

Destiny 1391

Chapter 1391: The Apostles (Part 2)

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Swoosh!

Shin used the final prism that he had gotten from Daven to keep the unconscious NPCs that the Corrupted Cult had captured to be the sacrifice for the Cult Ceremony.

He quickly headed to the five other altars where the NPCs were left unconscious to rescue them. His Elemental Spirit Companions also made their move right after receiving his instructions through mind connection. They destroyed all the altars at the same time, preventing those from sucking the life force of the NPCs.

Shin was able to move quite fast as Hanzo lent him a hand when traversing the different points of the cult's pentagram.

After saving everyone, and making sure that they had not overlooked anything, Shin quickly headed back to the center of the island. He wanted to see what Immortal was planning, and how the battle would take place.

This was a good opportunity to know how strong Immortal had become, especially when this guy had been promoted to the third of his class. The necromancer-related classes were quite a troublesome opponent since they had a variety of tricks and methods during the battle.

The main problem was the summoned undead monsters, which were numerous. When it was in the hands of Immortal, this army of undead monsters even reached a whole other level since the quality of his summoned monsters was way beyond the rest.

On top of this, there were also those powerful dark spells and debuffs that made them powerful dark mages. These alone already made them one of the most overpowered classes within the game.

Adding the fact that Immortal possessed a Transcendent Class and Race, who could form a contract with abomination elemental spirits that could possess his most powerful undead monsters, making them even more dreadful compared to the rest.

Aside from this, Shin also felt that Immortal had done something unimaginable. From what he had seen earlier, the latter seemed to possess both the Corrupted Powers from the cult and Demonic Energy from the Demonic Churches.

The two powers were similar to each other due to them being from the same roots, but they still had some noticeable differences.

Corrupted Powers were formed by corrupting the mana in the environment while using the special methods of the Corrupted Cult. They were also using this to build a connection to the Underworld and the Nether Realm, where the Original Corruption was coming from.

Meanwhile, Demonic Powers came from the Demons themselves. It came straight from the Hell, where the Demons live. Similar to the methods of the Cult, which was left by the Demons that invaded the Atlas World during the Repelling Era, the followers of the Demonic Churches were also building a connection with another realm.

But instead of building a connection with the realm itself, Demonic Believers built a connection with the Demons and the Demon Kings from Hell, or even the Great Demon Kings that ruled that place.

Possessing both of these powers would not only make an individual more powerful, but they would also gain more abilities that came along with them.

Boom!

When Shin arrived at the scene, an intense battle was already taking place. He hid in the distance while having a good vantage point where he could watch the battle.

The battle seemed to have reached its peak already as both sides were not holding back in the slightest.

Shin even saw that aside from the Zombie Dragon, Immortal had also summoned his Doom Knight which came from the Demonic Slaughterer that he had gotten from the Frozen Kingdom. It was from the body of Draco, the Grand Marshall that Shin and others had met in that place.

Aside from this Doom Knight, two more knights were fighting alongside Immortal, the Death Knight and the Undead Knight who were equally strong.

Shin knew that this was not the real strength of Immortal. The latter knew that Shin was most likely observing him, so he had to be careful when using his cards. He had to patiently bid his time and build his strength until he was confident enough to face this nemesis of him.

While observing, Shin could tell that Immortal was using his version of Elemental Spirit Possession on his summoned monsters. The three knights were possessed by different abomination spirits, which greatly improved their battle capabilities as well as their AI.

Aside from these, Shin also noticed the strange book that Immortal was holding in his left hand. This book was emitting a dark and eerie aura that Shin could feel even from a distance. The said book was also constantly releasing black smoke, which was a representation of highly condensed corrupted powers.

"What kind of item is that?" mumbled Shin as he stared intently at that black book.

He felt that it was most likely a special racial-specific item similar to his [Yamato] and [Nephilim's Gemini Mask] but with a slightly higher rank.

His [Yamato] was already on 'Obsidian Rank', which was most likely the highest rank at the current stage of the battle. But from the look of it, that book in Immortal's hand was much better than his, which indicated that it was most likely at 'Meteor Rank'.

Being able to sense the thoughts of Shin, Hanzo, who was the most knowledgeable among his Elemental Spirit Companions, suddenly said. "If I am not wrong, that is the Divine Grimoire of the Corrupted Cult."

"Divine Grimoire?" asked Shin with a slight frown.

Hanzo nodded as he explained. "That is right. It is a special treasure that the cult has created after sacrificing an entire empire's worth of population."

Shin's blood ran cold when he heard those words. His heart trembled when he tried to imagine the scene where the cult had sacrificed the people of an entire empire.

"That Divine Grimoire of the Cult is used by the most powerful Necromancers that became known throughout the world. It was also the very item that made the first evil necromancer, Zramek Metus, become an evil being comparable to deities. That grimoire is called the 'Records of Undead'," added Hanzo with a solemn tone. "I don't know that it falls into the hands of one of your enemies, Kiddo.

You must be careful when facing him."

"If that is the case, then the rank of that item must have surpassed my [Yamato]," mumbled Shin with a deep frown.

"That is not necessarily the case," said Solus as she chimed in. She paused for a moment before continuing. "From what I can see, there are multiple seals cast on that grimoire. However, it is still slightly better than your sword as it is most likely at the peak of Obsidian Rank right now."

"It is a Divine Relic of the Corrupted Cult after all," added Hanzo.

"A relic, huh?" mumbled Shin as he was also in possession of a relic, which was his cloak, the [Death's Shadow]. However, his relic was still in the process of evolving while Immortal's grimoire was in the process of being unsealed.

After that, his eyes were suddenly attracted to the bone scepter that Immortal was holding with his other hand, which resembled the skeleton hand of a huge creature. This was the very weapon that was on the same level as his [Yamato].

Watching the battle from the distance, Shin could see how powerful Immortal had become after their last encounter. He, himself, could feel immense pressure just by watching the battle.

He felt that coming here was worth it since he could spy on the current strength of this enemy.

On the other hand, the Cult Elder that Immortal and his undead monsters were fighting was not something he could overlook.

This NPC was most likely a boss monster comparable to the Level 165 Emperor Rank Monster. On top of that, the elder was also a powerful dark mage who was able to cast multiple advanced spells at once.

If not for the protection of the Zombie Dragon, and its humongous body, Immortal would most likely be in a sorry state right now despite possessing such a powerful item like the 'Records of Undead'.

The exchanges between the two had changed the topography of the island. The forest was flattened while the trees had dried up after the two sucked the life energy from the surroundings.

The nearby mountain had also been razed to the ground due to the powerful spells that the two had cast during their battles.

After watching the battle for a little more, Shin also cast his gaze at the different parts of the island and saw that Daven and Kazin were fighting against a group of cultists that came from who knew where.

These cultists were trying to prevent the two from getting the black pearl situated at the center of the altar, which was the main target of Immortal on coming here.

The two were putting up a good fight despite being surrounded by a huge group of cult members. Moreover, those NPC cultists were at least as strong as Peak Titled Rankers while a few were comparable to Maverick Gods and Godlike Players.

Shin slightly squinted his eyes as he looked at the battle. These two apostles of Immortal seemed to be much more powerful than what he had expected.

They were slightly inferior when compared to apex gods like Shin and the others, but they were at least on the same level as the peak gods in the lower rankings.

He then recalled Rust and the swordsman that he temporarily captured and felt that they were on a similar level.

"It seems like we have to pay more attention to these apostles," he mumbled as he put them on the same level as the Troupe Members of the Pandemonium Descendants. He felt that these two forces would be their main rivals at the battles in the future updates of the game.

Apostles, an elite group that Immortal had under him. It was the secret force that he had built way before the release of this game. It was also the main force of the Undying Guild, who was following him faithfully.

Sooner or later, Shin and the others would be clashing against them since they were from different factions.

After taking a mental note, he turned his attention back to the battle between Immortal and the Cult Elder with the hopes of understanding his opponent a little deeper.

He put more attention on the moves and spells that Immortal had rather than his undead monsters. He wanted to learn what kind of combat state Immortal was using.

But even after a long time, he still could not figure out what it was. He had limited knowledge of this area, but he could at least compare it to the previous experiences that he had when facing opponents that could enter those special stats.

But despite all of that, he still failed to find any resemblance between what Immortal was using and the others. It felt like another category of combat state that was still unknown to the public.

Regardless, Shin still kept on observing Immortal, memorizing everything the latter could do and taking note of what he could.

The battle continued to escalate until the Cult Elder exploded in power by consuming his life force, which greatly burned his Health Bar while fighting Immortal.

It must be some sort of berserk skill.

In exchange, Immortal, the Zombie Dragon, and the three power knights were suppressed by the powers of the Cult Elder.

Shin knew that the battle had escalated to a much higher level. He also could not help but think how he would fish in these troubled waters without violating the contract that he had with Immortal and his party.

While he was trying to figure out a way to trick the system with holes in the contract, Shin suddenly sensed an immense dreadful aura coming from the distance.

That was when he saw three phenomena occurring in the distance.

A moment later, his expression turned dark as he watched everything take place. "Tsk! This guy has become much more powerful after reaching Tier 3 of his class."

Chapter 1392: The Apostles (Part 3): Underlying Plans

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Necromancer Classes was one of those classes that could be considered as a 'scaling' class since it was quite 'useless' at the start of the game due to their lack of powerful farming skills and very squishy selves when hunting in the wilderness.

But as the game progressed, and these classes gained more skills and built up their undead forces, they became one of the overpowered classes within the game.

They were also quite troublesome to deal with due to multiple tricks that they had under themselves such as powerful dark spells, a huge army of undead monsters, and a variety of buffs and debuffs that they could use to enhance the strength of their army and weaken their enemies respectively.

It was a class that was widely known as the one-man army.

Right at this moment, Shin was seeing what this class could achieve when it reached its highest potential.

In the distance, Shin was watching three more phenomena as Immortal held the Cult Elder that he was fighting along with his Zombie Dragon.

The first was the splitting of the ground, where dense black smoke was currently leaking out.

It was highly concentrated corrupted mana!

A moment later, sharp bone claws reached out from the crack of the earth before widening it. Then a huge skeletal monster pulled itself from the crack. It was a gigantic skeleton with multiple arms that was holding a variety of weapons in each of its hands.

Not far from there was a huge black pillar of light that descended from the sky. It was like a huge column that supported the sky and connected it to the ground.

Bang!

Then a humongous monster suddenly walked out of this black pillar, revealing its hideous appearance. It was a giant wearing a set of monk-like clothes with four arms. The first pair were quite long possessing long fingers and sharp claws while the other pair was slightly shorter with its palms joined together as if it was praying.

Its face was like a rotting zombie, making it hard to stomach. It was also breathing out black smoke, which was the representation of the dense corrupted mana running throughout its body.

Meanwhile, a huge rift appeared in the sky. It spread wide, filling it with black cracks that spread in every direction.

Then a humanoid figure walked out of it. It looked like an ant compared to the previous two that first appeared. But the presence that it had was as strong as the two, especially the suppressive aura that it was releasing.

This humanoid figure was wearing a set of full-body armor that was unique to the glorious knights of imperial families of the past. It was also wearing a crown that indicated its previous status of being a king during its time.

But instead of releasing a glorifying aura, it was currently emitting a dark and sinister presence that could suffocate anyone.

Adding the double-edge sword stuck on its chest and the rest of the short swords and spears stabbed on its back, this humanoid creature looked wicked and horrifying.

Each of these new undead monsters was comparable to the Zombie Dragon that was currently fighting alongside Immortal.

Shin, who had seen everything from the distance, could not help but frown deeply as he felt immense pressure from each of these new summons.

In the meantime, Hanzo, who was in the speck of light form like the rest of the elemental spirits, suddenly opened his mouth. "The Skeleton Destroyer, the First Abomination, and the Forsaken King – all of these guys are ancient undead that used to strike a deep fear and cause a catastrophe in the entire continent."

Hearing those words, Shin could not help but raise his brows.

