

Destiny 1571

Chapter 1571 Dungeon: Lesser Hatchling Lair (Part 2)

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After gathering behind a huge boulder, Shin discussed the plan with the rest of the group on how they would deal with the monster behind them.

"We will start with a standard strategy to measure the strength of this Komodo Lizard. And also, to somewhat gauge the average strength of the Dungeon Monsters," he said as he started arranging their formation.

Not long after, the entire team was fully ready for the battle.

At the same time, the Komodo Lizard instantly noticed the group right after they formed a battle formation. The quickly assumed a battle position, digging its sharp claws into the cave floor while giving the group low growls as some sort of warning.

"Buffs!" signaled Shin.

Cloe and Samael quickly responded as they waved their staff and sword in the air, chanting out a series of buffs that greatly boosted the overall stats of everyone.

"Go!" right after the two finished boosting the stats of everyone, Shin quickly commanded, telling Arthur to start the battle.

Bang!

Arthur did not hesitate as he quickly kicked the ground, which sent fragmented gravel in the air as he propelled himself toward the Komodo Lizard.

Arthur did not enter his Reality Manifestation as they had already discovered earlier that the consumption of their concentration in this place was not just twice as the outside, but also quite draining to their mental strength as well.

This time, they would be relying on the usual methods when fighting inside this dungeon. However, even these previous methods also required a decent consumption of their concentration, which was quite a burden as well, albeit slightly less draining.

Swoosh!

'Class Fighting Style: Breaking Through of the Golden Dragon'

Roar!

It was his usual opening move, but it was noticeably weaker compared to the version he used under the combat state of Reality Manifestation.

Utilizing the Dragon Might that his class possessed, Arthur was able to somewhat weaken the stats of the Komodo Lizard to a certain degree.

It was also somewhat intimidated by the golden dragon formed by Arthur's aura since he mixed the Dragon Might with it.

Regardless, this monster still underwent a series of mutations under the mysterious power filling the cave, which was why it was able to quickly recover itself and slammed one of its front paws on the ground.

Bang!

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

Then, in the very next instant, Arthur was greeted by a barrage of stone spikes that shot out from the ground, which also formed a blockade to halt his dragons.

Roar!

Arthur ignored it as raised his round shield within the golden dragon and continued charging forward.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

He broke through the blockade of stone spikes, sending rock fragments in every direction, before facing the wide-opened mouth of the Komodo Lizard right in front of him.

Arthur wanted to throw his dragon spear right inside its mouth, but he quickly rejected the idea after seeing a barrage of stone spears coming out of it.

Raising his round shield further, he hid behind it by curling his body into a ball while channeling the residual energies from the golden dragon earlier into the shield.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

(-5,024), (-5,523), (-5,224), (-5,602), ...

"That's unfair! This guy is not following the usual script! Using elemental spells right off the bat? That's not how it usually works!" Arthur complained as he was sent flying back to where he came from while being bombarded by the stone spears.

"Switch!" he shouted as tried to stabilize his balance in the air while dodging the stone spikes coming after him.

Swoosh!

Owen was already running ahead during that time. He accelerated by using a swift sprint while carrying his shield, which already transformed into a kite shape that most of the knights used.

Bang!

Like an unstoppable truck, Owen collided with the Komodo Lizard, forcing it to close its mouth due to the strong impact.

Grr!

The monster growled as it looked at the new person who was trying to challenge it.

It barely moved an inch despite the powerful impact. Instead, it was Owen who was forced to take a couple of steps back to stabilize himself. He felt like clashing against a solid wall made of metal rather than a monster from that previous collision.

He also felt that his innards were being shaken due to the vibration sent to his body, which was produced by their clash. He even suffered quite a lot of damage, chucking his healthy HP Bar by a large margin.

(-30,251)

Swoosh! Swoosh!

(+15,000), (10,000), ...

Fortunately, Cloe cast a couple of healing spells onto him, restoring his HP Bar to its healthy state.

Swoosh!

But before he could even get a proper footing from the previous collision and subdue the intense shaking of his innards, another attack came from above.

It was a giant claw that was trying to smash him into smithereens.

'Knight Advance Skill: (Modified) Deflect'

Bang!

Owen skillfully moved and inclined his body and shield to the side as he tried to redirect the trajectory of the strike to another direction while also lessening the burden that his body would suffer from the impact.

Bang!

(-70, 295)

The claws of the Komodo Lizard landed on the ground near him as he successfully deflected the attack in exchange for another huge chuck of health.

Whoosh! Whoosh!

(+20,000), (+15,000), (+15,000), ...

The healing spells landed on him right at the same time, restoring his health to full once again.

He did not dare to stay in a single spot this time as he was already moving in the opposite direction of that claw that previously tried to crush him.

Swoosh!

But right after he did not, a gust of wind came from the other direction, signifying another attack was coming to greet him from the side.

This time, it was the other claw of the Komodo Lizard. It was heading his way from the opposite direction, trying to intercept him.

Owen was about to use one of his life-saving skills when he suddenly saw a golden silhouette appear in front of him and blocked the incoming claw head-on.

Arthur came back to rescue him!

Bang!

(-20,524)

Decent damage appeared above Arthur's head despite him standing firmly right after blocking that attack.

But he did not mind it as he put more force on his arms to push the claws back.

Boom!

"You handle that side while I cover this one," he instructed as he engaged in an intense battle with the Komodo Lizard.

Owen did not hesitate as he also started attacking the monster from the other side.

He knew that either of them would be enough to thoroughly pin the monster in one place given its size and overwhelming strength. It would require the two of them to work together to control its movements and lock the monster in place.

This was not your regular monster that they were used to fighting in the previous continent. It was more like a raid boss rather than a regular mob inside the dungeon.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

After a while, Shin made sure that the two fully secured the aggro of the monster before giving out his next orders. "Lay out the totems!"

Right after receiving his command, Huahua, who was already waiting for it, quickly threw something in the air and scattered it in different directions. She then clasped the wooden scepter with both of her hands before starting a series of chants.

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

Bang! Bang! Bang!

Not long after, three sets of wooden totems appeared on the entire battlefield.

The first two sets landed around the place where Arthur and Owen pinned the Komodo Lizard. These totems released a series of lights that connected themselves after forming a pair of formations.

The first one was meant to weaken the monster with their curses and debuffs while the other released a warm aura that further strengthened those who would be fighting on the front line.

As for the final set of totems, they landed around the group, who were at the back line, before releasing a series of buffs for the rest of the Empyrean Talons.

Right after receiving all these buffs, Shin quickly signaled the others to start attacking. "Go!"

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

Akailu, Samael, Leonard, and Diablo quickly charged ahead to join those two at the front line while the mages – Alice, Daulla, and Chaotic Luck – started casting their spells one after another and sending them to the Komodo Lizard in the distance.

Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh!

Bang! Bang! Bang!

Ithilien and Archimedes also joined by sending a series of arrows infused with their respective powers. The former used some elven prayers to enhance her arrows with spells while the latter utilized the techniques of the Winged Race with every arrow he fired.

(Starting here, I will be addressing the Wingmen Race to Winged Race.)

Bang! Bang! Bang!

Lorraine and Alucard also did not hold back as they started firing their magic rifles without restraint. The former used special ammunition while the other infused his bullets with blood powers, utilizing the blood-sacrifice technique used by the Vampire Race.

Cloe, on the other hand, did not join the others when attacked as she was saving her mana. She solely focused on healing those from the front line while occasionally casting buffs when needed.

With her support, those who were fighting at the front line gained more confidence and courage when fighting, bringing out their best capabilities.

Shin oversaw everything from his original spot, not joining the battle. He observed the monster and gauged its true strength while checking everyone's progress.

He rarely gave commands to the veteran experts of the group as he focused on Samael and Huahua, who were quite new to the team. He was focusing on nurturing them and trying to promote them to at least a Ranker's standards.

Samael was somewhat there already, but he was still having a hard time keeping up with the pace of the group. Huahua had also improved quite a lot over the past few days, but she still needed to be polished, particularly in her skills and mentality. She still panicked during the most unexpected occasions, making her commit a series of mistakes.

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The raid went relatively well until they were able to lower the health bar of the monster to 20% of its total health.

But that was also when something unexpected happened.

The Komodo Lizard went berserk, but it was already something they had expected. What surprised them instead was this monster summoning a huge group of earthen golems that instantly turned the tides of the battle.

The number of the earthen golems alone was overwhelming enough to cause chaos in the battle, so it instantly became a disaster when the Berserk Komodo Lizard was added to the equation.

The team was immediately thrown into a predicament that could not be solved easily.

Chapter 1572 Dungeon: Lesser Hatchling Lair (Part 3)

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"Ah!" Huahua started to panic when she saw the number of mini-golems scattered in the cave, especially when they started overturning the totems that she had set up earlier.

But as she was having a hard time thinking about what to do next, Shin's voice quickly calmed her down as he gave out a series of commands. "Akailu, summon your monster pets and cover the left side! Chaos, call out your Solar Undead and form a blockade to block those golems coming from the right side!"

"Huahua, summon your Ghost Gate and let it release some Ghost Soldiers to help Akailu," he paused as he patted the little shaman's shoulder in a gentle manner to calm her.

He then turned to the others and continued. "Alucard, cover Chaos' side. Lorraine, you handle those that are going to break from Akailu's side."

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

The group quickly responded in a very organized manner, executing all his instructions one after another.

Huahua was slightly behind as she was still trying to recover herself, but she was still able to follow right on time.

"Mages, focus casting your AOE (Area of Effect) Spells where the larger number of golems are gathered," Shin continued to give out orders as he oversaw everything.

Roar! Roar!

Bang! Bang! Bang!

Beasts and Undead roars resounded in the entire cave as the battle became more chaotic. The usually dark cave was illuminated by the series of explosions of spells and skills that were being cast one after another.

