

Destiny 1511

Chapter 1511 Plans

Alucard could not help but stare blankly at Arthur, who seemed to treat those costly body-strengthening serums as some sort of commodity from a neighborhood market.

He wanted to ask if it was alright since he felt that they had yet to become worthy of such treatment from this team. After all, he felt that they still had yet to do something for the team.

He was not the only one who had such thoughts as Diablo was thinking the same, so he quickly stepped forward and asked. "Is this alright? I know you guys are quite wealthy, but I don't think it is appropriate for us to get such a treatment yet."

Arthur looked at Diablo with a slightly inclined head before saying nonchalantly. "Don't worry. This is no big deal. And it is not for free as we need you to work twice as hard for this team in the future."

Diablo was about to say something more, but Leonard quickly cut him off. "There is no need to feel uncomfortable about this."

"This guy here is from a military family, so they have quite a lot of boxes of enhancement serums lying around their home," he added while pointing at Arthur.

Arthur nodded and added. "And it is not like I am stealing them from our house. I am paying it with the funds of our adventurer team, and we will be deducting some from your salary, so there is not much to it."

"Moreover, the serums that we are giving you are not military secrets, but commercial ones, so there shouldn't be any problem."

Alucard wanted to say something, but he then swallowed his words back after seeing from Arthur's expression that it was not a big deal.

He also somewhat from a military background, so he was aware of some things related to them. He knew that despite Arthur saying that they were only providing serums that were meant for commercial use, it was still quite costly as such things were a form of strategic source.

But given that Arthur was not too bothered about it, he could tell that their family was not as simple as an ordinary military family, especially after hearing from Leonard that there were a bunch of serum boxes lying in Arthur's home.

After collecting their information, the meeting then proceeded as Cloe took over. "Next is our schedule for this month to prepare for the upcoming group stage of the United Cup."

"Our adventurer team has accumulated enough fame and reputation to be considered as one of the top teams within the game. Though, most of the reason is because of these monsters in our team," she added while pointing at Arthur and Leonard.

"We are exempted from the early rounds, so we still have quite a lot of time to prepare for it," she paused for a moment to open a virtual screen and project it to everyone.

"This will be our schedule. Since we are still busy with our respective tasks here, we can only train in our team's virtual space together every three days. But we hope that you can finish the daily training regime we prepared for you in the virtual space."

Cloe continued to discuss their overall schedule for quite a while before displaying another panel on the projected screen. "We will also be sending some information about the top teams that we may face in the next rounds of the tournament. I hope you study them as well whenever you have time."

"We will also do a group discussion about these teams after our team training every three days," she added before proceeding to another topic.

This meeting lasted for almost two hours before they were dismissed to return to their respective business.

As every was leaving, Lorraine suddenly entered the training grounds. "Eh!? Is it over already? What a pity~! I can't see the beautiful and professional Cloe."

Cloe rolled her eyes when she heard that. "What do you expect when you come two hours late?"

Lorraine made a pitiful expression as he clung her arms to Cloe's. "What can I do? My family is asking me to come back now."

"Hmm? Why? It is not like your safety will be at risk inside the Springfield Household," asked Cloe in confusion.

Lorraine sighed as she answered. "The Springfield Family is the reason why my family is asking me to come back sooner."

"As you can see, the Springfield Family has become the center of the storm recently. My father is worried that I will be swept by the tides given my close relationship with them."

"Of course, he did not tell me to distance myself from Arthur and the others. After all, our families are still allies. He just wants me to be careful since there are a lot of powers targeting the Springfield Family right now," she added with a sad tone.

"Still, it does not mean your life will be at risk inside the household," said Cloe confusedly.

Lorraine scratched her cheek as she said in confusion. "I also don't know about that. But the tone my father has is very serious. It seems like another big thing is going to happen."

"So? Are you going to go back now?" asked Cloe. Even if she felt sad about that, it could not be helped since it was a family matter for the Goldstein Family.

But to her surprise, Lorraine gave her a different answer. "Of course, not! This is a rare opportunity to live with my Leo under the same roof! How can I let it pass?"

Or should she say this was something to be expected?

With a helpless sigh, Cloe shook her head before saying. "I will be logging out for now. I have something else to do."

"Eh? It hasn't been that long since you have gotten online. Why are you logging out now? We still haven't visited those shops yet!" Lorraine pouted her lips, trying to act coy.

Unfortunately, it did not work for Cloe as she wanted to meet someone right now.

"I'll tell you later," said Cloe as she ignored Lorraine and quickly pulled out the virtual panel in front of her and pressed the logout button before the latter could even complain.

Swoosh!

Seeing Cloe disappear right before her eyes, Lorraine could only sigh, showing her loneliness. "It seems like I have been ditched."

But before she could further fall into 'her despair', a familiar voice suddenly sounded behind her. "What are you doing?"

Hearing that voice, Lorraine seemed to come back to life as she could recognize that voice even in her sleep.

Swiftly turning around, she saw Leonard standing behind her with crossed arms and a tilted head.

A beautiful smile suddenly bloomed on her face as she hopped beside Leonard and linked her arm to his. "What's this? Are you waiting for me? Are you going to invite me for a date?"

Leonard quickly regretted asking. He knew that this was going to happen, but for some reason, he felt like talking to her.

He sighed and shook his head. "Forget I ask."

He was about to free his arm from her so that he could go back to training when Lorraine clung to it desperately. "Wait! You are not going to leave a poor girl alone, right? Accompany me for a while. I promise you that you will not regret it!"

"I've discovered something interesting during my time here. Let me show it to you," she added before dragging Leonard outside the training ground before Leonard could even say anything.

Seeing them, Owen nudged Ithilien, who was busy reading the files sent to her by Cloe earlier.

Ithilien frowned deeply and glared at Owen for interrupting her. "What!?"

Seeing her snap like that, Owen hesitated for a moment before gathering all his courage and pointed his lips and chin to Leonard and Lorraine.

Ithilien turned her head toward the direction he was pointing at and saw Lorraine dragging Leonard outside the training ground. She then turned to Owen, who was looking at her 'pitifully', before rolling her eyes.

But after a brief thought, she sighed before closing the virtual screen in front of her and linking her arm with his.

Owen was surprised at first before smiling brightly. He then ran out of the training ground along with her.

Not long after, the others, who were already outside, saw those pairs.

Samael thought for a moment before dragging his younger sister to relax as well. There was also Daulla who invited Archimedes to unwind as well since they never had the time for it since they arrived on this continent.

Seeing them walking in pairs, the single guys, could not help but turn at each other.

"Why do I suddenly feel lonely?" asked Akailu in a joking manner.

"We have decent girls in our team, but they are either taken already or have someone in mind. The rest are not interested in getting in a relationship from the looks of it," commented Alucard while nodding his head.

Diablo shook his head and walked away.

Seemingly understanding the conversation, Chaotic Luck shook his head as well before whispering. "You two better be careful. You can get in jail with those words."

The two froze when he heard him before realizing something. They then turned at each other before cursing.

"F*ck!"

"Damn it!"

Chapter 1512 Eyes to Everyone

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The Emphyrean Talons were not the only ones preparing for the group stage of the United Cup.

The top guilds and huge organizations within the game were already making their respective preparations. Given their resources, the range of their information network was much larger than the Emphyrean Talons, especially when they had a fully established system.

Compared to Arthur and the others, who were only relying on their connections, the teams supported by these guilds and organizations had a more detailed and organized set of information.

But that did not mean the information that Arthur and Cloe had that much inferior. After all, Arthur could just ask for some help from Shiella if he wanted or buy detailed information from the Assassin Union.

Regardless, these teams that would be their future rivals were thoroughly studying the Empyrean Talons as they were one of the top contenders in this tournament given that they had quite a lot of noticeable individuals in their group and quite a lot of Godlike Players. Some of them were even comparable to those at the peak and recognized as Maverick Gods just like Diablo.

Alucard was in a special situation as he had gotten an official title as a Titled Ranker, but his strength was comparable to the Godlike Players. However, there were not many who were aware of this as he rarely appeared in the eyes of the public.

He was much stronger than what others could expect, especially with the Legacy that he had gotten from Dracula from their previous adventures in the Frozen Kingdom.

The only team that knew the true strength and potential of the Empyrean Talons were the current champions of the United Cup, the God's Paradise, since they had been having scrim matches with them before the Frozen Kingdom opened its borders to everyone.

However, it was also working the other way around as the Empyrean Talons became more familiar with them, albeit God's Paradise did not show their full strength since some of their members were not present in the Saint Heaven Kingdom during that time.

As these top teams were busy with their preparations, the players, who were paying close attention to this competition, watched the early rounds of the United Cup and started to notice quite a few of the previous top teams dropped from the original tier list and struggled against some emerging forces that they had never heard or seen before.

Among these new teams were from those powerful and influential corporations from the real world.

People immediately noticed how much resources these huge corporations had spent on their teams as all their members were wearing top-quality equipment and weapons.