He was about to ask what they could do when Hanzo continued. "They are from the same era as me, who was first born right after the Ancient Era. Each of them possessed unrivaled powers that are comparable to the heroes of the past."

As Shin listened, he also saw that the Abomination Spirits surrounding Immortal suddenly fused with each of the ancient undead, possessing their bodies.

Boom!

Not long after, an even more powerful pressure was released from each of them, covering the entire island.

Shin's solemn expression turned grave as he watched all of this happen.

On the other hand, the Cult Elder, who was fighting Immortal suddenly started shouting after seeing the ancient undeads. "Immortal, you traitor! The Cult will never forgive you! They will hunt you down even at the end of this world!"

After that, he was submerged in the attacks that came from the combined forces of the four undead monsters on Immortal's side.

In the meantime, Shin saw that the Death Knight, Undead Knight, and Doom Knight assisted Daven and Kazin in defeating royal guards of the cult assigned to the Cult Elder and escort the black pearl.

Immortal was originally planning to hide most of his cards since he knew that Shin was currently observing him, but he could not afford to waste more time here since he knew that the reinforcement of

the cult would be coming here now at any minute. He had to defeat this Cult Elder as soon as possible and take the black pearl before it could happen.

Fortunately, he still had a lot of cards under his sleeve, especially when he now possessed the ancient relic of the cult. The 'Records of Undead' not only possessed a list of powerful undead monsters that he could get, but it also recovered all the techniques and skills of its previous owners, who were powerful beings.

With this treasure, he was confident that he would be able to defeat Shin in the future.

Revealing a few of his cards now would be a small sacrifice to build up his power and gain more advantage for their future battles.

Shin was trying to think of a way to take advantage of the holes in the contract and planning to sabotage Immortal and the rest somehow, but Immortal moved much faster than he had expected.

Or more specifically, he did not expect Immortal to be decisive enough to reveal his trump cards this early when he was watching them from the sidelines.

It did not take long for Immortal and the rest to wrap up this battle.

"Tsk!" he could only click his tongue as he felt a little pity that he could not do anything to sabotage them.

Regardless, he had already achieved his goal. He saved the villagers and even the rest who were captured by the cult.

He did not know how much time he would take if he did it alone, especially when he did not know that other people got captured along with the villagers. His job became much easier when he collaborated with these guys, but he felt that something strange during the entire process.

Given how much Immortal and his people had prepared, he could see that they did not need his assistance at all. They could get the black pearl themselves even if they did not collaborate with him.

"Their original goal is to tie my hands and prevent me from interfering with this event," Shin clicked his tongue when he thought about this.

Immortal was afraid that Shin and the rest of Empyrean Talons would get in their way, especially when the villagers who got captured by the cult were supposedly under Shin's protection. They had expected that Shin would get a special mission from the system once he discovered that his people were under threat – he was a duke after all, and they were his subjects.

What confused Shin was how Immortal knew about it when this information was kept in secret. It was only recently that the public became aware of this.

At this point, Shin felt quite regretful that he had chosen the solo quest instead of the group version. If he chose the latter choice, then they would be able to stop Immortal and the rest with their plan once again.

"Now wonder the system had given me such choices – they were a clue after all," he mumbled before disappearing from his spot and appearing at the center altar once again.

Daven and Kazin were currently cleaning up the battlefield when Shin suddenly appeared in manner. He was walking toward them without any caution despite seeing what happened earlier.

Three knights, who were supposedly guarding the black pearl after defeating the cult's royal guards, suddenly disappeared from their respective positions and surrounded Shin.

But before they could do anything, Grimrace, Astaroth, and Hanzo suddenly appeared to intercept them. They guarded Shin from all sides while glaring sharply at the three undead monsters.

Shin might be confident that these guys would not be able to do anything to him due to the contract, but it would never hurt to always be careful. Always putting up his guard, especially when facing such a sly group, would be his best choice.

Even if Daven and Kazin possessed a Spirit Awe skill that could force his elemental spirits to be unsummoned, Shin would still get ample time to escape with the delay between the activation of such skills.

During the standoff between the two sides, Immortal suddenly appeared and slowly descended from the sky. He looked at Shin briefly before walking toward the black pearl.

Shin remained standing on his spot, watching Immortal's actions.

Immortal examined the black pearl after getting it before nodding his head. He then turned toward Shin with an evil grin. "It has been a while. I want to test my new strength against you, but I have a lot of matters to attend to, so let's meet again at the Hegemon Cup."

After that, a dark portal appeared behind him before he stepped on it.

When Immortal's figure disappeared, his undead monsters also disappeared as they were unsummoned by him.

"Hegemon Cup? Does this mean he will not be participating in the upcoming United Cup?" he mumbled in confusion. But then figured out what Immortal was planning.

This Lich God was planning to patiently bid his time and steadily build his force before making a comeback and shocking everyone with his powers.

He would most likely be lying low for the time being, which also meant that Shin would not have to worry about him that much.

Shin stared at the portal for a moment before turning to Daven and Kazin. "It seems like your task here is already done. How about you send the information that you promised so that we can leave."

Daven smiled as he replied. "How about you release our people first?"

Shin shrugged his shoulders before taking out the prison prisms where Rust and the swordsman were being held. He then tossed it in the air before it fell on the ground between Shin and the two apostles of Immortal.

Understanding what Shin wanted to do, Daven opened a virtual screen before sending a message to Shin, containing the promised information.

Shin did not immediately leave after getting what he needed. He first opened the message, making sure that it was reliable. He was still quite doubtful that these guys would give him the accurate information that he needed.

But to his surprise, it seemed like the information was the real deal given that he suddenly received a quest update from the system right after reading them.

He did not read thoroughly at everything and even ignored the notification since he was still not in the position to let his guard down. He did not want to be surrounded by his enemies while he was reading them.

He glanced at Daven and Kazin before nodding his head. After that, he turned around and left along with his Elemental Spirits.

He wanted to at least deal with these guys now that the contract was done, but after sensing those hostile gazes directed at him in the dark, he knew that he would not be able to deal with all of them alone.

In the meantime, Daven and Kazin did not dare to make their moves as they were also aware of the strength of the opposing side. They did not even dare to pick up the prism prisons on the ground when Shin was checking the message since they could feel the immense threat that he was emitting.

Even the other lesser apostles that came with them, hiding up until now, did not dare to make their move as instructed by the two.

Daven only picked up the two prism prisons after making sure that Shin had left.

"What a dangerous individual. His presence alone is enough to deter us from doing anything against him," mumbled Kazin as he recalled what just happened.

After releasing Rust and the swordsman, Daven stared in the direction where Shin had left off before turning around. "Let's go back. We will not be clashing against them for quite a while anyway, so it is not our concern."

"Do you think that they will head to that place to try closing the demonic portal?" asked Rust as she followed Daven.

"They don't have the choice. The Bug Tribe will be flooding in this real if they don't," said Kazin.

"I guess an Empire War will be taking place next," Rust felt quite excited when she thought about this.

"What's the point of being excited? We will not be participating in it anyway. We are tasked to focus on reaching the Awakened Continent as soon as possible," rebuked Kazin as they entered the dark portal.

"Let them fight among themselves while we develop ourselves."

Chapter 1393: Quest Updates

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Shin returned to the coast of the Sky Deceiving Valley with a slight frown. He turned around and looked in the direction where the desolate island was located before falling into deep thought.

After that, he turned to the notification that he had received from the system earlier.

Ding

System: You have obtained a crucial clue about the Divine Seer of the Land of Miracles!

Quest Update: The Divine Seer of the Land of Miracles, Celeste, has sensed the fracture in the dimension that is connecting the Atlas World and Hell, where the Demons reside.

Afraid that the Demons were invading their world once again, Celeste used her blessings bestowed upon her by the gods and tried to close the portal connecting the two worlds to prevent the arrival of the demons.

But she did not expect that the one leading the invasion this time would be the Glutton Demon King of the Flies, Beelzebub.

Her soul got seriously injured due to her collision with the Greet Demon King's presence, making her fall into a deep coma. But her sacrifice was not in vain as she was able to delay the arrival of the main army of the Bug Tribe.

Her condition had alarmed the upper echelons of the Supreme Temple and the Martial Alliance as she held a very important position within the Council of Righteous Churches. This also made them look for a cure that could help the Divine Seer in her condition.

After the extreme efforts, the Martial Alliance was able to find a Sea King with possession of a Sea Soul that could help Celeste. But with the interference of the Corrupted Cult and Demonic Churches, who were informed by their spies, the Sea King escaped and fled toward the Aurora Continent with grave injuries.

Enraged, the leader of the Supreme Temple, who had a deep connection with Divine Seer Celeste, charged at one of the main bases of the Corrupted Cult and Demonic Churches and slaughtered everyone.

After venting out his anger, the leader of the Supreme Temple left the two bases in ruins, killing all the elders of the two evil factions assigned to protect those places.

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After reading through the entire update of his quest, Shin could not help but sweat profusely, when he knew where the mentioned Sea Soul ended up. "That leader of the faction will not wipe my existence once he learns about me, won't he?"

Recalling that the Supreme Temple and the Martial Alliance had put him in a difficult position due to this very reason, Shin could not help but become afraid for his life.

Such a powerful NPC could easily wipe his existence within the game, equivalent to his account deletion.

"It is not too late to beg for forgiveness, right?" he mumbled as he recalled the recent events that happened.

He then recalled that the Sea Soul was already deeply corrupted when Grimrace had consumed it. He was about to convince himself that it was fine when he realized that such corruption could be purified by such peak existence.

While he was thinking about his life, Shin proceeded to the next batch of notifications.

Ding

System: You have learned a crucial clue about the incident that happened between the Corrupted Cult and the escaped Sea King.

Quest Additional Update: The Corrupted Cult had done everything they could to corrupt the Sea Soul within the body of the Sea King. They hoped that the Supreme Temple or the Martial Alliance to find the monster and retrieve the Sea Soul to use it for the Divine Seer.

The potent corruption that they had injected into the Sea Soul was one of the new corruption mana that they had, which would be undetectable in the eyes of the peak existence even if they tried purifying it.

This corruption disguises itself as a purified mana after coming in contact with the Divine Powers of the Church of Light or similar energies.

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Phew~!

Shin could not help but heave a sigh of relief after reading these notifications. This meant that he had unknowingly 'helped' the Divine Seer – or at least that was how he comforted himself.

"I did the right thing," he was trying to 'justify' the actions of his nutjob elemental spirit until he felt that it was not effective. He glared at Grimrace, reprimanding his actions. "You are nothing but trouble!"

Continuing, he looked at the next clues that he had.

Ding

Quest Update: You have learned the location of the portal connecting the Atlas World and the Hell, the Realm of Demons.

New Objective: Head to the Storm Empire and inform the Emperor about the appearance of the Demon Portal at their neighboring Kingdom, the Dark Cloud Kingdom.

Additional Clue: The Dark Cloud Kingdom has become a vassal of the Demonic Churches.

Ding

System: Faction Quest has been added.

Quest Detail: Lead the Church of the Sun and Moon to fight against the spawns of Hell and eradicate all the invading demons!

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Shin slightly raised his brows when he saw this. He could not help himself from being interested in this quest as it would become a new Empire Quest or even a World Quest given the current progression that was happening.

But at the same time, he could not help but feel that something was wrong. He could not put his finger on what exactly was it, but he was sure that there was an underlying current that could not be seen from the surface.

He then suddenly remembered that all of these happened after he had gotten the intel from Immortal and his apostles.

Frowning deeply, he could not help but have some suspicions. Given his understanding of Immortal, he knew that this opponent would not do something without benefiting from it.

"I guess I have to be a little more careful and focus on other matters as well," he mumbled as he could not shake off the sense of foreboding with this upcoming quest.

He glanced at the timer that was counting down the arrival of the demonic forces of the Bug Tribe and saw that there was still a lot of time before that invasion happened, so he could still do some of the unfinished business and make some preparations.

But before anything else, Shin had to deal with the NPCs that he had just rescued. Thinking about this, he walked toward the Calderock Port since he felt that it was better to live under the care of Ribbit, who was also an NPC like them.