Despite having the situation under control, the experts of the group could not help but wear serious expressions on their faces as they knew that what was happening was bad news for them.

They knew that such a huge commotion could attract the other monsters from the deeper area of the cave, especially when this was an enclosed space.

The vibrations produced by the explosions of their skills and spells could be sent to those at the deeper parts of the cave.

Rumble!

Not long after, Leonard quickly sensed a series of heavy footsteps coming from the deeper parts of the cave.

They might be about to kill this Special Elite Komodo Lizard in front of them and wipe out the earthen golems summoned by it, but they would be quickly besieged by another horde of monsters not long after.

"Shin!" shouted Leonard, seemingly wanting to ask how they would deal with the situation.

Shin knew what Leonard was about to say, so he quickly shouted and instructed. "Focus on eliminating that Komodo Lizard first, then we will be retreating to the channels of the cave with a narrow path."

"If they give up on chasing us, then it will be for the best. But if they continue, then we will take advantage of the limited spaces of those narrow channels and form a blockade while fighting," he added.

"But... aren't these guys lizards? Can't they stick on the walls and climb the ceiling of the cave?" refuted Leonard.

"We will deal with that later. Let's deal with this guy first!" said Shin as he joined the battle, leaving the command to Cloe and Lorraine.

Roar!

With the final cry, the Komodo Lizard finally fell, which was immediately followed by the earthen golems that it had summoned earlier.

Without the support of their summoner, the mini-golems started turning into rock fragments one after another and fell to the ground.

The Komodo Lizard, on the other hand, slowly turned into specks of light while leaving a spherical object on the ground.

Arthur quickly picked it up as he swiftly retreated along with the others, who were already running toward the direction where they had come from earlier.

Rumble! Rumble! Rumble!

But as he was sprinting toward the others, the entire cave started trembling due to the heavy footsteps coming from the deeper part of the cave.

This indicated that the number of monsters heading their way was quite large.

As the group rushed towards the cave channel with a narrower path, they saw a horde of Komodo Lizard behind them.

They somewhat heaved a sigh of relief when they saw that there were still some common-rank monsters among the horde, which indicated that this dungeon was not only filled with Elite and Special Elite Monsters.

But that also did not mean that this dungeon housed a huge number of monsters within it. The group was not confident that they would be able to clear it within a day. It was clear that it would require them quite a lot of time before fully exploring the cave and clearing the entire dungeon.

This reminded veteran experts like Arthur, Leonard, and Cloe, who played the said hardest game of all time – the «True Era» Online, to be reminded of their experience during that time.

Dungeons with higher difficulty in that game also required a couple of days to be cleared, some even took an entire week, especially those dungeons that needed to be raided by 50 people.

As for the super dungeons with ultra-hard difficulty and required a hundred-man party filled with top-class experts – such dungeons would at least take 2 weeks up to a whole month to be cleared.

The dangers enveloping such dungeons were insanely high, but they also gave the players a lot of benefits and rewards.

Grinding in such dungeons not only netted the players a lot of experience points, but they also gained a lot of top-class weapons and high-quality equipment.

Ultra Rare and Unique Skill Books were also not a problem for those dungeons. They also gave the challengers a series of bonus stat points after every challenge.

There was also a time when they were rewarded with some Class-Conversion Manuals, which could give the players rare and special classes.

Of course, these kinds of dungeons could not be grinded continuously to maintain the balance of the game. Instead, they had insanely long cooldowns, making them somewhat of an event dungeon that was only available for a limited time.

Those dungeons that required a whole week to clear had a month-long cooldown while the ultra-hard dungeons that could be cleared in a month had two to three months cooldowns depending on the type and difficulty level.

The event dungeons, on the other hand, were only available during certain events issued by the game companies.

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Being reminded of this, Leonard could not help but frown deeply and said to Arthur. "Why do I feel that the design of this dungeon greatly resembles those from «True Era» Online?"

"You bet! Of course, it can! After all, the World Gaming Organization is a collective group of the previous gaming companies that used to be independent!" said Arthur as he ran as fast as he could.

He then continued after catching his breath a little. "There is a high chance that the sadist developers of that stupid game are invited to the World Gaming Organization, so it will not be strange if they inputted such impossible-to-complete continents in the game!"

"Of course, I know about that!" Leonard smiled bitterly before clarifying what he meant. "What I am saying is – don't you feel that this place is kind of familiar? Or more specifically, it greatly resembles a certain place from that game?"

Arthur slightly frowned as he became somewhat confused. "What do you mean? What place?"

Leonard sighed before further implying. "That place! That place where you first got your title as the Dragon God."

Hearing those words, Arthur could not help but halt his tracks. His eyes turned wide as a flood of memories flashed through his head.

He then slowly turned to Leonard, who also came to an abrupt stop and was slightly ahead of him. "Now that you mentioned it..."

Arthur wanted to say something, but he was immediately interrupted by Shin, who came back to knock on his head. "Yeah! Yeah! We can talk about it later!"

"Stay here if you want to die," added Shin before running ahead and adding. "Just look behind you!"

Arthur then turned his head behind him and saw the horde of Komodo Lizards approaching them. Even if their speed were not that fast and their movements were being obstructed by the narrow path of the cave channel that they were in and those monsters that stumbled over one another, the sheer number of the monsters coming after them was still extremely large.

Then his gaze was attracted by a massive shadow behind this horde of monsters, that was trying to enter the narrow cave channel.

Using his Dragon Eyes, Arthur was able to see some of its details. His eyes turned even wider as he saw that it was a Chieftain-Rank Monster. It was no longer called a Komodo Lizard, but a Komodo Drake instead.

Without further ado, Arthur quickly used one of his speed-boost buffs and started running back to the group.

"Hey! Why is a Chieftain-Rank Monster being among them? Isn't it supposedly a boss monster that stayed on its home?" complained Arthur as he further added. "What kind of dungeon lets a boss monster freely roam around?!"

"Isn't it obvious? It just means that this is no ordinary dungeon!" responded Shin as he ran slightly ahead of the two.

He then paused for a moment before quickly adding. "Or there is also a possibility that it is not even a boss monster of this place rather just a leader-of-the-pack-type of monster."

The corner of Leonard's mouth suddenly twitched when he heard that before carefully saying. "Are you telling us that there is a Lord-Rank Monster in this place?"

Shin shrugged his shoulders as he added. "We don't know. But will not hurt to be mentally prepared at the very least."

"Hey! Are you asking us to die? Given our current strength, a Chieftain-Rank Monster is our utmost limit," said Arthur and continued. "Given that these monsters are of Draconic Species as well, our chances of defeating a chieftain are not that high even if we go all out and use all our trump cards."

"Like I said... It is just a possibility," Shin rolled his eyes as he added. "Moreover, this is a one-time event dungeon, which is also related to your quest."

"There is a high chance that there will be a Quest Scenario later at the end of the dungeon, so don't lose hope yet," he said as they caught up with everyone.

Looking behind them once again, Shin saw that the number of monsters chasing them was noticeably smaller than before. These monsters were mostly at Common-Rank as well, so he signaled everyone to get ready to fight.

"We will talk about what you two are discussing later. But first, let's deal with these annoying lizards," he said as the entire team got in position.

Chapter 1573 Dungeon: Lesser Hatchling Lair (Part 4)

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After hours of continuous fighting, the swarm of Komodo Lizards finally stopped, finally giving the group some time to catch their breaths.

"Hu~! That's quite intense," commented Owen as he sat in a corner.

In this battle, they had to continuously battle without rest as the swarm of the lizards were attacking without stopping. Moreover, the monster's corpses of those they killed quickly turned into specks of lights right after death, which made their initial plan of building up a rampart to block the other monsters fail in an instant.

With that, they had no choice but to fight the monsters without rest until they stopped coming.

Fortunately, the monsters that were attacking them were mostly composed of Common-Rank Komodo Lizard with a couple of Elite-Rank ones in the mix.

They were able to hold their ground against the swarm due to this, especially when there was no longer a Special Elite Cave Komodo Lizard among the monsters.

Another good news was they became more familiar with the attack patterns of these monsters, making it much easier for the group to handle the swarm.

They had also discovered that the Komodo Lizards were more of a magical-type monster rather than a full-melee monster.

Even if they had tough defense and powerful strength, their main source of power was still their control over Earth Elemental Mana.

"These Komodo Lizards seem to be divided into two different classes two. Some of them preferred using long-range attacks while the others like to fight using their bodies covered with stone armor and reinforced claws," said Akailu after assessing their previous experience.

"That's right. The differences are even more distinct when it comes to Elite Rank Komodo Lizards," nodded Owen.

"But it is a different case when it comes to Special Elite ones, especially that one that we first encountered earlier," said Alucard as he joined them.

"That one is capable of fighting in a melee and long-range battle, making it much harder to deal with," said Akailu before adding. "Maybe, there is a dividing line between Elite and Special Elite Monsters of his continent. After all, those Iron-Skinned Wild Boars outside also have a distinct difference in them, especially when it comes to fighting capabilities."

Samael was not much acquainted with them, so just found a corner and started checking on his equipment.

His Equipment Set was a special set bestowed to him by the Church of the Sun and Moon due to his merits. It was also capable of self-recovery, so he did not have to pay too much attention to it even if its durability dropped. But he could still hasten the process if he did some maintenance to it.

Moreover, it also became his habit to regularly maintain his equipment as an independent player, so he continued doing it.

Archimedes also did not like socializing with other people. He just kept his silence and sat in a corner while hugging his bow.

Chaotic Luck wanted to discuss something with Akailu, but after seeing that the latter was 'busy', he just found a corner and started browsing the online forums about battle formations.

While these guys were busy with their own thing, the girls were too busy to talk or do anything else, so they found a corner to rest.

Those with magic-related classes went to meditate, hastening the recovery of their mana as well as their willpower. In this kind of dungeon that needed a lot of time to recover, having a sharp mind and firm would be a necessity, especially when they were most likely to encounter some emergencies later.

