

Destiny 1241

Chapter 1241 The Incident at the Sacred Light Kingdom (Part 6)

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Shin logged out of the game at the usual time.

His progress in finding the secret laboratory was still fruitless but the exploration of the Phantom Island bore some fruits. He was able to find more strange regions, although he did not encounter any Spiritual Beings any longer.

He thought that he might have been wrong with his suspicion, but he still could not shake off the strange feeling that he was into something. He had to continue investigating until the deadline that he had set up for himself.

If he still did not find anything later when he logged in back in the game, then he would give up on it altogether.

It was a new day and when to do his daily routine. Today was Thursday, so the schedule that he and the rest of the class had was to head over to their respective departments for the specialized training.

Since everyone seemed to be busy, Shin had to head to the school alone. Arthur and the rest seemed to have already left early in the morning. It seemed like their departments were doing another early exercise.

Anyway, they had agreed to meet in the afternoon for their rehearsal, so he would see them again in the music studio that Alice's agency had prepared.

Shin went straight to the Research Department since that was what Professor Henry had instructed. He would be training under Benedict's supervision, following the detailed plan that the professor had prepared.

When he arrived at his destination, he could not help but feel a little strange. He still could not believe that one of the strongest and most elite departments and clubs was staying in this rundown building.

But he was still surprised that this seemingly ruined and abandoned building was hiding such an advanced facility under it.

Upon entering, Shin went to one of the rooms still in good condition. He had to wait for Benedict since he was still not familiar with the place. It would be a total disaster if he wandered around and accidentally triggered one of the traps installed to catch any intruders. Based on what he had heard from Benedict, even a Void Manifestation Stage and Rulers Realm Experts would be trapped inside and unable to escape once they were caught.

While waiting, Shin felt a little bored which was why he thought of browsing online to see if there was anything worth looking for.

He opened the official forums of the game and logged in to his account before looking at the most recent topics that the gaming community was interested in.

Some of the top topics were about discovering high-level hidden and neutral regions. The big guilds were exploring these places and competing with one another for control.

Since such places were neutral grounds and did not have any NPC organizations to govern them, the powerhouses within the game were fighting over them. They were setting up multiple settlements that could be their temporary base while exploring the area.

Among the organizations that were trying to govern these lands, one of the leading powers was the Pandemonium Descendants. After their recent ambush on the three neutral regions, their people started being active and no longer hid their presence.

They quickly caught the attention of the public and started growing their influence.

When the public became aware of their presence, the players immediately labeled them as one of the emerging powers of the game. They also became one of the Powerhouse Organizations upon their emergence, shocking most of the players.

People even said that this new emerging power was already comparable to the existing organizations, especially when they saw the military prowess that the Pandemonium Descendants had showcased during their recent operations.

Shin could not help but shake his head when he saw the news about the Pandemonium Descendant. He could also tell that they seemed to be planning something big given the movements that they were making.

He did not know if it was due to the quests that the Demonic Churches had issued, but he could tell that the entire organization was plotting something.

On the other hand, the Corrupted Cult seemed to be laying low after their recent failure in the Saint Heaven Kingdom. However, Shin could feel that this might be just a calm before the storm. He did not believe that this organization would stop just like that, especially when he remembered how meticulous the series of plans that their mysterious strategist was.

During the entire event that shook the whole Saint Heaven Kingdom, Shin, and Shiella were almost caught in the traps that the opposing party had prepared.

Shin felt that they might be gathering their strengths and would explode later when the time was right.

The other news was about some famous groups that raided some powerful monsters or went to a dangerous region for explorations. Most of these did not pique Shin's interest, so he just skipped most of them.

He was about to get bored when he saw a certain topic was rapidly climbing the ranks. It kept on climbing higher in each passing second as its views and the players joining the discussion continued to rise.

Reading the title, Shin could not help but knit his brows deeply.

– "Something Big is happening in the Sacred Light Kingdom" –

Shin was creasing his brows as he found the name of the kingdom somewhat familiar. But he was not sure where he heard it, so he did not dwell much on the topic.

He then opened the discussion and quickly saw that the detailed events were listed at the very top. When he read through everything, he immediately felt that something was amiss.

The first topic that was discussed was a grinding map called 'Maze Forest'. It was a pretty large map that did not have many monsters to hunt but was filled with rare and unique resources instead.

It seemed like the map was being monopolized by the three biggest guilds during a certain period, preventing the regular and independent players from entering the map.

No one dared to fight these three guilds, often addressed as the 'Big Three', due to how powerful they were and how much influence they possessed within the kingdom. They were said to be the hegemons of the kingdom.

But this time, when the people of the Big Three were trying to push everyone away from the Maze Forest, there was a pair of experts who dared to challenge them and 'forced' their way in.

There was even a video where one of the mysterious experts slammed the squad leader from the Mythical Guild on the ground and humiliated the guy before finishing him with a single strike.

The rest of the opposing side could not even save their leader as the other expert stunned them by shooting arrows at them with very high precision and firing rate.

Shin only needed a single glance at the two to realize who they were. He instantly recognized the two just by seeing their movements. He became even more confident about it when he saw the bow that Ithilien was using.

"Tsk! Tsk! I heard from Owen that he will accompany Ithilien back to their home kingdom to clear some quests, yet they are already creating trouble before they can even start," Shin commented, reprimanding Owen.

Shin continued reading through the article and discovered that the situation on their side was getting more serious.

First, the three big guilds started making arrangements to close all the exits of the Maze Forest while also forming elite squads that would hunt the two.

Then Shin learned that there was some history between the pair and these three big guilds. He also realized that the Big Three seemed to have realized the real identity of the two after skimming through the movements of their forces.

Shin was able to quickly figure out the intention of the three big guilds from the arrangements and movements that they were making. He was sure that the leaders of those guilds were able to figure out Owen and Ithilien.

Shin started to become worried as he continued to read.

It was at this moment that he realized the gravity of the situation. A third party seemed to have gotten involved and they had dealt serious damage to the allied forces of the Big Three.

After entering the Maze Forest, the forces of the three big guilds seemed to have encountered something, making them suffer greatly.

The information seemed to have been tightly controlled, keeping the outsiders from what exactly happened. But some of the information still leaked and the players learned that the elite squads of that the Big Three had sent were all annihilated.

People thought that it was because of the two mysterious experts first, but they later learned that it was not the case. There were some witnesses, who saw what exactly happened before dying.

In the video that was uploaded, they saw that one of the elite squads was trapped in the middle of a swarm of Zombie Elves. There were some, who were able to break through the swarm and survive. But they still died in the arrows and blades of the Drows lurking in the shadows.

The poor player, who witnessed this sight, died in horror as what he had seen was something that could only be seen in horror and thriller movies. They even died in the blades of a Drow that stabbed them from behind.

In their dying breath, they saw the crimson eyes of the Drow that killed them, striking fear deep into their souls.

The players, who saw the video until the end, also felt horror after seeing the cold eyes of the Drow staring straight at them. It felt that the video was real.

With the elite squads of the Big Three being annihilated in this incident, they had suffered a serious blow that they could not ignore.

And given the current update of the game where the player that died was banned from entering the game for the whole 24 hours, this damage was much more serious than anyone could think of.

As if waiting for this to happen, a regional announcement was issued by the system. Its contents said that the entirety of the Sacred Light Kingdom was in a state of emergency.

In this announcement, a regional event was triggered. The name of the event was 'The Withering'.

From the description that was shared with everyone in the official forums, it seemed like a strange phenomenon was happening in different parts of the kingdom.

This phenomenon was affecting the forests in the whole kingdom, making the trees and all sorts of vegetation dry at an insane rate. At the center of these withering regions were even in a state of being completely dried up and turned into a ghost forest.

After reading through these pieces of information, Shin quickly realized that it must be the Corrupted Cult acting again.

But compared to what happened to the Saint Heaven Kingdom, this attack in the Sacred Light Kingdom seemed to be moving at a much faster rate.

From what he could see, it must be because of the nature of the kingdom itself. The entirety of the Sacred Light Kingdom was like a huge forest land. It had more vegetation and mountain areas compared to the other kingdoms.

Shin felt that this was natural since this kingdom was governed by the Elven Race despite being a neutral kingdom.

But from the look of it, it seemed like this fact was taken advantage of by the Corrupted Cult. They seemed to have created some sort of trick that could spread the corruption at a much faster rate.

It was like an epidemic was spreading wildly in the entirety of the kingdom and slowly consuming everything in its wake.

From the information, it seemed to be affecting all the living beings in the area where the 'Withering' was occurring. The monsters were getting agitated and throwing them in a constant berserk state while the corpses of some dead monsters turned into undead.

Adding to the experiences that Shin and the others had during the invasion of the Sacred Light Kingdom, he could tell that the Corrupted Cult seemed to have come fully prepared this time.

They even set up a trap that caught the three Powerhouse Guilds reigning supreme in the Sacred Light Kingdom, dealing damage that almost crippled their forces.

Owen and Ithilien seemed to have helped the Corrupted Cult accidentally with their coincidental appearance.

Shin became even more worried about the two as he saw all these pieces of information. The series of events seemed to be spiraling at an uncontrollable rate, snowballing in the favor of the corrupt cult.

He was not familiar with the power structure of the Sacred Light Kingdom, but he felt this was only the start of the upcoming disaster.

His gut feeling was telling him that something big was about to come.

Shin was about to close the discussion after reading through everything when a sudden notification came. It was a notification updating the main topic of this discussion.

When Shin scrolled back up to read what was updated, his eyes suddenly turned wide as read through everything.

He could not believe it at first since this affected the state of the game greatly. Or to be more specific, this news would affect the future of the Sacred Light Kingdom.

– "The King of the Sacred Light Kingdom was dead!" –

Chapter 1242 Negotiations and Gamble (Part 1)

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After the training, Shin met with Arthur and the rest of the club at the studio that Alice's agency had prepared.

They quickly went through all the songs that they had already rehearsed previously, working up with their synergy and other things. Shin polished everything while scolding anyone who would make a mistake mercilessly.

Even though everyone seemed to be enjoying themselves, Shin told them that they did not have to overdo it since they could still practice tomorrow. He also told them that they had to wrap up everything early since Shin and the others needed to deal with some matters inside the game.

Among the group, there were only three people who were not a part of the Empyrean Talons: Lorraine, Molton, and Jillian.

Shin gathered the others after they had finished cleaning up the studio. "There are some problems with Owen and Ithilien."

Hearing that Shin quickly went straight to the point, and the rest of the group immediately realized the gravity of the situation. This might be much more serious than they had expected.

As someone who always kept an eye on the online forums to be updated with the most recent and hottest news, Arthur was able to instantly figure out what Shin was talking about. "Are you talking about the Sacred Light Kingdom?"

Shin nodded his head. "Yeah. Owen and Ithilien seemed to be involved in the recent events in that kingdom. I am guessing that the chain quest that Ithilien is doing is connected to the main quest scenario of the kingdom."

"And just like how it has always been, the Corrupted Cult seems to be all over the place once again and messing things up."

He then paused for a moment before adding. "Given the information that is mentioned in the forums, the center of everything is most likely that special map 'Maze Forest'. Everything started there, so the key to ending everything should also be in that place."

Leonard was silent for a moment before saying. "So, do you want us to head there and lend the kingdom a hand?"

Shin shook his head and said. "I think it is already too late for that. Everything is already out of control. Even the king of the kingdom is already dead."

"Moreover, there are only a few of us. I am not sure if there is much impact that we can do," he added with a bitter smile.

"We can at least stop the spreading of that phenomenon called 'Withering'. It is similar to what happened in the Dragon's Sanctuary before, so I am guessing that the solution is most likely the same," refuted Arthur.

Shin was still wearing a bitter smile as he continued. "If it is as simple as that, then there shouldn't be any problem. But it is not the case."

Cloe nodded her head. "With the king being dead while the kingdom is in chaos, that kingdom is already finished."

"The kingdom is in a state of emergency and there is no leader to deal with it, it is not hard to guess their outcome," she repeated, emphasizing the main point of the issue.

Shin slightly nodded before asking. "What I want to ask is who among you can lend to Owen and Ithilien. I am sure that they are still unwilling to come back despite the current state of the Sacred Light Kingdom."

