This was also how they had encountered Shin and Charlotte in the Elven Kingdom.

The pair arrived at Whitestone City, one of the capital cities within the Sacred Light Kingdom.

Owen looked around the plaza right after stepping out of the teleportation hall. "It has been a while since we last visited this place. A lot of things have a chance."

Just like the transformation of the Holy City when it was successfully promoted into a Capital City, the current Whitestone City has advanced greatly.

Its progress was not inferior to the former, however, the technology in this city was slightly different from the Holy City.

Since this place was heavily influenced by elves despite being a neutral land, the technology that they were using was from the elves, which centered around nature and elemental magic.

They did not have any mechanical carriages for transport, but instead, they used levitating boats made of special woods and other plant-type materials. These were the types of 'vehicles' filling the roads of the city.

The buildings were also not made of concrete or metals but made of wooden materials. Some were even made from tough leaves and vines patched up together.

There were also some houses built on tall and huge trees, which gave the city a primitive and ancient feeling.

After observing the city, Owen turned back to Ithilien to his side and smiled. "Let's go. Let's get this over with and leave as soon as possible. We can't let ourselves get entangled with those 'friends' of yours."

Hearing that, Ithilien glared at Owen sharply. "Don't make things complicated. We don't want to attract the attention of the Powerhouse Guild that they have joined."

Owen suddenly clicked his tongue when he heard that. "Those traitors. Siding with those strangers just to gain some favor from the 'powerful' people."

He then shook his head before a dangerous glint suddenly flashed in his eyes. "I will show them who they have provoked."

Ithilien smiled bitterly as she saw him getting angry at her. She then patted his shoulder. "Let's go. I need to clear this overdue quest before moving to the next task that we have."

Chapter 1237 The Incident At The Sacred Light Kingdom (Part 2)

.....

Owen and Ithilien walked out of a luxurious house in the middle of the city. They just finished submitting their quest completion and reported their progress. Everything went smoother than they had expected as they did not find any hindrances along the way.

Now that they had completed most of the tasks that they needed to complete, they were only left with the most important one. It was to complete the final chain of the major quest that they had cleared before.

It was to meet a certain NPC in at the center of the Maze Forest, one of the strangest and most complicated maps within the Sacred Light Kingdom.

According to the information that they had, the NPC was named Nolan and was known as Keeper of the Groves. Given that he was a Titled NPC, the two were expecting that this guy would play an important role in the future.

It was a simple quest to deliver a message. However, it would take some work to complete due to the location of the NPC.

The Maze Forest was a very complicated map. A lot of players were lost in it after trying to venture within it. All of them were trapped within the forest and could not get out, forcing them to use their teleportation and return scrolls to go back to the city.

But despite that being the case, the players were having a hard time fighting the temptation of venturing into that place.

The map was like a treasure trove that was filled with rare herbs and special ores. Such resources were currently in demand in the entire kingdom due to their multiple uses like the creation of the unique potions that could only be found in the Sacred Light Kingdom.

These herbs could also be used to create some unique pills that were always been the top product of the kingdom. These pills were top-quality resources that could give permanent attribute points or long-lasting buffs that most of the players would go crazy for.

This was one of the reasons why the Apothecary Sub-Class was famous within this kingdom. Even though the other Empires and Kingdoms had Apothecary specialists of their own, the ones that could be found within the Sacred Light Kingdom were one of a kind.

Even the Hand of Midas, which was known as the number one lifestyle guild and trading firm within the virtual world, only had a decently good Apothecary Specialist.

Even if they had almost all the number one players in different lifestyle professions, they still did not possess an Apothecary Specialist who could confidently say that they were the best apothecary within the game due to the masters staying in this kingdom.

Of course, there was also the rivalry between Alchemy and Apothecary, which had similar traits and shared the same target market.

But despite all of these, there were still some distinct differences between the two.

Since the Apothecary within the Sacred Light Kingdom was quite unique, the powerful guilds and organizations within the game were also trying to gain influence within the kingdom.

One of the guilds that managed to take root deeply in this kingdom was the Golden Dawn, which spent quite a lot of time and effort on annexing multiple small to medium guilds based on this place.

Golden Dawn was one of the top Powerhouse Guilds within the game, which made them quite a strong contender at controlling the resources within the Sacred Light Kingdom.

But despite their efforts of trying to monopolize everything, their rival guild, the Mythical Guild, also managed to grow a decent influence within the kingdom.

Multiple clashes between these two guilds already occurred within the game due to them trying to take control of certain grinding maps and leveling areas. They were also fighting over the unique resources whenever a mine or harvesting fields were discovered.

While these two were busy fighting against each other, another powerful force suddenly emerged from the dark – the Clear Water Guild. This guild was being sponsored by a huge corporation in the real world, the Black Water Corporation, who took an interest in investing in the virtual world.

The Clear Water Guild might not be as experienced as the two Powerhouse Guilds since they just joined the competition within the virtual world, but they had a lot of money. They could hire multiple workshops with a decent reputation and recruit famous small organizations within the game to be their fighting force.

With their money, recruiting some strong and powerful individuals was also not a problem while the management would be overseen by the specialist from their side in the real world.

Then they would provide the gold that would equip these forces with top-quality equipment and weapons, giving them a decent fighting chance against any powerhouses within the game.

With these three hegemons competing against each other, the smaller guilds did not stand a fighting chance and could only pick up the scraps that were overlooked or left behind.