Seeing the three big sisters in meditation, Huahua felt like she was slacking off, so she mimicked them. She sat not too far from Alice, Daulla, and Cloe before entering meditation.

Lorraine went to a secluded spot to check on her magic rifle and Ithilien joined her as she looked at the former's actions with interest.

On the other hand, the monster trio – Shin, Arthur, and Leonard – went to find a secluded corner to discuss by themselves.

Diablo was also quite interested in the earlier topic that they were talking about, so he asked if it was fine to join.

Seeing there was nothing wrong with it, Shin and the others let him listen.

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"So, what do you guys mean about this dungeon being similar to what?" asked Shin as he looked at the two.

"It is not exactly similar, but they do have great similarities in some areas," answered Leonard before turning to Arthur and urged. "You explain it since it is one of your 'achievements'."

Arthur scratched the back of his head as he explained. "It is not that serious anyway. But Leonard is right, this place indeed has great similarities to that dungeon."

He then paused for a moment to organize his thoughts before continuing. "In this one game that we played a year and a half ago, which is also released by the same company as the creators of «True Era» Online, there is this insanely hard dungeon that no one can defeat."

"But as you already know about my personality, I'm quite stubborn when it comes to the things that I have set my mind on, so I decided to repeatedly challenge it."

"Additionally, there was also this annoying guy before that kept on pestering me. He keeps saying that my current title as a Ranker during that time is unfounded and whatnot."

"I stubbornly challenged that dungeon even though I kept on failing multiple times."

"Then one day, something flashed in my head. I felt that I could clear that entire dungeon, so I streamed it live on one of my official channels."

"Then after a whole week of struggle, I finished the entire dungeon and earned a lot of fame. I have also solidified my reputation as the Dragon God due to that," he added with a proud look on his face.

But Shin was not impressed and continued to press. "So? What happened next? And what is the connection between that dungeon and this one that we are raiding right now?"

Arthur rolled his eyes when he heard that and was about to say something.

But Diablo beat him into it. "That dungeon is an Event Dungeon that can only be cleared once. And it is called the 'Dragon Nest'."

Arthur opened his mouth and was about to explain, but Diablo continued. "It is a special dungeon with multiple layers. Or you can say that it is a massive dungeon composed of multiple lesser dungeons."

"Each lesser dungeon is ruled by a powerful Dragon with absolute authority over certain elements. And..."

Diablo was about to complete his assessment when Arthur quickly cut in. "And a section of one of the lesser dungeons is called the 'Earth Hatchling Nest'!"

Hearing that, Shin seemed to have realized something. "Oh~! Are you saying that this very dungeon is the same as that one?"

"You are half right," Arthur shook his head as he continued before Diablo could even steal his spotlight once again. "The design is oddly similar, but not by much."

"Moreover, the monsters here are much stronger than that dungeon and the terrains don't show any similarities," he added.

"And?" pressed Shin as he still did not get what these guys were implying.

If it was some similar designs between the two games, then there was nothing strange about it since they knew that the current World Gaming Organization was composed of multiple gaming companies around the world, so something like this was only to be expected.

He did not understand that they were making it a big deal.

"Sigh~..." Arthur breathed out heavily before continuing. "But that dungeon that I have cleared is nothing simple."

"Based on the game company at that time... that dungeon is said to be a perfect simulation of a certain place in the real world."

"Or you can also say that it is a perfect recreation of that place," added Arthur before pausing, recalling his past experiences.

"And do you know what the company said in one of their announcements after I cleared that dungeon?" he asked as he paused momentarily before continuing. "They have said that the entire event in the dungeon is based on a certain legend that happened far down in our history."

"They have dropped the entire record of that history for everyone to see. The detailed events starting from how everything had started up to how it ended are all revealed to the public."

"And the highlight of everything is how a certain individual fought and defeated a super powerful dragon, which also earned him a certain title..."

Before Arthur could even complete his words, Shin already figured it out. "The Legend of the Dragon Slayer – Siegfried."

As someone who grew up in the Springfield Family, Shin was naturally aware of the legends and the recovered history concerning the Dragons of the Ancient Era, especially when the Springfields themselves were said to be the descendants of a dragon.

Shin also knew where Arthur had gotten the name that he was currently using inside the game. It was the very legend that was just mentioned.

"But do you know what was even more surprising?" asked Arthur. But he did not wait for Shin to answer, and he quickly continued. "That very dungeon contained an inheritance, which is the final reward of clearing it."

"There are not many people who know the truth about it as they thought that it was some sort of Ultimate Skill in the game," he added before sighing. "At first, I also think that it is nothing or treat it as some sort of joke. But later, Uncle Nathan scolded me asking where I have gotten the inheritance."

Arthur shrugged his shoulder as he added. "I don't know that it is something that serious."

"Wait! Uncle Nathan knew about it?" asked Shin.

Arthur nodded as he clarified. "During one of our training sessions that time, I have tried incorporating the techniques that I have gotten from that inheritance into my spearmanship."

"The inheritance is about some sort of swordsmanship, but you know that my expertise is about spear arts, so I have tried to incorporate the inspirations that I have gotten from the manual and converted them into spear techniques."

"I did not know that Uncle Nathan would instantly know that it is from an inheritance," he shrugged his shoulders.

"Then what did uncle say after that?" asked Shin.

"Nothing. He just asked me where it came from, and I answered truthfully. Then nothing else happened," said Arthur.

Shin then realized what these guys were trying to say. "So, are you guys saying that-..."

Arthur nodded. "That's right. This may be one of the 'sections' of the 'whole' picture. But if I continue following the directions of this quest-..."

"There is a high chance that it will lead you into another inheritance," said Shin, completing what Arthur was trying to say.

Diablo did not find any of this surprising as he was now learning under Professor Henry, who also partook in creating the game. He was staying with Benedict and the other seniors of the Research Department, who were all Beta Testers, so he had heard and learned quite a few secrets from them.

Moreover, he had also learned quite a few things from the Pandemonium Descendants during his time there. After all, he was one of their executives there.

However, all of those were just superficial knowledge as Lucier, the Great Leader of that organization kept everything to himself.

He just managed to start piecing everything together after Benedict and the rest had told him that «Destiny's Fate» Online was not just a simple game as most people thought it would be.

This time, Leonard seemed to have recalled something. "Remember that senior from the Heavenly Taste Restaurant?"

"Are you talking about Senior Laurent? He is a friend of Senior Brother," said Shin.

"Didn't he show us that inheritance marble or something during one of our visits to their restaurants?" asked Leonard again.

"Eh!? Now that you have mentioned it," Shin started thinking about this more seriously, making him think deeply.

Diablo then shook his head as he said. "There is no need to think too much about it. We will all learn the secrets of this game once we become qualified for it."

"So, what you guys have to do right now is to cultivate and train hard in the real world and reach the Ethereal Opening Stage or the Peak of the Grandmaster Realm as soon as possible," he added.

Hearing that, something ignited within the eyes of the three as they started striving to reach the next stage as soon as possible.

Chapter 1574 Dungeon: Lesser Hatchling Lair (Part 5)

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As the Empyrean Talons continued to explore the dungeon, they discovered that the number of monsters scattered in different channels of the cave grew exponentially.

Their encounters with the groups of Komodo Lizards within the cave became more frequent, while their numbers grew quite a lot.

Starting from the scattered common-rank monsters, the team started to encounter groups of Komodo Lizards composed of elite-rank monsters and multiple common-rank ones. Their numbers might be quite overwhelming for regular players, but for the Empyrean Talons, who became accustomed to fighting them, such a number was not enough.

With top-class frontliners along with the best healer in the game, dealing with these monsters became much easier the more time passed.

The more they became familiar with these monsters, the easier for the entire team to deal with them.

Moreover, the number of Komodo Lizards remained at a manageable level, so the group was able to deal with them without any issues.

What made the group quite confused was they had never found any Komodo Lizards with special elite rank.

"Strange, why we haven't encountered another Special Elite Komodo Lizard up until now? Aside from the one that we first encountered earlier, we have never seen one anymore," commented Owen as they proceeded deeper into the cave.

Their experience when dealing with that Special Elite Rank Monster was still vivid in his memory as it was much more powerful than any monster that he had encountered up until now.

It was not only powerful and capable of both melee and long-range battle, but quite crafty and cunning as well, making it much harder to deal with. There was also the time when they had to deal with the mini-golems that it summoned right on the brink of death, which also made the situation quite dangerous for them.

It was also the reason why they had been chased by the swarm of Komodo Lizards to the starting point of the dungeon.

Moreover, he seemed to remember that there were quite a lot of Special Elite Komodo Lizards in the mix in the swarm earlier, which was why he found it strange to not find even a single one up until now.

"If my guess is right, then it is most likely an event monster that triggers the 'real' dungeon," said Shin, voicing out his guess, before continuing. "Its death must be the main condition to truly initiate the raid, which was the earlier event happened."

"And from the looks of it, we are still in the outer regions of the dungeon, so it is not surprising not to encounter the real challenge for us," added Arthur.

As someone who was used to dealing with these kinds of dungeons, which were filled with draconic species, Arthur was very familiar with its interior and the methods on how to clear them.

Meanwhile, Cloe glanced at the digital clock from the corner of her eyes and realized that it was about time for them to log out. She turned at Shin and the others and said. "We have been grinding here for a long time already. We should log out for the time being and recover ourselves before coming back."

She then pointed at Huahua, who was not used to this kind of high-end raid, before saying. "Look, even Huahua is already reaching her limit. We should rest for now and come back again later."

"And I am sure that everyone still has to deal with their daily lives in the real world, so we have to pause for now and continue again at our regular time," she added.

The group paused as they also realized that fatigue was somewhat catching up with everyone and started affecting their performance, so it was a good idea to rest for now and come back again once they recovered their peak forms.