"They are most likely at the most crucial part of Ithilien's quest and don't want to come back because of it."

"I can't head there for the time being because I still have matters to deal with on my side, so I am leaving those two to the rest of you," he added while looking at the others.

He specifically turned to Leonard and Arthur since these two were the freest at the moment. They were both trying to clear their respective Tier 3 Promotion Quest but were currently stuck in a bottle just like Shin, which was why they were in the middle of relaxing.

Especially Arthur, who was in the mood to roam around different places to find his online friends and mess with them.

He knew that Cloe was still in the middle of her quest that was connected to her promotion quest, so he could understand that she was unable to help.

Leonard did not even think twice as he nodded his head. "Alright. This shouldn't be a problem."

Alice even volunteered to help. "I will head over there too. This is a major event for the Elven Race since the Sacred Light Kingdom is under the rule of the elves, so the Elven Council will surely send some reinforcements and try to save the kingdom."

She then paused before adding. "Though, I am also not optimistic about it since everything is already in a mess after the king of the Sacred Light Kingdom died."

Shin and the others made a couple more arrangements before deciding to head back home.

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After returning to his room, Shin took a quick shower before heading to his gaming cabin. He adjusted his mind as he sat inside the cabin before quickly logging back into the game.

But before he could even initiate the link, a call suddenly interrupted him. He paused and looked at the caller's ID, trying to see who was calling him at this time.

His eyes suddenly turned wide when he saw the ID of the caller. He could not help but swallow hard as he looked at the caller as he felt a little threatened.

But he was able to quickly recover himself when he remembered that he had already come prepared for this.

He took a deep breath before answering the call.

Swoosh!

Upon answering, his consciousness was set to his virtual room. He did not spend any time designing this room, so it had nothing in there. It was a white room, which was the default setup for virtual rooms.

He then summoned a pair of chairs and a tea table in between before taking a seat. It did not take long for the caller to appear in the virtual room.

"Tsk! You still haven't changed this room despite having that much free time? Do you want me to design it for you?" commented Shiella as she looked around with great disappointment.

She then sat on one of the chairs before taking a sip of the tea that popped out from who knew where.

She sat very relaxed and kept her silence for quite some time, clearly indicating that she was not in a hurry. It was clear that she was playing psychological warfare with Shin.

Shin smiled bitterly and shook his head repeatedly as he clearly understood what she was trying to do. "Let's stop this play, Big Sis. I'm already busy with the things that are on my side, can't we just get this over with?"

Shiella giggled when she saw the reaction from Shin before saying. "I guess it is an important matter since you can't keep your usual calmness."

"Alright, let's get down to business already," she nodded before turning to Shin and asking with a serious tone. "Have you prepared everything?"

Seeing the sudden change of atmosphere surrounding Shiella, Shin also turned serious and responded. "I hope that it can satisfy you."

He then extended his hand forward and tapped in the air. Then a stack of papers suddenly appeared on top of the tea table. "You can see my proposal here. All the plans and other things are already written here."

Shin did not immediately show his card as he knew that Shiella would slowly negate everything he did not play right.

Shiella casually picked up the papers while asking in a nonchalant tone. "The shares?"

Shin turned to her, trying to read her expression before answering. "Twenty."

"Tsk!" Shiella clicked her tongue, showing that she was not satisfied before saying. "Can I at least take thirty? I will be managing it anyway."

Shin nodded his head and said. "Now that you mentioned it, I think I only need to give you fifteen. I have my manager that can take care of the management."

"Hey!" his words quickly got a reaction from Shiella as she turned to him with an unsatisfied look.

But before she could even refute it, Shin quickly added. "He is a special Named NPC. He has been doing pretty well managing the Calderock Town, don't you think?"

He then paused for a moment before continuing. "Big Sis, this is a little different from how we are negotiating the terms for the Calderock Town. At that time, I don't have the intention of managing it properly and want to leave everything to you, which is why I agree with the 50-50 division of profits."

Sheilla squinted her eyes as she stared at Shin before shaking her head after seeing him calmly negotiating with her. She then paused before asking. "How about the manpower? Our side will be dealing with everything, right?"

Shin smiled and said. "I will be hiring your people and buying the materials from your firm. I don't think I need to concede more shares when I am spending money."

Shiella pouted when she heard that before turning her eyes on the papers in front of her and reading through them.

She was silent the entire time when she was reading through everything. She could not help but become a little impressed at the entire plan that Shin had. She could ignore the city blueprint since she could consult her architects and engineers about it, but after skimming through it, she could tell that Shin had put a lot of thought into the design.

The positioning of the key buildings such as Battle Arena, Adventurer Guild, Trading Firm, Teleportation Hall, and such were not centered on a single spot and spread in different places of the city.

Teleportation Hall was placed at the center of the city as usual, making it easier for all the players arriving in the city to head to the place that they want to visit.

The main plaza was slightly away from it, not following the usual design of NPC cities. Instead, the Adventurer Guild and the Trading Firm were placed in the two opposite ends of the Teleportation Hall.

There was also a specific place that was dedicated to the players who wanted to set up their stalls. It was quite a distance away from the center of the city and the main Trading Firm, avoiding the direct competition. Instead, it was placed on a busy street, making it look like a marketplace.

Sheilla just skimmed through the blueprint, but she could already see that it was well prepared.

Continuing, she also saw Shin's plans for building his army. He also indicated that the city would have three major religions such as the Church of Light, the Church of the Sun and Moon, and the Temple of the War God.

He was taking advantage of the special status that he, Cloe, and Leonard had in their respective NPC organizations to their advantage. Adding the additional people that the Adventurer Guild would provide, the security within the city was dealt with.

They only needed to assign a few guards who would constantly patrol the city to fill the little gaps.

Shiella could also put some of her people in certain areas to cover everything.

Pursing her lips, she continued and saw that they only needed to cover the security in the surrounding regions of the city. But the private army and the recruited adventurer teams could solve that problem somehow.

And if she stationed the scouts of the Hand of Midas and some of their hunting teams in certain areas to grind, everything was covered.

Shiella nodded her head, seemingly satisfied. But when her thoughts reached this point, she suddenly paused as she thought of something. She then turned to Shin and gave him a fierce glare. "You, bastard! So, you are planning to use my guild to do the hardest work, yet you are so stingy about giving the shares!"

Shin shook his head before giving her a cheeky smile. He knew that his little scheme would be seen through easily given her insight. Now that he had been found out, there was no point in denying it. "Big Sis, it is not that I am taking advantage of you, 15% is everything that I can give you. The city is not entirely mine as Arthur, Leonard, and Cloe also invested quite a lot of gold too."

"I also have to give the members of Empyrean Talons some too," he added while maintaining that cheeky smile.

"Then you can just take the rest from your share!" Shiella snarled back.

Shin just clicked his tongue before refuting. "Big Sis don't be too greedy. We both know that 15% is already too much. I will be providing all the funds for the construction of the city and even provide all the Master Rank Blueprints for the advanced structures."

"I even have the Master Rank Restaurant coupled with a high-class Inn in the same rank. Those two are rare."

"I even have the blueprints for mount stable, military training ground, and archery grounds. Adding the default barracks that come for free with the city itself, I think our military forces will grow pretty fast."

"It will not take much time to build a solid army that can protect our land from the opposing forces. What's more, we have the whole month of protection period upon the creation of the city."

"I think it is more than enough for us to solidify our forces, so you will not have to wait that long before everything is properly operational," he added, trying to convince Shiella.

Shiella did not immediately refute as she continued to read through everything. Aside from Shin shamelessly trying to advantage of her, everything else seemed to be perfect. He had planned everything pretty well, with the only problem being the security of the dukedom.

If she ignored that fact, then everything was perfectly tailored by Shin.

She did not show her thoughts on the outside as she maintained an expressionless face.

She then proceeded to read the papers and saw that the latter part was discussing another matter. After skimming through it, she could not help but knit her brows deeply.

It was not because of it being a bad plan or anything, but it was the total opposite. It was so good that even made Shiella look at it positively.

She then turned to Shin and said. "So, this is where your real cards lay, huh? It is indeed pretty good, but it also puts us in a much more difficult position. We will be having more problems in terms of manpower than we already have, especially in the security area."

Shin then looked at her and said honestly. "Before answering that, I want to ask you something first."

"Are you willing to take the gamble, Big Sis?"

Chapter 1243 Negotiations and Gamble (Part 2)

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"Are you willing to take a gamble, Big Sis?"

Hearing those words, Shiella did not immediately respond to Shin and stared at him intently. She was trying to read what this little brother of hers was planning to do. But after not seeing any change in his expression and maintaining that serious look, she could only smile and shake her head.

"I can see that you are serious about this," she said before quickly adding. "So, you are planning to ask me to sacrifice some of our branches, I guess?"

Shin quickly shook his head and said. "It is not 'sacrifice', but 'transfer'. You are transferring your people from those branches to this port city that we are trying to build."

"You are quite bold, huh? Having the guts to set up twin cities. You sure know how to gamble," commented Shiella.

She pursed her lips before trying to break down everything. "Setting up Twin Cities has a lot of pros and cons."

"Let's talk about some of the pros first. With these cities sitting close to each other, protecting it will be much easier since either city can immediately send reinforcements when needed. You can also set up trading routes connected to the two cities for the NPC merchants, earning you additional profits."

"And since the locations of these two cities that you are planning to build have two different main products, one being a city on top of a mountain with the other being a port city near the sea, the profits can be much larger."

"I can already see how good it was," she nodded. "And that is only a few of the benefits of having connected cities. There is also the alliance that you have with the Frozen Kingdom, earning you more rare products for both cities."

"We can also nurture military forces specialized in land, forest, and guerilla warfare given the terrain and the environment around the mountain city. Then for the port city, we can train marines, who specialize in sea battles. If we are successful, then we will be earning more than what we can already have."

She then paused for a moment before adding. "But that is also where the problem lies. This will require a lot of time, effort, and even manpower. If he is a little too slow, then the predators eyeing us may pounce on us before we can even do anything and seize everything."

"Given our current position, we are not in a position to defend both cities. It will be better to focus on building the first city and rushing everything. This way, we can set up more solid defenses and much more mature forces that can defend our land."

"That is only when we can set up the port city and proceed according to the plan."

Her words lingered in the air for a moment as she continued. "...but"

Shin was quick enough to complete the sentence for her and said. "We will lose the perfect time when the players are still trying to catch up to the rest of the pack."

"With the current state of the game, the slightly behind players are slightly anxious. They are afraid that they will not be able to get their Tier 3 Classes before the entirety of the Second Continent is fully explored."

"Everyone wanted to be one of the first batch to explore the new lands, so everyone is rushing their levels and wanted to find the most suitable training maps where they can grind levels."

"This is the most perfect time for us to build the two cities since the Sky Deceiving Valley is filled with high-level monsters and it is even connected to the Frozen Kingdom, which is filled with a much higher-level monsters and has a lot of unexplored lands."

"The mainstream players will constantly flow toward our way."

Shiella smiled as she could see that Shin could see the bigger picture. "Which is why this is a huge gamble."

She then paused for a moment and asked. "Do you even know how much profit I am giving up if I abandon those branches and transfer to your land? I have poured quite a lot of time, effort, and money just to settle in those places."

Shin smiled cheekily and said. "Then you can just give up the less profitable branches. I hear that the businesses in the Blind Abyss Empire and Serpentine Empire are not doing good. There are also others."

The corner of Shiella's mouth suddenly twitched when she heard that. "You even do your research, huh? Or have you brought my people by offering to craft advanced equipment?"

Shin could not help but sweat profusely when he heard those words as they were clearly on point. Sheilla had hit right on the mark, accurately guessing what he had done.

She then stopped talking for a moment, considering everything seriously. She rhythmically tapped her fingers on the tea table as she weighed her options.

Shin also did not say anything as he kept silent on the side and patiently waited.

A few moments later, the tapping finally stopped as Shiella nodded her head. She then turned to Shin and said. "You are using that relocation order to the Calderock Town and transferring it to the edge of the Sky Deceiving Valley, near the sea, am I right?"

Shin nodded his head. "Naturally."

"Alright, I will be arranging everything and informing my people to get ready," said Shiella before snapping and asking. "How many days do we have before that stupid wall of ice melts?"