Some of these teams even have famous players, who were widely known for playing solo. Rumors said that these corporations spent quite a huge sum just to recruit these people.

Aside from these teams, some were formed by well-known solo players. Some of them were even Godlike Players and Maverick Gods, who were known for not joining such a team competition.

Aside from the solo tournaments like the Ranking Cups and Hegemon Cups, these players never joined any other tournaments.

But they gathered and formed a team together, following the lead of the Empyrean Talons.

Even though they had not accumulated enough reputation as a team like the Empyrean Talons, they were still a strong contender in this competition given the individual prowess of their people.

However, they should be facing the same problem as the Empyrean Talons when it comes to the synergy of their members. But since they were starting from the very bottom of the tournament, they would have a lot of chances to fix their flaws and solve the problems that they could not do alone.

On top of that, they could also build up their teamwork more in a competitive stage, where they could occasionally feel pressure from strong rivals that they would be encountering along the way.

That was also not the end as some experts from the 'older' generation were also starting to show one after another. These experts were also at the apex tier of the game, rivaling those at the peak of the current ranks.

With such players appearing one after another along with their respective teams, this United Cup became more competitive and much more intense than previous ones.

But these teams and experts knew that it was not the case since the ones who had the greater edge in this tournament were those who had reached the third tier of their respective class and the ones who had found the virtual combat state that suited them the most.

This tournament would be decided by who had more members that acquired both pieces of the puzzle.

Given this, the viewers of the tournament started pulling out the list of the teams that were directly sent to the group stage and compared their members to the teams struggling in the early stages.

That was when these players realized that those top teams have a lot of members with both the virtual combat state and Tier 3 Class.

Now these people realized which criteria the organizers of the United Cup had used to categorize the teams participating in the tournament.

The craziest part was they noticed that the God's Paradise and the Empyrean Talons seemed to be way ahead of everyone else in terms of overall power.

There were some teams from the top guilds and huge organizations, who were able to somewhat match them, but the gap was still quite noticeable. But this did not mean that it was insurmountable as a lot of apex experts started to catch up one after another.

The Hall of Fame that was recently added to the official website of the game was constantly changing due to the flood of experts clearing their respective promotion quests one after another.

Among these emerging players, some were familiar names like the famous Godlike Players, who were quite late at doing their promotion quest. But they still managed to rank high enough with their accumulated achievements once they were successfully promoted.

The most noticeable ones were Khing, who was previously recognized as the king of virtual games before he disappeared; Snow White, the Frost Goddess, who dominated the rankings during the same

era as Khing; Cold Moon, the Goddess of the Everlasting Night; and other experts on the same generation.

What was surprising was the names belonging to the Chiefs of the Hand of Midas, who were known for their lifestyle professions. They were way ahead of the others despite them not having a combat class.

This further proved that production classes were not just meant for crafting items and tools.

Speaking of the Hand of Midas, the chiefs of the guild were currently having a meeting as Shiella summoned all of them.

"Are you sure you are going to the Awakened Continent this early? There are still a lot of things that need to be done here," said Harmony as frowned.

The guild was already on the right track, but there were still quite a lot of areas that needed to be covered.

The Hand of Midas just finished relocating their headquarters to the Saint Heaven Kingdom, particularly at the Sky Deceiving Valley, which was now Shin's territory.

With the majority of their forces stationed in the Golden City and the Calderock Port, they now had a long of manpower to manage the entire Gold Mountain.

Along with the forces of their allies such as the Assassin Union and Secret Society and the affiliated groups that Shin and the others had invited, the management of the entire territory had become very stable.

But that was only limited to the Sky Deceiving Valley and the neighboring regions within the borders of the Saint Heaven Kingdom.

Moreover, there was still the Frozen Kingdom that was being explored by quite a lot of forces and right beside Sky Deceiving Valley, so they were still lacking some people.

They had also just established their branch in the Sacred Light Kingdom, so the leading figures of the guild were quite busy.

Delusive Smile had been running around to manage everything just recently because Shiella had been away for quite some time. It was quite fortunate that she managed to hold well up until now.

Shiella had just returned and was already planning to leave right after clearing her promotion quest. It would not only hit their morale but also affect some of their operations given that some annoying people were eyeing their territories and operations.

With the recent successes that the Hand of Midas had been getting, a lot of forces had become jealous of them and started giving them trouble.

Black Hammer nodded his head as he agreed with Harmony. "Harmony is right, Guild Leader. I don't think it is the right time to leave now."

The other chiefs did not voice their opinions, but given the expression on their faces, it was clear that they were against with Shiella's decision as well.

Shiella already expected this to happen, so she was not surprised by the opposition. She remained calm before turning to Delusive Smile. "What do you think, Smile?"

Delusive Smile was silent for a moment before closing her eyes and sighing. "I hate to admit this, but I think it is also better for the progress of our guild to let the guild leader go."

The chiefs turned at her all at the same time, giving her questioning and curious gazes. They wanted to know her reason for saying those words, especially when she was the one who suffered the most during Shiella's absence.

Seemingly understanding their confusion, Shiella signaled Delusive Smile with her chin. "Show it to them so that they can understand."

Getting the permission, Delusive Smile sighed once again before projecting a virtual screen to everyone.

What followed it was a complete silence. The chiefs of the guild were unable to say anything for quite a while after seeing everything displayed on the virtual screen.

Everything that was displayed in front of them was the organized information that the Emphyrean Talons had collected about the Awakened Continent from the Divinity City, which Arthur had sent to Shiella.

The more the chiefs read through them, the quieter they became.

Shiella waited for quite a while to give them time to digest everything before asking. "What do you think now? Do you think heading there and establishing our footing earlier than others is not right?"

Chapter 1513 Festival of the Sea's Second Round

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Boom! Boom!

Shin was immediately assaulted by multiple sea creatures right after he entered the spatial fracture earlier. He instantly became the main target right they spotted him in the special dimension that they were sent to.

Their numbers were quite high and tricky to deal with, especially since they were targeting him with a coordinated attack.

What made it even harder to deal with was some of their abilities were able to link together and complement each other.

Fortunately, his Boundless Ocean Technique and the unique ability of this vessel he was in heightened his senses, making it easier to read the incoming attacks regardless of the angles they were coming from.

He was always ahead by a step of everything, making it harder for his opponents to trap him in a corner.

Instead of trapping Shin in serious trouble, they were allowing him to hone his newly acquired abilities and polish his mastery over the Boundless Ocean Technique.

With such a stressful environment where he was constantly putting a lot of pressure and repeatedly pushing to his limits, the growth that he was getting was reaching an unimaginable level.

His Battle Genius Talent was showing its fullest potential in this kind of environment where he had to be constantly fighting.

Bang! Bang!

"Not bad! This feeling is not bad at all!" Shin was grinning from ear to ear as he repeatedly clashed against the sea creatures that were besieging him in every direction.

After fighting within this body for quite a while, Shin was able to discover quite a few more abilities that it possessed. One of them was the powerful regeneration that it has on top of having a tough defense provided by the scales over its skin.

With all these tools in his arsenal, Shin was not afraid to exchange blows against these creatures assaulting him from multiple directions.

Whenever he got hit once by those attacks that he could not avoid, he would return them with two more strikes, which also carried twice the force of what he just received.

But in return for this power, his mind was starting to get affected by a berserk state caused by the raging blood flowing through his veins.

As he was constantly losing and replenishing his blood with these trades, the berserk nature that was engraved in the veins of the World Serpents was becoming more awake and active.

This was why Shin had to be careful when using the racial abilities of this race.

Fortunately, he was somewhat familiar with this feeling and had been training against something like this in the real world.

The assaults that his Seed of Hatred was trying to consume him from time to time were much worse than this one.

Moreover, the mind-cleansing technique of the Jade Kirin Scripture was more than enough to deal with these occasions, so the constant attacks in his mind by the berserk bloodline of the World Serpents were constantly offset by Shin's techniques.

But this was not the only cause of the berserk state of this race's bloodline. The blood of the creatures that had been killed by their race was also triggering the berserk effects, which also had a much worse effect on them.

The scent of the blood was like the smell of the tastiest delicacy to the World Serpents, making the berserk nature engraved in their existence become awake once again.

Boom! Boom!

Despite Shin's efforts alongside the help of these techniques, the accumulated 'hunger' of this race's bloodline was starting to affect his mind, which was also slightly affecting his mind and actions.

But this was still not the main problem that Shin was currently facing.

"He is already entering the berserk state! Don't stop attacking! We have to further increase our pressure!"

"We must buy more time for the others to acquire the Sea Gems!"

The purpose of the second round of this trial was still to eliminate as many numbers of participants as possible. But the method this time was slightly different.

Instead of just having a royal rumble, where the participants had to eliminate one another, this round required the participants to collect the several gems scattered in different places and hold onto them until the time limit ended.

These gems were scattered in the Sea Realm that they were currently in, and the participants had to look for them blindly.

They could also steal them from the other participants if they could.