Even after exploring the dungeon for quite a while, the team still hadn't found the first main checkpoint, so Arthur and other experts were quite reluctant to stop.

But they also understood that this dungeon could not be cleared for a short time, so they could not force themselves into over-exhausting themselves.

Shin looked at everyone and saw that some of them were indeed quite fatigued already, so he told them. "Alright, let's find a safe spot to log out first before resting. Then let's meet again tomorrow at the usual time."

...

The next day, the group continued their exploration of the dungeon. They were then finally able to find a certain section of the cave that was different from the rest that they had encountered before.

"We have already cleared all the monsters and explored the other cave channels along the way. All of them ended up in a dead end and did not give us any clues about the dungeon," commented Arthur before continuing. "But given our current findings, I think this is an extermination-type of the dungeon where we have to continuously kill the monsters that we find and wipe them out."

He then paused and turned at the cave channel in front of them before adding. "This channel is not here before, so I think these pathways will only appear once we have cleared a certain section of the cave."

They were currently advancing with his lead as Shin and Diablo scouted the path ahead as usual.

Since those two were doing their jobs quite well, the group did not have to worry about any accidents happening like some ambushes from the Komodo Lizards.

Those two thoroughly checked the path for everyone, making sure that they did not miss everything.

But the group still threaded their way through the channel while advancing. After all, there was nothing to lose for being extra careful.

As for this section of the cave that they had just found, it seemed to be a certain 'point' within the cave with a place ahead that was connected to multiple channels, which would lead them in different directions.

If their guess was right, then this was one of the 'main' sections that they were looking for.

Swoosh!

"There are three Elites ahead and they are leading five common-rank Komodo Lizards each," reported Diablo after he returned from scouting ahead.

As for Shin, he was left to keep the Komodo Lizards in check, closely observing their activities. He was also trying to see if there were any patterns in their movements.

The group quickly frowned after hearing his report as the number of these monsters was the highest from what they had encountered up until now.

Even if they were quite experienced at dealing with these monsters now, such a number of monsters still far surpassed their current limit, especially when there were three Elites mixed in the group.

Swoosh!

Shin then returned and rejoined everyone.

Diablo turned to him and asked. "How is it? Do find anything?"

Shin reorganized his discoveries before telling everyone about them. "This is quite troublesome. The three groups seem to be connected to each other. If we try to lure one of them, then the rest will quickly follow."

"It is as if they are a unit," he added as he tried to recall more details from what he had seen before continuing. "It also looks like they are guarding a pathway each."

"There are three huge channels over there, but there are still some smaller ones just like we have encountered up until now."

"My guess is that those three huge cave channels will be leading us to the major sections of the dungeon while the smaller ones are the sub-sections that need to be clear for some sort of condition," he said as he shared his thoughts.

He quickly stopped saying useless things after seeing that everyone was waiting for him to tell them how they would take on this battle.

"We will go with a tri-front strategy. Leo, Arthur, and Owen will be holding off the three Elites while Akailu, Chaos, and Huahua will be summoning their respective summons to create a blockade to block common-rank monsters."

"The mages will focus on taking down the common-rank monsters with their AOE Spells while the marksmen will be assisting our frontline with their cover fires."

"Samael will be focusing on supporting everyone with buffs for the time being while protecting everyone from any common-rank monsters that will break through from our defensive formation."

"You only have to hold them for a moment until Akailu throws them back. You also don't have to feel too much pressure as Alucard and Lorraine will be assisting you if something happens."

"Meanwhile, Diablo and I will be helping the frontline keeping those Elite Komodo Lizards busy," after ending his instructions, he turned to Alucard. "I will be leaving their safety in your care.

Alucard just shrugged his shoulders and did not say anything.

"Alright, let's clear this place so that we can finally have proper progress," he said as he led everyone toward the center point.

He could already feel that the next batch of monsters after this would be giving them more trouble given the current stages that they had encountered up until now.

Chapter 1575 Dungeon: Lesser Hatchling Lair (Part 6)

.....

Bang! Bang!

Arthur forced the Elite Komodo Lizard that he was facing back with his round shield, gaining himself enough space for a big move. He held his dragon spear tightly before thrusting it forward as a huge apparition of a dragon appeared behind him.

'Class Fighting Style: Golden Dragon soars through the Heaven'

Swoosh!

Bang!

This strike pinned the monster in place as it dug its claws into the cave floor and it endured the violent energy current that the golden dragon had as it passed through its body.

Arthur did not deal any damage to the monster due to the thick earthen armor that was covering its entire body and the sturdy scales underneath it. But the golden dragon that he just sent was more than enough to shred the earthen armor of the Komodo Lizard's body.

Immediately after, he twirled the dragon spear before throwing a series of stabs that produced multiple spear phantoms of golden color that bombarded the elite monster.

'Class Fighting Style: Dragon Nest'

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

(-10,245), (-15,560), (-20,523), ...

Each succeeding attack dealt more damage as the defenses of the Komodo Lizard continued to be shredded by the barrage of stabs, especially when the dragon spear was reinforced by Arthur's unique mana manipulation technique.

Despite having a huge Health Bar, the Komodo Lizard suffered serious damage due to the stabs that it had taken from Arthur.

Click!

At the same time, a subtle sound resounded beside the monster before a flash of lightning passed through its body, leaving a trail of black and white electric currents in the air.

Shing!

'Class Fighting Style: Quick Draw – (Lightning) Flash Cut'

(-2,523,524)

A huge chunk of Komodo Lizard's health disappeared as the lightning strike sliced through its neck.

Even if that damage was still far from putting the monster in a critical state due to its massive Health Pool, the bleeding that was left on its neck was rather serious, making the monster continuously lose health with every passing second.

Moreover, the paralyzing effects that the attack left behind did not just make the monster unable to move for quite a while but also weakened its regeneration abilities to a great degree.

Shin did not stay longer after dealing that much damage as he quickly disappeared and charged toward another direction – he was heading where Leonard was fighting this time.

Arthur, on the other hand, took advantage of the somewhat paralyzed Komodo Lizard and started throwing a series of attacks empowered by his advanced skills and techniques, dealing massive amounts of damage.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

On another side of the battlefield, Leonard was aggressively exchanging blows against the Elite Komodo Lizard in front of him. Aside from having extreme confidence due to Cloe's support from the distance, his class also favored this kind of frontal confrontation.

His Destroyer Class was a Transcendent Class that fell in the warrior-type category. It was more of an upgraded version of the Berserker Class, which was an expert of prolonged battle due to their Berserk Skill that made them stronger the longer they fought and the lower their Health Bar.

This meant that Leonard could still be stronger in either a healthy state due to Cloe's healing and buffs or a battered state filled with blood and injuries due to the innate trait of his class.

A sanguine flame enveloped his entire body as he continued to exchange blows with the monster before him.

Each strike he did with his war axes dealt massive damage despite them being only regular attacks and were not reinforced by any skill.

This unique mana manipulation technique of his was further strengthened after becoming more familiar with the innate attribute of his bloodline and the inheritance of the warrior tribe that he came from in the real world – the Asad Tribe.

He had even combined it with the inheritance of the Thunder Lord that he had received before, creating a very advanced mana manipulation technique.

His Sanguine Flame and Crimson Lightning were not losing to Arthur's Dragon Aura and Divine Lightning and Shin's Eclipse Wielding and Primordial Lighting.

Swoosh!

As he was fighting, Leonard suddenly sensed something. He then started smiling before aggressively charging forward.

Bang!

He stomped his feet on the ground, firmly planting them on the cave's floor, and ducked sideways to dodge the aggressive bite of the monster. He then twisted his waist and tightened his grip over his war axes before swinging them upwards while they were blazing with a sanguine flame.

'Class Fighting Style: Destructive Ascension'

Boom!

(-100,520)

A huge chunk of damage was dealt to the Komodo Lizard as the attack connected, which also sent it flying in the air.

Click!

Right at the same time as its body was suspended in the air, the familiar subtle sound rang in the cave once again before a series of lightning flashes intertwining with one another sliced through the body of the monster and dealt massive damage to it.

Shing!

'Class Fighting Style: Quick Draw – (Lightning) Flash Requiem'

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

(-50,923), (-23,569), (-30,023), ..., (-150,300)

Different numbers appeared above the head of the monster, signifying the damage that these lightning flashes had dealt with the final strike being the highest.

Shin quickly left once again after striking the Komodo Lizard once as it was already enough for him.

Instead, he ran across the battlefield while cutting everything in his path.

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

At the same time, a series of explosions erupted around him as the mages from the backline were bombarding the common-rank Komodo Lizards with the AOE spells while Alucard and Lorraine were doing the same with some of their skills that had in their arsenal.

Regardless, Shin ran through everything while reaping the lives of those common-rank monsters that were barely holding on with their sliver of health.

He lived up to the name of his class, which also became one of the nicknames given to him by the players, the Grim Reaper.

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

Alongside him, another figure was running through this chaotic battlefield, dealing huge damage to every monster it came across and killing those on the verge of death.

This phantom-like figure was like a personification of death that danced within the shadows while ripping the lives of anyone in its path.

Dancer of the Shadows commonly known as the Shadow Dancer – a Transcendent Class, which boasted its pinnacle speed and unpredictable attacking patterns.

Diablo ran swept through the battle just like Shin after he assisted Owen briefly in dealing with the Komodo Lizard that the latter was pinning down.

Shin and Diablo kept on switching between helping those three pinning down the three elite-rank monsters and eliminating the common-rank monsters to lessen the burden that the others were enduring.

This battle lasted for quite a while before the Empyrean Talons finally cleared every Komodo lizard.

In the process, the group was also able to get some earthen cores from this batch of Komodo Lizards, albeit inferior to the one that they had gotten from the Special Elite Komodo Lizard that they had first encountered.