Now that the Calderock Port was under the supervision of Ribbit, it was better to leave these NPCs to him, especially when they could fill the low residents of the city due to its relocation.

The moment when Shin arrived at the port city, he could not help but sweep his surroundings due to how lively it was. A lot of players walking on the streets while multiple stalls were set up on the sidewalks.

Confused, Shin continued to walk around and overheard a couple of conversations with the people around him.

"Have you heard? It seems like a new race is hidden in this city?"

"Yeah. I also heard about it. That is why I come here. Should we look for the Mayor's Residence and look for more clues?"

"This is a Player City, so there is a high chance that we will not going to get anything from there. They can monopolize this new race themselves."

"Tsk! Tsk! Sea Nomads. Such an interesting race. Moreover, it has a lot of perks that come with it, especially when this is a port city right beside a high-level sea region."

Shin slightly frowned when heard this. He knew that the Golden City and the Calderock Port would be bursting with activity due to the recent opening of the Frozen Kingdom, but he did not expect that there was something more to it.

Shin walked a secluded corner before opening the official website of the game. Since it was a new race, then its details would most likely be available on the website.

Sure enough, he immediately saw the basic description of the race in there. But instead of a major race, it was more like a sub-race of the Human Race like the Barbarian Race.

But unlike the Barbarian Race, which was majorly connected to being a true warrior, the Sea Nomads could be described as the children of the sea.

Based on the background description, the Sea Nomads were humans that lived for a very long time close to the sea and were making a living there.

Throughout their history, it was said that their body had somewhat mutated after living in the sea for a very long time. They could hold their breath underwater quite well. They might not be able to stay there as long as the Ocean Nagas, but they were able to stay underwater much longer than other races.

Aside from that, they were also able to fight under or on the surface of the water. They even created a unique martial art that was meant to be used along with their special abilities. It was also meant to protect themselves from the sea monsters that were bothering the fishermen and divers of their group.

Looking further, he also saw that this race was rather special since players could convert to it while retaining the class that they already had as long as it was under the basic Human Race category. But given the properties of this race, it was some of the classes were unfit for it while some were quite perfect.

But aside from that, there were also four unique classes for the Sea Nomads which were the Vikings, Pirates, and Sea Shamans.

Based on the description that he had read, it seemed like these classes could only be achieved if the players were already at Tier 2 of their respective classes.

When these classes were to be promoted further, they would become the Legendary Viking, Cracken Slayer, and Ocean Magus.

Shin could not help but become more interested in the current stage of the game since it was constantly releasing newer content that most of the players could not keep up with.

He seemed to remember when he last checked the forums that some other places were also having similar events, mostly related to releases of new races and classes.

It was almost as if the game developers were purposely overwhelming the players with these two to keep them busy.

It felt like they were buying time or delaying something.

It might just be his imagination, but Shin strongly felt this way.

After adjusting his thoughts, he closed the virtual screen and headed toward the newly improved Mayor's Residence at the center of the port city.

Regardless of what was happening, it was beneficial for the Calderock Port since it would attract more people, which would improve their profits in return.

Developing their forces and other assets would also be much easier this way.

As he passed the small branch of the Hand of Midas Trading Firm, Shin suddenly saw a huge group of people coming out from there.

He also found that they were somewhat familiar. He had worked with the Firm for quite a lot now, so it would not be strange to recognize a few of the people who worked with him.

But what surprised him was that other people were in the mix. Some of them were familiar faces that were under the Springfield Family. "Ah! Big Brother Saun and Big Brother An! What are the two of you doing here?"

Hearing his call, two of the group walking out of the shop suddenly halted in their tracks and turned toward the voice.

They might not be able to see his appearance because of the cloak that he was wearing, but it was impossible not to recognize the voice that was always with them in the household.

"Young Master Shin?" Asked the two simultaneously as they stared at him.

Shin was able to figure out what Shiella was trying to do when he saw these two young men. 'These guys are from training units of the Marine Force of the Springfield Family. They are highly trained for sea battles and quite an elite among their batch. Don't tell me big sister is planning to build a Marine Force inside the game with these guys?'

Thinking about this, Shin suddenly got an inspiration. "This is going to be good!"

Chapter 1394: Meeting the Head Mysterious Instructor (Part 1)

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After chatting with the two acquaintances, Shin learned that Shiella indeed had recruited a few of the youngsters in the training camp of the Springfield Family. Since they were lacking in manpower and people that they could trust due to their recent rapid development, she could only choose those that she was familiar with and the ones that were working under their family.

Saun and An were one of those talented cadets from the camp of the Springfield Family and Shiella had tasked them to form an elite group that would specialize in sea warfare and underwater combat.

Since the two of them were assigned to the Marine Unit of the Springfield Forces, this job would be the best for them.

Moreover, they were also tasked to change their races into a Sea Nomads so that they could get the advantages of the race, which suited their needs. They could also accept some people with Ocean Naga Race which also met their requirements.

These people would be setting up their main base in the Calderock Port, which was one of the main cities under Shiella and Shin.

Hearing all of these, Shin came up with a sudden inspiration – what if they also created other elite units dedicated to other specializations such as Forest Rangers specialized in guerilla and forest warfare or Air Force Units that were skilled in aerial combat?

Such thoughts were not farfetched since they met most of the requirements. The Ranger Units could either be a bunch of assassins from different races, which had a variety of tricks under their sleeves, while the Air Force could be the Wingmen Race, which Archimedes controlled due to his inheritance.

With all of these, they would be able to create an elite force that covered almost everything.

After polishing his plans, Shin quickly contacted Shiella and explained everything to her.

"Not bad. We can also use this force as other cards that we can use when Guild Wars start," she said before continuing. "But I think it is better to form a guild meant for this. It is better to separate most of their operations from the Hand of Midas and Empyrean Talons to avoid some conflicts."

"Even better if we form a guild for these forces and make them our partners on the 'surface'," she added after a brief thought.

Since this force would be focusing on combats and other matters, it would be better to separate their operations from the Trading Firm. She already had enough people for the Hand of Midas, so it would create some complications if the members of her guild, especially those meant for combat rather than lifestyle profession, learned about these new forces.

"Then I will leave the rest to you," said Shin after hearing her further polishing the plan.

"Tsk! You always leave the troublesome task to me while you, yourself, always get in trouble," she scolded before hanging up.

Shin chuckled as he knew that Shiella did not mean what she said.

He then headed toward the Mayor's Residence so that he could deal with his original purpose of coming here.

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Ribbit greeted Shin enthusiastically after seeing him. Due to the recent relocation and upgrade of Calderock Town into a port city, Ribbit has become busier, but very satisfied. His dream was gradually coming true with the help of his master.

Shin glanced at the status of Ribbit and saw that his loyalty was already maxed while also being in a Worship Status, which was the highest relationship that a player could have with an NPC.

But what confused him was that the special mission that he had gotten from this NPC was still on ongoing status. This could only mean that Ribbit's life was still in danger due to the mysterious organization that he previously belonged to.

'Do they still haven't taken the bait, or the relocation of the city have interrupted their plans?' he thought before asking Ribbit for some updates about the recent progress that they had. "Ribbit, give an update of your activities so far and the layout of your plans for the development of the city."

"Yes, Mayor!" Ribbit immediately got busy and put a pile of papers on the table, which were the reports that he had prepared.

Shin rarely managed the city, but since Ribbit was very competent and quite skilled in every aspect, he did not have to worry about anything – aside from those assassins that were coming for the life of this poor NPC.

Shin skimmed through the reports while also listening to Ribbit's explanations. He was cutting off the latter from time to time to ask some questions before continuing.

After seeing that there were no problems with them, and all the plans would be going smoothly with the help of the Hand of Midas, Shin nodded in satisfaction before saying. "Ribbit, since we are already partnered with the Hand of Midas, you can report to my sister about the progress of the city."

"As you can see, she is more talented than me in this aspect, and she is also very familiar with how to make these things work, so there is no need to worry about anything. If you encounter any problems, you can always come looking for her."

"I will be visiting occasionally to see how things are going," he paused and smiled. "I will be entrusting this city to your care."

Ribbit felt a little emotional for some reason after hearing Shin was fully trusting him. He then bowed and said from the bottom of his heart. "You can rely on me, Mayor! I will make sure not to disappoint you!"

Shin slightly nodded his head before taking out the five prison prisms that held the NPCs that he had rescued. "Within these prisms were the people that I have saved from the hands of the Corrupted Cult."

"I am also entrusting them to you. Provide them with houses and anything that they can use to start a new life. They will be our citizens in the future, so be kind to them. You can also assign some of them with tasks that the city needs or give them regular jobs that fit them."

"Some of these people are the original residents of the Sky Deceiving Valley, so they are very familiar with everything here. You can work with them to develop the city."

"Village Chief Choi is a friend of mine, so you can trust him and his people. He is also previously a captain of the Knights Templar and still has a few knights following him, you can assign them as guards of the city if necessary."

Ribbit listened to Shin's instructions attentively and nodded his head repeatedly. It was the first time Shin had given him a lot of tasks since they had met, and most of them were important ones, so he wanted to do a good job to repay Shin for everything.

...

Upon walking out of the Mayor's Residence secretly, Shin looked around to make sure that no one had seen him. He then walked toward the streets of the city, blending with the flow of people.

Not long after, he reached the gate of the city, facing the road toward the Gold Mountain. There was a constant flow of people, both NPCs and Players alike, filling the road. Some of them were merchants who were looking for business opportunities or already making some trades while the rest were looking for adventure.

Shiella had purposely not built a teleportation hall on the Calderock Port because she wanted the people to go through the Golden City first before coming here.

The distance between the two cities was not that far anyway since the players would only take a few minutes to travel if they used their respective mounts. Some carts and carriages were constantly traveling between the two cities, so even the NPCs did not mind this little travel.

Looking at the flow of people, Shin nodded in satisfaction as he could already see that everything was going well.

As he was appreciating the view while climbing the road toward the Golden Mountain, Shin was checking what quests or tasks he had to deal with first. After skimming through everything, he decided to go check on the Head of the Mysterious Instructors.

"I guess I should head to the Saint Heaven Mountains first before heading to the Storm Empire," he mumbled.

Seeing that he did not need to do anything in the Golden City and Calderock Port, he decided to continue with his plan.

...

A few moments later, Shin stepped out of the Teleportation Hall of the White City, a city on the outskirts of the Saint Heaven Kingdom. It was the city nearest to the Saint Heaven Mountains.

Due to it being quite far from the rest of the cities at the center of the kingdom, the population of NPCs and Players here was quite small.

The city was also quite small as well, so it was not as desolate as it seemed given its small number of residents.

Shin swept his gaze at the surroundings and saw that the average level of the players in this city was quite low despite the moderately high level of the surrounding regions – they were low level on his standard at the very least.

After walking around the city to see if something was interesting, Shin walked out of the gates and rushed toward the mountains. He even summoned Whitie, who transformed into a white tiger, to make sure that he would reach his destination much faster. It was also to prevent any prying from seeing him or anyone from tailing.

While traversing the forest, Shin noticed that there were no monsters around. The forest seemed to be a little too desolate despite him being deep within it. He also noticed that the place was devoid of players, which was quite puzzling.

The travel was quite smooth as Shin did not encounter any mishaps. Or at least that was what he thought since he was able to 'arrive' at the depths of the Saint Heaven Mountains without a problem.

But after continuing his journey, Shin realized that he seemed to be moving in circles around the mountain. He kept on returning to the place that seemed to be the entrance of the mountain.

"Are we caught in a trapping formation? Since when?" mumbled Shin as frowned deeply. He did not notice any strange fluctuations in the air, which was supposed to indicate that there was some sort of formation around. This was the reason why he did not realize that he was already trapped within a formation.

Even Hanzo and the rest of his Elemental Spirit Companions did not notice anything strange up until now.

He also now realized why he did not find any monsters or players around. It turned out that the entire place was under the trapping formation. Moreover, this formation seemed to be very advanced at that.