So long as they collected all the required gems, they could advance to the next round when this one ended.

The purpose of these sea creatures was to prevent Shin from collecting any of the Sea Gems so that he would be eliminated from the competition earlier.

They knew that they did not stand a chance against those top predators who entered the same spatial fracture as them, so they could only do whatever they could to contribute to the ones they supported.

This was not a new strategy as it was something that happened regularly whenever such a competition occurred. It just became more intense in this one due to some crafty tricks that the cunning participants had prepared.

Among these cunning creatures of the sea, the one who was from the Kraken Race and entered the same spatial fractures as Shin had convinced everyone to target the World Serpents on purpose as they were the ones with the greatest threat to everyone.

Moreover, they were a public enemy of the entire Ocean Civilization, so tricking these fools was much easier than the Kraken had expected.

This was why Shin was in such a situation, where he could neither look for the Sea Gems nor hunt other participants to steal from them.

[Aren't enjoying this a little too much? You have already achieved your goal, so there is no need to waste your time here, don't you think?]

After quite a while, Uno could no longer endure it, especially after seeing something strange from Shin's actions.

"Ah! Is that so? I guess I got carried away a little bit," Shin finally snapped out of his somewhat berserk state after hearing Uno's voice.

[You-...]

Uno was trying to say something, but Shin immediately cut him off. "Don't worry. Everything is under control. I will never lose it."

After that, Shin disengaged from the battle by pushing all his assailants a powerful shockwave he created by clapping his hands.

Boom!

"I've enjoyed our time playing with each other, but I guess it is now time to leave," he added as he swept his gaze at them.

His eyes were still bloodshot due to the residual berserk state of World Serpent's Bloodline. Because of this, his cold and eerie eyes sent shivers down to the spines of the sea creatures surrounding him, halting them from their tracks for a moment.

This brief pause from them was more than enough for Shin to use one of the special abilities of his current race.

Then the water in the surroundings was suddenly attracted to him and formed a powerful suction force. It did not take that long before a whirlpool was formed and started pulling the opponents surrounding him.

'World Serpent Skill: Devouring the Great Sea'

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

Due to the sudden pull of the water, the sea creatures surrounding Shin were unable to respond in time and got swept by the strong and spinning current despite them having the ability to swim away from the whirlpool and fight its current.

As their movements had become restricted, Shin's body suddenly blurred before appearing in multiple places at the same time, targeting all the sea creatures stuck in the whirlpool.

After familiarizing himself with this body and learning its capabilities, Shin was able to use some of his mentalism techniques by applying their principles to the special abilities of the World Serpents and combining them with the Boundless Ocean Technique.

'Four Symbol Scripture: Heavenly Black Tortoise – Ghost of the Dead Sea'

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

Not long after, all the copies of Shin scattered in every direction exploded disrupting the attempts of the sea creatures to get away from the whirlpool and pushing them further into it.

As the sea creatures were further pulled into the center of the whirlpool, Shin's figure transformed into a white serpent that swam away from the scene.

He wanted to finish them off given that it was a great opportunity. Unfortunately, he did not have any killer moves under his arsenal that could kill them in an instant.

He had to at least wait until he made the Boundless Ocean Technique his own along with the body that he currently possessed.

That was the only way for him to fully unleash the true powers of the World Serpents and combine them with his more powerful and advanced techniques.

For now, he had to run away and look for the Sea Gems scattered in this small realm so that he did not have to worry about being eliminated once the round ended.

As Shin swam away, a lurking shadow suddenly emerged from one of the corrals behind the whirlpool while looking in the direction where he went.

There was a dangerous glint in this creature's eyes before stealthily chasing after Shin.

Chapter 1514 The Battle of the Sea Ancients

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Shin spent quite a lot of time looking for the Sea Gems. He first thought that it would be hard looking for them in such a huge place, but he realized that he was wrong as such things were easy to spot given that they were constantly releasing a brilliant light that could be spotted from afar.

He did not know how many Sea Gems were out there, but he was sure that they were limited given that this round was also to eliminate as many participants as possible.

He had found a couple of gems along the way, which was unexpectedly easy. He did encounter other participants fighting for the gems, but they immediately forgot that they were competitors when they saw Shin appear.

They worked together in an attempt to take down Shin, who was a 'common' enemy. Unfortunately, they were beaten so badly that they could barely fight back.

Shin was too used to fighting multiple opponents already due to the recent battles where everyone was ganging up on him. Because of this, fighting a lesser number of people was much easier to deal with in comparison.

The struggles that the sea creatures were giving him earlier had now become a weapon that he was using against them, especially when the number of sea creatures competing for the Sea Gems was much lesser than what it was supposed to be.

Since the rest of the sea creatures were hunting for World Serpents out there, the ones fighting for the gems had become so little that they no longer posed any threat to someone like Shin.

With all the experience that he had accumulated within this trial, Shin was able to acquire four Sea Gems of different colors.

Given that the colors of the gems were following what a rainbow had, Shin suspected that seven gems in total needed to be collected by each participant.

He was not sure how many of the gems were required for a participant to pass the round, but he could tell that there would be something special once an individual had collected all seven gems.

He could also feel that something was going to happen once the seven different gems were gathered.

After swimming for quite a while, Shin finally found a problem. Four gems that he currently had seemed to be the common gems as all the other participants that he had encountered up until now either had gems of the same color or had nothing at all.

This was when Shin realized that this round was much more complicated than he originally thought.

This could only mean that the participants who could possess all types of Sea Gems would be very limited. This also further proved Shin's guess that something was going to happen once someone completed a set of gems.

As Shin was continuing to look for the gems he was missing, he suddenly felt that the ones that he had responded to were something.

He was already familiar with this as he had already experienced it earlier when he was collecting these gems. They were telling him that one of the Sea Gems that he was lacking was somewhat around him.

The only question now was whether it was somewhere in the environment or if it was being held by another participant.

But since he was not seeing any kind of light somewhere around him, which indicated the location of a Sea Gem when it was around, he could only guess that it had already been seized by another participant.

He quickly paused his actions and heightened his Spiritual Sense along with the Boundless Ocean Technique to observe his surroundings more clearly.

As he entered this state, he was able to sense a hidden killing intent lurking in the shadows. But despite his heightened sense, he was still unable to pinpoint the exact location of its source, making him frown deeply.

This danger that was slowly creeping toward him from the depths of the sea seemed to have no form or exact source. It looked like the darkness itself that was filled with unforeseen danger.

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

Not long after, Shin realized that he had been surrounded by invisible tentacles without his knowledge.

He immediately opened his eyes wide as they released a gentle golden glow.

He activated his True Sight Skill to the fullest as he was trying to look for the trances of the tentacles. He was barely able to see the transparent silhouettes of these tentacles despite using the fullest potential of his ocular skill.

Moreover, these tentacles were moving so stealthy that they had already closed all the escape routes that he could use if he wanted to retreat. It was as if they had created a cage that trapped Shin inside and prevented him from running anywhere.

Shin immediately knew who was ambushing him just by seeing these transparent tentacles. "Tsk! That stupid squid has been targeting me since the very beginning."

Shin was starting to get annoyed with this Kraken, but he could not blame the latter either as it was natural to target the 'weakest' participant, who belonged to the most dangerous race before they could even grow into a real threat.

Shin's hands were itching to hold a sword right now as he wanted to beat this Kraken into a pulp.

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

Not long after, Shin was suddenly assaulted by a group of tentacles with pointed tips. These tips were covered by hardened ice that could pierce a hole into a metal and destroy a boulder.

These attacks alone were more than enough for Shin to know that this opponent was way different from those cannon fodders that he had encountered earlier.

He must admit that this guy's guys arrogance had some merit in them.

Despite the seemingly random and scattered attacks from these tentacles, Shin could tell that they were meticulously organized into a strong formation that covered a lot of angles that he could take.

Regardless, Shin was still able to respond in return and started moving side to side, dodging all the tentacles heading his way in a very calm manner.

While doing all of this, Shin was sharply keeping a close eye on his surroundings and constantly looking for the annoying Kraken.

Not long after, he sensed a subtle ripple somewhere, which was completely different from what the tentacles were creating.

Shin did not even hesitate as he disappeared from his position and charged in that direction.

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

Seemingly realizing where he was heading, the movements of the tentacles changed as they responded accordingly.

They formed a solid blockade to stop Shin from advancing while also creating a net that would trap Shin once again with their barrage of attacks.

Shin swam ahead without showing any signs of stopping. He skillfully dodged all the attacks directed at him until he finally reached the location where he sensed the ripples earlier.

He quickly swung his fist forward right after his arrival, sending powerful shockwaves that spread in every direction.

Boom!

But despite the destructive force behind his attack that cleared the surrounding water and formed a dried land in the middle of the sea.

As the water was moving back and pouring from the sky, Shin saw a humanoid figure standing in the middle of the point of impact.

It was the familiar abomination of a creature that seemed to be a hybrid between an octopus and a human.