Shin thought for a moment, calculating the time. "We only have ten days before it fully melts, but the Frozen Kingdom will still be unavailable at that time due to the monster horde event. Adding everything, we still have twenty to twenty fives days left. In-game time, of course."

"That is more than enough. First, you must keep the information about the relocation of the Calderock Town secret, but you can start promoting that you will be promoting it into a city," instructed Shiella.

Shin needed clarification as each piece of information was connected to the other. He did not know what the difference was between keeping the information about the relocation and spreading the word about the city promotion.

Shiella smiled when she saw Shin trying to figure out her intention. "There is an obvious difference between the two, but each piece of information has a different impact when the top guilds hear about it."

"If you tell them about the relocation, then they will try looking for the best place where you are going to relocate it. But if you tell them about the promotion of the city, then they will focus on what changes in the city will do even though they know that you are going to relocate it into a more profitable place."

Shin quickly understood and nodded his head.

Shiella stood up and was about to leave the virtual space when she suddenly remembered something. "Another thing! The entirety of the Sky Deceiving Valley is your dukedom, right? Then issued a ban for any players from entering the region through the Adventurer Guild and Saint Heaven Kingdom Administrator Hall."

It was at this moment when Shin suddenly remembered that Shiella was supposed to be unaware of the fact that he owned land right now.

He was about to ask about it when Shiella beat him into it. "Little Al, accidentally spilled the beans earlier when I called her."

"Little Al?" asked Shin confusedly.

Shiella giggled and explained. "Alice. Alice Stuart. She is a junior of mine. I called her earlier since I wanted to ask her a favor. That is when she spilled about your land accidentally when we were catching up with each other."

Shin clicked his tongue before asking. "How can I ban the entry of the players in the Sky Deceiving Valley?"

Shiella thought for a moment and shared some information with Shin. "It is a special right given to the new 'lords' of the game. You can ban the entry of the players on your land during the 'preparation phase'."

Shin slightly frowned when he heard that before asking. "Where did you learn about that? From what I know, I should be the first player to own a land. How can you know what I don't even-... know-..."

His words trailed in the air for a moment as realized something. His eyes turned wide as he looked at Shiella, who was currently giving him a smug look.

His cheeks suddenly twitched as he muttered. "D*mn! You even have spies in such a powerhouse guild like the Hydra Guild. And given that you have that information, that spy should be in a very high position."

"Such a thing is pretty normal, and it can't be avoided," said Shiella before snapping once again as she left.

Shin pursed his lips as he stared at the spot where Shiella disappeared before leaning on the chair and closing his eyes.

This time, he would be logging back into the game.

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Shiella also logged in to the game.

Right after she appeared in her office, she quickly contacted her assistant and summoned her. "Smile, come to my office."

It did not take long for Delusive Smile to arrive. She carefully knocked on the door before entering. "I'm here, young miss."

Shiella nodded at her before gesturing to the latter to come over. After that, she gave the plan that Shin had given her earlier before instructing. "Go through this and discuss it with the chiefs of the firm. Tell me immediately if they have any changes that they want to suggest."

"I need it by the end of this today," she added, emphasizing the importance of the matter.

Delusive Smile was stunned for a moment and asked for clarification. "Today? The time of the game?"

"What else?" said Shiella, telling the latter that she did not want to repeat herself.

Sensing the mood that Shiella had, Delusive Smile knew that this matter needed to be of utmost importance.

She did not immediately since Shiella had not told her that that was everything. And sure enough, at the very next moment, her boss gave her more instructions. "I also need all the reports, in every branch we have."

"Separate it with all the most profitable branches and the least profitable ones. We are going to some of the branches and transfer them to the new base," she added as she quickly went through the reports on the table.

Despite her eyes skimming through the reports, her mouth continued to give orders. "All the plots of land, the small shops, the main base that we own along with every dungeon that we control from the branches that will be picked are going to be sold. We are not leaving anything behind."

"Look for the buyers and sell everything to them, but don't hold an auction. Sell everything secretly," she added, surprising Delusive Smile greatly.

"B-But-... Young Miss," Delusive Smile wanted to say something, but Shiella quickly cut her off. "Don't worry. We will not be suffering any loss here."

"We will be investing in something that can give us a bigger return," she explained briefly, making Delusive Smile to calm down.

"I understand, young miss," said Delusive Smile, nodding.

After that, Shiella continued to give more instructions, and each one shocked her assistant greatly.

The poor assistant could not keep up properly and almost suffered from a heart attack. Fortunately, she was a professional and able to remember everything and took note of every important point that Shiella had emphasized.

"Remember, you must move with complete secrecy and not let the other Powerhouse Organizations learn about it. Or at the very least, they have to learn about it as late as possible," said Shiella, warning Delusive Smile seriously.

"Don't worry, young miss. I will handle everything personally to ensure it is going according to your instructions," said Delusive Smile confidently.

"Alright, that is all," said Shiella before pausing briefly as she remembered something. "Ah! One last thing, contact that old geezer from the 'Secret Recipe'. Tell him that I have a good business proposition that he will not be able to refuse."

"As for the Assassin Union-... I will contact Cold Moon myself," she added before finally sending off the Delusive Smile.

When she was left alone in the office, Shiella suddenly smiled as her eyes kept on reading through the reports in her hands.

She then muttered with a cheerful tone. "It has been a while since feel like this. It has been a while since I am facing such a challenge."

Chapter 1244 Finding the Answers

...

Right after Shin logged back into the game, he quickly opened the Currency Exchange System and looked at the current exchange rate of gold to real money.

When he first started playing the game, the exchange rate was at the ratio of 1:100 – from gold to Federal Coins. But after seeing that it was now 1:10, he was a little disappointed as it clearly showed that the rate had dropped greatly since then.

However, it was constantly at this rate since it dropped to this point, which meant that it would never drop or increase in the future.

Shin thought for a moment before sending a message to Shiella, telling her to inform him if she finalized everything. He would then send all the funds needed for the construction of the new city and the relocation of Calderock Town.

He honestly did not expect that the negotiations would go as smoothly as this. He even prepared a lot of cards to play, expecting that Shiella would point out a lot of flaws in the plan.

He was also expecting her to ask for more shares since that was how she was supposed to be. But she had proven him wrong as she did not pursue the issue again after he refused her twice earlier. Instead, she focused on reading through the proposition that he had given her.

He was not sure why, but he felt that Shiella might have found something in his plan. It might be the reason why she agreed with the deal straight away.

Regardless, everything worked out smoothly, so he did not have to worry too much about it. He could leave everything to Shiella and wait for her reply before moving to the next part of the plan.

For now, he needed to finish everything on his side before heading back to the First Continent and deal with the things that needed to be done, particularly that dimensional key that he needed to enter the Rebirthing Place of his Elemental Spirits.

...

Shin spent the next couple of days (in-game time) exploring the entirety of the Phantom Island and discovered a few more strange regions with special phenomena. He also finally found a way to 'trigger' the special encounters with the Spiritual Beings.

He did not gain much clue from Hanzo and the rest as they were somewhat quiet the entire time. They were only talking to him during idle chatters and did not disclose any important information that he could use.

But during his exploration, the words that Solus had casually mentioned to him seemed to have given Shin an idea.

She said something about the Ancient Beings that were already living in the lower plane before the gods and goddess from above spread their influence.

Shin felt that he had triggered a special condition when conversing with her, leading to her giving him this crucial clue.

Shin did not immediately learn the truth from that and instead contacted some of his friends, who were not busy to help him look for the information in the royal library. Since he could not leave the Phantom Island for the time being, he could only ask them for this favor.

Everyone was busy, so it was hard to look for someone, who was free to help him. More importantly, some that he could trust.

He tried to look in the online forums or official websites of the game, but he could not find the most accurate information that he was looking for. But he learned that the royal and imperial libraries from capital cities and above would most likely have the information that he needed.

After asking around, the only person who responded to Shin was Molton. He had already added this guy before, though they did not contact each other often in the game since they had matters that they needed to deal with.

He only remembered Molton when he was browsing the online forums. He remembered that he used to read the reviews and tutorials that Molton had when he was starting the game.

Fortunately, Molton was a regular visitor of libraries. He loved reading the history of the game. He liked the feeling of having discovered something new every time he read the historical books and ancient records.

He even spent all the reputation points that he had earned during his quests and special missions to increase his right to enter the libraries and their secret rooms. At the moment, he was already a Grand Scholar, who could enter and exit the royal libraries without concern.

He could also enter some secret facilities and rooms that normal people were forbidden from entering.

After hearing the problem that Shin was facing, Molton agreed to his request without second thoughts. He was also quite interested in the topic that Shin had mentioned, particularly the Phantom Island and the Ancient Beings.

This was something new, so Molton was quite excited about it.

Since the records about the ancient era were collectively recorded in all royal and imperial libraries, the records should be relatively similar to one another. That excluded the 'smaller' historical events for certain kingdoms that were recorded locally.

Shin was only looking for the major knowledge, so Molton would not find it hard when looking for the relative information.

Shin decided to meditate at the center of the black iron desert and practice his swordsmanship at the peak of the frozen mountain while waiting for Molton.

He did not wait that long as he immediately received a detailed explanation from Molton. Not only did the latter call him and explain everything, but Shin also received a detailed summary of everything through mail.

Shin could not help but smile bitterly when he saw how dedicated Molton in this. The latter even enthusiastically told him that if ever needed his help regarding similar matters, he was free to call him anytime.

Despite hearing everything from Molton, Shin still read the summary to make sure that he had not missed anything.

The first information that he read was about Spiritual Beings.

According to the historical records, these beings were one of the oldest beings along with the Dragons, Qilins, Pheonix, Giants, Primordial Beasts, Immortals, and other mythical and legendary races.

Spiritual Beings were said to have a strong connection with nature and all kinds of elements, giving them absolute governance over them.

Their magical powers were comparable to Ancient Dragons while their physical combat prowess was on the same level as Immortals and Asuras.

Their race was divided into two, the Spirit Knights and Spirit Sages. The former focused on physical enhancements and combat techniques while the latter majored in magical knowledge and mage arts.

After the Primordial War, the Spiritual Beings have never been found again due to some unknown reason. There were a lot of rumors about their disappearance, but none were proven right.

Then during the new era, their descendants started to appear one after another, which were the Elementals, Spirituals, Eternals, Dryads, and Nightmares.

These new races were born from the Ancient Spiritual Beings, possessing the different traits and abilities of their ancestors.

After reading through this, Shin finally realized what kind of creatures were those Spiritual Beings that he had seen previously.

It turned out that the temporary name that he had called them was true.

Based on the names and the titles that he had seen from them, it seemed like the Spiritual Beings that he had encountered were among the highest rank officials of their race.

Then the second question suddenly entered his mind – "Then why were these powerful beings here? Or why did they have recorded history here in the Phantom Island." –

This was when Shin read through the information about Phantom Island.

Based on the records that Molton had read, the Phantom Island had many names such as the Land of the Dead, the Land of the Forgotten History, the Forbidden Land of the End, the Disappearing Island, and such.

These names were given by different cultures or religions while the records about them were written by some well-known explorers or paladin knights, who were on expeditions.

A lot of people had already set foot on this mysterious island, but all of them only arrived there due to some accident. Some were swept away by the tides after their ships sunk in the sea while the others accidentally docked on the island after being lost in the fog.

And they only told the tale about it after they did their best to return.

There were a lot of versions of stories about Phantom Island, so there was no accurate information about it.

But there was a certain expert explorer, who managed to uncover some of the truths about this island. It was said that the island was one of the shattered lands that was separated from the mainland when the Primordial War occurred.

No one believed him at first due to how ridiculous his claim was, but after presenting some evidence, no one dared to laugh at him or refute his words.

As for the mystery of why, there were a lot of versions of the Phantom Island, the explorer said that it was because of the 'heart' of the people.

The island was reflecting the thoughts and desires of whoever stepped on its land. It also answered the questions of anyone, who asked for it.

Because people possessed different desires and looking for different answers, they were seeing different responses from the island.

Naturally, there was another wave of refusal when the people heard his explanation, but they quickly shut their mouths when there was a group of Transcendent Beings, who proved his point.

Transcendent Beings represent the heroes and peaks of this world, so no one would dare to question their words.