"Is this some sort of a test or something?" he mumbled as he observed the surroundings closely. He even spread all his senses while focusing his mind on sensing the flow of mana in the air.

Given his high Magical and Elemental Affinity, he would not be losing to most of the mages or other magic-related classes in this area. Adding his True Sight Skill,

Not long after, he was surprised at what he discovered. "What kind of mana density is this?"

The mana density of this place was so high that he felt that he would be drowning in it if he kept staring at them. Even his movements seemed to be getting affected as well without his knowledge. If he did not try to use his True Sight and Sensing Circle to their fullest potential, he would not notice all of these.

Moreover, he could also feel that it would be hard to execute his skills and techniques in this place. Even trying to properly swing his sword would be quite challenging.

But what was more surprising about his discovery, this place was still the outer part of his destination. This could only mean that if he went deeper, the density of mana would be much more concentrated than in this place.

Frowning deeply, Shin unsummoned Whitie and walked forward, following the flow of mana in the air.

He did not have a good feeling about this, but also somewhat excited. He was anticipating a new experience in this place. "Let's see what the Head of the Mysterious Instructors has prepared for us."

Chapter 1395: Meeting the Head Mysterious Instructor (Part 2)

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Shin continued to walk toward the deeper parts of Saint Heaven Mountain. He was not lost this time or returned to the mountain's entrance. With the help of his True Sight, he was able to see the flow of

mana in the air while his Sensing Circle was letting him feel the movements of the air itself, which led him in the right direction.

With the combination of the two skills, he was able to roughly figure out the way out of the maze formation covering the entire mountain.

Just like what Shin had expected the mana density within the deeper parts of the mountain was more concentrated and much heavier than what he felt outside.

His movements were getting harder and harder as he went deeper into the mountain – even walking itself was becoming more challenging.

This made Shin pause his advance and start adjusting himself. He unsheathed his sword and started training his swordsmanship. The mana density of this place might be affecting his movements and making it hard to do anything, but it was also a perfect place to train himself.

Shin started with the most basic forms of swordsmanship, solidifying his foundation, before proceeding to the more advanced movements and techniques.

Swoosh! Swoosh!

As Shin continued, his movements were becoming smoother. When he adapted to the place, his techniques became more refined than what they used to be. Some of his skills had also become much stronger compared to what he originally remembered.

"This is not bad either," mumbled Shin after realizing all of this. "Don't tell me this place is some sort of a training ground."

After adjusting himself and making sure that he would no longer have any problems with his movements even if he encountered a monster, Shin continued walking forward.

But what he discovered when he reached another part of the mountain baffled him. This time, the gravity had become much stronger on top of the highly concentrated mana filling the air.

"Just what kind of place is this, exactly?" he mumbled with a deep frown.

Just like he did earlier, he paused his advance and resumed training again to adjust himself to the new environment.

This progress repeated multiple times until Shin almost forgot how many times he had done it. This also made Shin reevaluate the place that he was in. He had been walking within this place for quite a while now, even more than a day, but he seemed to be walking a long path that would never end.

Shin adjusted himself to the environment that was slowly getting more ridiculous as time passed.

When he just finished readjusting himself and was about to continue his journey he realized that there was something different in the place that he was currently in.

Sweeping his gaze at the surroundings, he saw that he was in the middle of an open field in the middle of the forest which was not supposedly be found in a place like this, particularly in a mountain.

What was strange about this was that he found the place seemed to be too flat and wide to be found in a mountain place such as the one that he was in.

When he looked a little closer, he realized that this place seemed to be an arena or something similar.

Raising his brows, Shin seemed to have gotten an idea of what was going to happen next. "This seems to be some sort of a test," which confirmed his initial suspicion.

Not long after, a monster appeared in front of him, seemingly appearing out of thin air.

Bang!

It was a giant bear that stood at least three meters tall. Its body span was quite large too, especially its broad shoulders and wide waist. Its strong arms and legs carried immense strength that was making Shin shiver just by looking at them.

The brown furs on its body seemed to be no different from ordinary monsters, but Shin could feel that it was so tough and durable that it could rival the defenses of the highest quality armor that the players could dream of on the current stage of the game.

Sharp claws dug into the ground while saliva kept on dripping from its mouth as the monster showed its pointed teeth and fangs.

Shin was confused when he saw the monster. It was not because he was disappointed, but it was because he found this seemingly ordinary monster was more threatening than the King Class Monsters that he had faced up until now.

While having his doubts, Shin used True Sight Skill to look at the details of the monster. What he saw baffled him even more.

[Monster Name]: Savage Bear

[Rank Classification]: Normal

[Monster Type]: Beast

[Life Rating]: None

Level: 160

HP: 2,000,000

Skills:

...

...

Shin became even more confused as he read the details of the monster in front of him. It was just a normal monster with a slightly larger Health Bar compared to the ones he encountered with a similar level and rank.

What confused him even more was the long list of skills that rivals the number of skills a King Class Monster should have.

"What kind of regular monster is this?" Shin was sure that this was not an ordinary monster despite how simple the system had described it.

At the same time, Shin's eyes also caught a vague black aura leaking out from the body of the Savage Bear. It was an aura familiar to Shin since he had seen the multiple times when fighting against the Corrupted Monsters and Demonic Monsters.

What was confusing here was that the monster was clearly described as a regular monster despite the dangerous aura that it had, especially the dark aura that it was emitting.

"Is it because of the surroundings?" he mumbled with a knitted brow.

Due to how potent and dense the mana in this place, the monsters living here might have evolved to what he was seeing. But the irony of that was this monster was too powerful to be labeled as a regular monster.

While Shin was thinking about this, the Savage Bear finally made its move.

Bang!

"Fast!" Shin was surprised when he saw the bear almost upon him when it moved. Given its massive size, he did not expect it to move this fast, especially with how strong the gravity was in this place.

The bear roared as it pounced at its target. It was already in front of Shin when it swung its massive claws.

Shin could also feel the heavy air current that was accompanying the bear when it reached him. Realizing that he did not have the time to counterattack, he could only use the 'Void Steps' elemental skill to dodge.

Swoosh!

He appeared five meters away from his previous location, making the bear miss its attack.

Boom!

But to his surprise, there was a strong shockwave quickly followed the swing, which signified how heavy it was.

Shin could not help but sweat when he saw it. He had gotten more confirmation that this supposedly regular monster was as strong as a King Class Monster of the same level. The produced gust of wind that swept through his body was so heavy that it almost blasted him away.

But that was not the end of the surprises.

Bang!

Right after the bear missed its swing, it suddenly sprinted toward Shin with a momentum that made it look like a huge truck charging at him.

Sensing the air current that was accompanying the Savage Bear, Shin knew that he could not take this too lightly.

Assuming his signature stance, Shin called Solus out to possess the [Yamato] before channeling his energy on it.

Click!

When the bear reached his attack range, his thumb gently pushed the guard of the sword, slightly revealing its sheathed blade.

Shing!

As he fully unsheathed the sword and horizontally swung it in front of him, a blazing crescent was unleashed and swept toward the monster.

'Jade Kirin Scripture: Quick Draw (Blazing) – Solar Flare'

Swoosh!

The Savage Bear bravely charged through the blazing energy, not carrying how powerful it was.

Boom!

(-15,523)

A thick cloud of smoke blocked Shin's vision as the explosion erupted.

Swoosh!

The smoke cloud in front of Shin did not even last that long as it was immediately swept away by the huge body of the Savage Bear that was charging straight at him.

Its furs were slightly scorched due to the previous explosion. Some parts were still on fire, but that did not mean they were dealing damage to it.

What surprised Shin was that his 'Solar Flare' did not deal that much damage despite the bear charging straight into it. If it was any other monster that he encountered in the past, they would most likely receive a serious injury, especially when they directly got hit like that.

"What kind of ridiculously powerful defense is this?" mumbled Shin as his expression suddenly grew solemn. "What kind of regular monster is this?"

He could not help but feel like he was sent back in the early stages of the game where most of the people were still struggling to fight a single regular monster.

Seeing that the bear was about to slam its massive paw at him, Shin quickly used the 'Moonlight Steps' to turn himself into a streak of light that pierced through the body of the monster and appeared behind it.

Bang!

As the massive paw of the bear landed on his previous location, a strong shockwave was sent in every direction while the ground itself sank into a crater.

While the rock fragments were flying in the air, Shin was already above the monster and ready to unsheathe his sword once again.

He slightly angled his body midair before slightly tapping the air under him with 'Mondi's Jump' to propel himself downwards.

Swoosh!

'Jade Kirin Scripture: Quick Draw (Blazing) – Flash Descent'

Shing!

Shin's figure flashed downwards as he slashed toward the exposed back of the bear. He went straight to the spine of the monster, planning to break it with a powerful impact and paralyze this giant bear.

Boom!

Another explosion erupted as the blazing blade of the [Yamato] landed at the back of the monster. The flames even flew upwards, forming a mushroom shape before gradually spreading out while slowly dissipating in the air.

(-15,023)

The corner of Shin's mouth twitched when he saw the damage that he had dealt. Moreover, the bear seemed to be completely fine despite taking the full brunt of his attack. Aside from the ground sinking further and having multiple cracks that spread in every direction, this Savage Bear seemed to be completely unaffected.

"Tsk!" clicking his tongue, Shin when he saw this. He then quickly hopped backward while using another charge of 'Moonlight Steps' to dodge the swipe of the bear while doing a roll to shake him off from its back.

Landing on his foot a few meters away, Shin stared at the Savage Bear with a solemn expression. Given its insane speed, powerful strength, and tough defense, this monster was without a doubt beyond what it was supposed to have, especially with its rank.

The only saving grace here was this monster not having powerful regenerative ability. Its passive regeneration was at least on an acceptable level. But since he was not dealing that much damage to it, the health bar of this monster barely moved. It would not take long before it went back to full.

Shin slightly frowned as he was thinking of a way to deal with this powerful defense. His current choice was using the 'Primordial Lightning' along with the 'Chaos Slasher Possession' or the 'Void Powers' that he could barely control while combining it with the 'Dimension Cutter Possession'.

The first choice was his primary pick since he was more familiar with it now on to of it being more powerful than the rest of the combinations that he had. He could execute powerful attacks with it while also having a numbing effect that it passively provided.

Meanwhile, the second choice was slightly weaker since he would be lacking in control. Unless he was under the 'Descent of the Fallen God' berserk form, he would not be able to reach the same level of control and power as the former.

At least not until he fully mastered the 'Void Powers' and promoted it on the same level as the 'Primordial Lightning' without the help of that berserk form.

But he knew that the 'Dimension Cutter' was the better choice right now due to its strong penetration effects that could cut through most of the defenses within the game.

Thinking about this, Shin decided that this would be his primary weapon in this battle while the rest would be the supporting tools.

He would not be using the special berserk form of his race since he did not know how many tests were waiting for him. But he would be going all-out to avoid any kind of accident.

"I will be checking the secret of this place later. But first, let be deal with this first hurdle."

Chapter 1396: Meeting the Head Mysterious Instructor (Part 3)

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Bang!

After a long struggle, Shin finally was able to defeat the Savage Bear. He was not expecting that he would go through a lot of difficulties just to take down a single 'regular' monster.

During the entire battle, he had used everything he had aside from his strongest trump cards such as summoning the Eclipse Dragon, using the racial berserk skills like Descent of the Fallen God, and that ultimate elemental skill Ragnarök.

Shin even had to use his domain skills like the Monochrome Field and Ruler's Authority just to suppress the bear and its abilities.

Most of his problems aside from dealing with the bear was the environment himself. He did not notice it at first since he thought he had already adjusted himself to it earlier, but he later realized that his skills were slightly disturbed during the battle.

During his training, he was able to execute most of them properly, but he realized that he was still having some trouble using them when he was in an actual battle.

While he was adjusting to the new environment, Shin had to deal with a powerful monster in front of him, which was unexpectedly putting a heavy burden on his mind.