Given the skin color of the opposing side along with their clothes, Shin could tell that they must have used some sort of camouflage technique to hide themselves in the water, which was a common ability of octopuses as they regularly hide in the rocks and corals under the ocean by mimicking their surroundings.

The source of this ability was those eyes with rectangular pupils.

Due to the constant changes in the surroundings, the camouflage ability of this creature was continuously changing and constantly adjusting to the new environment.

The creature that came from the Kraken Race locked its gaze on Shin in a provoking manner. It was as if it was challenging Shin to use the special abilities of the World Serpents and find it in the sea once the water returned.

Shin squinted his eyes as he fixated his gaze on that humanoid creature until they were submerged in water once again.

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

Bang!

Shin kicked the ground as he propelled himself toward the spot where the creature stood earlier.

Swoosh!

But despite him arriving on that spot almost instantaneously, he was still unable to catch his target.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

Instead, he was immediately greeted by sharp tentacles that shot up from the ground and tried to pierce his body with their pointed tips.

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

Shin continuously dodged, not letting even a single one graze him as he could sense a potent venom coating those tentacles.

He was about to spread his senses and activate the unique abilities of his current race when the surroundings suddenly turned dark due to a black ink that was spreading in every direction and slowly enveloping the entire place.

Shin slightly frowned before suddenly started grinning. "I guess it is time to pick up my pace."

A dangerous glint suddenly flashed in his eyes as the aura surrounding him took a change.

Chapter 1515 Battle of the Sea Ancients (Part 2)

.....

Shin's senses started to get affected by the black ink as it spread around and formed a dark fog underwater. Not only his vision was getting obstructed by this fog, but even his other senses were being influenced by the fog along with a sluggish movement.

He was not only having a hard time looking for the traces of the already hard-to-notice tentacles due to their transparent color but also finding it hard to move due to the obstructions of the black ink mixed with the water.

It felt like he was thrown into a muddy field instead of swimming underwater.

With this, dodging the attacks from the tentacles would be harder. It was already quite troublesome to keep up with them despite his heightened Spiritual Sense which was further enhanced by the Boundless Ocean Technique.

The camouflage skills of the octopus-hybrid abomination earlier were not as simple as it seems. It was much more powerful than Shin had expected.

However, he was still able to keep up with their movements due to the unique ability of the World Serpent Race, which was further strengthened by his techniques.

But now that this black fog was added to the equation, hiding the already faint traces that the tentacles had, Shin would have a much harder time fighting this opponent.

"An Ancient Monster Race is not something to be underestimated. They sure have unique abilities that are hard to deal with."

Regardless, Shin still welcomed the challenge with open arms. "They say octopuses have nine brains and three hearts. I wonder if a Kraken is the same or has more."

"Given that this guy is quite cunning for plotting all those schemes just to deal with me, I expect him to be the intellectual-type monster that uses their brains to hunt their prey. But who will expect him to be quite a battle-type monster as well with these kinds of skills."

As Shin gave his comments, he retracted his Spiritual Senses and shrunk its range to five meters around him. He was planning to lessen the effective range of his senses in exchange for a much more solid defense.

With a smaller range, the information that his brain would be getting would be much smaller as well. But in return, he would also be receiving a much clearer set of information that his brain could process in a much faster way.

What was left was whether his body could respond to it or not. But this would be the least of his worries given his Immediate Response Talent, especially when it was partially promoted into an Ultra Instincts inside the game.

With these innate traits within the game, added to his newly acquired ability, Shin was confident that he would be able to hold his ground against this opponent.

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

A few moments later, Shin's Sensing Circle sensed fast movements within its range to which he responded accordingly.

He covered his body with the unique mana of the World Serpents, forming an extra layer of scales over his body. It felt like he had donned himself with an armor that was covering his entire body.

This time, instead of just dodging the attacks from the tentacles, he was also deflecting them and changing their trajectory to collide against each other.

His movements were quite tricky as well as he was always positioning himself to the opposite side where he sent the tentacles away, which made it easier for him to focus on the attacks coming from the other side.

Along with the armor-like mana covering his body, the potent venom covering the tips of the tentacles was unable to give him any immediate harm.

Even if Shin had to repeatedly replace the corroded part of the Mana Armor after being in contact with such a highly concentrated venom that could even melt a metal like a potent acid, the mana supply of a World Serpent was more than enough to deal with it.

Along with the high regeneration rate that was further enhanced by the Boundless Ocean Technique, his mana pool was almost like an inexhaustible dam.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

Regardless of the obstructions of the black fog, he was able to hold himself quite well.

Swoosh!

That was when Shin sensed a sudden movement within his Sensing Circle that was different from the tentacles that were attacking him but with a comparable speed, if not faster.

Whoosh!

At the same time, Shin could also sense something sharp cutting through the water, seemingly ignoring the current and its resistance.

'A Sword?' Shin slowly frowned before suddenly halting his actions and swiftly dodging toward another direction.

He ducked to the side, barely dodging the sharp sword that almost cut him in half.

"That's dangerous," mumbled Shin as he quickly retaliated with a left-hand hook that was targeting the exploded side of his opponent.

Bang!

But despite how powerful his punch was, Shin felt that he did not hit anything. His fist seemed to have landed on a cushion that absorbed all the force behind his punch.

"Tsk!"

Shin clicked his tongue as he immediately realized something and quickly tried to retreat. But before he could even do just that, smaller tentacles shot out from the body of his opponent and tried to grab him.

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

Shin was immediately trapped in a cage created by these smaller tentacles while the larger ones were already making their way to crush him.

Seeing that Shin quickly adjusted his stance as he burned a huge amount of mana from his reserves.

Bang!

A strong shockwave was sent in every direction as a white energy shrouded Shin's figure.

The shockwave halted the advances of the tentacles momentarily while the white energy warded them off and prevented them from approaching Shin.

Supplied by the mana of a World Serpent in this vessel, Shin used a mentalism technique to create a spherical barrier that surrounded him.

'Four Symbol Scripture: Heavenly Black Tortoise – Bulwark of the Turtle General'

Swoosh!

The Mana that was released swirled around Shin, blocking all the tentacles that latched themselves on the spherical barrier and tried to crush it with their powerful strength.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

At the same time, the larger tentacles were bombarding the barrier with powerful attacks, ramming themselves into it.

Crack! Crack!

The barrier was starting to show some signs of breaking under the bombardment of the tentacles. Given the power of each attack, it was clear that it would not take that long before the barrier collapsed completely.

But the time that the barrier had brought for Shin was more than enough for his next move.

Hu~!

Exhaling gently, Shin relaxed his body before suddenly 'jumping'. He then twisted his body 'in midair' before spinning rapidly and using his tail as some sort of weapon.

'World Serpent Skill: Tail Whip Slashes'

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

Blue flashes of lights flew out of his tail as Shin swung his tail around during the spin. His movements were quite awkward due to his unfamiliarity with the skill, but the might of each swing and those energy flashes were strong enough to cut the smaller tentacles.

This created a gap between the entrapment of his opponent and let him escape.

Shin was able to quickly break off the broken cage of the tentacles, but he was still unable to pinpoint the exact location of his opponent.

He was about to try looking for the latter when another sudden attack came to ambush him from behind.

Shin quickly dodged and avoided the tip of the sword directed at his back before retaliating with a powerful punch.

But this time, he did not throw a regular punch reinforced with mana. He instead threw a rotating punch while a violent ripple of mana spun around his fist as it approached his target.

Since he could not just throw a physical attack, he would be throwing a devastating attack that covered a large area to prevent the opposing from appearing and disappearing as they pleased.

'World Serpent Skill: Destruction of the Sea'

Boom!

The Kraken quickly covered its body with its tentacles, forming a strong wall that withstood the powerful force of the incoming attack.

The entire sea shook as the punch was thrown, creating tremors under the sea.

Right above, on the surface of the water, huge waves were forming as if a huge storm had shaken it despite the sky being so clear.

The commotion that this singular attack had attracted several participants nearby, thinking that two absolute monsters were clashing against each other.

Their guesses were not that far as there were indeed a pair of Ancient Sea Creatures fighting at this very moment – someone from the Kraken Race and another from the World Serpent Race.

They first thought that such a collision was the most powerful attack of the two sides, but little did they know that it was just the start of the real battle.

Shin, who had finally gotten a clear view of his opponent after his previous attack cleared the entire surroundings, grinned.

"How do you want me to cook you? Grilled with a special marinated sauce or just sliced raw into a mixed salad?"

Chapter 1516 Battle of the Sea Ancients (Part 3)

.....

Boom! Boom! Boom!

The battle between Shin and the Kraken that he was fighting almost flipped the entire sea realm in a literal manner.

The two of them traveled around the entire realm while fighting, attracting the attention of the other participants.

At first, there were two foolish individuals, who tried to benefit from the battle of these two Sea Ancients, but they later realized how foolish their thoughts were after witnessing the battle prowess of the two.

The reputation of a Kraken and a World Serpent was not just for show. They had earned that fame themselves using their powers and abilities.