Moreover, one of the Transcendent Beings, who supported the claim of the famous explorer was 'Supremo' the founder of the 'Supreme Temple' and one of the heroes, who led the victory of the Atlas World against the invading Demons during the Repelling Era.

All the evidence and other recorded information about the Phantom Island was stored in the main branch of the 'Supreme Temple' at the Divine Empire.

Molton said that if Shin wanted to know more about the mystery behind the Phantom Island, he had to visit the 'Supreme Temple' and try his luck there.

Even if the information that he had gotten was somewhat limited, Shin still felt that he had gotten what he wanted already.

The key to his problem was the 'questions' and 'desires'.

When he focused on this point, he was able to see the encounters with Spiritual Beings once again in every special region that he had visited.

Even though the Spiritual Beings that he encountered were the same as the previous ones, the opponents that he was facing were completely different.

Shin had revisited all the strange regions within the Phantom Island and watched every battle between the Spiritual Beings and Primordial Monsters in full attentiveness. He did not dare to miss a single detail in every encounter as he gained different insights whenever he watched them.

During the entire process, he was actively using the secondary effects of the 'Duplicator's Eyes'. This Legacy Skill was special and mysterious, making Shin curious about how powerful the original creator was.

The main usage of this skill was copying other skills. And he could even copy anything as long as he met certain conditions, particularly the required 'Spirit' and 'Wisdom' Stats.

Of course, he could not just comply with anything as there were some limitations in it. He could also not endlessly use it since it had a very long cooldown before he could use it again.

There was also a limit on the number of skills that he could copy, so he could not senselessly use the skill whenever he wanted.

But that was for the main effects of the skill.

Fortunately, its secondary effects were not limited. Its 'learning' ability could be constantly used as long as he wanted to 'learn' something.

He would not be copying a skill for the secondary effect. It only enhanced his ocular skills and learning ability to peer through the secrets of certain skills or techniques.

Just like what happened when he was trying to learn blacksmithing and when he had created the 'Solar Breathing Technique'.

He was not copying anything but learning the secrets of certain tricks that could be beneficial.

As for why 'Regan's Method' Legacy Skill had evolved, the answer was immediately given to him after he had visited all the special regions filled with strange phenomena.

When he was done exploring the entirety of the Phantom Island, the 'Regan's Method' Legacy Skill and already transformed into something completely different.

Or to be more precise, it had revealed its true form after Shin had absorbed all the insight from the battles between the Spiritual Beings and the Primordial Monsters.

Even though he had to spend all his Legacy Points that he had saved up until now to keep up with the evolution of the skill, he felt that it was quite worth it.

The skill had become something that was not only better than the previous form that it had but also fitted his current style.

But what surprised Shin greatly was the notification that he had gotten in the end after the Legacy Skill had evolved.

Ding

He laughed at himself as he found it rather silly. "It turned out that I have already found what I am looking for, but refused to acknowledge it."

"To think that it is right in front of me, yet I never have recognized it. I feel like an idiot," he smiled at himself mockingly as he read the system notification.

System: Congratulations! You have found Regan's Secret Laboratory!

Chapter 1245 Finding the Answers (Part 2)

...

Ding

System: Congratulations! You have successfully found the secret laboratory of Regan – the Magic Knight and the Elemental Swordsman.

System: Regan's Method has shown its true form.

Ding

System: You are receiving the complete legacy of a Hero.

As this notification flashed in front of Shin's eyes, a pillar of light suddenly shot down from the sky and descended onto him.

He felt the warmth of the light as information continuously entered his head. He was receiving knowledge about the path that Regan had used to walk in the past. The experiences that the hero had gotten and the insights that gained during the journey were constantly flowing inside Shin's mind, flashing through at an insane speed.

It only lasted for a couple of moments, but Shin felt that he had experienced a hundred years' worth of time inside his consciousness.

It was at this moment that he received another series of notifications.

Ding

System: You have gained the knowledge of 'Elemental Sword and Armor' and 'Magic Swordsmanship', the secret techniques of Regan!

Ding

System: Elemental Control has drastically increased!

System: Elemental Sensitivity has improved greatly!

System: Elemental Affinity has reached great mastery!

Ding

System: 'Elemental Unification' has been created!

Reading through this series of notifications, Shin knew that he had not received any skills. Instead, what he had gained was techniques and martial insights, which was currently much better than getting advanced skills in his opinion.

As Shin was reading through notifications given to him by the system, a familiar voice suddenly interrupted him.

"You have finally realized it! Do you know how frustrated I was watching you walking around aimlessly on the entire island?"

"So, you are not actually that bright."

Shin did not need to look in the direction of the voice to know its owner.

Nevertheless, he still turned toward the source of the voice while saying. "I see that Sir Kentas is still around. You should have given me a hint so that I don't have to waste too much time."

Kentas, who was still currently disguised as an explorer, chuckled after hearing those words. "That will be no fun at all. However, I must admit that it is quite frustrating."

"But I still believe that it is better this way. At least, the answer that you have gotten will be forever engraved in your mind."

Shin thought for a moment before nodding his head. He understood what Kentas meant with those words, so he did not complain very much. After all, what he had received from this island was pretty much worth it in the end.

He could already feel that his connection with the Elemental Mana had greatly improved. He could even see them now through the naked eye. He now did not need to actively use his 'True Sight' skill to read their flow. He could also control them much easier than before.

Setting this aside, Shin finally had the time to ask something that he was curious about. "How is Sir Kentas related to Regan? And how come this entire island has become his secret laboratory?"

"Also, is Sir Kentas somewhat connected to this Island?" he added before the latter could even answer his previous questions.

He would first think that the Phantom Swordsman Class and this Phantom Island were not connected at all. It could only be a coincidence that both had the word 'Phantom' in them.

But he kept having this feeling that it was not the case. He felt that there was at least some connection between the two.

Moreover, it could not be a coincidence that Kentas happened to be exploring this place when he was about to take his Tier 3 Class Promotion. There had to be a reason for that.

Adding the words that Kentas had said just now, it could be proven that this NPC had purposely brought him to this place.

Kentas thought for a moment before deciding to disclose a few pieces of information. "Let's say that I have worked with that guy before. You can also say that he has been colleagues for quite some time."

"As for his connection with this island – I guess you can say that when he is looking for answers to his questions, he stumbles upon this place and lives here for quite a while."

"As for the recorded history that you have seen up until now, I trust that you have already guessed their origin. They are the battles that this island has witnessed. That is right, this place is one of the main battlefields of the Primordial War where the Spiritual Beings have fought."

"Though, they are only a few of the main combatants that fought here," added Kentas with a mystifying tone, clearly indicating that there was more in this island that Shin had yet to discover.

He did not wait for Shin to respond as he quickly added. "As for the third question, I can't say that I am not connected to this island, but it is not like I am also deeply connected."

He then paused and tossed a token to Shin while saying. "How about you find the answer for that yourself."

Shin caught the token and looked at it. At first glance, there was nothing special about the token aside from being made from tough materials. He felt that it was much tougher than his armor and could not be broken by any regular means.

He also could not find any trace of mana on it, not even a hint of any kind of energy.

While Shin was confused, Kentas continued. "Use that token when you want to return here."

"You will be able to return here when you channel your mana into that token while using a teleportation circle. Any teleportation circle will be fine as it can transport you from one large kingdom and Empire to another. In short, any advanced teleportation circle would be fine."

"Just pick a random destination, but don't forget to channel your mana on that token since it will readjust coordinates to this place accordingly."

Shin could not help but frown deeply when he heard those instructions, finding them slightly 'unreliable'.

Seemingly able to understand what Shin was thinking, Kentas quickly explained. "Kid, it is not easy to create a dimensional token that can direct you to this place since the whole island is shrouded by a natural energy barrier that negates any outside entry, especially if it was a teleportation."

"If you don't have someone on the island that can pull you in, or if you are not supported by an advanced teleportation formation at the very least, then you will land on the nearby sea instead and wander there aimlessly."

"Unless you are strong enough to tear through the space and dimension, then it is impossible for someone as weak as you to freely enter this place."

Kentas paused for a moment before adding. "Of course, you can use some normal means like using a ship to travel through the sea while using that token as some compass that will guide you here."

"But that will take a long time and a lot of effort, especially when this Island is at the center of the 'Sea of Death' in between the Aurora and Awakened Continents. Hence, I do not suggest you take that route."

He then paused for the second time as he remembered something and quickly continued. "Ah! Personally, I suggest that you choose the Thousand Light Empire as your main destination when you are using the teleportation formations since it is near the borders of the continent and will greatly help during the spatial transport."

"It may be costly, but it is much safer and can avoid accidents during the entire process."

Hearing those words, the corner of Shin's mouth started twitching as he suspected that this NPC was playing tricks on him.

Shin closed his eyes and took a deep breath to calm himself down before putting the token inside his inventory space.

It was at this moment that he suddenly remembered the dimension where Vladimir's homeland was located. From what he had remembered, Kentas was the one who had separated that land from the main world and created an independent world where it existed.

But before he could even ask to help him with it, Kentas quickly beat him into it. "Kid, that is your problem. I may be the creator of that dimension, but it had already become an independent world for a very long time. It is no longer under my control."

"I can help you re-enter it if you want, but that is all into it. You can exit it freely, but you will not be able to re-enter it again unless you have some help from someone like me. But that will be a little inconvenient, don't you think?"

"It will be better to enter the place through the proper channel."

He also added, making Shin completely speechless. "And don't ask me to create a dimensional key solely for that independent world. Do you think it is easy to create one? I may be powerful, but even someone like me can't freely create something like that."

"I can freely enter it if I want since I am strong and can withstand the pressure of the dimensional passage. But for a weakling like you, it is impossible, so you can only rely on external means."

He then shrugged his shoulders before continuing. "You should have remembered the place that I have brought you during that time, am I right?"

"There is a teleportation portal there, but it will only react to you since you are connected to the main lord of that place-... or should I say 'lords?' After all, your Elemental Spirit Companions have already turned it into their main rebirthing place."

"But you still have a dimensional key before using it. But instead of mainly using it for teleportation, the dimensional key that you need is something that can protect you during the dimensional travel."

"Passing through the spatial and dimensional passage is still something that you can withstand with your current strength."

He then smirked. "What do you think? This should be better, right? At least, the materials that you will need for this type of key will be much easier to find than a dimensional token. The production cost will be much cheaper too."

Shin could only sigh helplessly when he heard those words before nodding his head. "Thank you, Sir Kentas. This will greatly help me with my problems."

Kentas repeatedly nodded his head when he heard those words. "That is good! That is good! As long as you acknowledge it."

After fooling around for a moment, Kentas eyes finally turned serious, and said solemnly to Shin. "But kid, I must remind you to clear your 'Third Awakening' as soon as possible since the matters of this plane are getting serious."

*(Tier 3 Class Promotion.)

"The Corrupted Cult and Demonic Churches are being too active lately, which means that they are preparing for something big."

"The Righteous Churches and the other organizations are already making their preparations too and getting ready to counterattack, but they are starting to find traitors one after another, causing some delay on their plans."

"At a time like this, you, Otherworld Individuals will be a great help to everyone, so we are hoping that you will reach at least the next stage as soon as possible to have a decent strength to join the upcoming battle."

"We are all hoping that every envoy and representative of the Righteous Churches and other groups will be able to grow much faster and lend us your powers."

"And as someone chosen by me, I hope you will not disappoint me," he added before turning around.

"Kid, you are one of those guys, who has the greatest potential. I hope that you can grow faster so that peace can be maintained in the future. We will be waiting for all of you!" he said without turning around and waving his hand.

After that, he suddenly turned into a blur and disappeared as if he had never been there.

Shin stared at the spot where Kentas disappeared from while falling in deep thought. Based on the information that the latter had disclosed, it seemed like a major event would be happening soon.

If he guessed it right, then it would most likely be related to the World Quest that he had received during their expedition in the Frozen Kingdom.

"The Decent of the Devil Ancestor," mumbled Shin with a serious tone before nodding his head. "I must be thoroughly prepared myself for this. The others too."

He nodded his head before taking out a Return Scroll from his inventory and crushing it.

Chapter 1246 Ribbit's Secret

...