While resting, Arthur and Cloe walked to Shin as he stood at the center of this section of the cave while facing the multiple channels that would be leading them to different sections of the dungeon.

"Which channel are we going to choose for our next destination?" asked Arthur as he approached.

Shin did not immediately answer, as he had asked instead. "What do you think?"

Arthur understood what Shin was thinking and pursed his lips. "I did not get any notification from the system that told me about the update of my quest."

"So, this is still not the main point that we are looking for," he added after a brief pause.

"How about using that 'intuition' of yours when doing your quests?" asked Cloe.

She was familiar with Arthur, especially his in-game identity since she played with him in a couple of games that he had played previously. With her experience, she knew how he usually played and solved problems he encountered within the game.

This so-called intuition was what he was using whenever he was stuck in the middle of a predicament where he had to decide between difficult choices.

"It is something that I feel every time," Arthur smiled bitterly as he heard her.

"How about using your Dragon Sense? This is a dungeon filled with Draconic Species, so the monsters here must be carrying a hint of scent that is unique to your race," said Shin.

Hearing that, the corner of Arthur's mouth suddenly twitched before complaining. "I know what you mean by saying that, but why does it sound like you are saying that I am a dog when it comes out of your mouth?"

He then paused for a moment as he concentrated on using his 'Dragon Sense' before turning back to Shin. "Strange..."

"Stop the suspense and spit it out," said Shin as he knew this guy was trying to mystify things like he usually did.

"Tsk! Boring~!" Arthur complained before continuing. "All the small channels were filled with draconic scent, but there is no powerful aura among them, which indicates that there are only common-rank up to elite-rank monsters in them."

"The three big ones, on the other hand, are where the strange things lie," he paused for a moment to point to the huge channels on the left and the right before continuing. "I can't feel any monsters from these two, which is quite confusing. But there is a strange aura coming from their deepest parts."

He then turned at the cave channel before them as he said. "Meanwhile, this one is overflowing with draconic scent, which means that all other monsters are gathered here. I can even feel an overwhelming presence waiting for us there."

"So... what's your choice?" asked Arthur.

Shin suddenly smirked as he said to the two. "Let's do how usual gamers deal with these kinds of situations."

"Eh!?" Cloe was confused for a moment as she stared at Shin with confusion.

Arthur, on the other hand, grinned as he fully understood what Shin meant before chuckling. "Doing all the side quests first before proceeding to the main quest."

Chapter 1576 Dungeon: Lesser Hatchling Lair (Part 7)

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The Empyrean Talons spent quite a lot of time clearing all the small cave channels that they had found. They made sure that they did not leave anything unturned, so they threaded their way with full caution while carefully looking at everything and closely observing the cave channels, especially the cave walls and ceiling.

They were trying to find a clue in these cave channels about the true nature of this special dungeon.

But after clearing all the Komodo Lizards that varied from common to elite-rank monsters, the group did not find anything else. They only bumped into a dead-end when they reached the deepest parts of these small cave channels.

Aside from the few Earthen Elemental Cores that the Komodo Lizards had dropped and a pitiful amount of experience points, the group did not find much from these places.

The grinding of experience, when someone reached the third tier of their respective class, became more challenging. The rise of difficulty was at an exponential level, making it hard for most of the players to level up.

Aside from hunting in very high-level hunting grounds such as the Neutral Regions in the Aurora Continent or going to the Awakened Continent to train, leveling up by normal means would become impossibly hard.

Previously, when the group was grinding outside the dungeon, the experience points that they were getting were quite pitiful as well. But it was still way better than the grinding in the regular hunting grounds in the Aurora Continent.

As for this dungeon, the group realized that it was from the category of dungeons that would only give them the reward experience points once they had killed the bosses ruling each stage and clearing the entire dungeon altogether.

That should also be when other rewards such as weapons, equipment, special items, mystical tools, high-quality materials, and others would be given to them.

...

Arthur was frowning as the group stood at the center of the section that was connected to every cave channel.

It seemed like he was having a hard time choosing which of the three major paths in front of them would they be choosing.

"What is there to think about? Let's just pick either the left or right one since the one at the center is the one that will lead us to the main sections of the dungeon," said Leonard as he became impatient after waiting for Arthur to choose for a long time.

The group just got online, so they were currently at their peak conditions. He was quite itching to have a real challenge right now since dealing with these common and elite-rank Komodo Lizards became quite boring.

These monsters were quite challenging at first, but it became easier to deal with them once the group was able to familiarize themselves with their strength and attack patterns.

Leonard wanted to fight against the Special Elite Rank Komodo Lizard once again and test their current progress.

Arthur wanted to ignore Leonard at first, but he quickly changed his mind and explained. "It is not like I am having a hard time to choose. I just find it strange that the other two paths are a little different compared to the first time I have examined them."

"Different? How different?" asked Shin as he joined the two.

Arthur pointed at the left and right paths first before saying. "Previously, when you asked me to first use my Dragon Senses to check on these cave channels, I said that these two channels don't have anything in them."

"But now that we have fully cleared all the minor and smaller channels, these two are now releasing a 'scent' of their own."

"They may be a little faint, but the dangerous scent that I am getting from them is no less than the one in the middle," he added after a brief pause.

Leonard slightly frowned as he used his special means to try sensing the cave channels but could not find anything.

His 'Bestial Sense' innate trait was not much inferior to Shin's Ultra Instincts and Arthur's Pinnacle Omniscience. It even had extra effects like sensing techniques similar to Arthur's Dragon Sense.

But despite that being the case, he still could not sense anything from these three cave channels, throwing him in confusion.

"This is a dungeon related to dragons, so it will not be strange if I am the one who can accurately sense them," said Arthur after seeing Leonard's expression.

He then turned at the three paths in front of them as he continued. "The stranger thing is the presences that I am getting from the three of them are different from one another yet also somewhat similar."

"Are you telling us that each of these paths will lead us to different types of creatures? Or at least different types of Komodo Lizards?" asked Shin after realizing what Arthur was trying to imply.

Arthur nodded as he pointed at the right path and said. "This one has the faintest aura, but also carries the more dangerous scent compared to the left one."

"So, are we choosing the left one then?" asked Cloe as she hopped in front of the three. "Everyone is ready. We have finished our maintenance, so we can now proceed."

Arthur shook his head. "No. I think we should choose this one. Even if there are multiple faint presences in this one, they are at least at the level that we can handle."

"The left one, on the other hand, is much more dangerous despite having a single entity waiting for us at its deepest part," he added as he turned at the other cave channel before squinting his eyes.

"Hmmm... A boss? Then we have to save it for the latter," said Leonard as he nodded his head. "So? What are we waiting for? Let's go!"

"Alright," Shin nodded as he signaled the others to get ready to move.

...

After entering the right path, the group cautiously made their way inside while carefully observing their surroundings.

This cave channel felt a little strange due to the coldness of the air filling it. Shin and the others also felt an eerie feeling as further advanced into it.

Shin's instincts were also telling him that there was something wrong with their current situation. An ominous feeling also surfaced in his chest, making him quite anxious.

Tilting his head to the side and frowning deeply, Shin immediately gave out a series of commands. "Leo, go to the rear and guard it alongside Alucard. Owen, move to the right and cover that side. Akailu, you move to the left and summon your monster pet with sharpest senses."

"Everyone else gathers at the center and advance while following Arthur's pace," he was currently scouting the path ahead along with Diablo as usual, but they did not scout that far from the group due to ominous air filling the entire cave channel, particularly with the unusual darkness of this place.

The others were confused as to why Shin wanted to change their formation so suddenly, but they still followed his instructions without question.

Then-... the entire group suddenly halted their tracks as they simultaneously sensed an immense killing intent filling the entire cave channel.

Or to be more precise-... the entire place had multiple killing intents that were being directed at them.

Swoosh! Swoosh!

Shin and Diablo did not even hesitate as they retreated and regrouped with the others while sharply sweeping their gaze in the surroundings.

Due to the killing intents coming from every direction, the group could not pinpoint the exact location where they were coming from.

Not long after, the group started seeing glaring eyes appeared from the darkness covering the entire cave channel.

These sharp eyes carried immense intent which made the group feel a stinging sensation on their skins.

As Arthur saw these monsters hiding in the dark, the expression on his face suddenly contorted before shouting to the others. "Shadow Lizards! These guys are descendants of Shadow and Dark Dragons! Be careful of their stealth skills!"

While he was warning everyone, a sharp glint silently flashed on the ceiling above the group while staring at them.

This lizard-like creature slowly and silently opened its mouth before extending its flexible and stretchable tongue from it.

Swoosh!

This tongue shot toward the group like a silent weapon, heading straight to Cloe, who was standing at the entrance of the group's formation.

This creature was intelligent enough to tell that her role in the group was the most crucial one, so targeting her first was the most logical choice.

The speed of the tongue was so fast that it almost reached Cloe within an instant. But right before it touched torched her, a sword flash suddenly appeared on its path and sharply tried to cut it.

Shing!

Shin suddenly appeared right in front of Cloe like a ghost and swung his sword upwards.

Clang!

Blazing sparks flew in the air as the sound of metal colliding against metal rang in the entire cave, attracting everyone's attention.

"There are also above us as well!" shouted Shin to inform the others while he was preparing to use another skill.

Roar!

This collision immediately signaled the start of the battle.

Chapter 1577 Dungeon: Lesser Hatchling Lair (Part 8)

Seeing the silhouettes of the creatures stuck on the cave walls and ceiling, Owen quickly reacted and raised his shield high while activating one of his most advanced skills.

'Ancient Protection Skill (Tier 2): Bulwark of the Titan God'

Swoosh!

A huge dome of aura quickly enveloped the entire group and formed a sturdy barrier that protected them from all sides.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

It was at that moment when a series of sharp sounds reverberated in the entire cave channel as the barrier was bombarded by the attacks from those dark creatures.

It was also at this moment that the group was able to have a clear look at these monsters.