Due to the heavy influence that the three guilds had built up within the Sacred Light Kingdom, the other powerhouse was having a hard time joining the competition. Especially when these three had a tacit agreement to crush whoever was trying to join the competition within the kingdom together.

They were joining forces if an outside force tried to get a slice of their pie.

Of course, these three powerhouses were quite crafty enough not to provoke the wrath of the public. They had set certain rules for themselves to make sure that they would not be provoking some talents within the masses and missing the chance to recruit them.

With these three keeping an eye on each other, there was a certain tranquility within the kingdom despite how competitive it was.

...

Owen and Ithilien were quite famous within the kingdom before due to their talent and battle prowess. The three guilds were keeping an eye on them and even extending an olive branch to them, showing their sincerity in recruiting them.

But the two chose to remain on being independent players up until they were recruited by Shin to join the Empyrean Talons.

Before, Ithilien had a group of friends that she would regularly hunt and grind with during their free time. It was also a team of independent individuals, who were quite skilled and talented despite their not-so-pleasant personalities.

Regardless, she would regularly join them with their hunts, dungeon clearing, and questing from time to time since most of them were her classmates in school.

But during one of the important quests that they were doing, they stumbled upon the members of the Golden Dawn, who happened to be hunting in the area.

Those guys were quite arrogant and tyrannical, they tried to chase the group away under the pretext of their guild was doing an important business in the area.

Due to the bad temper of some of Ithilien's friends, tension was quickly built between the two sides.

But before the fight broke out, someone from the Golden Dawn had recognized Ithilien. Due to her fame, a lot of players from top guilds within the kingdom were able to recognize her.

The situation was quickly resolved at that time. But before the Ithilien's group could even walk away, an officer from the Golden Dawn suddenly arrived and made the situation even worse.

He tried to harass Ithilien, which quickly escalated into an intense battle. Because of the huge difference in strength, Ithilien's group was immediately wiped out aside from her.

It was at that moment when they tried to humiliate her and do something terrible. But before they could even lay a finger on her, Owen suddenly appeared and slaughtered everyone.

This caused the higher-ups of the Golden Dawn to be enraged, especially when that officer happened to be the brother of an elder of the guild.

The guild sent a bounty order to the pair, making them to be the target of the whole guild.

The guild had also used some underhanded methods to poach Ithilien's friends, making them betray the two and sell them out.

Owen was so enraged that he hunted those friends and forced them to hide behind the city walls and never come out.

That was also the time when Owen's reputation reached its peak within the kingdom. Not only did he hunt down those traitors, but he also did it while he was being hunted down by a powerhouse guild.

Of course, there was still a limit to the strength of an individual. Even if Owen was skilled and powerful, he could not face the forces of the Golden Dawn by himself. He was forced to hide and run along with Ithilien.

What made things worse was when those 'friends' of hers suddenly shared the information about the chain quest that Ithilien was doing to the Mythical Guild.

The Mythical Guild tried to communicate with the two. They even said that they would be willing to mediate with the Golden Dawn as long as Ithilien shared the quest with them.

As it turned out, the quest that Ithilien was doing was a major quest that concerned the main storyline within the Sacred Light Kingdom, and the Mythical Guild happened to be the one that was able to clear

But after losing their lead, they did not know where to start and blindly looked for clues. It wasn't until they stumbled upon the information that Ithilien's friends had shared with them.

Things escalated further and became a complicated issue when the spies of the Golden Dawn and Clear Water Guild got the information and reported it to their higher-ups.

It became even more troubling for Owen and Ithilien to stay in the kingdom, especially when the three hegemons were looking for them. This was the reason why the two were forced to leave and migrate to a different city.

They first wanted to stay in the Elven Kingdom since Ithilien had a pretty decent reputation there. But as if luck was not on their side, that kingdom was also in a complicated situation, which led them to meet Shin and Charlotte along the way.

...

"This is an important quest, so we have to be careful. We still don't know when those guys will become aware of our return," said Ithilien to Owen, who seemed to be itching to cause some trouble.

"Don't worry. I understand our situation very well," he said with a smile.

If it was not for this quest being a solo quest, then they would be more willing to share it with Shin and the rest of the Empyrean Talons. But since it could not be shared, they had no choice but to proceed with the original plan.

They could actually ask the others from their adventure team to help, but since everyone was busy with their respective businesses, the two chose to take the risk and head back with just the two of them.

It was not like they were the same as before.

Owen had already finished the chain quest to convert his class to the one that he had gotten from the treasures that Justin had left behind. He had already become a genuine 'Ancient Protector', which seemed to have an evolutionary path that could rival the Ascended Class.

He still hadn't tried tackling his Tier 3 Class Promotion quest due to this issue with Ithilien. Moreover, he also wanted to familiarize himself with the new set of skills that he had gotten and tried to enter the state of Reality Manifestation that Shin had taught them.

Aside from that, Owen had already become more accustomed to the set that he had gotten from Justin. This was a top-quality gear that could rival Shin's Apocalypse Set and Arthur's Divine Dragon Set.

He also had the sword and shield that Black Hammer had forged for him to compliment this set and his fighting style.

With all of these, Owen had become more confident in himself.

Not only him, but Ithilien too.

After the previous Empire Quest, the Empyrean Talons had gotten quite a lot of equipment with the highest quality and other forms of resources.

Due to her being the only Archer of the group, Ithilien had received the bow that the Archer King 'Caelum' had been using before. It was a top-quality bow that was at the peak of the Black Mithril Rank, so it was not hard to imagine how powerful she had become after possessing such a weapon.