Right after Shin returned to the Saint Heaven Kingdom and appeared at the Teleportation Hall of the Holy City, he immediately went back to standing at the teleportation circle and teleported to Calderock Town.

He would first drop by the Mayor's Residence and tell Ribbit to start the preparations and inform him about the adjustments to their plans.

The operation of the Calderock Town was the same as always. It was stable, but it no longer had any potential. Sooner or later, it would lose its current popularity and would be forgotten by everyone. They had to make sure that the relocation would be successful.

Ribbit was pouring everything he had into this project that they had and even recruiting more NPCs to be their soldiers and investing in training them. Shin even instructed to equip everyone with the best weapons that they could have according to their respective strengths.

Even though ten thousand soldiers were a lot, Shin knew that it was far from what they needed if he wanted to protect the Twin Cities that they were planning to build, much less the entirety of the Sky Deceiving Valley.

If they wanted to have everything under control, then they had to invest more in their military prowess so that they could maintain the security of their land.

However recruiting more NPCs would be challenging, so Shin and Ribbit planned to compensate for their lack of numbers with the quality of their soldiers.

This project had already been in motion since Ribbit had proposed the promotion of the town, so they had already made great progress. After visiting the military barracks stationed outside the town, Shin had saw that the training NPCs already reached a satisfactory level.

Each soldier was at least 175 Elite while the rest were slightly better. The Captains and the Knights that Ribbit had previously recruited also reached the rank of Commanders and had an average level of 180.

*(NPC Commanders were comparable to Lords at the current stage of the game).

It was just a little disappointing that the first batch of Named NPC soldiers that Shin had recruited when he was starting to build the town had died during an unfortunate incident. They had died during the invasion of the Corrupted Cult.

David had protected the Town during that time, but some assassins still had managed to sneak from the other side of the main battlefield, making these named NPCs face them and die in the process.

But their sacrifices were not for naught since their subordinates had shown tremendous growth after the incident.

Shin was not sure if it was a system setup, but he felt that when a named NPC with an important role died, their loyal subordinates grew a little faster than the normal pace and became much stronger.

It was similar to what happened to Dracula when he died. Those vampires that were under him had reached a much higher level after he died sacrificing himself for his kingdom.

Shin had seen Bellion reach a higher rank and almost reach the stage that Draco had reached during his peak. Even though the General of Dracula still hadn't reached the rank of Sovereign Being, he was still not too far from it.

Shin hoped that he would be able to find such a powerful General NPC when they relocated to the Sky Deceiving Valley. Even though he knew that it was just wishful thinking, he was still a little hopeful.

Shin was quite in a hurry since he still had a lot of things lined up, waiting to be dealt with. He had to complete everything as soon as possible. He felt a sudden urgency from what he had heard from Kentas.

The game was rapidly moving. Its state of affairs seemed to be heading in a certain direction, sweeping everyone with a strong force.

The sudden opening of the Major Regions of different races, the active movements of the Corrupted Cult and Demonic Churches, the sudden discovery of the Ascended and Enlightened Races, and the distress of the Righteous Churches – all of these seemed to be pointing to something.

And Shin could feel that it was both a disaster and an opportunity.

If they did not make haste, then they might be swept away and get swallowed by the wave, unable to fight back.

They had to be ready when that time came and ride the wave naturally as if they were the kings of the sea. They had to be in control instead of being led by it senselessly.

...

Unfortunately, not everything could go according to one's plans. At times, there were some unavoidable circumstances and certain variables that could affect the flow of everything.

And right now, Shin was about to face one.

Due to his taking proper action and a lot of preparations, the quest that he had somewhat forgotten due to the successive events that happened recently and the certain peace that Ribbit was currently experiencing had suddenly become 'active'.

His plans and actions, especially when they were now at the most crucial stages, had triggered the final key to set the quest in motion.

The system now had judged that it was the right time to proceed with everything it had prepared for this quest.

Quest Name: Ribbit's Ambitions - I

Quest Type: Hidden Supportive Quest

Quest Difficulty: Default

Quest Details:

Ribbit felt indebted to you because you saved his life before. And due to that reason Ribbit, the merchant, wanted to return the favor and decided to manage the Calderock Village in your place. But when the puny village is suddenly promoted into a decent town, Ribbit suddenly feels that his worth will end, but you suddenly offer him the position of the Town's Manager.

Ribbit became moved and promised to make Calderock the most prestigious city in the Saint Heaven Kingdom.

Quest Condition:

Now that you have presented the topic, Ribbit wanted you to prepare some things to promote Calderock Town into a Basic City.

Quest Progress (205%):

-Town Relocation Order

-Master Class Blueprints of the following:

--Inn

--Restaurants

--Potion Shop

--Blacksmith Shop

--Battle Arena

-Form an official alliance with a Guild that has an over 500,000 Guild Reputation or Adventurer Team with the same reputation.

Quest Reward:

-Ribbit being promoted to Grand Merchant (Next Rank of Master)

+2 000 000 bonus City Reputation when the Calderock Village was successfully promoted into a Basic City

Quest Penalty (Ineffective unless Ribbit dies):

- (???)

Shin was suddenly reminded of this quest when he arrived at the Mayor's Office and saw Ribbit in a terrible state. The NPC's face was completely pale, and his lips were somewhat dry and turning white.

Shin frowned deeply when he saw this and swept his gaze inside the office. It was at that moment that he saw two NPC guards standing inside, seemingly guarding Ribbit fully alert.

He then used 'True Sight' to look at the information of the two guards. He only glanced at it briefly, but he could not help but frown deeper when he saw that they were both level 180 Captain Rank NPCs.

Shin then realized the gravity of the situation, making him take this seriously.

Seeing that the Town's Mayor entered the office, Ribbit immediately stood up and greeted him along with the two NPC Guards.

"I am sorry, Mayor. As you can see, I am not in good condition, so I can't greet you on your arrival," said Ribbit apologetically.

"It is fine. It is not even a big deal," Shin shook his head before directly asking. "But what happened?"

Ribbit smiled bitterly before adding. "It is just a minor issue, Mayor. You don't have to worry too much about it. I can handle this."

Shin frowned even deeper when he heard that before saying. "I don't think that it is a minor issue."

Seeing that Shin was not pleased with his reply, Ribbit could only smile even more bitterly before reporting the entire matter.

...

As it turned out, Ribbit had almost been assassinated inside the Mayor's Office by an unknown assailant.

Fortunately, the guards patrolling at that time saw what happened and quickly saved him in time. They managed to prevent the disaster, but the assassin still managed to escape, making them uneasy. Due to this, the head of the NPC guards assigned these two guards, who were the best among the guards, to stay at the side of the city manager at all times and protect him.

Now that he thought about it, he also noticed that the NPC guards roaming the streets of Calderock Town seemed to be somewhat agitated.

At the same time, he also saw that the security of the Mayor's Residence was very tight, which was most likely the result of the previous assassination attempt.

Having a rough understanding of the situation, Shin could only nod his head before falling in a deep thought. – "Why was someone wanted to assassinate Ribbit?" –

It was at this moment that his eyes suddenly attracted to the bottommost part of the quest that he had gotten from Ribbit.

Quest Penalty (Ineffective unless Ribbit dies):

- (???)

Shin thought that it was nothing special at first, but as it turned out, it was not the case. This seemed to be much more serious than he thought it could be.

Moreover, he also noticed that the quest was not completed despite him collecting all the required items for the promotion of the Town. It was completely strange.

"Why is it not completed yet?" he muttered to himself while thinking deeply. It was until an idea flashed through his mind. "...it is a series of quests?"

"No. It is a series of quests," he corrected himself as he gazed at the name of the quest. That 'I' was indicating that this was just the first part of the quest.

He just did not notice it immediately since he had neglected this particular quest up until now.

Right now, Shin only needed to trigger something to proceed to the next part of the quest. He then turned to Ribbit and asked the most crucial question. "Why does someone want you dead? And do you have any idea of who they are?"

"This-..." Ribbit paused for a moment, clearly showing that he was somewhat hesitant to answer.

This reaction alone was more than enough for Shin to have a rough idea of what was going on. He also realized that this Named NPC that he had 'picked' up before was not as ordinary as it seemed.

He then took a deep breath and suddenly added to his previous questions. "Ribbit... Who exactly are you?"

Right after these words left his mouth, a system notification suddenly rang in his ears.

Ding

It was clear that the quest had been updated.

'I knew it!' he did not even turn to the notification as he had somewhat expected it. He just continued staring at Ribbit, waiting for the NPC to answer patiently.

"I-..." Ribbit hesitated for another time, not sure how and where to start. But after contemplating it for a moment, he gritted his teeth and steeled his resolve.

It was only at that moment that he was finally able to force a few words from his mouth. "...-I'm originally a part of a secret organization."

Hearing those words, Shin immediately understood a couple of things and quickly got a rough idea of the current situation. "So, the real reason why you want to work under him at that time is not because of gratitude, but it is because you want to lay low and hide from the eyes of your previous organization."

Hearing those words, Ribbit suddenly panicked. He felt that Shin would be disappointed because of this.

He even started to stutter as he tried to defend himself and prove that he was now loyal to Shin. "That-... that is-... only at first, Mayor. I-... I-..."

Seeing that Ribbit was panicking, Shin shook his head and smiled before saying. "I understand. You don't have to worry. I have seen your sincerity when working under me. You even take care of the Town during my absence."

"If you have any hidden agenda, then you have already pulled some strings now."

"I trust you, Ribbit," said Shin, making the NPC almost cry in gratitude.

But before Ribbit could even get on his knees and worship him, Shin quickly asked. "How about you tell me your story so that I can understand your situation?"

Chapter 1247 Ribbit's Secret (Part 2)

...

After hearing Ribbit out and instructing the latter to be ready to proceed with their plans, Shin walked out of the office and headed to his room to rest and contemplate everything that he just heard.

Naturally, he also assigned a few more people to guard Ribbit after learning that the secret organization that the NPC had used to be part of was quite powerful.

He fully understood the gravity of the situation, so he made sure that everything was being handled properly. He also had to ensure the safety of this named NPC, especially now that he had an important role in Shin's plans.

Sitting on the sofa, Shin leaned his back tiredly. It seemed like all the mental fatigue that he had accumulated up until now was starting to kick in.

While resting, he started organizing the information that he had gotten inside his head.

Based on what he had heard, the secret organization that Ribbit used to belong to was called 'Silver Knives'. It was an underground NPC organization that secretly operated in different kingdoms.

It was one of the largest NPC organizations that was not part of any Religion or bound to any nation. They were made up of merchant organizations with each member being the most elite people in their field.

The heads of the organizations were named NPCs which were quite well-known within the game. Most of them were also the owners or an executive of Merchant Organizations within the game.

The founders of the organization built it while having a goal to make profits that would continuously flow in their pockets even if they were not doing anything.

It was something that had to be expected from a merchant organization.

But they also had a secondary goal and that was to connect all Kingdoms and Empires and spread their signature products to the entire continent.

Profits always came first while the rest came in second.

Ribbit said that the organization was very small when it started but it quickly grew in power and became larger as time passed. Its influence started to spread throughout the entire continent as more merchant organizations joined it.

It continued to grow until it became one of the hegemonic organizations within the continent. Even though they were not that well known by the public, they were still a massive monster lurking in the shadows and controlling the market.

It was also said to be the wealthiest organization on the continent.

As for the reason why Ribbit left and was being hunted by this organization, Shin learned that it was because of the sudden uprising of a certain group that recently joined the organization.

There was a sudden power shift when the current leader of the organization died due to an unforeseen incident.

The entire organization was in chaos, especially since everyone here was sly and cunning businessmen. They quickly revealed their fangs and set their eyes on the empty seat left by the previous leader.

The different factions within the organization started fighting against each other, clearly showing their greed for the wealth of the organization and their desire for the empty seat of the leader.

A lot of organizations were eradicated during the process, and it only stopped when the new leader was seated in the head position.

This impacted the strength and influence of the secret organization, but this new leader did not care and continued to wipe out the enemies that he had within the organization.

Ribbit was one of those people, so he was forced to leave the organization. But from the look of it, the current leader of the organization had a deep-rooted grudge against him.

Not only did this leader kick Ribbit out of the organization, but he also annihilated the merchant group that Ribbit previously had and forced him into hiding.