Fortunately, he was able to persevere until the end and was able to emerge victorious.

But not all of it was a bad thing. Due to this event, Shin was able to get a whole new understanding of his skills and techniques. He was able to reevaluate everything due to the circumstances that he was in, making him look back at his beginning.

Adding his Battle Genius Talent, he was able to constantly evolve during the battle and became more skilled compared to his previous self.

Regardless of the sufferings and troubles that he had encountered, he still greatly benefited in the end, which improved his mode greatly.

Huff! Huff!

Shin was catching his breath as he stood in front of the corpse of the Savage Bear. One of his feet was stepping over the head of the monster while the other was in between its brows.

The [Yamato] was stuck on top of the head of the monster, piercing through its skull and crushing its brain.

There were also multiple wounds on different parts of the bear, signifying that it went through a tough battle with Shin. Some of these wounds were scorched black due to the Eternal Flame, others were sharply cut by the penetration abilities of the Void Powers, and the rest were wounds burnt by the Primordial Lightning.

There were also some internal wounds caused by the crushing force of the Earthly Metal and Metallic Earth energies. Some of them even shattered the bones of the bear.

Shin had spent quite a lot of effort dealing with this Savage Bear, which showed why he was too exhausted right now. Physically, he did not have the problem since his race and battle physique provided him an unlimited stamina. But he was quite exhausted mentally, especially when he just went through a couple of battles earlier – particularly that battle against Ashura.

The sad part about his situation was he did not get anything from the monster. It did not provide him any good drops, particularly materials, since its furs and other gatherable parts were badly damaged in the battle.

He also did not get any experience from the battle, which was also quite disappointing.

Since Shin had reached level 150 and was promoted to Tier 3 Class, he discovered that leveling up had become much harder.

He was currently 10% of before reaching level 152, which was quite slow given the recent events that occurred. Even if he did not focus on grinding his level, the events that he went through involved quite a lot of hunting powerful monsters, yet the experience that they provided was very pitiful.

Even Larva of the Bug Tribe, the young Grand Centipedeus, did not give him that many experience points. Moreover, he had to split it with Leonard and Diablo.

He had also hunted quite a lot of monsters during the sudden invasion of the Sea Monsters led by the Sea King. Despite killing such a large number of monsters at that time along with his Elemental Spirit Companions, his experience bar barely moved, signifying how hard it was to level at this current stage.

He wondered if grinding at the Awakened Continent would be better.

When Shin was thinking about this, a sudden thought flashed through his mind. "Eh? Mysterious Instructors and Qualifications-..."

These thoughts lingered for a moment before he turned to the corpse of the Savage Bear. He then smiled bitterly as a ridiculous conclusion lingered in his mind. "Don't tell me-...?"

He was barely able to catch his breath when heard a slithering sound coming from the distance. Raising his head, he saw a huge black snake making its way toward him while constantly releasing a hissing sound.

Seeing the armor-like scales of this giant snake, Shin felt like this was going to be another troublesome battle.

Activating his True Sight at this new monster, Shin investigated its details.

[Monster Name]: Black Mamba

[Rank Classification]: Normal

[Monster Type]: Beast

[Life Rating]: None

Level: 160

HP: 2,000,000

Skills:

...

...

Seeing the oddly similar description of the monster, Shin could not help but wear a bitter smile. He became sure that this was some sort of a trial from the Head of the Mysterious Instructors, but the difficulty was stupidly high.

If it was any other layer, then they would most likely fail when dealing with the Savage Bear alone.

Aside from apex experts like Shin or those with similar levels of skill, no player would be able to pass this kind of test.

This made Shin wonder how the trials of the regular mysterious instructors were, or whether they have a similar trail such as this one.

"Tsk! At least let me catch my breath!" he clicked his tongue after seeing the Black Mamba glaring at him.

Seeing that complaining would not do anything, Shin prepared for another battle and took his stance. He then glared back at the Black Mamba while taunting it. "Come! Let's see what you got!"

Bang!

Swoosh!

Shin and the giant snake then charged at each other without any hesitation.

...

After spending an entire day battling (in-game time), Shin became so exhausted that he was barely able to move. He was so tired that he lay on the ground, unwilling to move.

Even if his virtual avatar could still move, his mind could no longer take it and in the verge of collapse. He would be forced by the system to log out of the game if he tried to continue.

During the battles, he had fought quite a lot of 'regular' monsters, which were as strong as the Savage Bear and the Black Mamba.

These monsters varied from different species. They span from bears, snakes, wolves, boars, birds, and others. There were also a few special and hybrid monsters such as goblins, kobolds, trolls, and orcs, which gave him a lot of trouble, particularly those undead types like vengeful spirits, dark revenants, and shadow wraiths.

All these monsters had similar strengths, but those humanoid ones were more troublesome to deal with since they had a variety of skills that resembled a unique discipline from the real world.

This surprised Shin greatly, especially when he suspected that this would be the level of monsters in Awakened Continent.

This made him more interested in the said continent. If a normal monster from that place was this strong, then how much stronger were those at the higher rank?

A single regular monster was already as strong as a King Class Monster on the same level, so Shin was suspecting that the Elites were comparable to Emperor Rank, which was already the most powerful monster in the Aurora Continent.

Then how strong were the Special Elites and Chieftain Rank monsters? What about the Lords and Overlords? How about the King Class and Emperor Class Monsters?

Shin could not imagine how strong they were. He was not confident in that he would be able to fight the Special Elites by himself given his experiences with the 'regular' ones.

Then what would happen to the regular players if they encounter these monsters?

Shin now realized why the system was 'filtering' the players that could go that continent. Only the real experts were qualified to set their foot there.

...

While resting, Shin glanced at the clock in the corner of his eyes and saw that it was now time to log out of the game.

Sweeping his gaze at the surroundings, he realized that no monster had spawned for the next round. "It looks like this Mysterious Instructor still has some conscience."

After making sure that the place was safe, Shin found a corner to log out.

He did not do anything special for the day as he just did his usual daily routine. He did his daily morning exercise, shower, and breakfast, then went to the Magic Ace Academy for his training.

He then went straight back home right after.

The training might be quick, but it was fruitful. He was able to learn more sword principles. The more he became familiar with the more sword principles he 'acquired', the easier to learn the rest.

There was also a more surprising discovery about this. He realized that his swordsmanship was becoming more mature and refined as he learned more sword principles.

He felt like he would be able to use more variety of attacks and combinations with these new sword principles that he just learned.

After arriving at his room, Shin quickly took a quick shower to freshen himself before going to the gaming cabin to log back in the game.

...

Swoosh!

When logged in to the game, he found himself back at the place where he left. He heaved a sigh of relief when he saw that, silently thanking the Mysterious Head Instructor for not sending him back to the entrance of Saint Heaven Mountain.

But that feeling did not last that long when he saw the next monster that appeared.

Bang!

A huge monster that seemed to have fallen from the sky landed a dozen meters away from him. It was a humanoid monster standing on a pair of monster legs and hooves. Its upper body was similar to the buff body of a bodybuilder with bulging but well-refined muscles while its head was of an ox's.

Moo!

It was a minotaur!

Swoosh!

The minotaur released a powerful roar that sent a strong gust of wind that swept toward Shin.

Shin planted his foot firmly on the ground, not letting himself get swept by the powerful gust. He held his stance while inspecting the monster with his True Sight Skill.

And what he had seen made his face contorted.

[Monster Name]: Minotaur

[Rank Classification]: Elite

[Monster Type]: Humanoid Beast

[Life Rating]: None

Level: 160

HP: 5,000,000

Skills:

...

...

His fear seemed to have come true.

Based on this minotaur's aura, he could instantly tell that it was as strong as an Emperor-Class Monster of the same rank.

It was of the same level as the regular monsters that he had faced all day, yet the difference between power was so huge despite only having a single rank difference.

Seeing the minotaur, particularly the huge war axe that it was holding.

"Tsk! This brings back memories," mumbled Shin before turning to the speck of light revolving around him, representing Hanzo. "Don't you think, old man?"

Hanzo did not respond even though he knew what Shin was talking about. It was the time when they first met each other.

"Since we both have some history with a 'family member' of this guy, you will be the centerpiece once again," he said as he prepared for the battle.

"Since this Head Mysterious Instructor is testing my limits, I better give my all," he added while calling out for Hanzo. "Void Reaper!"

Chapter 1397: Meeting the Head Mysterious Instructor (Part 4)

...

Right after Hanzo possessed the [Yamato], Shin quickly charged forward, taking the initiative for this battle.

Swoosh!

He turned into a streak of light that flew straight at the minotaur.

Bang!

He then stopped in front of the monster while stomping his foot on the ground. Cracks appeared and rock fragments flew in the air as he took his signature stance.

Shing!

He then unsheathed the sword and swung it horizontally. The space seemed to collapse by that swing as the blade of the sword seemed to have destroyed the space itself, leaving spatial fractures on its path.

'Jade Kirin Scripture: Quick Draw (Void) – Spatial Collapse'

Bang!

The minotaur raised its huge ax and hacked it downwards, slamming the already collapsing space. A shadow flame even shrouded the sharp edge of the ax as it fell.

The Void Powers that were produced by Shin's earlier strike was instantly obliterated as the war ax fell at him. The ax was much stronger after his sword destroyed the spatial powers left behind.

Seeing that, Shin immediately understood that this monster possessed a different level of power than the previous monsters he had fought last night. The density of the mana that this minotaur could control was a notch higher than theirs.

"It is not a Demonic Creature nor a Corrupted Monster, but it controls a dark and sinister mana unique to those two," mumbled Shin as he turned his wrist along with his sword before throwing a forward strike that was directed at the descending ax.

This seemingly normal swing carried a couple of sword principles such as the Heavy Sword, the Swift Sword, and the Sturdy Sword, which converged into one and formed a unique principle. Combining this with a sword technique under his arsenal, the might of this strike reached a whole other level.

'Jade Kirin Scripture: Fourth Movement (Void) – Spatial Stroke'

Swoosh!

Being reinforced by the Void Powers that he controlled with the 'Dimensional Cutter Possession', the space on the path of his sword collapses. The might of this strike also became even stronger while its speed had reached an unimaginable speed.

Bang!

The sword and the ax collided and sent violent ripples in every direction. There seemed to be a storm that appeared due to the strong collision, making the air dance chaotically.

Bang!

The difference in strength also appeared as Shin felt nauseous due to his muscles shaking and tremors within his body. The impact of that clash was so strong that he could not move his body the way he wanted.

(-20,959)

There was also a huge number that appeared above his head, signifying that he had received serious damage from the collision.

Taking a series of steps backward, Shin left deep footprints on his path, which indicated how strong the force behind the attack of his opponent was.

The minotaur, on the other hand, had its arm recoiled in the air along with the huge ax that it was holding. But aside from that, it did not receive any damage from the previous collision.

This was the difference between the weight classes of the two. No matter how strong Shin's attack, it would still lag a little behind compared to such a huge and powerful monster.

Seeing that Shin was still in the middle of recovering himself, the minotaur took advantage of the situation and stepped forward, before slamming the war ax down for another time.

Moo!

Swoosh!

Sensing the quick approach of the minotaur, Shin instantly understood that it was on a different level than the regular minotaurs that he had seen before. Its AI seemed to be pretty high in comparison, particularly its battle IQ.

Taking advantage of the current situation, where Shin was still recovering his footing, to attack was a good example.

After experiencing the difference in strength, Shin would not recklessly face this minotaur head-on. But at the same time, he also had a few ideas inside his head on how to deal with this kind of opponent.

With his recent battle against Ashura, where the latter completely overwhelmed him with the difference of power, Shin naturally learned a thing or two. He also had thought a couple of ideas on how to deal with similar situations when he encountered one.

His True Sight worked to the fullest as he watched the minotaur's movements closely. He even applied a few tricks that he had learned from his Mentalism Techniques while reading the monster's movements.

His eyes were glowing as he focused his mana on them. Due to that, the movements of the minotaur seemed to have slowed down in his eyes.