Aside from that, Shin also provided the materials that she needed for creating a personal set. Then, Shin commissioned Harmony to craft it for her. As the number one Tailor in the game, it was pretty natural for her to create an equipment set that was comparable to the products that Black Hamer had forged.

The leather armor that Harmony had crafted for Ithilien was also a Black Mithril Set that made her ashamed to take.

She wanted to refuse at first, but after Shin insisted that it was part of the contract and the team was investing in every member, she could no longer be stubborn and accepted the set in the end.

Owen was already living proof, after all. The guy had not only received an overpowered class and equipment set, but he had also received a specially tailored pair of weapons, so how could she refute?

She also received the 'proof of qualification' that they had gotten from Caelum, but she had yet to use it since she wanted to see what rewards she would get from this major quest that she had.

She already had the other half of the scroll, and she would be receiving another if she managed to clear all the chain quests.

She was quite curious about what kind of reward she would receive upon completion. She also wanted to see if it was a special scroll that would help her convert into another race or class.

...

The pair fixed the special cloak that they had received from the Hand of Midas. It was the special cloaks that could hide their identities, which was also similar to what the elites of the guild were using.

It was the same cloak that Shin had seen from the elite squads of the Hand of Midas, which was based on the design and abilities of his [Nightwalker's Cloak].

After making sure that no one had spotted them, the pair quickly blended with the flow of players walking out of the city before heading to the Maze Forest.

Chapter 1238 The Incident at the Sacred Light Kingdom (Part 3)

...

After traveling on their respective mounts, Owen and Ithilien arrived at the entrance of the Maze Forest. When they arrived there, they were immediately greeted by a familiar sight. The entrance of the map was bursting with activity, where the flow of players was constantly entering the forest while some set up their stalls nearby to sell their things.

The pair felt a little nostalgic when they saw the sight. Then they looked at each other before heading toward the entrance.

But before they could even take a step forward, a commotion quickly occurred at the center of the crowd, making everyone halt in their tracks.

Bang!

Not long after, they saw someone being thrown out from the Maze Forest. It was a Demon Hunter (a special tier 2 branch of the elven archer class) who looked like in his early twenties.

Looking at this player, the surrounding players quickly noticed that he was completely beaten up with his HP Bar only having a sliver of health.

With the current update of the game, where it had a very high realism, players in a wounded and beaten up state clearly reflected how much they had suffered and the current health that they currently had.

It was pretty much the same in the real world with the only exemption of the floating health bar and status window that every person had over their heads.

Seeing the player lying on the ground, the surrounding players quickly gathered around and formed a circle while chatting with each other. Some of the players, who set up the stalls near the scene started packing up and hid among the crowd.

Given how quick the reaction of the players and how fast they formed a crowd, it seemed like this scene was quite a common occurrence.

Curious, Owen and Ithilien joined the crowd to see what was happening. Even though they could roughly guess what was going on based on the gossiping of the surrounding players, they still wanted to see what the current situation in this place was.

Not long after, they saw a group of players coming out from the Maze Forest. They acted arrogantly like a third-rate villain as they walked toward the poor elf.

"Hey! How many times do I have to tell you not to come back here again? If you are not willing to pay the taxes and entry fees, then get lost and look for another grinding place," said the leader as he sat on his feet in front of the beaten elf, grabbing the hair and raising the head of the latter.

On the chest of this person, there was an emblem of a golden sun between two mountain peaks, indicating the guild that they belonged to.

Hearing his words, the surrounding players murmured to each other, giving out their respective comments with a whispering tone.

"Tsk! Look how arrogant these guys have become. He is just one of the thugs who bully the players weaker than him before, but he started acting like a tyrant after joining the Golden Dawn."

"Taxes? Entrance fees? This is a public grinding spot. It is not owed by the Golden Dawn."

"Yeah! What are those people from the Golden Dawn doing? Are they going to let these members act as they please? It is not like they are the owners of the Kingdom."

"Hah! You don't have to say that. Those guys only care about profits, they don't care about how their people act or about their reputation."

"Heh! They are only like that to the weaker and independent players. They are picking their targets and bullying those without backgrounds. If they encounter a real expert, they are always wagging their tails like obedient dogs."

"Tsk! Tsk! What happens to the glorious Golden Dawn of the past? They are nothing but a bunch of losers now."

"They only became like this because of the humiliation that they have suffered after trying to target the 'Dark Knight' before. They have lost quite a lot of faces when their top experts are beaten by him and even accept the encirclement of thousands of people. Imagine how humiliating is that?"

...

Listening to the gossip of the players around them, Owen had gotten an idea of what was going on. It seemed like his battle against the experts of the Golden Dawn had greatly impacted their reputation, making them lose quite a lot of talented players during the process.

"Serves them right," he muttered with a smirking face.

Hearing his words, Ithilien tugged his arm before signaling him to lower his voice. If they invited trouble right now when they were about to complete her chain quests, it would be a troublesome matter.

Even though they were quite confident about their current strengths, fighting a huge guild was still out of their league. They were unlike those monsters in their adventurer team, who could take on a large army on their own.

Moreover, the Golden Dawn was not the only one that was targeting them. The Mythical Guild and Clear Water Guild also had their eyes on them due to the major quest that she had.

At the same time, Ithilien also reminded Owen not to cause any trouble since it would be problematic once those people realized that they had come back again, especially when they were trying to clear the quest right now.

Bang!

The two were immediately disrupted by the sounds of fighting, making them raise their heads and turn back at the entrance of the Maze Forest.