Ribbit ran to this kingdom and kept a low profile, hiding from the eyes of the 'Silver Knives'. But from the look of it, this organization seemed to have sniffed him up and started pointing their daggers at him once again.

Shin felt that because of the Calderock Town during the previous time and the recent events that centered around the Saint Heaven Kingdom, the higher-ups of the Silver Knives might have noticed Ribbit movements.

Thinking about this, Shin suddenly turned at the update of the quest that he had gotten from Ribbit.

[Quest Name] Ribbit's Ambition – II

[Quest Type]: Hidden Assistance Quest

[Quest Difficulty]: Default

[Quest Update]: You have discovered Ribbit's hidden identity and learned that he was part of the hidden organization, Silver Knives.

Due to Ribbit being one of the greatest opponents of the current leader of the organization, he was constantly being hunted down by the Silver Knives for years.

Ribbit was the sole survivor of the opposition and was also the wisest among them, but due to his faction being crushed greatly and his previous merchant group being annihilated, he was powerless in front of such a powerful organization.

You have promised Ribbit to help him reach his ambition, but when you are about to succeed the Silver Knives have noticed him.

[Quest Condition]: Help Ribbit survive this predicament until you reach your goal. Or completely resolve the entire matter.

[Quest Rewards]: This will be calculated depending on your choice and overall performance.

lightsNovel.com [Quest Penalty]: Ribbit's death.

Shin frowned deeply as he read through the information about the quest before slightly shaking his head. This quest was not as complicated as the previous ones that he had completed; it was even very straightforward. But given the information that he had in hand, he could see that the quest was quite tricky to deal with.

He even got a hint from the system after seeing the final phrase written at the quest condition.

"To rush building our cities or deal with the secret organization, huh? This is quite trick to deal with," muttered Shin as he stared at the quest panel.

This might be quite troublesome since he would be facing a powerful NPC organization. It might have weakened due to the internal conflict and power struggle that they had a few years back and still in the middle of recovering. But they were still a big organization, nevertheless.

But even if it would be a problem to provoke such an organization, Shin was not that scared at all. He and his friends had been fighting against NPC Organizations up until now, which were much bigger than it.

The Corrupted Cult and Demonic Churches were among the major factions within the game, so the difference between these two organizations and the 'Silver Knives' was pretty much obvious.

It might be quite troublesome, but Shin felt that they could do it somehow.

On top of these issues, Shin also felt that this might be an opportunity. This was a secret merchant organization that spread throughout the continent that they were talking about, so if Shin successfully fended them off or even took over it, they would surely reap an astronomical profit.

Thinking about it, Shin quickly opened his friend list and contacted Shiella. He wanted to hear her opinion on this matter. He was also looking for her purposely because he knew that Shiella was a Master Merchant in her lifestyle profession.

Given that her guild also owned a training firm that spread far and wide in the entire continent, he felt that she might be aware of this secret organization. It would be better if she was familiar with it.

"What is it?" asked Shiella right after answering. She wanted to go straight to the point since she was currently busy dealing with everything.

Shin did not mind since this was also what he wanted. He did not beat around the bush and quickly explained everything to her. He also voiced out his thoughts and even presented the idea of taking over a secret merchant organization if possible.

Shiella remained quiet the entire time and waited for Shin to finish patiently. She even dropped what she was doing temporarily to make sure that she would understand everything and not miss any details.

After listening for a couple of minutes, Shiella could not help but smile bitterly and scold Shin a little. "You really are a troublemaker, aren't you? You keep on planning these kinds of crazy kinds of stuff when you are still in the middle of the mess that you have created."

"And your appetite is quite large, don't you think? We are still in the middle of building our main base of operation, yet you are already planning to swallow up such a huge NPC Organization? Can't you focus on one important task at a time? It is not like you will lose anything while waiting."

Hearing her nagging, Shin pursed his lips a little before refuting. "It is a quest given to me unexpectedly, though. It is not like I can control the system and stop it from giving me more of these crazy things."

He then quickly shut up when he saw Shiella glaring fiercely at him from the virtual screen.

Changing the subject, Shin quickly said. "So, what do you think? Can we-... do it?"

The corner of Shiella's mouth suddenly twitched when she heard that before sighing. "We are already lacking in manpower just on the matter with the building of the Twin Cities. I don't think we have the luxury to face that organization."

"I can arrange for some people to watch over your Town Manager and look out for the possible assassinations, but I can't promise to help you with the other matter. After all, my priority is the survivability of that NPC called Ribbit since it will affect our plans greatly if something happens to him."

"It is better to ignore the second choice and wait for us to settle on the Sky Deceiving Valley and set up a solid and systematic defense before thinking about challenging such an organization."

"The state of the game was also quite tricky since the Corrupted Cult and Demonic Churches are pretty much active all over the continent, so provoking other NPC organizations of that size will only give us more problems than benefits."

Shin did not immediately respond to her as he could understand her line of thoughts. He had also thought that they might be biting more than they could chew.

And if something went wrong, then they would be facing more problems in the future, especially with the size of the Silver Knives and the scale of their operation. With such a large force, Shin and the rest would most likely be crushed in one fell swoop given their current strength.

It might be a Merchant Organization originally, but given their wealth, it would be not impossible for them to hire the best guards for their protection or even create their security group.

Any of those cases could be possible, so it was also possible for this wealthy organization to hire some assassins or mercenaries to assassinate Ribbit or any other targets that they had, particularly their enemies.

But at the same time, Shin felt he was onto something. Given the clues that he had gotten from Ribbit's story and the small hint that he had gotten from the quest description, there must be a solution out there that did not require them to go all the trouble.

It was at that point that he remembered that Ribbit was supposed to have an important role in one of the leading factions within the Silver Knives.

"Ah!" when his thought fell into this area, Shin suddenly got a bold idea. "Big Sis. How about we use Ribbit as some sort of bait?"

Hearing that, Shiella stopped herself from returning to her work and turned back to Shin. She then gave him a look that seemed to be telling him to continue.

Shin did not hesitate and continued. "From what I heard, Ribbit seems to have some history with the current head of the organization. It is also something big at that."

"What if we take advantage of this fact and use it to our advantage-...?" he started laying out the plan that he suddenly thought, trying to convince Shiella.

Shiella fell into deep thought when she heard that and started considering his plan seriously, especially when he mentioned striking a singular target rather than facing the entire organization.

"Attacking the head to kill it in one strike, huh? Then use the influence of your NPC Servant to take over everything," mumbled Shiella as she started to see this in a different light.

If it was assassinating a single person, then they might be able to pull it off as long as they formed the most elite squad to take on the task.

The only problem was looking for the location of their target.

But coincidental, they were somewhat close with a certain player organization that focused on intelligence gathering about NPCs – the 'Secret Recipe' Group.

But this was still needing some time and preparation, so she did not immediately agree to Shin. "Let's wait a little longer. Let me deal with everything on this side and make sure that everything is going according to the plan before discussing this."

"I'll get back to you," she said before quickly ending the call.

Shin stared at the blackened screen for a moment before shaking his head. He then closed the virtual screen and rested for a little while before heading out.

It was time to deal with the rest of the tasks that he had for himself.

Chapter 1248 Insane Growth Pace (Part 1)

.....

Shin did not immediately leave the Mayor's Manor as he wanted for the people that Shiella had arranged for the protection of Ribbit. This additional security would put Shin more at ease, making him focus more on other tasks that he had in hand.

He only left after introducing the group that Shiella had sent to Ribbit and the rest of the guards patrolling around the Mayor's Manor.

After making sure that everything was fine, Shin quickly headed to the Holy City and looked for Berlin's Workshop, planning to consult the Saint Blacksmith about the dimensional key that Kentas was talking about.

Shin was preparing himself to get rejected. Or at the very least, he had to be prepared to negotiate with Berlin. He knew that Saint Blacksmith only agreed to reforge his sword, the [Yamato], because of the recommendation of the Dwarf King that he met in the beginner's village, Orn. Given this, he had to offer something that would make Berlin grant his request.

Fortunately, he had a pretty good relationship with Berlin himself, so he was not that worried.

When Shin arrived at the blacksmith shop, he could not help but halt his steps and stared blankly in front of him.

Berlin's shop was the most famous shop within the entire Kingdom, so it was only natural for it to be filled with consumers, both players and NPCs alike. The outside would always have a long line of people waiting for their turn since it became known to everyone.

But that was not the reason why Shin halted his steps. Instead, it was because of the opposite reason.

There was no one outside the shop. Not even a single soul.

Despite how fancy the blacksmith shop had become and how large it was now, it turned into a ghost place due to the current sight that it had.

It was only a short time since he last visited the place, yet it underwent another complete metamorphosis for another time.

"Why does this shop always transform whenever I visit it," muttered Shin to himself as he moved forward.

He still had not knocked on the door when someone already opened it and greeted him. "It has been a while, Sir Envoy. What can we do for you this time?"

Shin paused for a moment as he stared at the person who opened the door. After getting a clear look, he could not help but knit deeply as he could not remember knowing this shop personnel.

It was a male dwarf that he did not recognize. From what he could see, this was his first time seeing this dwarf. But for some unknown reason, he felt that he knew this dwarf somehow.

Seeing how the dwarf looked at him, Shin thought of something and immediately used his 'True Sight' skill, staring at the dwarf intently.

Upon activation of the observation skill, Shin could see a layer of mana shrouding the dwarf. When his skill fully activated, the true form of the dwarf was immediately revealed in front of him. "Ah! Sir Berlin!"

Berlin, who was currently in disguise, chuckled a little and commented. "That technique of yours sure is amazing. It can even be seen through the [Mask of Thousand Forms] that I have created. I guess I have to make a few adjustments with this."

After that, he turned around and invited Shin. "Come inside. It is not safe to take here. Let's go to my workshop."

Shin entered and closed the door behind him before following behind Berlin.

When he entered the shop, Shin could not help but frown deeply due to the sight that he saw inside. The shop was completely different from what he last visited. The racks that were full of weapons and equipment were now empty.

Seemingly able to read what was running inside Shin's head, Berlin suddenly said with his back still facing Shin. "You are confused why the business suddenly becomes like this?"

"Haha! It is because I get tired of getting requests from those annoying nobles. They keep on requesting more batches of equipment that they use to equip their army. I can't waste my time supplying them with war weapons and satisfying their greed, can I?"

"If I do that, I will not have the time to do my research in weapons and armor. I already have a lot of ideas on how to forge more powerful equipment after I reforge your sword, so I do not have the time to entertain those people."

Shin nodded his head in understanding after hearing those words. He could not help but agree with each of the words that the Saint Blacksmith had said.

After a brief pause, Berlin continued. "Due to that, I am forced to disguise myself while telling everyone that I am focusing on my forging technique. I just recently broke through the Saint Rank, so it is only natural for me to consolidate my current realm."

"The funny thing is no one dared to question my decision because I am the only Saint Rank Blacksmith within the kingdom. Everyone wants to earn favor from me, and no one wants to provoke me, which is what I find funny."

"And the reason why you close the shop is?" asked Shin curiously even though he already had an idea why.

Berlin chuckled once again as he responded. "It is just to make sure that no one will be suspicious. It is also to prevent those Otherworldly Individuals from annoying me. They keep on keeping and trying to get something from me, so I close the shop and make sure that no one will be disturbing me again."

He then paused for a moment and looked over his shoulder before continuing. "As for you-... You are an exemption. Given our relationship, I can say that we are somewhat friends. Am I right?"

Hearing that, Shin secretly heaved a sigh of relief as he was not sure that he could at least ask Berlin some favor.

After that, the two continued to chat with each other as they went deeper inside the shop. It did not long for them to arrive at the secret room where the hidden teleportation formation was located.

Familiar with the entire process, Shin just stood at the center of the room while waiting for Berlin to finish all the preparations. He did not wait long as the old dwarf immediately activated the formation.

Not long after, Shin and Berlin appeared at the volcano where the old dwarf had built his workshop.

When they arrived, Berlin quickly went straight to the point and asked. "So, what is Sir Envoy want from me this time? Given that you immediately visited me not long after testing your sword, I can tell that this must be something that must be happening."

Shin smiled bitterly when heard that before explaining everything. He mentioned about the dimensional key that Kentas had given him and his plans.