The foolish creatures who dared to get in their way were obliterated within an instant just by getting caught in the crossfire. Those lucky ones who managed to survive did not dare to join the two or plot something against them.

Naturally, there were also those with a strength comparable to the two, but they just ignored Shin and the Kraken as they were aware that such a battle would at least last for a long time before the true winner was decided.

With the overwhelming mana pool of their respective races and their insane rate of regenerating them, it would take at least weeks before these two fully exhausted themselves and determined the victor.

But the Festival of the Sea would not last that long, which was why these two were doing their best and planning to use most of their mana reserves before the second round ended.

They had already collected enough Sea Gems for themselves anyway, so it would not be a loss for them to miss the other gems.

Of course, they wanted to collect all the seven types of gems for a reason, but they knew that they would be obstructed by the opposing side until it happened, so it would be better to enjoy themselves in this battle rather than running around and looking blindly for those gems.

Moreover, Shin and the Kraken also possessed a different set of gems, which could be what they were missing. So long as they killed the other party, their gems would be collected by the winner and become ahead of the others once again.

...

Boom!

As Shin and his opponent were separated from each other due to a powerful collision, he raised his head and looked at the basic information of the other party once again.

[NPC/Monster Name]: Zorethar

[Title]: The Gatekeeper of the South End

[Race]: Ancient Kraken

[Bloodline]: Scarlet-Eyed Kraken Tribe

[Tier]: 4

[Classification]: Superior Enlightened Being

[Level]: 489

[Unique Abilities]:

- Supreme Intelligence, Sly Mind, ...

- Absolute Camouflage, Black Fog, ...

- Super Regeneration, Titanic Power, Stretchable and Flexible Body, ...

- Gigantification

Aside from the few things that Shin had already seen during their battle, there were still quite a lot of abilities that he had yet to see from the latter.

He could only click his tongue as he tried to imagine what kind of abilities were those. Most of them seemed to be passive ones, but those that required some activation sounded quite a lot of trouble.

What he was most worried about was the 'Gigantification', which he could already guess how much trouble was once it was used. He could already picture inside his head what was going to happen the moment Zorethar transformed into a giant squid with countless tentacles.

As Shin continued to fight along with his current body, a strange power started to flow within his veins. This power seemed to be a little different from what he was usually feeling from the bloodline powers of his current race as it was showing a distinct difference.

It was more potent and much denser than the original bloodline that this body had.

The more he fought, the more active this new power became. It was as if the true powers of his bloodline were slowly being awakened.

"Could it be!?" as the battle progressed, something struck Shin's mind.

Shin moved accordingly and changed how he fought. He became more aggressive, and his attacks turned into more destructive ones.

He was no longer attacking with physical power amplified with mana as he was using the strange flow power that he was feeling within his bloodline.

Shin learned to use the energy circulation of the Boundless Ocean Technique along with the circulation of the World Serpent's Bloodline, creating a whole new power.

With the combination of these two, he was able to summon much more destructive attacks than what he was using earlier. Even the most simple punch turned into a devastating one once it landed on the defenses of the Kraken in front of him.

"This-... This kid has learned to awaken the true potential of his power this early?" Zorethar could not help but become surprised once he saw the changes in Shin's movements.

One of the reasons why he kept on targeting Shin was because the latter was too young compared to the other World Serpents participating in the Festival of the Sea.

Even if all the World Serpents possessed an unimaginable power innate to their bloodline, such powers still needed to be awakened just like the other Sea Ancients.

They still must undergo a fierce struggle that would risk their lives before they could fully awaken this power.

A young World Serpent like Shin, who had yet to awaken his bloodline powers was a perfect target for Zorethar's plans.

He wanted to use this young ancient to promote his bloodline by crushing them.

He was about to awaken the second pace of his bloodline already. He was only lacking the right opportunity that could pressure him enough to push himself to the limit.

But awakening the Kraken was quite tricky as it could also lead to a disaster if they did not handle it properly.

He would need to consume the opposing party right after he awakened his bloodline to stabilize his new powers.

This should be called the 'Sacrifice' in their race.

Moreover, the Kraken that successfully consumed the 'sacrifice' would get a chance to acquire a random ability from the latter, which would further strengthen their powers.

Only those from their race knew about this as it was one of their secrets.

The Scarlet-Eyed Krakens held this secret as it was the true reason why their tribe was able to reach the ranks of the Sea Ancients.

Usually, someone in their tribe would meticulously choose their target as their future would be highly reliant on the 'sacrifice' that they would be consuming.

Zorethar felt that he was fortunate to find a young World Serpent when he was on the verge of breaking through the second pace of his bloodline. This young ancient would be the perfect sacrifice for him.

Someone from a powerful race who possessed an unrivaled bloodline but was still very young was the 'Sacrifice' that his tribe would be dreaming of.

Who would have thought that someone like that would fall right in front of him?

But this seemingly easy prey that he had found had turned into real trouble.

Not only this young World Serpent was slowly growing throughout their battle, but also constantly absorbing all the knowledge about the art of the battle.

It was as if the opposing side was in a constant state of enlightenment during the entire battle, making it possible for him to evolve continuously.

Moreover, as if it was not the end, the young World Serpent also started to discover the secret of his bloodline and started to awaken during the battle.

Zorethar felt like going crazy after witnessing all of this. Every time he thought that he had already figured out the opposing party and learned their limits, he discovered that it was just the tip of the iceberg.

Shin constantly surprised him with answers that he could not think of and even evolved during the entire process.

It was as if all the struggles and challenges that were supposedly obstructing him had instead become the nutrients that supplement his growth.

Thinking along this line, Zorethar suddenly that he might fail in his bloodline awakening.

If Shin continued to grow, finally awakening the bloodline of the World Serpents and combining it with their unique breathing technique, Zorethar knew that he would surely fail.

He suddenly became anxious as his bloodline awakening was already in process. He even set Shin as the target of sacrifice, so he could no longer back down.

The backlash of his bloodline awakening was much more serious than the other Ancient Races due to the need of consuming of a certain sacrifice.

If the Scarlet-Eyed Kraken failed to evolve and was unable to consume their target of sacrifice during the process of their awakening, then a reverse outcome could happen.

The supposed sacrifice could devour them in return and acquire one of their abilities, making it their own.

Their awakening process was a double-edged sword that could also make them the target of sacrifice once they failed.

"No-... no-...! I can't let that happen!" Zorethar suddenly sensed the foreboding disaster and started to lose his cool.

Roar!

Due to this, he went ballistic and started rampaging.

His body also ballooned and grew, turning into a giant monster that seemed to be a hybrid of a jellyfish, octopus, and squid.

His scarlet eyes glowed with a dangerous glint as he started destroying everything in his surroundings.

He had finally used his Gigantification ability.

This was what Shin was worried about earlier, but not anymore.

He was too focused on circulating his blood and energy through the special ability of the World Serpents along with the Boundless Ocean Technique.

The white aura surrounding him since earlier had become so strong that it resembled a violent flame burning bright in the depths of the ocean.

His scales then started to peel as if he were a snake shedding its skin. His eyes turned brilliantly red as a savage and violent feeling overwhelmed him.

Boom!

A powerful and ancient aura quickly descended on the place as he underwent this transformation.

He slowly opened his mouth as if he was trying to cough out something stuck in his throat.

Roar!

What followed was a deafening roar that shook the entire realm, seemingly announcing to everyone that he had finally awakened!

Chapter 1517 Battle of the Sea Ancients (Part 4)

.....

Boom! Boom!

Roar!

Zorethar had grown into a massive Kraken with tentacles stretching for a few kilometers and a humongous body that looked like a mountain underwater.

Shin could also use the Gigantification Skill and turn into one of the titans of the sea, the real form of the World Serpents. With the power of such a huge body, along with its unique abilities, he could at least match the destructive powers of a Kraken that took its true form.

But Shin chose not to do that since he knew it could only weaken him instead. After all, he was not familiar with moving in the body of a sea monster, so it would only do him more harm if he tried to transform as well.

It would be better to continue fighting in this form as he was more familiar with it. It would be much more effective for him to stay in the humanoid form in this battle, especially when his techniques were meant for this form as well.

If he tried to do the same as Zorethar and used his Gigantification Skill just to match the destructive power of the latter, then he would only do himself more harm and put himself at a disadvantage.

Moreover, he could only use the breathing technique that he just learned previously – the Boundless Ocean Technique, in this form as he was only familiar with using it in a humanoid form.

Since there were more demerits than merits if he tried to use the Gigantification Skill than maintaining in this form, Shin chose the latter without any hint of hesitation.

With that, he used everything he could to suppress the overwhelming power that was being stirred within his body due to the bloodline awakening.

This resulted in the current form of aura that was surrounding him. It was the leaking powers that were coming out from his body as he tried to keep them under control.

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

Not long after, Shin was suddenly bombarded by a series of attacks from the huge, flexible, and destructive tentacles from every direction.