Right now, there was a small group of players fighting against the members of the Golden Dawn, surprising the two.

"That is enough, Moren. You don't own this place, what is your right to collect taxes and entrance fees here?" said an Elven Forest Guardian, another special tier 2 class branched out from the regular Archer Class.

"Hoh-ho! Look at who we have here. Isn't this the famous Commander of the Flying Squirrels? Commander Anderson" said the leader of the opposing group, who was named Moren, in a sarcastic tone.

He then stood up and spread his arms before looking around. "What? Are you going to try to fight for the rights of these independent players again? Just like last time?"

"Have you already forgotten what happened after you got trashed by those people from the Mythical Guild?" he added in a provoking manner.

As if he was not satisfied yet, he quickly continued. "Your fame has long ended. You are no longer the mighty Commander of the famous Adventurer Team. You are only a lonely squirrel abandoned by those who used to call family."

"You have to accept this now. Loyalty is nothing in the face of benefits and bonds will crumble in front of a mighty fist."

Hearing that, the people behind Anderson quickly unsheathed their weapons, getting ready to fight. But before they could do anything, they were quickly stopped by their commander, making them glared sharply at Moren while gritting their teeth.

Those words hit a sour spot in them. The previous members had joined the Mythical Guild straight away after their commander lost a duel against one of the elders of that guild.

At the same time, among the crowd, Owen was currently suppressing his anger as those words seemed to have hit him too. Or to be more precise, it hit Ithilien's sour spot since a similar case had happened when her old friends had sold her out to the Mythical Guild.

He clenched his fist tightly and gritted his teeth while a dangerous glint flashed in his eyes. It felt like he would slaughter those people from the Golden Dawn if he heard more nonsense from them.

Noticing the sudden change in his mood, Ithilien quickly grabbed his clenched fist before he could even do anything reckless.

At a time like this, it would be better to ignore everything and drag Owen away from the scene. Unfortunately, the entrance of the Maze Forest was currently being blocked by these people, making it hard to sneak their way into it.

At this point, another commotion suddenly occurred as another group of people suddenly joined the drama.

On their chest was an emblem with a huge purple 'M' letter written in old English Text style. It clearly indicated the guild to which they belonged.

Seeing them, the rage that Owen was suppressing suddenly became more violent. He might have hated the Golden Dawn, but he hated the Mythical Guild more since they had played a larger role in breaking Ithilien's heart before and even messed with her the hardest. He would even forgive these people, especially those traitors who joined them.

Ithilien also felt some rage at the moment, but she was much calmer and more rational than Owen since she understood their current situation. She could only tighten her grip on his arm while waiting for the opportunity to get out of there.

But alas, heaven seemed to be not on her side since she saw her old friends among the group of Mythical Guild people walking toward the crowd.

She knew at that moment that it was already too late.

"Hey! Hey! Look who we have here! Isn't this Moren and Anderson? What are the two of you doing in front of the Maze Forest? You are disrupting the businesses around here; don't you think so?" said the leading person from the side of Mythical Guild.

He seemed to be a Blood Elf based on the crimson skin that he had. Adding the tattoos over his body and the huge ax behind him, it was pretty clear that he was in Berserker Class.

Moren looked at the other party and snarled back. "Keep out of this, Kendi. This is none of your business."

Ignoring him, Kendi, the Blood Elf, turned toward Anderson and said. "Oh~! Look at this. Isn't this our famous commander? What happened to you? Why do you look like a beggar right now?"

Hearing those words, Anderson could not help but glare at Kendi full of hatred. He could clearly remember the time when this guy had backstabbed him during one of their important missions.

This traitorous guy had stabbed him in the back snatched the quest item that they had worked on for months and handed it to the elders of the Mythical Guild just to get his current position.

Seeing that Anderson had no intention of talking to him, Kendi felt that this was going to be boring and quickly shook his head.

He then turned toward the crowd and said. "For those who don't want to get involved with this, it is better for you to distance yourself from here as far as possible, or else don't blame us for not showing any mercy."

"The Maze Forest will be exclusively used by the 'Big Three' right now, so I suggest you do not enter until further notice," he added while releasing a strong and scary aura that assaulted the crowd.

This guy might be an *sshole, but his skills and strength were still among the top Titled and Maverick Rankers within the game.

Hearing those words, the crowd felt disgusted and enraged. From the look of it, the 'Big Three' would be doing the 'monopoly time' once again, taking everything in the Maze Forest by themselves and not letting anyone inside.

Even though they were unwilling to comply, they did not have a choice but to follow their words since none of them could face these three Powerhouse Guilds.

"Tsk! Tsk! Is it that time already? D*mn! You are killing all the fun now," said Moren but did not say anything.

He first turned to Anderson and gave a provoking look before signaling to his people. "It is time to work guys. Clear the area and don't leave anyone behind. Make sure that there are no rats hiding inside the forest."

The crowd started to scatter and headed toward a safe distance away from the Maze Forest while the people from the Mythical Guild and Golden Dawn started making preparations for their 'harvesting' of the materials within the forest.

There was also an unwilling look on Anderson, but he knew that he could not do anything right now given his current influence and strength.

He had been assassinated by the Mythical Guild multiple times already, making his level lag behind the mainstream players. His equipment had also been robbed by them during those occasions as he dropped everything for every death. He had nothing on himself right now aside from his pitiful skills that could be countered by Kendi, who knew everything about him.

He could only sigh helplessly and signaled his friends to pick up the poor elf that had been thrown out and beaten up earlier.