It took a few minutes for Shin to finish. Berlin remained silent and continued to listen. He did not interrupt Shin even for a moment and just patiently waited for the young man to explain everything.

Berlin did not immediately respond as he was thinking about something. He then turned to Shin and asked something somewhat unrelated to the main issue. "What is your relationship with the 'Phantom King'?"

Shin was slightly confused at first before realizing that Berlin was talking about Kentas. However, he still could not immediately reply as he was not sure how he was going to respond. In the end, he could only say. "I guess I can be considered as his successor since I am learning under him."

Given that Shin had the Phantom Swordsman as his Secondary Combat Class, so it indicated that he was a student of Kentas. What confused him a little was how Berlin addressed that mysterious guy. 'Phantom King? I guess this title has some weight on it given that Berlin takes this seriously.'

But after putting more thought into it, he found that it was not that strange since based on what he had heard, Kentas was one of the active heroes of the Atlas World. That title alone was more than enough to tell much story.

Moreover, it was clear that this Phantom Swordsman Class was an Ascended Class, so there were still some mysteries in it that Shin had not discovered.

Meanwhile, Berlin remained silent for a few minutes as he fell in deep thought. Shin waited patiently as he could tell that there was some history behind this.

The Saint Blacksmith was lost in his thoughts for quite some time, making Shin a little uncomfortable. It was only after half an hour that Berlin finally opened his mouth. "I see. This is rather interesting."

He then turned to Shin and then back to his usual demeanor and said. "I will make that dimensional key for you. I can even make you a better one that can connect you both in the Phantom Island and the independent dimension that you are talking about."

Shin was surprised and could not help but ask. "Is that possible? And if it is, I think that it will be hard."

Berlin chuckled and said. "Of course, it will be hard to create one. I also have to ask some help from a decent Time Mage to create one."

"But it is necessary since items that a Saint Rank Blacksmith should be at this level to be worthy of their name."

He then paused briefly before continuing with a mystifying tone. "But I can't just craft you one for free, don't you think?"

Shin chuckled and replied instantly. "Naturally!"

Berlin slapped his thighs as he said. "Alright! I will hold onto that promise! But I will save it for now and use it when the time is right."

He then stood up and went inside his workshop. "This will not take that long but I need to look for a friend of mine to help me cast the time and space magic on it. You can come and take it two days from now."

"Alright, I understand," said Shin. Even though he was somewhat in a hurry, he still understood that it was not easy to create such an item.

Shin was about to leave when he heard Berlin added. "Don't leave just yet. Stay inside the volcano for today."

"Today is one of the rare occasions when this volcano calms down. It is a rare phenomenon that only happens once in hundreds of years. You can't miss it."

Shin paused his steps and turned around, looking at the blacksmith.

Understanding that Shin was asking him to explain further, Berlin immediately added. "It is called the 'Sleeping Tyrant'. It is the time when the volcano reaches its 'coldest' temperature."

"It will start in two hours at the very least and end tomorrow at noon," Berlin picked up an item from the stone table and tossed it to Shin while continuing. "Use that token when you find yourself in danger inside this volcano. It will instantly send you out once you channel your mana into it."

"Remember to observe the changes within the volcano. Everything! You have to observe everything, especially the transition between the heat."

"Since you have learned that breathing technique from me and even modified it to suit your style, I have high expectations for you."

"This rare phenomenon is one of the reasons why I want to build my workshop here. Once it starts, you must fully concentrate on it and absorb everything that you can get as much as you can."

Seeing that slight confusion on Shin's face, Berlin chuckled and continued. "This phenomenon is one of the things that inspired me to create that breathing technique. It can help you greatly on your progress."

He then paused for a moment and squinted his eyes as he stared intently at Shin's body. He could see the mixture of different elements enfolding the latter. He became even more interested when sensed the thick Metal and Earth Elemental Mana from Shin.

He then nodded his head before adding with a mystifying tone. "Who knows-... you may even get something that will surprise you greatly."

Chapter 1249 Insane Growth Pace (Part 2)

.....

Shin headed toward the spot that Berlin had pointed out. From what Saint Blacksmith had said, this place was the core of the entire volcano, which was also the hottest part within that aside from the workshop that Berlin had built.

But the difference between the two was the natural heat that they had. Inside the workshop, Berlin had drawn some formations that gathered all the heat from the volcano, which turned the entire workshop into a furnace.

On the other hand, this place that Berlin called the core of the volcano had a natural heat that was so intense that it turned the entire place into a scorching furnace.

Shin even felt that he was about to be burned alive just by standing there. If not for him mastering the 'Solar Breathing Technique' to protect himself, then he would have most likely died right now.

What Shin found surprising was the fact that he did not feel any discomfort from standing in this place the moment he used the breathing technique. He even felt very comfortable just by standing there.

He could also feel that his control over Fire Elemental Mana in the surroundings increased greatly. He could feel that it was not only because of his mastery over the 'Solar Breathing Technique', but also of the changes that the legacy skill, 'Regan's Method,' had brought.

Shin glanced at the legacy skill briefly as he felt that it was not as simple as it seemed. Compared to the other legacy skills, 'Mondi's Series,' particularly, 'Regan's Method' was an all-in-one skill.

It had all the skills within it. It looked like a bunch of skills within a skill.

Or to be more precise, it was a unique Skill Tree with multiple branches recorded within a skill.

The changes that the skill had after he had completed the exploration of the Phantom Island were much better than he had expected.

Aside from this, Shin's attention was also attracted to the special trait that he had gotten after he learned the secrets of the 'Regan's Method,' which was called 'Elemental Unification.'

Shin did not get anything from that description that it had since it only increased his Elemental Affinity and Sensitivity. But he could feel that it improved some things within him that he was not completely aware of.

But after focusing his senses and feeling the surroundings, Shin felt something strange. He felt as if the surrounding mana was gathering toward him, particularly the major elements within the volcano such as Fire, Earth, and Metal.

And due to his decent level of affinity with the Earth and Metal Elements, he could also feel the minerals scattered in the entire place.

Not only that, but he also felt something from the flowing river of lava. He could feel the mixture of Fire and Earth Elemental Mana in it and a hint of Metal Element.

Sensing that, Shin unconsciously extended his hand and gathered the three elements. He skillfully controlled them. He even separated them from one another.

With his training regarding mental control, he had already reached a certain level where he could fully divide his attention in multiple places.

The training practice that Grandmaster Benn had given him was now paying off.

The elements of Fire, Earth, and Metal formed three different spheres that represented each of them – a ball of fire, a cluster of dirt, and a chunk of metal.

The three elemental spheres spun around one another, controlling them like the steel balls that he had in the real world for training. He played with them a little, moving them at different speeds and paces to showcase his amazing control.

A moment later, an idea entered his mind and slowly moved the three elemental spheres closer to one another. Not long after, the three elements merged, creating a ball of magma.

Its composition was like the river of magma in front of him.

It was at this moment that Shin realized the real usage of the 'Elemental Unification' Trait. "This is going to be interesting."

It reminded him of how the Elemental Clone inside the trial ground of his promotion quest fought. This gave him a rough idea of how he would proceed with his path.

Looking at the Elemental Unification Trait and Regan's Method Legacy Skill one more time, Shin squinted his eyes before turning to Mondy's Style Legacy Skill.

With countless ideas running inside his head, Shin was itching to try taking the promotion quest once again. But after a few moments, he shook his head before mumbling. "Let's wait a little more. Once I have successfully reached the initial mastery of 'Golden Immortality and Great Dominator Techniques' before continuing."

After that, his focus was redirected to the core of the volcano, waiting for the phenomenon that Berlin was talking about earlier.

He looked for a good spot and found a stone pillar standing at the center of the magma river. He knitted his brows a little before summoning his black angelic wings and flew over to that stone pillar.

When he arrived, he did not find anything strange aside from the more concentrated heat enveloping the entire area. But despite being uncomfortable with it, he did not feel any kind of discomfort and felt that the intense heat was giving him strength instead.

He might be confused but he quickly took this opportunity to sit cross-legged on top of the stone pillar and started meditating.

As if taking his actions as some sort of a cue, the surroundings seemed to have taken some changes.

The flowing magma on the river moved more violently and started to around the pillar. It formed a vortex where the stone pillar was acting as the center.

At the same time, Shin also felt some changes in the temperature. The intense heat seemed to be 'rapidly' cooling down for some unknown reason. He did not know the reason, but he felt that he could completely feel and read the changes despite how fast they were.

What surprised Shin, even more, was the continuous insights and inspiration that he was getting as he read and observed the changes in the surroundings through his mind.

He was not sure about what was happening, but he would not let this opportunity slip away. He would take advantage of this situation and reap all the benefits as much as he could.

He continued to meditate and absorbed everything without stopping. He greedily devoured all the enlightenment that he had gotten from the changes in the surroundings.

It was at this moment when he realized why the Dwarves called this phenomenon within the volcano the 'Sleeping Tyrant'. As it turned out, anyone who would be receiving everything would become a tyrannical monster upon waking up.

What was surprising was after the temperature within this place dropped to its 'coldest', it suddenly started rising once again at the same speed as it had earlier.

But this time, Shin had gotten completely different insights and inspirations from them.

Shin took a deep breath and controlled the circulation of energy within his body through the 'Solar Breathing Technique'. He was doing this while absorbing everything that was entering his mind.

From the look of it, the Solar Breathing Technique was the bridge connecting him with this place. It was only when he had reached a certain mastery of this technique that he could receive this enlightenment that was constantly entering his mind.

It was pretty clear that it was some sort of inheritance technique for dwarves. Shin only managed to get it due to him discovering the truth about the breathing technique of Berlin and combining it with his own set of techniques.

Shin remained seated on top of the stone pillar and continued to meditate, absorbing and organizing everything that he was learning.

All the insights that he had gotten were about the connection between fire, earth, and metal. They were about different applications that could utilize their properties in the best way possible.

Combining all of this with everything that he had learned from Professor Henry and the books that the professor had given him, Shin had gotten a deeper understanding of the three elements and their connections.

His understanding of the 'Perfected Four Symbol Scripture' had become more profound.

Along with it, he also started to understand the principles behind the 'Golden Immortality Technique' and the 'Great Dominator Technique'.

He also felt that his connection with the Earth and Metal Element was getting stronger. He even felt that he would only need a small push to fully awaken his other two Innate Attributes.

Shin remained seated on top of the stone pillar and refused to move. He stayed like that during the entire process of the 'Sleeping Tyrant' Phenomenon, which lasted until it was noon the next day.

But despite the phenomenon ending, Shin refused to leave and continued to meditate. He felt that he was currently in a bottleneck and was about to reach a breakthrough.

Unfortunately, that feeling did not last long as it gradually disappeared as more time passed.

Helpless, Shin could only stop reluctantly. But he still refused to leave and started practicing his swordsmanship instead.

He was now starting to consolidate the foundation that he had and further strengthened it.

He started with the sword-drawing style of the 'Jade Kirin Scripture' before proceeding to the 'Thirteen Sword Movements'.

He only stopped when he felt satisfied with his progress.

Then he proceeded to the other techniques under the Perfectly Four Symbol Scripture along with the sword movements that he and Grandmaster Benn had created to complement them.

Shin performed all the techniques and sword movements from the most basic ones up to the most advanced ones that he could perform. He did not stop until everything was covered.

But that was also not the end.

He had yet to take a proper rest when suddenly proceeded with another set of techniques. But this time, he combined the principles of the three major methods of the Four Symbol Scripture – the Celestial Vermillion Bird, the Sacred White Tiger Method, and the Divine Yellow Dragon Method – with the three breathing techniques that he had recently gotten.

Due to his familiarity with the Four Symbol Scriptures, he was able to successfully integrate the three breathing techniques without problem. However, there was still a clear gap between the 'Solar Breathing Technique' and the two other techniques.

But despite that being the case, Shin did not feel disappointed and rather became excited instead. It was because he could feel the immense growth that he had after consolidating everything that he had experienced and all the knowledge that he had gotten together.

He only stopped at this moment since he knew that continuing further would not give him any benefits.

He originally wanted to strike while the iron was hot and proceed with the next step.