What they saw were a bunch of lizard-like creatures with a body covered with obsidian scales. These scales carried a dangerous luster compared to the Komodo Lizards that they were fighting up until now. These scales were shaped like a rhombus while carrying a dangerous sharpness on their edges.

The scales covering the four limbs of these creatures seemed to be somewhat erected, acting as some sort of spike weapon.

"These guys are masters of stealth and assassination in the family of Draconic Species, so keep your senses sharp and observe your surroundings as best as you can!" Arthur was an expert when it came to anything related to dragons, so he was very familiar with the monsters with some relation to them.

"Their defenses should be two levels lower than the Komodo Lizards that controlled the Power of Earth, but their attacking power is much higher than those guys."

"Moreover, these guys are more proficient in stealth, so if we added the factor that these guys are also under a series of mutations just like those guys, then these Shadow Lizards should be able to control the power of shadows to a certain extent."

As Arthur was explaining to everyone, he quickly walked out of the formation before clashing against the strong-looking Shadow Lizard that tried to charge at the barrier that Owen had summoned.

Bang!

He was able to send the monster back for a dozen meters after that collision, but he was also pushed back for the same distance due to the strong impact.

"Cloe! Chaos!" shouted Shin.

Hearing his call, the two quickly pointed their staffs in the air, sending a ball of fire and light above the group, which illuminated the entire place.

With these two glaring lights shining in the air, the figures of the Shadow Lizards that were trying to hide in the darkness were fully revealed in front of the group.

As the group was preparing for the battle, Diablo suddenly walked past Arthur, who was at the forefront of their formation.

Arthur slightly tilted his head to the side before asking in confusion. "Hey. What are you doing?"

"You said that these guys control the power of the shadows, am I right?" Diablo ignored the question as he asked in return.

Arthur became even more confused due to those words and was about to ask something, but he saw that Diablo suddenly turned to Shin.

"Vice Commander, can I act independently this time?" asked Diablo as a burning fighting spirit could be seen within his eyes.

Hearing that, Arthur could not help but glare at Diablo's back as the corner of his mouth twitched. 'Hey! I am also a vice commander of this team!'

Shin seemed to have understood what Diablo was planning to do. 'This guy has awakened the Ancient Powers of the Shadows during our battle with the Grand Centipedeus previously, so he must be itching to compare it with these monsters that control the same attribute, especially when they have a hint of dragon blood in their veins.'

'I can also feel that he wants to test the techniques that he had learned from that NPC organization that has scouted him,' Shin thought to himself before giving his permission. "Alright. You are free to do whatever."

"Thank you," nodded Diablo as he suddenly disappeared from his spot.

Swoosh!

He then instantly appeared in the middle of the Shadow Lizards in the distance before snapping his fingers.

Snap!

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

Not only after, the shadows within that dark side of the cave suddenly moved, seemingly obeying his orders.

These shadows wrapped themselves around his body, seemingly becoming an extension of himself.

Roar! Roar! Roar!

Not long after, the Shadow Lizards around him felt like they were trapped within the mud due to the sudden appearance of the 'water-like shadow' underneath them.

They tried to use their elemental powers to manipulate the shadows and free themselves, but the restriction that Diablo had cast upon them was much stronger than what they were capable of.

"Eh!? What kind of power is that?" Arthur stared at Diablo with a curious gaze and became interested at the technique that the latter was using.

He had been sparring with Diablo during their free time previously, so he was quite familiar with the abilities of the latter. He also had a good grasp of Diablo's power during that time, but it seemed like this guy had improved quite a lot after undergoing special training from that mysterious NPC organization.

"Interesting~!" he commented as he started fighting the Shadow Lizards that were starting to surround him.

Seeing Diablo showcasing his newly found powers, Arthur would not let himself outshined by anyone, especially when he was the master of showing off.

Roar! Roar! Roar!

Nine golden dragons appeared around Arthur as he swung his spear around. They danced around him while revolving around his body and slaughtering the Shadow Lizards in the vicinity.

'Class Fighting Style: Dance of the Nine Dragons'

Shin shook his head when he saw that scene, fully understanding what this brother of his was thinking.

He then focused on giving out orders to the other members of the group as they dealt with the swarm of Shadow Lizards that were coming from every direction.

...

The battle lasted for quite a while, but it was much faster than when they were dealing with the Komodo Lizards.

These Shadow Lizards might be more troublesome and more dangerous to deal with due to their fast movement speed and ability to move along the shadows of the cave.

Such abilities were very annoying to deal with, especially in dark places such as this cave. But these poor lizards just bumped into this group that had Diablo, who controlled a shadow power much stronger than them, and Cloe, who was from the Church of Light.

There were also Chaotic Luck and Samael, who possessed the powers of the Sun, which happened to be the bane of dark-type creatures.

Shin and Arthur were also a counter for these creatures, making the hunting time much more efficient compared to when they were hunting the Komodo Lizards.

But that was just the beginning as more Shadow Lizards were waiting for them at the deeper parts of this cave channel. Moreover, these batches of Shadow Lizards were much more troublesome to deal with as their ranks were much higher than the ones they had encountered previously.

They even encountered several Special Elite Monsters along the way, giving them a lot of trouble.

Some of them almost lost their lives during the battle against five special elites. If not for Cloe's overpowered healing abilities and Diablo and Arthur's senses to locate these special elite Shadow Lizards, then they have most likely suffered a serious casualty right now.

The group were even forced to use their respective combat states when they were besieged by the five special elites.

Shin, Arthur, Leonard, and Diablo were even forced to use their Elemental Possessions at the final moments to simultaneously kill four of these special elites with a single burst, ending the dangerous situation as soon as possible.

Due to this incident, the group was then forced to pause their exploration to rest and recover their peak forms before proceeding, especially when Arthur could sense five to seven more special elites waiting for them ahead.

The next battle became much harder due to the number of special elites lying in wait for the group. This forced the group to use most of their cards once again, which further exhausted their minds.

The concentration they consumed within this dungeon was twice as much as the outside, so even if they rested for quite a while earlier, the burden in their minds was still quite heavy for them to endure.

They might have cleared all the Special Elite Shadow Lizards, but it cost them to become exhausted beyond what they could endure.

Even Shin, who possessed an immense amount of willpower, was almost reaching his limit.

...

"Are you sure that there are no more monsters ahead?" asked Leonard as the group rested.

"Don't worry, I am a hundred percent sure about this. There is no monster ahead of us," Arthur reassured them as he kept using his Dragon Sene to the limits.

"If something jumps at us later, then it is all your fault!" said Lorraine as she leaned on the cave wall.

After a few moments, Shin finally recovered and signaled to Arthur and Diablo. "Let's go take a look at what's waiting for us ahead."

Arthur was too lazy to move right now, but he still forced himself to get up and follow Shin. Diablo also did not complain either as he silently followed behind the two.

Not long after, the three finally arrived at the end of the cave channel and saw a spacious area with nothing but a floating object at the center.

The three did not immediately step into this empty area as they carefully observed everything within. They checked the walls and the ceiling to make sure that there was no hidden monster waiting to ambush them inside.

Diablo even used his special technique to control the shadows to ensure that nothing was hiding behind the dark corners of this place.

These three only dared to enter the spacious area after confirming that they had checked everything.

They walked toward the center of the place and looked closely at the floating object.

Ding

It was at that moment when Arthur finally received an update for his quest.

Chapter 1578 The Compass of the Lost Soul (Part 1)

.....

What the three had found floating at the center of this place was a circular object that looked like a palm-size coin.

This coin was filled with a huge amount of darkness, carrying the densest form of shadow mana.

Hu! Hu! Hu!

The coin was even set ablaze by a shadowy flame due to the dense mana that it possessed.

Even Diablo, who already mastered the Ancient Shadow Powers to a certain degree, felt great restriction coming from this object.

Shin, who was somewhat sensitive to dark energies due to his connection with Grimrace and Blackie, felt somewhat quite heavy due to the dark mana filling the air due to this coin.

Arthur, on the other hand, did not feel that much anything from this coin. But his Dragon Senses and the connection he had with the Chaos Dragon Archon he contracted with, was telling him that this thing was not as simple as it seemed.

It was also at that moment when he got the notification from the system.

Ding

System: You have found the [Compass of the Lost Soul (Incomplete)]!

System: Find all three parts of the compass and head to the direction where it will lead you.

Ding

System: The fate of your Dragon Soul will be waiting for you on the other side.

...

Arthur frowned deeply as he stared at the string notification in front of him. He did not get a real update for his quest but received a bunch of nonsense instead. "What the heck is this?"

Shin raised his brows when he saw the expression that his brother was making. "Hey. What's wrong this time?"

Arthur did not reply as he shared the system notifications directly.

When Shin and Diablo saw the notification, they also frowned deeply before turning their gazes back to the floating coin once again.

Upon closer inspection, Shin found out that it was indeed a compass albeit lacking some areas.

This compass lacked any moving needle, which was the main indicator as well as the cardinal directions that it was supposed to have to signify which direction was which.

Aside from the eight-pointed star engraved into it, which indicated that it was a compass, this palm-size coin did not have anything else.

What confused them even more was the fact that this object was emitting such a dark aura.

Arthur did not think much about it as he hated putting too much thought into things since it would only make the situation more conflicted.

Instead, he extended his hand and grabbed the compass before using his Dragon Eyes to inspect it. But he quickly frowned when he realized that it was something that could not be inspected due to its incomplete state on top of being somewhat of a quest item.

"Tsk! This thing doesn't give us much clue," said Arthur as he put the item into his inventory.

Shin shook his head as he explained. "Didn't the system have given you enough clue? It is saying something about your 'dragon soul' or something at the end. There is also something about 'fate'."

"If you ask me, then it is more than enough for me to tell you that it will point you toward the location of the piece of the Divine Armor of the Dragonkin or at least something similar," he added while turning around.