While they were about to move away, they noticed that there was a pair of players walking toward the entrance of the Maze Forest despite everyone moving away from it.

"What are they doing?"

"Are they crazy? Don't they know who they are facing right now?"

The bystanders quickly started discussing with each other as they saw the pair ignoring everyone and walking straight to the Maze Forest.

"Hey! Don't you hear what I just said? Do you have a death wish?" shouted Kendi as he saw the pair. He felt humiliated for being ignored right in front of countless eyes.

Obviously, that pair was Owen and Ithilien. The former was walking straight and not caring about the gazes directed at them. He had a steady step and did not show any fear or hesitation.

Ithilien, who was slightly behind him, was wearing a bitter and helpless look as she knew that their plans were thrown out of the window once again. But she could not complain about it either given the current situation at hand.

At the very least, they were confident that they could handle this problem right now and solve it without a hitch.

Seeing that he was still being ignored, Kendi immediately became enraged and grabbed his ax before charging straight to the pair.

Boom!

His stomp on the ground resulted in a loud explosion where the ground where he previously stood crumbled while the air around him created a sonic boom sound.

He arrived beside Owen within an instant and was about to swing his huge ax down.

"Ah!"

The onlookers were amazed and scared by the instantaneous speed that Kendi had shown while also feeling pity for the poor and ignorant person, who dared to challenge the members of 'Big Three'.

Anderson was fast enough to respond. He wanted to save that player loaded an arrow on his bow and pulled it back with all his strength. He also infused his mana on the arrow, making it release a deep green light as he took aim forward.

But before he could even release the string of the bow, an unbelievable sight suddenly occurred and stunned everyone in the scene.

They saw the mysterious player slightly extend their arm to the side and accurately grab the face of Kendi before slamming it toward the ground.

Boom!

Then they saw the supposedly mighty and powerful squad leader of the Mythical Guild lying on the ground with his head buried under a pile of rubble.

Chapter 1239 The Incident at the Sacred Light Kingdom (Part 4)

.....

The entire place was filled with silence as no one dared to make any sound. It felt like everyone forgot how to breathe due to the scene that they were currently seeing.

It lasted for a couple of moments before their brains were finally able to process what just happened.

"Whoa!"

"What was that!"

"Unbelievable!"

"What can he respond with that speed?"

"How can it be possible to have that kind of strength with casual movements?"

An uproar quickly erupted as the onlookers went strange at the sight. They started shouting and yelling as they still could not believe what they just witnessed. Some were even hitting the players beside them, trying to see if they were in a dream.

Even Anderson, who was already about to attack, did not know how to react. He was immediately put in an awkward position, where he was still holding the string of his bow loaded with arrows.

It was at that moment when the members of the Mythical Guild finally responded.

"Bastard!"

"Catch him!"

"Kill those guys!"

But before they could even make their moves, a series of flashing lights suddenly cut through the air and flew straight to them.

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

Each light accurately hit the members of the Mythical Guild and quickly immobilized them.

Raising their heads, they saw the other person, who was standing behind the guy who took down their squad leader, holding a beautiful and luxurious-looking black bow in hand.

That person was currently lowering their bow, signifying that they just finished firing a couple of arrows.

That accuracy and firing rate once again stunned everyone, particularly the Mythical Guild members.

It was at this moment that everyone realized that they had encountered a pair of real experts in the flesh. And these people were not someone that they could trifle with.

It was also at this point when Moren and the rest of the Golden Dawn people managed to regain their senses. One of them was about to make their move and wanted to help the members of the Mythical Guild but they were stopped by their team captain.

"Wait. Let's observe a little more. I want to see how strong those two are," said Moren as he stared at the figures of the two mysterious experts in the distance.

As someone who was able to survive in this game despite his average skills, Moren was pretty crafty. He was someone who would rather retreat when facing a powerful enemy rather than risk their life for the thing called 'pride' and 'honor'.

He could not recklessly jump into action when they were facing a pair of experts beyond their level, especially now that the game was currently at the stage where the penalty upon death was much harsher compared to what it used to be.

Since these two were obviously much stronger than them, it would be better to stay on foot and not get involved with the fight yet.

He would let Kendi and his people suffer first and test the waters for them.

Unfortunately, due to the monstrous strength that Owen had displayed and the insane accuracy and firing rate that Ithilien had displayed, everyone from the side of the Mythical Guild was too scared to make a move. Especially when their squad leader was currently lying on the ground and seemingly unconscious despite being in the game.

Not waiting for the opposing side to regain themselves, Owen quickly raised his foot and stomped on the already buried Kendi.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

He repeatedly stomped on the head of the poor squad leader, sending shivers to all onlookers and members of the opposing side.

His stomps might not be able to cause any serious damage physically, but the mental and emotional damage that it caused was much bigger than what a real attack could deal.

Even Kendi, who was still lying on the ground and being stomped by the opposing party, could not immediately recover himself as he was too stunned at what was happening. His brain was still processing how he was slammed on the ground, making it fail to process what was happening to him right now.

And when Kendi was able to finally snap out of his daze, it was already too late. Before he could even pick himself up, Owen suddenly unsheathed his sword and stabbed it down, accurately slamming it on the buried head of Kendi.

Bang!

With the current update of the game, being head-shotted like this could cause fatal damage, killing the target instantly. They would be dead without a doubt if they did not have any lifesaving skill that could save them from such a predicament.