After successfully combining the Perfect Four Symbol Scripture and the three breathing techniques, Shin wanted to apply the trick that he had learned from the Elemental Clone and fused everything with the Mondri's Style.

But after careful consideration, he bitterly shook his head and criticized himself. "I can't be too greedy."

He knew it very well. After the smooth success, he started getting a little complacent and overconfident.

It was fine to be bold and take the risk, but he still needed to know his limitations.

He might have been successful with combining the Perfected Four Symbol Scripture and the three breathing techniques, but that was only because of his great familiarity with the latter and the special effects of the 'Elemental Unification' Trait along with the special effects of the newly improved 'Regan's Method.'

All these just happened to complement each other, which resulted in what he had gained right now.

But he knew that it was not perfect. The balance between the three Elements was still incomplete as his Fire Elemental Attribute still greatly surpassed the Earth and Metal Elemental Attributes.

If he wanted to proceed with the next step of his plan, then he had to at least form the absolute balance between those three as well as his mastery over the three high-grade breathing techniques.

This was the reason why returning to the Rebirthing Place of his Elemental Spirit Companions was crucial. He had to get in there as soon as possible and start studying the Elements of Earth and Metal.

And for that to happen, he had the dimensional token that Berlin was trying to craft.

Thinking about this, he remembered that Berlin would be crafting the item now.

And looking at the time, he had unknowingly spent quite a long time training here. It was already the time of their appointment.

"What a perfect timing! Now can I look for the old dwarf and see if he has successfully crafted it!" feeling excited, Shin summoned his wings once again and flew over the bank of the magma river.

But before he could even reach his destination, something unexpected happened.

The magma river under him suddenly erupted and a huge creature suddenly shot up from underneath.

Roar!

Splashes of burning lava flew in the air while a deafening roar shook the entire volcano.

Shin stared at the creature and could not help but smile. "Is it my luck or bad luck? Anyways, this guy just came at the right time!"

Chapter 1250 Insane Growth Pace (Part 3)

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Shin stared at the huge burning creature for a couple of moments, waiting for it to fully reveal itself. He was itching to test some of his newly acquired skills and techniques in actual battle, so this guy came at the right time.

Not long after, the huge creature that came out from the lava revealed its entire body. It was a monster that looked like a hybrid of an alligator and a bear.

Its body was fit and muscular, showcasing a powerful physique. With its broad shoulders, fit chest, and perfectly shaped waist, this monster resembled a human upper body.

Its lower body and long arms, on the other hand, were similar to an alligator. It was filled with tough yet smooth scales that reflected the fiery light of the scorching hot surface of the magma river.

Its back was also filled with these scales which ran down to its tail was still submerged under the magma river.

Its head was similar to a real alligator with a ferocious look. Its burning eyes were glaring at Shin sharply, seemingly telling him that he would not leave this place alive.

Using his 'True Sight' Skill, Shin looked at the basic information of the monster.

[Monster Name]: Wrath of the Burning River

[Monster Type]: Beast, Amphibian

[Monster Index]: Tri-Elemental Mutation

[Monster Rank]: Overlord

Level: 165

Health Points: 100,000,000/ 100,000,000

Shin slightly creased his brows when he saw the information reflected right in front of his eyes. He could not help but have mixed feelings.

It was a Level 165 Overlord which meant that it was as strong as the three Overlord Rank Monsters that he had encountered in the Starry Spears Mountain Forest – the Stoneback Gorilla, the Ironhead Chimpanzee, and the Steelfist Ape.

This meant that this monster should be as powerful as those three, if not more.

But the strange thing was this monster only had a hundred million of health. It was still a huge number, but it was far from what a monster on this rank and level was supposed to have.

This could only mean two things – this monster had a very high defense or strong regenerative powers. Worse, it could even be both.

Moreover, Shin also felt that the monster index of this guy was somewhat strange. It indicated that it was a mutated monster, which meant that there was a high chance that it possessed a Beast Core.

And from what he could see, its Beast Core should be from three different elements given what the monster index had indicated. It was a core that was more likely formed from the elements of fire, earth, and metal.

Shin licked his lips behind his mask as he suddenly became even more excited. "Alright! Since you present yourself voluntarily, I will grant your wish and be my 'sparring' partner!"

Laughing, Shin spread his wings wide before diving down.

Swoosh!

He turned into a streak of light and flew straight to the giant alligator.

Roar!

The monster suddenly became enraged when it saw Shin taking the initiative to challenge it. It felt insulted that this little human being had the guts to fight it on its territory.

It then raised its head and slammed it onto the burning magma river, sending a huge splash in the air and creating a wall.

Unfortunately for this monster, this one challenging it was not an ordinary human.

Swoosh!

Seeing the curtain of magma blocking his path, Shin calmly put his right hand on the hilt of the [Yamato] while channeling his mana into it.

Since he was planning to test his progress, he was not planning to use any of his Elemental Spirit Possession in this battle. Instead, he would be relying on his power and techniques under the Reality Manifestation.

His breathing changed as he used the 'Solar Breathing Technique'. The flow of energy within him moved accordingly as a scorching heat flowed through his meridians.

The blazing mana was channeled into his sword, making a fiery light shine through the little gap between the guard of the sword and its sheath.

Hu~!

As Shin breathed out, white steam suddenly came out from his mouth while being swept away by the wind as he continued moving forward.

Swoosh!

'Jade Kirin Scripture: Quick Draw (Fire Form): Solar Flare'

Shing!

Swoosh!

A blazing trail was left behind the tip of his sword as a burning crescent wave flew toward the curtain of magma.

Surprisingly, there was no explosion upon the collision. Instead, the crescent wave that Shin had sent cut through the curtain of magma and spit it in halves.

Shin quickly flapped his wings and swiftly flew through the gap that his previous attack had created and continued diving down.

Swoosh!

.com But as if the alligator monster was already expecting that to happen, it quickly moved its arms and swung toward Shin while a thick magma was covering its claws.

Upon crossing through the gap of the magma curtain, Shin was immediately greeted by these blazing claws. It was already upon him and about to fall from above, trying to shred him into pieces.

Despite being in such a predicament, Shin calmly adjusted his posture in the air while changing the flow of his breathing.

This time, he switched from the 'Solar Breathing Technique' to the 'Great Dominator Technique'.

Right after he changed his breathing technique, the flow of energy within him changed accordingly. From the scorching mana flowing through his meridians, it suddenly changed to a heavy and domineering mana.

Shin's body also responded according to this new mana flowing through his meridians. His entire body released an earthen glow.

At the same time, he flipped the sheath that he was holding on his left hand, changing from a reverse grip to an orthodox one.

Along with his actions, the sheath's form quickly turned into a greatsword.

'Legacy Style: Mond's Style – Judgement Form'

Boom!

Without further ado, he quickly swung the greatsword upwards as its surface was suddenly enfolded with the earthen mana that was coming from his body. There was also a series of runes that flowed through the blade of the sword, which reinforced its toughness and increased its weight.

'Perfect Four Symbol Scripture: Divine Yellow Dragon Method – Mountain Crusher'

Shin was able to push the descending claws of a giant alligator with that strike, rebounding it back in the air. But at the same time, he was also thrown down due to strong force from the impact.

He quickly flipped his body during the flight, adjusting his angle in the air before spreading his wings wide.

His descent toward the magma river greatly slowed down due to his actions, so he was able to quickly fly over the surface of the scorching river before flying high up in the air once again.

His previous attack was just an experiment and a spur-of-the-moment after following his instincts. He was not planning to combine Mond's Style, the Great Dominator Technique, and the Divine Yellow Dragon Method yet since he was still not that familiar with the latter two.

However, it was quite a surprise that he was able to pull it off successfully despite that being the case.

He was still planning to rely on the more familiar techniques that he had been using recently, especially with his high affinity for Fire Elemental Mana.

But given the current situation, it seemed like he would be able to continue with this path.

It was at this moment that he was a Battle Genius. He was someone who could continuously improve in battle rather than doing some intense training.

He was now reminded of the answer that was right in front of him. This was how he was supposed to combine everything that he had learned both outside and inside the game.

"That's right! This is how it is supposed to be!" he muttered as he excitedly looked at the monster below him.

He felt like an idiot for forgetting about this fact, but he quickly recovered his composure.

Spreading his wings wide, he suddenly dived from the air once again he continued his assault.

Swoosh!

The giant alligator raised its head and opened its mouth wide after seeing Shin coming down once again. It roared with full rage before raising its claws and pointing at Shin.

Splash! Splash!

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

Following the actions of the alligator, the magma river where it stood suddenly showed some signs of strange movements.

Not long after, a whirlpool appeared on the magma river with the giant alligator standing at the center.

Then a series of splashing should be heard as blazing stone pillars suddenly shot from the magma river and flew straight to Shin.

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

Shin moved his body in the air, doing a series of aerial maneuvers to dodge the incoming stone pillars. He even left a series of afterimages as he moved, confusing the monster boss.

Roar!

With a deafening roar, the giant alligator suddenly raised both of its arms in the air. Then, following its actions, the magma river suddenly rose and formed another curtain of magma was formed.

This curtain of magma was much thicker than the one that was summoned previously.

This time, Shin did not force his way through and instead halted his advance by spreading his wings wide.

But despite doing that, he did not pause his other actions.

He switched his grip over the greatsword on his left hand and held it with a throwing posture. He then infused the Earth Elemental Mana on it before throwing the greatsword with all his might.

Swoosh!

'Perfected Four Symbol Scripture: Divine Yellow Dragon Method – Meteor Strike'

The greatsword turned into a stream of light during its descent. Its momentum was like a meteor crashing down from the sky and heading straight to the ground.

Swoosh!

It even formed a huge hole in the curtain of magma blocking its path as it continued flying forward.

Boom!

Within an instant, the greatsword arrived right in front of the giant alligator and struck the center of its brows accurately.

(-100,000)

The head of the giant alligator was pushed back, making it stumble a little while trying to regain its balance.

The attack hit successfully, but Shin was not that happy as he could see that the damage he dealt despite how strong his attack was quite pitiful.

It could be considered strong in the early stage of the game, but with how things were right now, it was far from enough.

Moreover, this monster still had a quite healthy HP Bar, which indicated that the damage that he had dealt was negligible.

What's worse was his pitiful damage was immediately healed due to the high regeneration rate of the monster.

Tsk! Tsk!

Clicking his tongue, Shin shook his head before continuing.

Swoosh!

His body disappeared and suddenly reappeared right in front of the face of the giant alligator within an instant.

'Elemental Skill (Shadow): Shadow Mark'

He then expended his left hand and grabbed the greatsword stuck between the brows of the monster before pulling it back.

At the same time, his breathing technique changed once again along with the flow of mana circulating within his body. Accompanying this change, the heavy and domineering mana flowing in his meridians turned into tough and sharp mana.

A golden glow shrouded his body as the greatsword transformed into a longsword.

'Legacy Skill: Mondī's Style – Meteor Form'

Holding the [Yamato] on his right and the transparent longsword on his left, Shin infused the mana with metallic nature within him toward the pair of swords before throwing a series of slashes in front of him.

'Perfected Four Symbol Scripture: Saint White Tiger Method – Ferocious Assault'

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

A series of sword flashes appeared in front of Shin as he swung his swords multiple times.

(-20,232), (-21,923), (19,293), ...

A series of damages also floated above the head of the giant alligator, indicating the inflicted damage that Shin had dealt.

(+10,000), (+10,000), (+10,000), ...

But at the same time, there was also a series of green numbers mixed with the red numbers, clearly showing the powerful regeneration of the monster.

It was nullifying most of the damage that Shin had dealt, making him quite speechless.

Regardless, he did not lose his confidence and continued to attack with a series of skills while dodging the counterattacks that the giant alligator had thrown at him.

He knew that he could not afford to stop, nor pause, even for a moment because all the damage that he had dealt would disappear within an instance once he did.

But despite the current situation, Shin could still not wipe the wide smile behind his mask as he was enjoying this battle.

It was not because this monster was powerful, but it was because he found a perfect sandbag to test his skills and apply his theories.

He was also using all the mentalism techniques and swordsmanship that he had, switching between the Perfected Four Symbol Scripture and the quick draw and sword movements under the Jade Kirin Scripture.

He was quite enjoying the entire process and showing insane growth that even he, himself, was not expecting.