Shin's body suddenly turned into a blur before flashing in every direction and leaving a series of afterimages behind.

It was one of his signature movement techniques. But this time, he was using it with a different breathing, producing a different elemental effect.

Moreover, he converted this Martial Skill into a Mentalism Technique, applying the principles of the Four Symbol Scripture into it while also incorporating the Boundless Ocean Technique in the process.

'Elemental Movement Technique: (Self-Created) Ghost Evanescent – Ocean Phantom'

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

Shin managed to dodge all the tentacles attacking him from every direction despite how large the range that they covered.

Not long after, the movements of the tentacles changed and took a more strategic route. They started forming a series of formations that were meticulously arranged and carefully stacked on top of one another.

Seeing that, Shin suddenly paused for a moment before he gathered all the energies within his body into a single point. He focused them in front of his chest as his palms faced each other before it.

Zong!

A spherical energy was immediately formed in between his palms, spinning rapidly as he contained it in place.

'Four Symbol Scripture: Heavenly Black Tortoise – Breath of the Sea'

Swoosh!

Not long after, Shin pushed his palms against each other, clasping the spherical energy tightly between them.

He then slowly opened them while stretching them forward. He was also forming a triangle seal with his hands as a manifestation of a white serpent appeared behind him. It opened its mouth while before shooting a brilliant beam of light that flew straight to the Kraken.

Roar!

Boom!

The huge and small tentacles quickly gathered and tried to block the beam of light, but the blockade that they had created collapsed within an instant right after they touched the energy beam.

The flesh of the tentacles was melted by the 'heat' that the energy beam had, obliterating them as it continued to fly to the head of the Kraken.

Roar!

In response to it, Zorethar suddenly opened its mouth filled with countless sharp teeth and opened it wide before summoning a powerful suction force through it.

Shu!

Not long after, the Kraken swallowed the beam of light, which then disappeared. It was as if it was sent into an endless abyss filled with nothing but darkness.

At the same time, its melted and broken tentacles swiftly recovered and swiftly regenerated their previous state.

But before they could reach their perfect state, a series of lights suddenly filled the entire place before turning into sharp flashes that cut through everything that they went.

'World Serpent Skill: Fangs of Sea'

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

Roar!

Due to the severed tentacles, Zorethar roared in pain, especially when those attacks were imbued with special mana that disrupted the energy flow with his body and amplified the pain receptors that he had.

Blue blood was also starting to come out from its wounds, signifying that these attacks from Shin were not as simple as they seemed from the surface.

The wounds that Shin had inflicted were preventing Zorethar from recovering. Because of this, the latter gave up on healing himself and just took the initiative to cut his tentacles that were affected by the strange mana of his opponent.

Shin was about to press forward and ride the momentum that he had created when he suddenly sensed something wrong.

He quickly halted his tracks and retreated, barely dodging an ambush sneaking from his blind spot.

When he turned his head over, he saw a bunch of octopods scattered around and slowly surrounding him.

Shin swept his surroundings and saw that these guys seemed to have been born from the severed tentacles that Zorethar had separated from his body earlier.

"Tsk! This is going to be a little trickier," mumbled Shin with a frown.

He knew that he had already pushed Zorethar into a corner with his previous attacks and was currently in a weakened state due to forcefully severing his tentacles from his main body.

It was the perfect time to finish off this Kraken.

Unfortunately, Zorethar possessed quite a lot of strange abilities that put Shin in this current position.

The two skills that he had used earlier were some of the most powerful ones that he could use right now. They might be powerful and could inflict serious damage on the opposing side, but they also consumed quite a lot of mana and put quite a toll on his body.

Even if he could recover the lost mana quite quickly due to the Boundless Ocean Technique, the burden that they had caused on his body would require some time to recover despite his powerful regenerative abilities.

He had taken the gamble of using powerful skills for a quicker pace of this battle since he could not afford to waste too much time here given that he could be targeted by other powerful participants once he left himself vulnerable to them, especially when the World Serpents were a 'common enemy' of all the sea creatures in this tournament.

Moreover, he had four types of Sea Gems in his possession, so he was currently a hot potato in their eyes.

Unfortunately, Zorethar seemed to have seen through his thoughts and decided to slow down the battle despite being in a somewhat berserk state.

These octopods surrounding Shin would buy Zorethar enough time to recover from his injuries while also wasting more time from his opponent.

"Tsk!" feeling a little annoyed, Shin suddenly bumped his fists against each other before getting ready to attack.

He was planning to eliminate as many octopods as possible while making his way toward the main body of his opponent.

But to his surprise, the movements of the octopods suddenly changed and formed a battle formation that focused on defense rather than an offensive one despite having an overwhelming advantage in number.

"I know that this guy is quite cunning, but I don't expect him to be this meticulous given his earlier actions," Shin clicked his tongue for another time after seeing everything.

It felt like Zorethar was able to read his mind as every time he planned to do something, the opposing side was able to move ahead of time before he could even execute what was inside his mind.

"Should I try confirming it?" mumbled Shin as he stretched and tightened his fingers, forming a clawing gesture with them.

He then took a stance while regulating his breathing before charging forward.

Swoosh!

...

At the same time, somewhere in this sea realm and somewhat near the battle that was going on, a group of sea creatures were rushing toward the direction where Shin and Zorethar were fighting.

Given the auras that they were emitting, it was clear that neither of them was a simple individual.

This group of participants was among those who had the greatest chance of advancing to the more difficult rounds of the tournament given their respective powers.

They were currently heading to the source of the commotions that they felt earlier. They all knew that an intense battle was presently taking place in that direction, which could give them a chance to fish some benefits without spending much effort.

But before they could even get near the place, they were suddenly obstructed by a lone individual.

It was another participant, who possessed the greatest power among those in the tournament. It was a familiar Naga that was somewhat familiar with Shin since it was the same sea creature that Shin had 'helped' earlier.

"I am sorry to say this, but this path is currently unavailable," said this World Serpent while looking dangerously at the group of sea creatures, not showing even a hint of fear despite their numbers.

"I ask you to use another route."

This time, he had given them a calm suggestion that sounded like a threat. He was telling them not to get involved in the ongoing battle behind him.

Chapter 1518 Battle of the Sea Ancients (Part 5)

.....

The battle between Shin and Zorethar continued for quite a while until they had almost destroyed most of the part of the Sea Realm that they were in.

The Kraken showed his cunningness in every attack he threw at Shin, especially with those tricky strategic formations that he arranged with his tentacles.

Shin was having a hard time dealing with them, especially when Zorethar started using the unique powers and skills of the Kraken Race, which also involved controlling the sea to a certain extent.

This made the battle much harder for Shin, who was still not that familiar with the true potential of the World Serpent Race.

But that was not much of a problem for someone like him, who was a Battle Genius. The more the battle progressed, the stronger Shin became, and the more he was able to explore the abilities of the current race he had.

Not long after, he also started combing the tricks that he had learned from using these abilities of a World Serpent into his techniques, particularly with the 'Heavenly Black Tortoise Method' of the 'Four Symbol Scripture.'

He was starting to further polish this Mentalism Method along with the Boundless Ocean Technique, slowly transforming it into a more powerful version.

Due to this, countless inspirations flooded inside Shin's head, making him want to use the other Mentalism Methods of the 'Four Symbol Scripture' so that he could improve and revise them as well.

But those had to wait until he came out of this trial ground or at least when it was time to log out of the game.

The other good news was that he had finally made the Boundless Ocean Technique into his own after this continuous battle and the constant pressure that came along with it. He had become so familiar with it that it had become second nature for him to breathe and circulate his energy according to it just like the other breathing techniques that he had already mastered.

Aside from that, he had also learned a few tricks from this race, especially that blood circulation technique that enhanced the efficiency of his bloodline powers.

It was similar to the Bloodline Techniques of those from the families with bloodline powers from the real world, but slightly different due to the difference in application and how the awakened abilities were produced and utilized.

Shin was quite itching to log out right now to try these things in the real world, especially when he now had the five elemental breathing techniques that would complement his innate attributes.

He could also now start awakening his still dormant attributes, which were the wood and water, with the legacy that he had gotten from the recent incident with the Black Serpent Mafia and the Boundless Ocean Technique that he now acquired within the game.

He could also start preparing to break through to the Peak of the Grandmaster Realm now that he acquired these pieces.

Having these thoughts in mind, Shin felt that it was finally time to end this battle. He had already learned enough and it was now time to digest them and consolidate his strength.

He also learned the weakness of his opponent and how to defeat this Kraken. He already found where the core of this sea creature was located after a close observation during their battle.

At the same time, Zorethar was also feeling something strange after not seeing a single participant even after all the commotion that they had created and how long Shin and him were fighting.

He refused to believe that they were not interested in the Sea Gems that he and Shin had in their possession, especially when there was a high chance of collecting all seven types of gems by targeting the two of them.

He had also collected all the three rarest gems to prevent the others from collecting the complete set as he already knew their locations ahead of time. This was also the reason why Shin could not find any of them despite spending quite a lot of time looking for them.