Owen fixed his grip on the hilt of his sword as he pulled it out from the ground. After twirling it a little, he sheathed the sword back to its scabbard before turning in the direction of Mythical Guild people.

Due to how casually he did everything, it gave the impression that he just did something trivial.

And when he turned at the people of the Mythical Guild, everyone in the scene felt that he was purposely provoking them. Even though no one could see the expression that he was making due to the hood of the cloak hanging over his head, the surrounding players could clearly feel the meaning of his actions.

There was a shiver that was sent down to the spines of the people of the Mythical Guild when they saw him looking in their direction. They unconsciously took a couple of steps back when they saw the fierce eyes staring at them under the shades of the hood.

Some of them, who were the so-called old friends of Ithilien, felt something strange. It felt that the mysterious expert was looking at them, seemingly making them the main target.

Seeing that those people were acting so cowardly, Owen smirked before turning around and walking toward the Maze Forest.

Ithilien also stared at her old friends for a couple of moments, feeling a little strange, before turning around and following behind Owen.

It was only when their silhouettes disappeared in the forest that the spectators erupted with yet another uproar. They were shouting as they talked with each other despite being too close to one another.

Aderson finally lowered his bow, but his eyes kept on staring in the direction where Owen and Ithilien had disappeared. It was only when his members called him out that he managed to snap out of his thoughts.

He then turned toward the people of the Golden Dawn and Mythical Guild before signaling to his members to leave, not forgetting to pick up the earlier elf with them.

Moren was currently in deep thought as he felt something from the earlier 'exchange'. He then turned to his people and instructed them to enter the Maze Forest. But he was not planning to chase after Owen and Ithilien but just wanted to put up an act that they were going to do so.

He had to take advantage of the fact that the people from the Mythical Guild still had not organized themselves, avoiding the issue of them not joining the battle.

As they entered the map, Moren also reported the event directly to his superiors while also voicing out his suspicions. He felt that something big was going to happen, centering this pair of mysterious experts.

...

Inside the Maze Forest, Ithilien caught up to Owen and immediately started to scold him. "What are you thinking? Huh? Huh? Don't we agree to avoid creating big scenes? Now, those big guilds will start hunting us down once they realize our identities."

Strangely enough, Owen felt rather good hearing the nagging from Ithilien for some unknown reason. He then turned to her and apologized. "Alright, I am sorry about it. I just lose my reason when I see those bastards again."

"As for those big guilds realizing our identities, it will take them quite some time before it happens. When that time comes, they will have to comb through the entire Maze Forest before finding us."

"We should have enough time to find that troublesome elf hiding this forest, right?" he added while giving Ithilien a bright smile.

Seeing Owen's laidback attitude, Ithilien could not help but roll her eyes on him while shaking her head.

She then took out a necklace from her inventory and equipped it on. This accessory item did not give any kind of extra stats or skills, but it could grant her a special ability. It would let her see invisible traces in the air that could not be seen by normal means.

Upon equipping the necklace, Ithilien's eyes suddenly shone brightly for an instant before returning to its normal color. There was a pale glow left behind when the bright subdued. It surrounded her eyes as her vision suddenly changed.

She could now see a silent and subtle flow of mana moving toward a certain direction.

"I can see it. This can now lead us to the location where that mysterious elf is!" she said excitedly before taking the lead and following the mana flow.

She had spent months before just for this moment, so it was natural for her to be this excited. She was really curious one what was going to happen when she completed this chain of quests, which also concerned the main quest scenario of the Sacred Light Kingdom.

She and Owen first thought that this might be similar to the Empire Quest that they did along with the rest of the Empyrean Talons, but after thinking long and hard about it, they concluded that it might not be the case.

After all, that Empire Quest was so big that it involved a number of forces, that were in conflict with each other. There were also quite a lot of quests interconnecting with one another, concerning that Empire Quest.

They even heard from Shin that he had received a World Quest during the process.

Owen watched Ithilien's back for a moment before shaking his head as he saw how excited she was. He then followed behind her while keeping a sharp eye on the surroundings.

He knew that this map barely had monsters that they could hunt or hunt, but it would never hurt to be careful, especially when he felt a strange atmosphere upon stepping there.

He was not sure if it was because it had been a while since he had visited this place or if it was due to the changes brought by time, but he kept having an uneasy feeling the longer they stayed here.

As the pair continued to venture deeper within the Maze Forest, they saw quite a number of rare and unique herbs along the way. Feeling that it would be a huge waste to leave them behind, they decided to harvest them while moving forward.

Not long after, the two suddenly felt a strange pressure coming from the Maze Forest itself. It was as if they were being preyed upon by something unknown.

It was also at this moment when they realized that they arrived in the part of the forest that was not recorded in the map that they had brought from the skilled explorers in the kingdom.

The two became even more vigilant as they advanced. They felt a little tense as they continued moving forward. It wasn't until they reached a certain region within the Maze Forest that they could feel a lot of presence ahead of them.

Wearing a serious look, Owen stepped forward and took the lead, protecting Ithilien behind him. He also raised his shield in front of him while holding the sword on the other, preparing for an intense battle.

It was rare for this map to have monsters that could be hunted, much less the ones that could pose a serious threat to the duo. They had to be in their extreme vigilance when advancing.

When they reached the place where they sensed the huge number of presence, they were immediately greeted by a strange sight.

They saw a bunch of undead creatures feasting on the body of a huge monster. From the look of it, that corpse was from a beast-type monster from Elephant Species.