"Let's go. The others have already waiting for quite a while. We better tell everyone to log out and rest properly before coming back again later," he said as he walked back to where they came from.

Diablo also followed as he fell into deep thought, trying to recall something.

...

After a proper rest offline, the Empyrean Talons did not wait that long as they quickly headed to their next destination right after going back online.

This time, the group moved as cautiously as possible despite Arthur's assurance that there would only be a single enemy on this cave channel. They did not want to get ambushed once again just like what previously had happened from the other cave channel.

But just like Arthur had said, they did not encounter any monsters along the way, which saved them a lot from trouble and conserved their strength.

But right after they reached the end of this path, the entire group could not help but halt in their tracks and stand still due to the monster soundly sleeping ahead of them.

[Monster Name]: Cave Komodo Drake (Hatchling)

[Monster Type]: Beast (Reptilian Family)

[Monster Rank]: Chieftain

[Life Rating]: Draconic Species

[Monster Level]: 155

Health Points: 50 Million

Description:

A Komodo Lizard underwent a series of mutations after an extended exposure to the mysterious power within its habitat and evolved into a Drake.

It possessed tough scales that could rival any sturdy armor and sharp claws that could cut steel as if it were tofu.

Its mouth had a strength that could easily crush boulders and metals.

Under the constant exposure to the mysterious power within the cave, it had awakened the power hidden in its bloodline and became a full-pledge draconic species.

At the same time, it had also gained an innate control over Earth Elemental Mana.

Note 1: The body of this monster could not be harvested as it was a dungeon monster, but there was a high chance that a Beast Core or an Elemental Core would drop upon death.

Note 2: There was also a small chance that a Soul Crystal would drop upon being killed.

Note 3: There was also a very certain chance that a fragment of a Lesser Dragon Core would drop upon its death.

"Is this the guy that we saw earlier?" mumbled Arthur as he recalled their brief encounter with a chieftain-rank monster earlier when they were being chased by the Komodo Lizards.

"The chances are high, but that is not the main problem right now," said Leonard as he could feel an immense threat coming from this monster.

His 'Bestial Instincts' were telling him that this monster was way more powerful than any monster that they had encountered up until now.

Even Shin was frowning quite deeply as he stared at the sleeping lizard. He had said to Arthur before that their current limit in the Awakened Continent was a Chieftain Rank Monster if it was a one-on-one battle if they used all their cards.

But after seeing the monster before them, that assessment might be wrong, especially when chieftain-rank monsters mostly possessed a high life rating due to their awakened bloodline.

Of course, the Draconic Species was one of the creatures with the highest life ratings due to them being descendants of the Dragons, which was why this Komodo Drake in front of the group gave off a much stronger threat compared to other types of monsters.

At the same time, not far from this sleeping drake, the group could also see a floating sphere in the air.

When they used their respective ocular skills to have a closer look at that object, they realized that it was a small magic circle that resembled a compass.

The group then realized that it might be one of the pieces that Arthur needed to complete that item that he had gotten from the previous cave channel.

"Get ready and adjust your mind. This is going to be much more exhausting compared to the previous battles that we have up until now," said Shin to the group, especially to Samael and Huahua, who were quite new to the team.

Based on his estimate, this must be their first time facing such a powerful monster that far surpassed the current limit of the players.

The common and elite-rank monsters of the Awakened Continent might be equivalent to the king and emperor-class monsters of the Aurora Continent on the same level respectively while the special elites were a notch higher than the latter.

But given the quality of the players of the Empyrean Talons, they could not feel that much pressure from these monsters, especially when these experts always make up for their mistakes.

However, they faced a monster that far surpassed those monsters, which could even cause the group serious trouble during the battle. This could even endanger them given that this Cave Komodo Drake possessed a strength that could threaten even their top combatants.

Bang!

Arthur did not wait that much as he quickly charged ahead right after receiving the buffs from Cloe and Samael.

Swoosh!

He transformed into a streak of light while assuming a throwing stance midair. He was holding his dragon spear as if it were a javelin while gathering his dragon powers and infusing them into it.

It was at this moment when the Komodo Drake finally opened its eyes, waking up due to the sudden intruder.

But before it could even pick itself up from its comfortable position, Arthur threw the dragon spear forward, transforming it into a huge golden dragon.

Swoosh!

'True Nine Dragon Arts: Imperial Tactics – Golden Dragon soar through the Heavens'

Roar!

He did not even hesitate as he entered his combat state, the Reality Manifestation, taking this battle very seriously.

Boom!

(-2,520,623)

Chapter 1579 The Compass of the Lost Soul (Part 2)

.....

Bang!

Arthur was pushed by the Komodo Drake after blocking a powerful charge from the monsters, which forced him to skid for a dozen meters and left a long and deep trail on the ground.

He also almost lost his footing, making his form a little unstable.

Roar!

Seeing that it successfully pushed Arthur, the Komodo Drake wanted to take advantage of this situation to finally get back on this annoying guy who kept on blocking its path earlier.

Swoosh!

But before it could even charge forward, Owen suddenly appeared in front of it and pushed his shield forward as a tall wall of transparent energy solidified in front of him.

He blocked and prevented the Komodo Drake before it could even get in position, where it could properly generate a strong momentum when charging.

'Ancient Protector Basic Skill: Titanic Wall'

Bang!

Owen was able to momentarily stop the monster before the transparent wall that he just summoned was filled with cracks and shattered.

"Argh!"

(-105,523)

At the same time, he also suffered heavy damage after the head of the monster collided with his shield.

The impact from the collision was still quite strong, pushing him for quite a distance and almost making him stumble. If not for a series of buffs that he had received from Cloe, Samael, and Huahua along with the powerful enhancements attached to his top-class equipment, then he would most likely get one-shotted by this monster in that single clash.

Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh!

(+20,000), (+20,000), (+20,000)

(+5,000), (+5,000), ...

A series of warm flashes quickly fell on his body, swiftly restoring his health to full.

Bang!

He had yet to fully recover his footing when the Komodo Drake quickly stepped forward before swiftly swiping its right claw at him.

Swoosh!

Seeing the incoming claws that resembled the scythe of death from his perspective, Owen quickly transformed his kite shield into a rectangular shield before planting it into the ground while he took a defensive stance.

He squatted his hips to lower his center of gravity while supporting the rectangular shield with his shoulders along with his other hand right after he sheathed his shortsword.

Swoosh!

At the same time, a towering wall was manifested before his rectangular shield as the claws approached him.

'Ancient Protector Skill (Tier 2): Divine Wall of Heaven'

Boom!

(-100,356)

Another huge number appeared above Owen's head, indicating the massive damage that he just suffered despite the powerful defensive skill that he had used.

His stance was also broken somewhat easily as he was briefly thrown in the air.

Bang! Bang!

(+5,000), (+5,000), (+5,000), ...

(+5,000), (+5,000), (+5,000), ...

A pair of wooden totems appeared beside Owen before quickly releasing a series of green flashes of healing light that rapidly restored his HP Bar to a healthy state.

Huahua had perfectly timed and placed these healing totems, earning herself a compliment from Owen.

Roar!

Seeing the continuous healing that Owen was receiving, the Komodo Drake turned its attention to the backline of the group with a threatening glare.

But before its aggro shifted to those at the backline, Arthur appeared before its eyes with his spear stabbing forward.

Roar!

A golden dragon appeared as the accumulated energy was released from the tip of his spear and shot forward.

'True Nine Dragon Arts: Imperial Tactics – Golden Dragon Devours the Heaven'

Boom!

(-1,052,523)

This one attack quickly stole the aggro back, making the Komodo Drake lock its gaze once again.

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

At the same time, a series of spells and skills from the mages and the marksmen from the rear landed on the Komodo Drake.

Boom!

(-100,332)

Bang! Bang! Bang!

(-52,523), (-82,542), (-60, 002), ...

Roar!

Suffering a series of damage from the bombardment of those spells and skills, the Komodo Drake became enraged.

Roar!

It raised its mouth, pointing it toward the ceiling of the cave, before releasing a powerful roar that produced a strong shockwave that pushed Arthur and Owen back while also destroying the incoming spells and long-range skills from the mages and marksmen of the group.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

After that, the Komodo Drake suddenly slammed its claws on the ground, producing another shockwave. But this time, the cave floor shook violently before being trampled by it.

Arthur and Owen were forced to take a defensive stance to block the shockwave while also trying to keep their footing as steady as possible.

They also had to withstand the waves of trampling earth along with the intense movements of the broken boulders and rock fragments.

But due to this, the two were pinned on their respective spots and unable to go anywhere. After all, they were right in front of the Komodo Drake when it used this skill.

Bang!

The monster finally found the right opportunity to teach these two a lesson, so it quickly pounced forward with its wide-opened mouth and arms.

Swoosh!

But before it could even reach the two, Leonard, who unknowingly appeared above it, suddenly descended like a falling meteor while slamming his war axes down.

'Supreme Blood Sutra: Sanguine Descent'

Boom!

(-1,00,523)

The war axes landed on the head of the monster, producing an explosive sound as if its skull was blasted.

But due to the earthen armor that the Komodo Drake possessed, the damage was somewhat negated despite landing a critical hit.

Boom!

At the same time, it also slammed the monster on the ground, preventing it from attacking Arthur and Owen.

While the Komodo Drake was trying to shake the dizziness that it had, Shin and Diablo suddenly appeared on each of its sides and launched their respective skills.

Shing!

'Jade Kirin Scripture: Quick Draw – (Lightning) Flash Requiem'

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

'Shadow Dancer Skill (Tier 2): (Modified) Shadow Assault'

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

Multiple sword flashes appeared in the air before intertwining with one another, forming a shining net that enveloped the body of the Komodo Drake and cutting through each part of its body.

(-100,325), (-150,823), (103,002), ...

(-102,523), (-123,001), (-105, 992), ...