He then moved his body, accordingly, slowly raising his sword and slightly turning his wrists sideways.

His slow movements were done calmly and flawlessly as they accurately timed to deflect the descending ax.

Clang!

The sword seemed to be drawing a circle in the air while following the movements of the sword tip. The gentle flow of mana also followed it as he used the qi circulation according to the Jade Kirin Scripture.

Adding the Sword Principles of the Steady Sword, Gentle Sword, and Sturdy Sword, his movements became much smoother and firm.

'Jade Kirin Scripture: Second Movement – Returning Wave'

Bang!

Changing the trajectory of the ax with the [Yamato], Shin sent it landing on the ground beside him.

As the sharp and irregularly shaped fragments of earth before were in the air, Shin suddenly swung the [Yamato] forward while boring the force that the brief collision had made.

Shing!

The minotaur raised its right arm to block the incoming strike, producing an ear-piercing metallic sound right after the collision.

Clang!

Seeing that the minotaur did not receive even a scratch from that collision, Shin instantly understood that the defense of this monster reached beyond the level of a 'regular' monster.

"Well, it is an 'Elite' monster after all, so it should be normal," he mumbled as he felt a little stupid after thinking it through. "It seems like normal attacks with not do much against it. Ability-reinforced attacks should be required to deal enough damage."

Among the energies that he had fully controlled, the Void Powers still had the strongest penetrative attacks while the Primordial Light possessed a slightly similar effect on top of its amazing destructive powers.

While Shin was still thinking about how to deal with the minotaur, the monster raised its fist and swung it down, planning to crush him with it.

Without any hesitation, Shin quickly used the 'Void Steps' to get away. Standing at a safe distance, Shin was preparing to launch a powerful attack when he saw the minotaur raise its right foot before stomping on the ground with a lot of force.

Trample!

Boom!

The ground seemed to collapse as with that power stomp. Cracks spread and moved toward his location along with a strong force that seemed to be flipping the ground itself. There was also a strong gust of wind that was heading in his direction, carrying a force that could rip him into shreds.

But instead of retreating, Shin chose to charge forward instead.

Bang!

Kicking the ground, he launched himself forward while gorgeous flames surrounded his body. The sheath on his left hand also turned into a longsword that Solus immediately possessed, making his control over the flame improve by a large margin.

As he controlled the Eternal Flame, a spherical barrier was suddenly formed, protecting him from any harm.

'Perfected Four Symbol Scripture: Celestial Vermillion Bird – Pheonix Embrace'

Bang! Bang! Bang!

The violent wind and the trampling earth repeatedly smashed on the blazing barrier protecting Shin. The huge and small fragments were melted right after they touched the barrier while the violent wind made the flame stronger instead of putting it down.

After absorbing all the forces from the repeated impact of the attack, Shin concentrated them at one point while approaching the minotaur. When he arrived in front of the monster, he immediately detonated the blazing barrier and caused a powerful explosion.

Boom!

The minotaur was instantly swept by the explosion. Its body was swept by the blazing flame, burning its tough skill and flesh.

Moo!

As the minotaur protected itself from the explosion, it suddenly stomped onto the ground and raised its head before bellowing with all its mouth.

A powerful energy force was released from its body, which repelled the powers of the Eternal Flame and warded off the scorching heat that came along with it.

Swoosh!

Shin broke through all of these as he held the [Yamato], reinforced by the 'Dimension Cutter Possession', over his head and slashed it down.

Reinforced with the principles of the Swift Sword, Sharp Sword, and Destructive Sword, the strike came a little too fast and powerful.

At the same time, the space seemed to have collapsed as the blade of the [Yamato] passed through it.

'Jade Kirin Scripture: First Movement (Void) – Collapsing Void'

Shing!

Seeing the incoming attack, the minotaur lowered loudly while covering its war ax with the dark mana that it possessed. It then swung it upwards, meeting the incoming attack of its opponent.

Moo!

Boom!

The collision produced a much stronger explosion that destroyed the surroundings.

Swoosh!

Shin's figure was sent flying by the impact, making him collide with the huge trees before stopping.

Cough! Cough!

He spat a mouthful of blood, signifying that he suffered severe injuries. He was also immediately put in a seriously wounded state, making most of his stats drop. His health bar was already at 25% and always reaching the critically wounded state.

Without any hesitation, he used the 'Sacred Light' Elemental Skill to recover from his injuries and restore his health to full.

Wiping off the blood at the corner of his mouth with the back of his hand, Shin walked out of the thick cloud of dust produced by the collapse of the trees earlier.

He looked at the minotaur that was standing in the same spot while holding its war ax with both hands. It was glaring at Shin as visible bleeding could be seen from different parts of its body. It was an indication that it did not escape unscratched from the earlier clash.

Moo!

With another bellowing, the minotaur exhaled loudly, releasing visible air from its nose. It also scratched its right hoof on the ground, kicking out the dust and dirt.

Shin looked at it provokingly before twirling the [Yamato] multiple times and putting it back in its sheath. He then assumed a sword-drawing pose before kicking the ground and propelling himself forward.

Swoosh!

Moo!

At the same time, the minotaur charged at him with an unstoppable momentum while dragging the huge war ax behind it.

Bang!

It then leaped in the air before slamming the war ax down, targeting Shin, who was about to reach it.

Shin glanced at the minotaur briefly before unsheathing the sword and swinging it forward. At the same time, his figure suddenly disappeared, only leaving a flickering afterimage behind.

Boom!

Shing!

The ax missed its target landed on the ground and sent shockwaves in every direction, further destroying the surroundings.

Meanwhile, Shin managed to cut the waist of the minotaur as brushed past it in the air. But the wound was a little shallow as did not even bleed.

Shin paused in the air as his back was facing the back of the minotaur, he then disappeared as he kicked the air, propelling himself toward the monster once again.

Swoosh!

His figure flashed repeatedly. He appeared and disappeared around the minotaur while slashing with his sword along with a series of sword techniques applied by the multiple sword principles that he had learned up until now.

This monster might be tough to head with and much more powerful compared to the ones that he had faced previously, but it would also serve him a good practice partner, that would make him familiarize himself with the new sword principles and further polish his swordsmanship.

In the meantime, the minotaur repeatedly turned and threw random attacks that were trying to catch Shin, who looked like a fly that kept on annoying it.

An intense battle between the two of them followed, further destroying the environment around them.

Chapter 1398: Meeting the Head Mysterious Instructor (Part 5)

.....

While Shin was having an intense battle against the Elite Minotaur, his fight was being projected by a magic stone. The battle was being watched by a person, who was sitting on top of a boulder at the peak of Saint Heaven Mountain.

This man was wearing a set of ragged clothes, making him look like a beggar or a homeless person. But despite his rough and dirty appearance, there was a mysterious air that was enfolding his entire body.

He felt like a person that seemed to have merged with his surroundings, or the surroundings had merged with him.

Watching the intense battle projected by the magic stone in front of him, this man suddenly commented. "This kid seemed to be more decent than the rest. He is much better than those Otherworldly Individuals that happen to stumble upon our formation."

"He seems to be personally invited by the 'Will of the Hevean' as well. He must be the chosen one," he mumbled.

Standing respectfully behind him, another person was also watching the battle. He was wearing an exquisite set of armor. He seemed to be an honorable knight given the aura that he was releasing. But despite greatly contradicting the appearance of the previous person, this knight seemed to be quite inferior to the latter.

Hearing the comment that the person in ragged clothes had said, the knight suddenly turned his head before asking. "Captain! Don't tell me you are planning to invite him right away. He still hasn't passed all the tests that we have prepared for him and everyone else."

These people were the Head of the Mysterious Instructors that were scattered throughout the entire Aurora Continent and his right-hand man respectively. They had been watching Shin since he stepped into the vicinity of the Saint Heaven Kingdom, so they knew what he had experienced up until now.

The Head of the Mysterious Instructors shook his head when he heard what his subordinate had said. "There is no point in continuing. This trial will be useless to him given his abilities."

"Moreover, the other monsters that we have prepared are not much different from this Minotaur – those High Orcs, Dread Trolls, and the rest were on a similar level, so there is no point testing him any further."

"Aside from that, he fits the description that our 'Apple Vendor' has reported, so there is no need to learn more about this young man," he added while continuing to watch the battle. He seemed to be very entertained.

After a brief silence, he continued. "You should know why we are sent here by the 'Council' – we are to find the worthy individuals, who can help us repel the upcoming invasion. The 'Divine Oracle' even tells us that we can't show our prejudice to these Otherworld individuals as they possess the blessings of the 'Divine Will of Heaven'. They will be of great help to us."

"Moreover, this kid far surpassed the limits that we have set for his kind. We just prolonged his test because you are too insistent on testing his full capabilities."

"But from what I can see, this kid seemed to have an endless potential. If we continue testing his limits, then this trial will never end," he added while looking at Shin with great appreciation.

"On top of that, you should also know that the current situation on our continent is getting worse. It may not be visible on the surface, but the underlying current is already flowing at full force. We can't afford to delay this any longer."

Hearing those words, the knight remained silent for a couple of moments before shaking his head. "But these Otherworldly Individuals are quite disappointing. Only a few of them are worthy to carry the 'Divine Will' – some of them even pointed their swords at us and sided with those filthy demons and corruption."

The Head of the Mysterious Instructors smiled bitterly and shook his head repeatedly when he heard the words of his subordinate. He found that this man had become too naïve after being away from his duties for quite a while.

"Just like there is light in our hearts, the darkness also exists. People can freely choose which side of theirs will they take – some just happen to let the darkness consume themselves rather than embracing the light."

"We are dispatched here to guide these people toward the light and look for the potential 'Protectors' while those Missionaries of the Demonic Churches and Corrupted Cult are tasked to spread their influence and create more 'Martyrs'."

"We just have to remain faithful to our beliefs while leaving the rest to the 'Will of Heaven'."

"Fate will take its course while the Destiny will await those who are deemed worthy. Fate is our guide while Destiny is our destination," said the Head Mysterious Instructor, chanting the universal mantra of the Council of Righteous Churches.

Hearing that, the knight kept his mouth shut, realizing that his captain seemed to have seen something from Shin that others could not.

Among all the people that were sent to this continent to be the 'guide', this person was the most mysterious and unfathomable.

The knight was not sure what his captain had seen from Shin, but he could tell that it was something beyond reason since it could pique the interest of such an individual.

...

Boom!

Going back to the other side, Shin was finally able to take down the Elite Minotaur after a long struggle. He had already lost his sense of time during the battle, so he was not sure how long it lasted. But he could at least estimate that it was at least an entire day or so (in-game time).

The moment when the minotaur fell to the ground, Shin quickly bent his knees as he stabbed the [Yamato] on the ground, supporting himself with it. He was too exhausted to even continue standing.

He glanced at his skill bar and saw that all his berserk and domain skills were already in cooldown as he used everything aside from the absolute trump cards under his arsenal.

"Tsk! I thought I had already become powerful enough to look down on these monsters, but I guess I am wrong," he mumbled as recalled the details of the battle.

If not for his Battle Genius Talent that helped him continuously grow in battle, then he would not have reached the ideal swordsmanship that he envisioned.

He must thank this opportunity as he found new problems with his Myriad Transformation Swordsman, which helped him fix them before it could even become a habit.

He also discovered a few new tricks that he could mix with his swordsmanship with the help of other skills that he rarely used now just like the Telekinesis Elemental Skill that he had gotten from Grimrace.

Since Grimrace had become a real Supreme Elemental and turned into a true Eldritch Psychic Spirit, this Elemental Skill had also evolved and reached another level. Its name also became 'Demonic Telekinesis', which indicated that it had become more powerful and more flexible.

Aside from normal telekinesis, this newly improved skill also gained new features. It was no longer limited to lifting and controlling light objects as he could now form more tricks with it.

He could now form a transparent hand through this skill and even grabbed a huge amount of earth that he could throw at this opponent. He could also form a Force Field or a Barrier that could restrain his opponents or protect him from some of the attacks directed at him.