What surprised the two was the undead creatures. Given the appearance that these creatures had, the two could already tell that they were zombified humanoid monsters.

Seeing the pointed ears and lean bodies of the undead creatures, Owen could not help but click his tongue. "Zombie Elves? That's unique."

In the meantime, Ithilien was looking above, staring at the tree branches. "There are also those guys."

Casting his gaze up, Owen frowned slightly before mumbling. "Drows? And a large number of them? Now, this is troublesome."

Chapter 1240 The Incident at the Sacred Light Kingdom (Part 5)

.....

When they saw the Zombie Elves and the Drows on the trees, Owen and Ithilien immediately realized that they were already nearing the setting of her current quest.

They were about to make their move when a sudden notification rang in Ithilien's ears.

Ding

System: Main Quest Scenario has been triggered!

System: Ongoing quest is being updated!

System: Second Chain Quests had been triggered!

Ding

System: Quest Progression will now be converted to Main Quest Scenario!

...

Quest Name: The Withering

Quest Type: Main Quest Scenario

Updated Difficulty: SSS+

Quest Update: While following the lead that the Eleven King 'Jol' had given you when looking for Elf Baldir, the Druid, and the Watcher of the Forest, you stumble upon a strange phenomenon where elves were being corrupted by dark energy.

You saw a dark miasma shrouding and spreading in the inner parts of the Maze Forest, corrupting the plants, and affecting all the lifeforms that came in contact with it.

Updated Conditions: Kill all the corrupted beings and find the source of the withering.

Secondary Goal:

Look for Elf Baldir to learn more about the situation.

Quest Rewards: This will be calculated based on your performance.

Quest Penalty upon failure: Wide Spreading of the Withering.

Note: This is a solo quest, you can ask for some assistance, but the quest itself could not be shared.

...

Reading through the series of notifications and the updated quest window, Ithilien immediately understood their current situation.

She then shared the information about the quest with Owen, giving him a rough idea of what was going on.

After hearing her out, Owen nodded his head before raising his gaze toward the group of Drows staring at them from the trees. "Those guys may have some connection with the cause of the corruption, so we can assume that the Corrupted Cult is mostly related to this."

"We have to be careful," he added before getting ready to fight.

He then gestured toward the corrupted elves on the trees before pointing at the Zombie Elves on the ground. "Take care of those Drows and leave your safety to me. I'll protect you while dealing with these ugly creatures."

Hearing that, Ithilien slightly nodded her head before nocking an arrow to her bow. She then aimed up, targeting one of the Drows on the trees.

Twang!

When she released the arrow, it flew straight to her target, flying at an insane speed.

Swoosh!

But before it reached the targeted Drow, the latter suddenly jumped off from the tree, trying to avoid it.

But right after it made its move, the lone arrow suddenly showed a green light before multiplying. They suddenly separated from each other and flew in different directions, flying toward the surrounding Drows.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

Some of the magic arrows missed their targets and hit the trees instead while the rest managed to hit the arms and legs of the other Drows, rendering them completely immobile. The others were barely able to graze the remaining, allowing them to fire back.

They started nocking arrows on their bows before firing at the two from above, especially Ithilien, who could pose more threat to them.

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

The hail of arrows fell from above, forcing Ithilien to continuously dodge them. But despite her high mobility and skillful dodging, some of the arrows were still able to find her.

But before they could even reach her, Owen suddenly appeared in front of her and raised his shield, blocking all the arrows.

He did not even wait for a moment as he quickly stomped on the ground and sent a shockwave outward, that blew away the Zombie Elves that were already charging at them.

He then used a skillful foot technique to turn around, circling Ithilien, while slashing with his sword.

Slash!

His swing accurately struck a Drow that suddenly appeared behind Ithilien who was trying to sneak attack and eliminate her.

Ithilien was not idle either as she had already nocked a few more arrows on her bow and aimed it above them. She infused her mana on those arrows before releasing them without any hesitation.

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

The arrows flew high up in the air before drawing an arc as they spread in every direction. Then, with an inverted parabola, they started raining down from above while multiplying their numbers.

'Master Archer Skill (Tier 2): Arrow Rain'

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

The rain of arrows poured down from above striking all the surrounding Zombie Elves that swarmed at them and the Drows that were about to fire with their bows.

Ithilien did not even wait for the result of her attack as she quickly turned around rolling her back on Owen as he also did the same.

Ithilien raised her bow and started firing at the Drows above the trees, who were also about to strike them from behind.

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

Each arrow was fired with extreme accuracy and insane speed, finding their targets one after another. She had targeted the heads, necks, or hearts of their opponents to make sure that they would die with a single strike.

In the meantime, Owen, who just returned facing the front, deeply inhaled a lot of air before suddenly shouting at the top of his lungs.

"Hah!"

The shout was like a lion's roar that swept through in every direction, attracting the attention of all the Zombie Elves and some of the Drows hiding under the shade of the trees.

'Knight Skill: Provoke'

He then slammed his shield and sword with each other, activating a series of buffs to enhance all his stats, particularly his defenses.

His body glowed with a golden light, which slowly flowed upwards.

'Ancient Protector Skill: Blessing of the Ancients'

Boom!

A strong pressure was suddenly released from his body as he faced the incoming swarm of Zombie Elves. He raised his sword in front of him and hid the sword behind while glaring at them fiercely.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

The teamwork of the two was seamlessly perfect, making all their actions so natural. They did not even need to talk with each other as they exchanged places during the instances where they were covering the blind spot of the other party.