But since Zorethar spent most of his time plotting something against Shin and collecting these gems, he did not have the time to collect the other four types of gems, which were the most common of them.

But so long as he successfully killed Shin, he would be able to collect the complete set of gems and fully awaken his bloodline power for the second time as well as acquire one of the unique abilities of the World Serpent.

It was like hitting multiple birds with a single stone.

On top of that, he could also lure more participants to come at them if some accidents happened if he had underestimated Shin.

He believed that he could take advantage of the chaos that would occur once all these sea creatures gathered, especially when different sea gems were gathered in a single place. He could snatch the sea gems from some of them.

He refused to believe that these participants would be able to withhold from the temptation of completing the seven Sea Gems.

But after not seeing any one of them even after all the commotion and how long the battle was going on, he suspected that something had happened over their side that prevented them from coming here.

Realizing this, Zorethar understood that he could not afford to let this battle drag any longer, especially after sensing Shin was also planning to use his strongest attack and end this battle.

...

Shin distanced himself away from Zorethar so that he could gather his power without being interrupted.

He then took a stance where he spread his feet and squatted his hips while positioning his clenched fists on each side of his waist.

Boom!

Not long after, a huge aura suddenly burst out of his body that looked like a blazing flame in the depths of the ocean before turning into an apparition of a humongous white serpent with crimson eyes.

Roar!

A deafening roar shook the entire realm when this white serpent materialized behind Shin, making all the participants within it subconsciously tremble as if a deep fear engraved in their existence was suddenly aroused.

Aside from those on the same level of existence, everyone else shook and started to collapse after hearing this world-shaking roar.

A few moments later, an overwhelming presence made its appearance in this realm, making it shake and start showing some signs of collapsing.

At the same time, Shin slowly merged with the apparition behind him, turning them into a single existence.

This humongous white serpent opened its mouth wide as if it were trying to swallow the world.

'World Serpent Ultimate Skill: Serpent Devours the World'

Roar!

It then flew straight to Zorethar, who was in the middle of preparing his final attack.

...

Seeing Shin was able to use the ultimate skill of the World Serpents despite just being awakened, Zorethar could not help but feel a sense of danger.

He might not be able to survive this battle and fail his second bloodline awakening, but he had to make sure to take down Shin so that the latter would not be able to get one of his powers.

Moreover, he could also feel that Shin could be one of the most dangerous participants in the Festival of the Seas, who could even threaten the best talent of their race.

Shin might be young and still unpolished, but Zorethar could feel the great potential that Shin had, especially with that kind of insane growth rate.

The expression on Zorethar's face suddenly turned serious as he looked at the approaching serpent.

He then pulled back all his tentacles and gathered them in front of him, pointing their tips toward the incoming serpent while focusing his energy on each of them.

Not long after, each tentacle was covered with a frozen liquid that was composed of different toxins and venoms.

He waited for a couple of moments before suddenly sending all his tentacles toward Shin, who was fully merged with the apparition of the white serpent.

The tentacles flew straight to the wide open mouth of the serpent, which devoured everything like a bottomless pit.

Boom! Boom! Boom!

Explosions bombarded the white serpent from all directions as invisible waves of energy appeared out of nowhere and attacked at the same time.

But despite the destructiveness and unimaginable powers of all those attacks, the humongous white serpent remained unaffected and continued to swim forward.

It devoured all the other attacks that were heading from the front and further opened its mouth wide.

It did not take that long until it almost reached Zorethar, who was glaring at it.

When the mouth of the serpent was about to devour him, a larger number of tentacles suddenly appeared out of nowhere. They wrapped themselves around the body of the white serpent, restraining its movements and preventing it from advancing.

Zorethar then opened his mouth in return, seemingly trying to devour the white serpents in return.

Swoosh!

But when he and the white serpent were about to devour each other, a flash of light suddenly flew out from the mouth of the latter and took the initiative to jump straight to his widely opened mouth.

Zorethar was taken off guard as his eyes widened at what just happened.

Not long after, the expression that he was making suddenly turned ugly as the flash of light pierced through his head and came out to the other side.

His eyes were still full of disbelief as Shin appeared behind him with a huge spherical object in his hand.

Zorethar was about to say something when his body suddenly ballooned before exploding into meat pastes, which was then devoured by the giant white serpent.

It was at that moment when a series of notifications from the system bombarded Shin.

Chapter 1519 The Cycles of the Five Elements

.....

Pssh!

Shin quickly logged out of the game right after seeing that it was time to wake up.

He did not have that much time to check most of his system notifications as the Festival of the Sea continued regardless of his situation. The next few rounds were much simpler than the second round since they were only required to hunt other participants after being sent to another independent dimension.

But this time, the participants with a greater number of Sea Gems in their possession were scattered in different realms, preventing them from facing one another.

At the same time, they all became the target of other participants as their collected gems would be given to those who had eliminated them.

Shin still did not know what it meant to have all seven Sea Gems, but it seemed like those who possessed a complete set had a special standing within the competition.

Of course, Shin was still being targeted by almost everyone, especially when he had a reason to be hunted by the other participants. He had the complete set of the Sea Gems on top of being one of the World Serpents.

Shin had already mastered most of the unique abilities of his current race along with the special skills that they possessed. Moreover, his mastery over the Boundless Ocean Technique had reached a very high level, catching up with his other three breathing techniques.

What was left now was for him to integrate it with his Mentalism Method and use it to awaken his Water Elemental innate attribute.

The fourth innate attribute, the wood elemental attribute, was already awakened by the inheritance that he had gotten from the recent incident with the Black Serpent Mafia, so it could wait a little longer.

Shin wanted to consolidate his current harvest within the game before he could forget the feeling that he currently had.

He did not even hesitate when he got out of the gaming cabin. He sat at the center of his room and started meditating while remembering everything that he had learned inside the game just recently.

He started with the Boundless Ocean Technique, making sure that he had fully mastered it and completely made it his own.

He did not have to spend too much time on it as it had already become second nature to him to breathe according to this technique when he was inside the game, so it would not be hard to adjust it in the real world.

What Shin wanted to master was the blood circulation technique that he learned along with the Boundless Ocean Technique. He wanted to convert it into a real technique in the real world.

After completely mastering the Boundless Ocean Technique, Shin proceeded to the other technique he had learned and started circulating his blood according to it.

Something indeed occurred within his body, but it was somewhat different from what he felt inside the game.

The familiar heat running through his veins was still there, but the strength and power that he supposedly got along with it was not present.

He was confused about this, but he later realized what was wrong. The blood circulation technique inside the game complemented the constitution of a World Serpent, whether they were in humanoid or a monster form.

Even if the humanoid form of a World Serpent was similar to humans, their overall constitution was still different, particularly when it came to blood vessels and mana channels.

Shin would have to make some adjustments with this technique to complement his real body.

[Let me do it.]

"Huh!?" Shin was in the middle of a dilemma where he would start when he suddenly heard Uno's voice inside his head. "What do you mean?"

[Let me deal with it. That technique is quite interesting, and it will be quite helpful to me as well. Let me modify it for you.]

Shin raised his brows as he heard those words. "It is quite rare for you to be interested in these kinds of things."

"I guess there are more merits in this technique from what I can see on the surface," he added as he 'looked' at Uno with a suspicious gaze.

When Uno had ignored him, Shin then asked. "Do you need to take over?"

[There is no need for it. I can do it here. Just do your thing and don't bother me.]

Shin raised his brows as he asked. "How long do you need?"

[Not that long. I should be done with it before you complete the complete cycle of five elements that you are attempting to make.]

Shin nodded his head before proceeding with his plan. He continued to meditate for quite a while, doing his usual training along with a few cycles of breathing practices with all the techniques he had.

With a complete set of breathing techniques meant for different elements, Shin could now initiate the five-elemental cycles of the Perfected Four Symbol Scripture, showcasing their full potential.

What left now was to build a complete balance between them.

Within his body, the innate attributes of fire and wood were much denser and purer compared to the rest as his special gift had devoured the flame superpower of the mercenary who had tried to kill him before, and the wood attribute from the inheritance tome from the recent incident.

This led to the early awakening of their properties. His Fire Innate Attribute possessed the properties of creation and destruction while the Wood Innate Attribute had the properties of life and death.

This made him realize that the properties of his innate attributes carried the principles of duality.

After exploring the Metal and Earth Elements Innate Attributes for quite a while along with his recent experiences, he was now close to finding out their respective properties.

It would not take that long for him to find them, so would be left with the Water Innate Attribute to awaken and explore later.

Once he was done with that, he would be able to start forming his Spiritual Force and proceed to prepare for his breakthrough to the Peak of the Grandmaster Realm.

The nurturing of his vessel would not be much of an issue as he had gained something after exploring the origin within himself. Along with the things that Professor Herny had taught him, Shin felt that he would be able to form the Spiritual Force and Vessel at the same time.