The Psychic Barrier was weak against physical attacks, but quite strong when faced with elemental or magical attacks.

And the most important thing about this skill was it no longer had any cooldown, which meant that he could use it whenever he wanted.

Adding this newly improved elemental skill, Shin was able to execute more complex attacking patterns and a variety of tricks that he could use in every situation. He could even wield a few more swords if he

wanted to, but that would require more mental strength and increase the burden in his mind during the battle.

But if he mastered this technique, it would be no different from the Flying Sword Techniques of the previous eras or the Sword Manipulation Techniques of the current times, which would also be a requirement to form a Mind Sword or something similar.

A Mind Sword was similar to the Qi Weapon and Armor of Void Manifestation Stage Martial Artist or Magic Arms of Rulers Realm Mentalist. It was a manifestation technique meant for Swordsmen or Weapon Experts in the real world while the Sword Manipulation and Flying Sword were the set of movements to control them.

Shin was far from achieving those realms in the real world, achieving something similar to those within the game, which would also act as his preparation for the future.

While he was reassessing his performance and the details of the previous battle, a portal was suddenly formed at the end of the area-like space within the forest.

Shin instantly realized that this trial had finally ended. He was not sure how he would feel as he wanted to curse the Head Mysterious Instructor for preparing such a difficult trial to test the abilities of the candidates while also being thankful for the opportunity as he learned about himself and his style due to this occasion.

Calming himself down, Shin walked toward the portal to meet this Mysterious Instructor.

Swoosh!

Right after stepping out, Shin immediately found himself standing at the peak of the mountain, where he could see most of the kingdom on the horizon. This very scenery was the reason why the mountain was named after the kingdom itself.

"It seems like you are not surprised."

He then heard a voice coming from behind. Shin did not need to turn around to know who it was since there could only be a single person waiting for him there.

When he turned around, he was surprised when he saw the appearance of the person, who called him. He even activated his True Sight to look at the details of this NPC to make sure that he was not wrong about his assumption.

[NPC Name]: Longinus, the Pinnacle

[NPC Title]: Head of the Mysterious Instructor (Temporary), ???

Race: Conqueror (Ascended Human)

Class: ???

Level: ???

???

???

Aside from the name and the two basic information, Shin could not see anything aside from a bunch of question marks. This indicated that the gap between their strength was enormous.

Moreover, he could also see that the title 'Head of Mysterious Instructors' was just a temporary title, which meant that this was just a side job or something similar.

Head Mysterious Instructor Longinus was smiling at Shin meaningfully when saw the latter using a special ocular skill to inspect him. "You have a quite special pair of eyes, young man."

"True Sight, is not something an ordinary person could achieve. Even those talented ones can't get it either if they are not hardworking enough," he added, complementing Shin.

At the same time, Shin also noticed that the eyes of Longinus were releasing an oddly familiar glow. Those eyes seemed to be observing him just like how his True Sight was observing the latter.

Seeing that Shin finally noticed, Longinus smiled even wider before saying. "Alright, that is enough for now. Let's proceed with your lesson since we don't have much time left."

He was about to continue when he suddenly remembered something. He then stopped smiling and looked at Shin with a serious expression. "But before that, let me ask you a few things. What is your relationship with Kentas, the Phantom Swordsman, and Supremo, the Duplicator of the Supreme Temple."

"Eh!?" Shin was caught off-guard by the sudden change in atmosphere. The welcoming air instantly disappeared before being changed by a solemn atmosphere.

He could also feel that Longinus was looking at him closely. He could also feel that it was impossible to lie as the latter would be able to instantly realize it.

"Kentas is one of my mentors. I inherited his skills and techniques. As for Supremo, I have only met him once," he answered truthfully.

But at the same time, he was also quite confused about Supremo. He had already suspected that that NPC was related to Supreme Temple, but he was still unaware of the entire story.

But from what he could see from Longinus' eyes and tone, it seemed like that guy had a much more complicated and special background than he originally thought.

Chapter 1399: Lieutenant Colonel

.....

Seeing the solemn expression that Shin was making, Longinus suddenly relaxed his face before started laughing out loud. He even hit his thigh repeatedly as he found the situation rather funny.

"Kid, relax. I will not beat you or anything just because you have a connection with those two. I just find it weird that an Envoy of the Church of the Sun and Moon receives an inheritance from a True Fallen and a High Human, which is quite rare," he said while trying his hardest to suppress his laughter.

At the same time, he suddenly added. "Those two are not as simple as you think, particularly Supremo. I suggest you refrain yourself from using his inheritance, especially when you arrive at the Awakened Continent."

Shin knew that Longinus was talking about the 'Duplicator's Eyes' Legacy Skill that he possessed. Fortunately, he rarely used this skill as he treated it as some sort of trump card. Until now, he had only used it twice, so he only had two copied skills.

As for the instances when he used the lesser of the skills, they did not count as him using the skill itself since the effects were barely noticeable. Moreover, many skills had similar effects, so it would not be much of a big deal if he kept using those sub-abilities.

These were also the abilities that helped him perfect his True Sight Ocular Skill, and even improve it further.

After seeing Shin nod in understanding, Longinus' laid-back attitude came back. He was smiling amiably as he said. "Let's forget about that for now. I know you have quite a few questions that you want to ask, so I will answer all of them to the best of my knowledge. But I can't promise if I can disclose some confidential information."

Shin seemed to have gotten a few ideas from the words that he just heard, making him think that the tasks of the Mysterious Instructors on coming here were not as simple as it seemed.

He first thought that they were only here to test the aptitudes of the players while also testing if they were worthy of going to the Awakened Continent. But based on the words that Longinus had said, they seemed to have some other tasks.

Seeing that Shin fell in deep thought, Longinus suddenly asked. "What do you think of the monsters that you have encountered before coming here?"

Shin did not even need to think to answer. "Powerful. They are extremely powerful."

Longinus chuckled when he heard those words, especially when he saw the solemn expression on Shin's face. He then said in a mischievous tone. "Then what if I tell you that they are the weakest of the weakest monsters in the Awakened Continent?"

The expression on Shin's face immediately became more serious when he heard that. He was already expecting this earlier, especially when the rank classification of those monsters indicated that they were only on Normal Rank.

The minotaur that fought him in an intense battle was only an Elite Monster, so it would be hard to imagine how strong those at the higher rankings were.

Then Longinus immediately explained. "The mana concentration or density in the Awakened Continent is very high. What this continent has could not even compare to that place."

He then paused as he thought of something before continuing. "What you have experienced inside the formation that we have built could barely mimic the environment in the Awakened Continent."

Hearing that, Shin seemed to have gotten a shock. The mana density within the formation that trapped him earlier was already so high that it was affecting his movements. It felt like he was moving underwater, which was greatly restraining him.

But such a place was just a fraction of the environment within the Awakened Continent. He could not imagine how hard to move into that place.

Moreover, this also indicated that the monsters there were much stronger than the ones he recently fought.

'D*mn! Then does that mean the Awakened Continent is not different from being a Hell in the physical realm?' he thought as he tried to imagine how hard to live in that place.

Longinus was already expecting the expression that Shin would be making once he heard those words. But as if it was not enough, he continued. "What you just met were just the weakest monsters that you can find there. Mostly, they were the youngest monsters that recently evolved or were born."

"But even if the Awakened Continent is a dangerous place, it is also a land of opportunities," he added with a smiling face. "Given the high density of mana, it will not be strange for natural treasures to be formed naturally, and powerful artifacts to be born."

Longinus cleared his throat when he reached this stage and continued. "But all of these are not our concern."

"Me, and my brothers, are sent here on a whole different purpose," he said in a solemn tone.

Shin could instantly recognize the helplessness in the tone of the NPC, making him curious about the so-called tasks that these Mysterious Instructors had.

Longinus was silent for a moment. It was as if he was organizing his words so that he could explain everything to Shin in a much easier way.

"Back in our home, the Divine Empire – a huge crack in space appeared in one of our borders. It released a dark and sinister miasma that is spreading in every direction and contaminating the mana in the air."

"Due to this miasma, the environment took a huge change. The plants and animals started to die one after another. Even those monsters with innate dark attributes didn't last long as they inhaled the black miasma."

"This incident alerted the Council of Righteous Churches. The miasma was starting to devour everything on its path, so the churches dispatched their Templar Knights and Saints to purify the land that got affected."

"At first, they were still able to fight the black miasma and purify the land, but they later realized that the longer something was exposed to it, the harder it was to purify. Some of the monsters that got contaminated even started to mutate and evolve before fighting the Templar Knights and Saints."

"A fight broke out, which lasted for quite a while before turning into an all-out war."

"Despite winning initially, the Council realized that the black miasma seemed to have a will of its own – or to be more precise, someone or something was controlling it beyond the dimensional crack."

Longinus paused as he let Shin digest the words that he had said before continuing. "As the problem was getting worse, the Council decided to send the Heroes of each race to investigate the mysterious cracks that appeared."

"Later, they brought back a news that shook the entire council. They said that the crack was connected to another dimension that was trying to build a connection with our world."

"Whoever it was on the other side, they were using the black miasma to build an environment that perfectly fit them, which would also become their main base of operation when they descended on our world."

"The Council and the Heroes tried everything they could to prevent the upcoming invasion, but it was a pity that they could not fully close the crack since they discovered it a little too late. All they could do was to suppress it and slow down the process of its opening to the best of their abilities."

"The Heroes even use their Divine Powers to contain the black miasma in a certain area, preventing it from spreading even further."

"This region later became a Forbidden Area within the Awakened Continent, and they called it the Abyss Brink – deep within it was the dimensional crack that was connecting the two worlds."

"All of this was only to buy enough time for the Council and the Heroes to prepare for the upcoming war."

He then paused for another as he was having trouble continuing – or admitting something. It took him quite a while before he brought himself to continue. "Based on the words of the 'Divine Oracle' of the Council and the 'Divine Seer', one of the Legendary Heroes, the war was about to decent upon us in a few years to come."

"We don't have enough time to raise the strength of our people in such a short time, so we are forced to look for another answer."

Reaching this point, Shin was able to figure out what Longinus was trying to say. He nodded his head as he stole the words from Longinus. "That is where our kind comes into play."

Longinus paused as he looked at Shin before smiling. He liked that Shin was easy to pick up. "You are right. You, Otherworldly Individuals, are one of our trump cards for the upcoming war."

"Your kind is the weakest even among the residents of our world, but your potential is insanely high. Your growth is also so fast that it even scared the Council of the Righteous Churches."

"But since the Divine Oracle has reassured us that you will be a great help to us in the upcoming war, we can only put our trust in her words and proceed with the arrangements."

"We, the people that you call 'Mysterious Instructors', are tasked to look for worthy individuals that we can put our hopes on. Testing your aptitudes and qualifications on setting your foot on the Awakened Continent was just a cover for us to look for these individuals that we want to invite to join our cause."

He then looked at Shin with meaningful eyes before asking. "And you happen to be the first worthy individual that we have found."

"What do you think, you one? Do you want to join us are repelling these filthy creatures that are planning to invade our world?" he asked.

Right after Shin heard those words, he suddenly received a notification from the system simultaneously.

Ding

System: You are picked to be part of the God-Slaying Army.

Will you accept joining the special army that the Council of Righteous Churches is building to repel the invaders of this world?

System: Accepting will grant you a special title issued by the Council of Righteous Churches.

System: Accepting will make you the first player to get accepted to the God-Slaying Army, which directly promotes you to the rank of 'Lieutenant Colonel'.

Shin's mind went blank for a moment when he saw the string of notifications right in front of his eyes. He even rubbed his eyes to make sure that he was not seeing things.

After calming himself down for a minute, Shin turned to Longinus and repeatedly nodded his head. "I accept. Fighting side by side with the Council and the Heroes will be a great honor!"

Longinus nodded his head in satisfaction when he heard those words. He then stopped smiling as a serious expression erased his laidback attitude.