Ithilien fired her arrows without restraint and did not think about her safety as she fully trusted Owen with it. The latter also did not disappoint her as he completely warded off every threat that could reach her. Whether it was arrows, the assassin Drows, or the swarming Zombie Elves – all of them were blocked and struck down by him all the time.

The battle continued as the two fought with ease while covering each other's backs.

In the meantime, somewhere in Whitestone City, a group of players were currently gathered and having a serious discussion.

These people were the leaders of the branches of the three Powerhouses here in the Sacred Light Kingdom.

As a tacit agreement, none of them set up a headquarters in the Whitestone City and let the smaller guilds and famous adventurer teams settle here. It was to set a balance and avoid getting in a serious conflict with one another and provoking the public further.

They might be strong and possess a lot of influence, but it would only affect them negatively in the long run if they senselessly provoked all the first-rate guilds within the Sacred Light Kingdom along with the famous adventurer guilds.

Once these smaller and weaker guilds bonded together, it would still cause them serious damage despite the absolute strength that they had.

Fenix, the Guild Leader of the branch of the Golden Dawn opened up the meeting by saying. "We should be able to find that core this time, right?"

Behind him was a pair of players, who stood like guards. They were glaring at everyone else, fully on guard.

They might look like allies right now, but the truth was that they were still competitors.

Sitting on the right of Fenix was a Dark Elf, who seemed to have a Twilight Class given the set of equipment that he had. This guy was the most lowkey among the Branch Leaders within the Sacred Light Kingdom, but also known as the slyest one of them all.

This guy was named Kellin, the Untraceable Shadow. He was a well-known Maverick God, who won fight against some Godlike Players. Even though he had not joined any official competitions to gain his official title, he was still a well-respected expert.

Unlike Fenix, who could not be labeled as a real expert and was only good at guild management and politics, Kellin did not even have a guard to protect him. This clearly showed how confident he was in his strength.

He played with his dagger and let it spin on his finger. There was a smirk on his face as he said. "You don't have to doubt me too much. I found an expert pathfinder that can lead us to the center of the Maze Forest."

"Tsk! If only we can get our hands on Ithilien early on, then we don't have to go through all this trouble," said another branch leader sitting on the other side of the round table.

The guy was the branch leader of the Mythical Guild; the Nightmare Swordsman 'Heckles'. He was another Maverick God without much fame in the competitive side of the game but was still known in the circle as one of the best experts in the path of the sword.

He was known for his unbelievable swordsmanship that always rendered his opponents completely powers. His swordsmanship was not as fancy as the other well-known swordsmen, but it could kill the rhythm of his opponents mysteriously, hence his nickname suggested.

Behind him stood his sole guard, who was also an unofficial expert. Even the people inside the room did know who this guy was, but his strength was not weaker than Heckles or Kellin.

Hearing those words, Fenix suddenly turned at Heckles with a fierce glare. "And who do you think is to blame for that? If you guys don't get involved in our business, then we have already gotten our hands on that item!"

Heckles laughed at those words and refuted them. "Nah-ah! That is not my fault. It is you, people, who mess everything up."

"If you did not expose us back then, then that girl may have already been on our side and cleared the main scenario with us."

Fenix gave him a sarcastic look while saying. "Hah! Join you, your *ss! If you don't provoke Owen at that time, then do you think things will escalate like this?"

Seeing that the two arguing with each other, Kellin shook his head before quickly mediating between the two. "Alright! Alright! It is already in the past. There is no need to cry over a spilled milk."

"What's more, those two are no longer above-average independent experts. They are now part of such a powerful adventurer team. With that kind of lineup, you can't casually touch these two any longer," he added, reminding the two that Ithilien and Owen were now part of the Empyrean Talons.

Hearing that, the two could only shake their heads, clicked their tongues, and accepted the reality unwillingly.

Seeing that the two finally calmed down, Kellin immediately went back to the main topic of their meeting. "Let's talk about the business instead."

"Is the information that we got from that group accurate?" asked Fenix with some suspicion.

Despite him not having a good relationship with Fenix, Heckles nodded his head in agreement. "That is right. I don't think we can fully trust those people. They still belong to the opposing faction after all."

"Isn't that why we are gathered here and discussing this through?" refuted Kellin.

He even added to further convince the two. "We are not like those in the Saint Heaven Kingdom, who divided themselves just for their respective goals. As long as we gather and work together, then there is no need to fear."

Regardless of how logical Kellin sounded, Fenix still felt that something was off. He felt that something lurking around them and seemingly trying to be the fisherman that would win in the end.

"I heard that they have a mission going on. They may also have another huge operation that concerns our kingdom. We can't let our guard down," warned Heckles, clearly showing his doubt.

It was at this moment when the three of them received a report from their respective subordinates overseeing the matters in the Maze Forest.

Seeing that all of them received the report at the same time, the three immediately realized that there were some problems around.

And when they were done reading through the report, the three turned at each other, exchanging glances and showing their thoughts.

At this point, Kellin suddenly started laughing. "It looks like the heavens are on our side. I think you know what I am talking about, right?"

The other two fell in deep thought for a moment as they also had the same idea as Kellin. Then they nodded their heads, agreeing with the latter.

"If it is really those two, and they come back to finish clearing that main scenario quest, then can we use this to our advantage," said Heckles.

"But we have to confirm the information first and see if they come here by themselves. If they come with the other members of the Empyrean Talons, then this can be more troublesome," warned Fenix, telling them to be careful.

After that, they started giving out orders and making the necessary preparations and adjustments.