After meditating for quite a while and doing some foundation training to consolidate his realm, Shin went to the bathroom for a shower before heading out of his room.

The moment when he stood in front of the door and was about to open it, he suddenly sensed a faint presence from the other side.

He suddenly paused and swiftly strengthened his Spiritual Sense that he was passively releasing before staring at the other person.

He could not help but frown slightly as he could not figure out who it was due to how faint their presence was. Whoever they were, they were quite skilled at hiding their presence as even his sharpened Spiritual Sense could not properly perceive them.

Given that their aura was also kept properly, Shin was having a hard time figuring out who it was.

He was trying to recall who among the people within the estate could have such a very advanced stealth technique but could not think of anyone.

David was one of them, but Shin could not sense the familiar Mental Energy from the other side. Instead, they seemed to be an expert martial artist or a skilled assassin.

Shin waited for quite a while before sighing after seeing that the other party seemed to be patiently waiting for him to open the door.

He prepared himself for the worse before slowly turning the knob and opened the door.

Swoosh!

Right after the door was opened, a silhouette suddenly pounced at Shin with an insane speed and impeccable timing.

Such familiar actions already sold out who it was, so Shin did not need to see who it was to know the identity of this person.

He could dodge if he wanted, but he chose not to do it. He was just still in place with a helpless smile, waiting for what was about to come next.

Bang!

But instead of the usual course of events, where Cloe would pounce at him for a hug, Shin was greeted with a fist planted on his stomach.

"Urgh!"

Shin groaned in pain as that seemingly simple punch was packed with a lot of strength that made the defense that he had set up with his mental energy collapse in an instant.

"Hey! Isn't this a little too much for saying that you missed me?" he said in a joking tone while trying to endure the pain in his stomach.

At the same time, he was also complaining inside his head as he recalled who Arthur had 'greeted' him last night. 'Does it have become a trend to hit someone you haven't seen for a long time as some sort of greeting?'

Chapter 1520 'Solutions'

...

Cough! Cough!

Shin could not help but cough violently when he tried to suppress the foreign force that invaded his body after receiving Cloe's punch.

He was about to say something more when he saw Cloe aggressively pounce at him for another time, seemingly trying to kill him.

But when he was preparing to defend himself, he suddenly felt something soft pressed on his chest followed by a pair of arms wrapping themselves around him.

He was stunned for a moment before smiling bitterly. He felt some wetness on his chest, clearly indicating that this girl was currently in tears.

He gently wrapped his arms around her while softly patting and stroking her back. "It's fine. I'm here safe and sound in front of you, don't you see?"

"You are still such a crybaby despite growing so strong," he added in a joking manner to lighten the mood, earning him a soft punch from her.

It took quite a while for him to calm her down, which made him quite helpless.

They sat on his bed after quite some time before asking. "Have you calmed down now?"

But when he did not receive a reply, he offered instead. "Or are you feeling hungry? I can cook something for you before we can talk."

It was at this moment when Cloe finally opened her mouth. "We-... talk first. Tell me everything."

"I am planning to tell you about it anyway-... along with Leonard and others," he tried to dodge the topic at first but quickly rejected the idea after seeing her sharp and dangerous glare. "But-... I guess I will tell you first."

'She never changes. She is still quite intimidating and scary when she is truly angry,' he thought to himself while wearing a bitter smile.

Shin sighed for a moment before scratching the back of his head "Where should I start?"

Real World

World Gaming Organization Headquarters

Carlos was having another headache after watching a certain recording projected inside his office. He stared intently at the player who was the main character of the recording before sighing.

"I am wondering why it is so peaceful just recently because this troublemaker has not done anything big for quite a long time. But it looks like he only has given us a little 'vacation' to prepare us for an even bigger mess."

"Why of all times? Why when the United Cup is underway? Is he not planning to train with his team?" he sighed in full helplessness as he paused the recording.

It was the moment when the player in the recovered had killed his opposition with a final strike that even Carlos had to admit that it was an impressive feat.

He leaned his back on his chair to slightly relaxed before closing his eyes. He tapped his finger on the armrest before mumbling. "At this rate, he will be able to unlock another troublesome content when he finishes all the trials."

"Unlocking the Ancient Races this early when the 'Realm Wars' is currently underway? This will mess up the balance a little too much."

Knock! Knock!

While he was grimacing, someone knocked on the door of his office, interrupting his thoughts.

"Enter."

Clink!

Not long after, Lohengrin opened the door and entered before closing it behind him. He walked over to the desk of the Department Head before handling a tablet. "The chairman has given his orders."

"Oh!?" Carlos was suddenly awakened and sat up straight. "Really? What did he say? Did he agree with our proposal?"

Lohengrin did not immediately answer as he tapped the tablet a couple of times, projecting a timetable of the scheduled plans that they were supposed to follow for the release of the game contents if not for the mess that the Miracle Players were giving them, particularly a certain someone, who was their greatest headache.

"The strategic team said that since the Faction War between the Righteous Churches and the Evil Faction is already underway, and the players are already starting to choose their side accordingly, it will not be much of a problem to release the bypassed contents of the game."

The so-called strategic team was a 'coalition' of every department of the World Gaming Organization.

Due to the troublemakers, the heads of each department had decided to create this team by sending a few of their most elite talents who could come up with quick solutions according to the progress of the Miracle Players.

Surprisingly – or unsurprisingly – the team had fallen under the jurisdiction of the Monitoring Department since they were the ones, who received the earliest news about the progression of these 'troublemakers', especially when they had written down their names on a special list.

The department even had dedicated teams just for monitoring these players.

In simpler terms, the Department Heads had dumped the extra work on Carlos as he was the 'freest' among all of them.

Carlos could not refuse either as their reason was quite reasonable. Moreover, the chairman had already approved it, so he could not say anything.

"And the decision is?" asked Carlos in a somewhat desperate tone while waiting for Lohengrin's next words.

"The leading players are way ahead of the pack anyway, so it will not much affect the progression of the game if we release some of the information about the forgotten contents."

Snap!

Carlos became excited when he heard those words, snapping his fingers. "Then what are we waiting for? Let's start the preparations already!"

Lohengrin shook his head as he continued. "We are not supposed to get involved with the progression of the game as it will mess up the system. But releasing this news will indeed solve some of our problems and restore some of the balance."

"But it will still be a little unfair to the others, particularly the mainstream players, who are right between those leading ahead and the ones lagging behind."

"So, the information that we are going to release will be in the form of lore dump and background stories of certain areas, events, or even artifacts. We will hide the true information among these loads of information as some sort of clues that the players need to explore."

"This way, it will not much unfair to the others. They will still have to spend quite a lot of time and effort reading the history of the game before they can find these easter eggs."

"It will be up to them whether they want to follow these clues or not."

He then paused for a moment before continuing. "But this information will be limited to the earlier contents that are almost been forgotten. Those at are too close to the progression of the mainstream players will still be on hold."

"The purpose of this project is to make the newer players aware of some secrets of the game and let them catch up with the others at a much faster pace. It will also nurture them into new experts that will fill the gaps created by the Miracle Players and Apex Gods of the game."

"Another thing, the quests and clues meant for hidden and special quests are to remain secret, particularly those that can produce drastic changes in the pace of the game."

"Based on these conditions, only the quest from level 50 and below are to be chosen by the team. Level 60 should be the limit."

Carlos continuously nodded his head as he heard these. "That is much better than what I have expected already! We can start with the plan."

"The strategic team is already listing out the quests that meet our conditions and writing up the background stories that are to be posted on the official website," said Lohengrin.

"That's good!" Carlos was quite satisfied with the result before suddenly remembering something. "Oh! What about Troy? What is that guy doing right now?"

"Department Head Troy?" Lohengrin paused for a moment as he tried to recall something before answering. "I heard that he is quite busy these days. He has been pushing the Development Team quite a lot from what I have heard. They are having quite a lot of overtime as well."

"They said that Department Head Troy is saying that have been inspired by something. And the inspirations have been passed down to his people and they have been since then."

He then took a table and searched for something before projecting another timetable. "He even has proposed a series of events in the last few meetings. His team has produced quite a lot of questlines already – five of them are even at major quest level."

Carlos was quite surprised when he heard that and looked at the timetable. "Since when that lazy bum has become this productive?"

Lohengrin shrugged his shoulders. "I am not sure either. But I heard that the chairman is quite pleased with his actions."

"Of course, those from the other departments, who have to be busy due to his proposals, are cursing him because of the loads of work he has dumped in them," he added with a slight shake of his head.

Hearing that, Carlos felt that something was not right. "Why do I feel something is amiss?"

That was when he heard Lohengrin's next words. "It feels like he is acting like a hardworking ant that is preparing for the storm that is about to come."

"Ah!"

Something seemed to have struck Carlos' head when he heard those words. "D*mn! That guy is accumulating many projects while our 'guy' is not present."

"He must be preparing to watch the 'adventures' of his favorite player for a 'movie marathon' after a 'long' hiatus."