He stood up and walked over to Shin before placing a badge on the latter's chest. "I, Longinus, the Pinnacle, with the power granted to me by the Council of Righteous Churches, declare you as the Lieutenant Colonel of the God-Slaying Army."

At the same time, Shin heard the notifications from the system.

Ding

System: Congratulations! You have become the Lieutenant Colonel of the God-Slaying Army! You will now be treated as one of the future pillars of the Righteous Churches! You will be treated respectfully by all the army throughout the Awakened Continent!

System: As you are closely related to the Righteous Churches, you will be treated as a Noble within the Divine Empire and an Esteemed Guest of the Alfheim – the land of Elves, Fairies, and Nymphs, the Nidavellir – the home of Dwarves, Gnomes, and Dark Elves, and Atlantis – the kingdom of all Sea Creatures.

System: You will also gain the ability to freely enter Terra Bestia – the land of the Beastmen, while the residents of the Forsaken Isle – the territory of undead creatures, will be wary of you and will not give you any trouble unless they are provoked.

(The undead creatures of this region are different from the corrupted ones. They practice Dark Arts and Soul Magic, but they are not related to Corrupted Cult or Demonic Churches)

...

'Sweet~!' Shin could not help but comment when he saw the series of notifications.

But that was not the only reward Shin had gotten since the badge itself was also a special treasure.

[Item Name]: Badge of God-Slaying Army (Lieutenant Colonel)

[Item Rank]: Special

[Item Type]: Accessory (Badge)

Details: This is an item granted to the players who are chosen to join the God-Slaying Army.

Stats:

+10% Wisdom and Intelligence

+20% Willpower

Special Stats:

- Deal 50% more Damage against Demonic Creatures, Corrupted Monsters, and Demons.

- Grants protection against the Black Miasma when you are inside the Abyss Brink.

Skills:

1. Master of Energies (Passive): Grants an additional 50% Control over special powers or higher forms of Mana.

Available Powers and Proficiency:

Elemental Powers

- Primordial Lightning (Superior High), Eternal Flame (Intermediate), Void Powers (Intermediate), Earthen Metal and Metallic Earth (Intermediate)

Higher Form of Mana:

- Brilliant Sun (Lesser High), Abyssal Moon (Lesser High)

Special Powers:

- Primordial Eclipse (Intermediate High)

Subcategory: Origin = Unexplored

2. Mind Immune (Active): Become Immune to all kinds of Mental Attacks that are below 'Divine Rank'.

Note: This item is bound to Player 'Sickarius' – cannot be destroyed, traded, or dropped.

Seeing the details of the badge, Shin could not hide his satisfaction, especially when it listed all the powers that he had under his arsenal.

But the surprises did not end there as a few more notifications from the system arrived, which caught him off guard.

"Eh!? This is related to those quests?"

Chapter 1400: Unexpected Clues

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Ding

System: You have received a crucial clue to one of your World Quest!

Quest Update: You have received a clue that is highly possible to be connected to the spawns of the Devil Ancestor!

Updated Condition: Head to the Depths of the Abyss Brink and investigate the said Dimensional Crack.

Note: This does not have any specific time limit, but you have to finish the investigation before the dimensional war breaks out.

Ding

System: A possible bridge connecting the Atlas World and one of the Outer Realms appeared in the depths of the Abyss Brink.

Quest Update: This Dimensional Crack could lead you to one of the Ancient God Fragments in your possession.

Additional Condition: Head to the other side of the crack and look for more clues.

...

Two World Quest under Shin's quest panel simultaneously got an update right after he listened to Longinus.

One of the quests was related to the descent of the Devil Ancestor, a powerful being that was most likely a Divine Being. He had been hearing this name a lot recently, so it could only mean that it said descent was fast approaching.

The other quest was related to the Ancient God Fragment in his possession. He had been delaying this quest since Solus and Hanzo had seriously warned him that he was not strong enough to try looking for the clues related to it, much less wielding its powers.

The two said that he could only try looking into it when he was at least at Tier 4, which was still quite far. He just reached the Tier 3 Class, and leveling this stage was extremely hard.

Based on the clues that he had just gotten, Tier 4 needed the players to at least reach Level 300 to meet the bare minimum of the qualifications when trying to tackle the Tier 4 Promotion Quests, so it was still beyond his concern.

But who would have thought that he would get two clues about the other fragments successively?

One of the clues led him to Hell, which was the world of Demons, while the other was on the other side of the Dimensional Crack in the depths of the Abyss Brink.

Fortunately, based on the words of Longinus, the said war was still quite far. There were at least a few years (in-game time) before the creatures on the other side of the Dimensional Crack could cross the dimensions and descend upon this world.

Building the God-Slaying Army would still require a long time, so there was no need to hurry. The Council of Righteous Churches was only being cautious by recruiting the players now. They wanted the players to develop faster so that they would be strong enough when the war broke out.

Shin estimated that he would be strong enough to tackle these two quests.

Little did Shin know that he was way ahead of the rest.

This content that he just uncovered was supposedly a year-long content that was prepared when there were enough players stepped on the Awakened Continent, and there were a lot of high-level players exploring the higher-level maps such as the Abyss Brink.

This was the result of the recent anomalies that he just achieved up until now. One of the reasons was the number of Supreme Elementals and True Monarchs under his command, which was supposedly impossible for most of the players.

The developers within the headquarters of the World Gaming Organization were currently pulling their hair and gritting their teeth as they watched Shin repeatedly destroy the original plotline that they had prepared along with the other Miracle Players. Those in the monitoring department were the ones who suffered the most since they were the ones to realize these events.

They were supposedly in the World's Metamorphosis Patch, where the players would unlock more races and classes and explore more about the new combat system that would help them reach the Tier 3 Class.

But these 'Troublemakers' were already at the stage where they were unlocking the end-game contents left and right such as looking for the Divine Armors, Promoting their Elemental Spirits into Higher Beings, Opening or Exploring the Dimensional Portals connected to other Worlds, 'Inviting' the True Demons to the Main World (Atlas World), and many more.

The game developers were having a hard time keeping up with these Miracle Players, who kept on defying their expectations.

The way these Miracle Players were thinking was just different compared to regular players. Just like how Shin was thinking about how he would explore the Abyss Brink when it was supposedly done until the mainstream players reached the average strength to set their foot in there.

Shin was among those who were giving the game developers the greatest trouble since he was related to almost half of their problems or more.

But the man in question was oblivious to all of these as he kept on exploring the game at the same pace, thinking that everything he did was normal. After all, his pair of brothers – Arthur and Leonard, who he hung out with most of the time – were on par with his progress.

What he did not know was their group was just too abnormal.

...

After recollecting himself, Shin chatted with Longinus a little more, hoping to get more clues about the quests that he had – or at least get some information about Kentas and Supremo since he was quite curious about the background of the two.

Those two overpowered NPCs seemed to belong to the Legendary Heroes of this world, or at least related to them.

But to his disappointment, he did not get anything as Longinus skillfully dodged answering all his probing and quickly changed the subject.

Regardless, he had already gotten a lot of things and information from this Head Mysterious Instructor, particularly the requirement on how to get accepted to the God-Slaying Army.

This army did not only include the players as its main force was still composed of NPCs. There were just a few players that could be selected as high officers like Shin, who would be able to pass the special tests prepared by the other Mysterious Instructors. They also needed to meet certain requirements that would be hidden from most of the players.

Shin just got lucky as he was the first player to reach Tier 3, which granted him special treatment.

Moreover, he also stumbled upon the special NPC that was connected to the Mysterious Instructors, which further increased his chance of being selected as a high-ranking officer of the army.

Shin had the special invitation that he had gotten from that apple vendor, which he could give to anyone he wanted. He could not think of anyone to whom he could give this recommendation as the errand quests that the special NPCs could help the players realize which combat state fitted their style.

Skipping those quests would lessen the chance of obtaining their ideal combat state, which would do more harm than good.

Unless it was someone, who already knew which path they were taking and already unlocked the combat state that they wanted, the recommendation letter on his hands would be completely useless.

Setting this aside, Shin had already found the ideal requirements on how the players would be able to get the chance to meet Longinus after passing the tests of the Mysterious Instructors for the opportunity of joining the God-Slaying Army.

He planned to share this with his friends, particularly Shiella, who could pass it to specific individuals on their side. This could make them monopolize most of the quota of joining the army, especially when they were planning to build a guild composed of elite cadets of the Springfield Forces along with a few talented individuals.

There were also a few advantages of joining the army. One of them was the special badge unique to the army. The next batch of the badges might not be on the same level as what Shin had, but they would still have a decent state, particularly the increase in Willpower, which was a special stat that could not be found anywhere.

There were also the lesser versions of the two skills attached to the item, which would be a great help to every player, particularly the top experts of the game. The skill 'Master of Energies' would be a great asset for everyone, especially those who could already wield their unique form of mana and created their Energy Manipulation Technique to complement it.

Such an item was extremely rare.

Aside from this item, Shin also found that the players of the army could get a unique equipment set that they could buy from a special camp dedicated to them. This set focused more on stats that could counter the creatures in the Abyss Brink, which would put them ahead of the other players when the map became available to everyone.

Shin might not be interested in the set because he already possessed a high-quality one, and was even in the middle of looking for the materials for a Divine Armor. But for most of the players, such an equipment set would be heaven-sent, especially when it was a growth-type set that could be continuously upgraded so long as they have enough merit points for the upgrade.

From what Shin had heard from Longinus, the set could be as good as Comet Rank Set at its peak, which was way beyond what most of the players could dream of.

The gap between the Obsidian Rank equipment and Stellar Rank ones was too large, which was why there were sub-ranks between the two called Meteor and Comet Ranks.

The current rank of [Yamato] was Peak Obsidian, which was also considered a Quasi Meteor. This sword was already beyond powerful, so it would not be hard to imagine how strong the equipment at the Meteor and Comet Ranks was.

Aside from these, there were also a variety of items and tools that could be brought in the special shop meant for the members of the God-Slaying Army. The higher the rank of someone in the army, the better the items they could buy from the said shop.

Shin compiled all the information that he had gotten from Longinus, particularly the hidden requirements when taking the tests prepared by the Mysterious Instructors, before sending it to everyone on their side.

After chatting with Longinus and knowing that he could no longer squeeze any information from the NPC, Shin decided to bid his farewell. After all, he still had a few tasks that needed to be done. He could only waste a little of his time here.

"I need to get going now, Sir Longinus. I still have a few things that needed to deal with," said Shin as he stood up and bowed at the NPC.

Longinus nodded his head as he smiled at Shin. But he did not immediately say goodbye as his eyes were suddenly attracted to the necklace that Shin was wearing.

"Oh~! It seems like you have quite a few interesting treasures in your possession," he said as his eyes glowed with mana, signifying that he was using a special ocular skill to inspect the item.

Shin paused for a moment before lowering his head and looking at the necklace. It was the [Proof of Eclipse], a racial-specific item that he had gotten after clearing his Tier 3 Promotion Quest. It also became a 'Dissonant Wish Item' after fusing with the previous necklace that he was wearing.

After staring at the necklace for a moment, Longinus suddenly chuckled. "I guess it is fate."

He then stretched his right hand and grabbed something in the air. A scroll was suddenly formed in his hands, which he gave to Shin after.

"I have gotten this when I was young and exploring the Sea of Death. I never have the opportunity to use it, so I am giving it to you and hope that you will retrieve that treasure recorded in it," he said while urging Shin to take the scroll.

Shin did not hesitate to take the scroll, especially when he heard the words 'treasure'. "A Treasure Map!?"

Longinus chuckled when he saw the excited look on Shin's face before explaining. "You are half right. It is a map that will bring you to an independent dimension. In there, there is a treasure, which is related to your Church."

"From what I have investigated, that treasure used to be in a set along with your necklace. You should take a look," he added before snapping his fingers and sending Shin out of Saint Heaven Mountain.

Shin was unable to respond to what had happened. He stared blankly in the air when he found himself standing at the foot of the mountain.

He then turned at the scroll on his hand and saw the familiar pattern of the Church of the Sun and Moon engraved on the seal.