A huge string of red numbers appeared above the head of the monster, indicating the series of damage that Shin and Diablo had just dealt to it.

Roar!

The Komodo Drake suddenly released an enraged roar after suffering multiple damage. It released another shockwave that pushed everyone away from it.

At the same time, its body suddenly released a shining light that briefly blinded everyone.

When that light subdued, the group saw that the edges of the scales of this monster were shining with golden light, further enhancing its earthen aura.

"Tsk! It has gone berserk this early," commented Arthur as he stared at the Komodo Drake with a deep frown.

They had been fighting this monster for quite a while already, yet they were only halfway through its total health bar.

Their damage was only ramping up just now because they had shredded most of its earthen armor which was giving them a lot of trouble earlier. Its defensive capabilities were innately strong already, so if they added the earthen armor into the equation, their damage would only become pitiful.

Now that they could see that the defenses of the Komodo Drake were further enhanced right after it entered its berserk state, the group knew that this was going to be even more troublesome, especially when they could already feel the consequences of using their respective combat state inside this dungeon.

Moreover, this was not the end. The group also knew that this monster possessed another annoying skill that would give them a lot of trouble right after entering its berserk state.

Roar!

Just like what they had expected, the Komodo Drake slammed its claws on the ground while infusing its power into it, seemingly summoning something.

Not long after, the huge boulders scattered everywhere moved, seemingly gaining life before gathering the smaller rock formations around them.

Wu! Wu! Wu!

The huge rock golems stood up one after another, further proving the thoughts of everyone.

"Akailu, cover the nine o'clock direction; Chaos, you take the three o'clock; Leo and Samael, you two cover the front; Huahua, prepare the totem formations; the rest will continue what you are doing," Shin quickly gave out a series of commands as he charged toward the Komodo Drake.

Arthur and Owen could not move away from the Komodo Drake as it could not be stopped by a single person due to its overwhelming strength. The two needed to work together to pin the chieftain-rank monster in place, or else they would be in trouble.

Shin and Diablo were also there to cover the two since Leonard, who was their secondary line of defense, needed to go back to protect the others from the rock golems.

Right after receiving Shin's orders, Akailu quickly summoned his monster pets one after another before forming a line of defense to cover his designated location.

He summoned a black bear, a huge grey wolf, and a majestic tiger to cover the left side of the group before quickly engaging in battle.

Chaotic Luck, on the other hand, chose to summon five giant blazing warriors rather than his numerous skeleton soldiers as wanted to use quality rather than quantity against these rock golems.

His job was to hold these golems and prevent them from advancing toward the group rather than fighting them head-on, so he focused more on summoning those with powerful defensive capabilities rather than offensive ones.

As everyone got in position, Huahua, who had already been preparing since earlier, suddenly raised her wooden staff and summoned a group of totems that were much larger than the regular ones that she was using.

These tall totems were meticulously arranged to form a magical array that covered every member of the group.

They also released a variety of lights that gave the group different kinds of buffs for each beating pulse they produced.

The fast reaction, the smoothness of their movements, and the quick execution of the instructions they gave clearly indicated that their team synergy was quite flawless.

At this point, the unified style of the team was starting to take shape and rapidly maturing simultaneously.

Chapter 1580 The Compass of the Lost Soul (Part 3)

.....

Bang! Bang!

Owen and Arthur, who were trying to keep the Komodo Drake in place, were throwing in the air after the monster slammed its claws on the ground and sent a powerful shockwave in front of it.

Moreover, a barrage of earth spikes also shot out from the ground, trying to pierce the bodies of those two, who were still trying to recover their balance in the air.

Owen and Arthur were skilled enough to maneuver their bodies midair, protecting themselves from the sharp earth spikes that were trying to come after their lives.

But at the same time, the two lost their respective post, giving the Komodo Drake a clear path leading to those fighting at the backline.

Even if they still had the main aggro, this Komodo Drake still possessed a certain level of intelligence, which let it realize that this was a rare opportunity to attack those annoying people freely firing their spells and skills from a safe distance.

Roar!

With a wide-open path before it, the Komodo Drake would not refuse such a free pass toward the group's core.

It released a powerful roar and started charging toward the group in a very aggressive manner.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

Each step it took produced heavy sounds, indicating how powerful its steps were. Along with it, the earth spikes and rock formations that were formed due to its skill were broken into fragments as it charged through them.

"Tsk!" Leonard clicked his tongue as he saw the berserk Komodo Drake charging straight at him.

He could not leave his position that easily since Samael, who was supporting him from behind would not be able to handle the number of the earth golems besieging them.

Fortunately, this monster was charging in a straight line, making it much simpler for him to handle. But at the same time, he knew that their formation would be most likely to break once he clashed against the Komodo Drake, which would then create some gaps for the golems.

"Seven seconds should be enough," mumbled Leonard as he glanced in the direction where the Komodo Drake sent Arthur and Owen flying.

Taking obstacles on their path and calculating the distance, Leonard came up with this conclusion.

So long as Samael and the others were able to hold out for seven seconds, then they would be able to stabilize the situation once again and rebuild their formation.

Swoosh!

But before he could inform Samael and the others of the plan and ask them to prepare for it, he saw a figure fearlessly charging toward the Komodo Drake.

"Of course! I'll leave it to you," Leonard smiled bitterly as he quickly understood what that guy was planning.

Whoosh!

At the same time, he suddenly raised his brows as he felt a sudden drop in temperature. He could even see some cold vapor filling the air in a slow, but steady manner.

He raised his gaze and saw Shin, who was running forward, was currently emitting a gentle flow of cold vapor. It was as if his body was so cold that it became like this.

"Did he awaken another power?" frowned Leonard as he watched Shin.

He knew that Shin had undergone some special training in when doing that trial quest since he had shared his experiences with them during their meals. But Shin vaguely told them some of the details, so he was not clear about what Shin had exactly gotten.

Even during their mock battles, Shin never showed them anything.

"Let's see what he has right now," he mumbled as he started clashing against the earthen golems.

...

Shin left a trail of cold vapor as he ran forward.

During his sprint, one of his hands was tightly clutching the sheathed sword while the other formed a hand seal before his chest.

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

The ground where his feet touched turned wet before solidifying into smooth ice that he used to slide forward, further increasing his speed.

Roar!

Seeing Shin running, the Komodo Drake suddenly roared, enraged. It then increased its speed, destroying everything on its path.

At the same time, the golden glow highlighting the edges of its scales grew brighter, further indicating the overwhelming power that it possessed.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

Its momentum then increased, causing a series of explosions for each step it took.

...

Hu~!

Seeing that, Shin took a deep breath before releasing a cold vapor from his mouth as he breathed out.

Click!

A moment later, his thumb pushed the guard of his sword, making it produce a subtle sound that reverberated in the entire cave.

Swoosh!

A cold flash of light illuminated the entire cave before disappearing once again.

Shing!

Then Shin unsheathed the sword and swung it horizontally before him. But instead of directing it toward the incoming monster charging at him aggressively, he directed the slash toward the ground and shot cold energy that embedded itself into it.

Swoosh!

Not long after, a thick tower wall of ice was suddenly erected alongside the silver runes filling its surface.

'Four Symbol Scripture: Heavenly Black Tortoise – Great Wall of the Northern Heaven'

Whoosh!

Seeing the ice wall blocking its path, the Komodo Drake became further enraged and increased its momentum once again, charging forward with an even stronger momentum.

Boom!

Using its sturdy head and the powerful earth armor protecting it, the Komodo Drake charged through the wall of ice.

Roar!

It managed to break the wall of ice despite how tough it was, but it was also forced to stop due to all its momentum disappearing right after the collision.

Roar!

The Komodo Drake opened its mouth wide while raising one of its claws to swing at Shin.

Hu~!

But as if already expecting that to happen, Shin breathed out a cold vapor as he used the Boundless Ocean Technique once again, while channeling the power of the Primordial Water into his sword.

Before the Komodo Drake could even slam its claw at him, Shin already swung the [Yamato], which released a cold gust of wind that swept through everything in front of him.

'Four Symbol Scripture: Heavenly Black Tortoise – Breathe of the Northen Wind'

Swoosh!

A violent cold wind turned everything into ice as it swept through everything on its path.

The huge body of the Komodo Drake in front of him was frozen, forming a thick layer of ice all over its body, while the surrounding earth golems caught by that skill turned into an ice sculpture.

This neither killed the monster boss nor its minions, but the effect of the skill locked them in place, giving those at the backline enough space to catch their breath.

Moreover, this also made it easier for the mages of the group to focus their spells on these stationary and vulnerable targets.

With all of this, Shin had brought the time needed for Arthur and Owen to come back, so he disengaged from the boss monster and started targeting the surrounding golems to clear the area.

...

Roar!

Not long after, the group was finally able to take down the monster after spending quite a lot of effort.

"Tsk! That is quite intense!" said Owen as he collapsed on the ground.

The last explosion of power that the Komodo Drake had shown them on its last breath almost caused them to be wiped out.

Fortunately, Cloe and Arthur combined their powers to save everyone with their overpowered Tier 2 Skills.

This chieftain-rank monster was much harder to deal with despite them using their respective combat state.

Shin and the others did not use their Elemental Possessions not because they were saving their stamina and concentration for the latter since they would be logging out after this anyway.

It was also not because of them wanting to train or anything.

They did not use those because the impact of using multiple techniques and special states at once put a lot of burden on their mind that would require them quite a long time to recover.

Even if they logged out and rested for quite a while, the mental burden would still be there, affecting their next actions.

Of course, it was not necessarily a bad thing since they could also feel a lot of benefits after they relieved their minds from this burden. Their minds became sharper and much faster after recovering.

But the problem was they were currently rushing this dungeon due to Arthur's situation. If they continuously used this method, then not only they would be slowing down their progress, but it could also cause them to fail the raid due to some accidents later.

At first, they could only use either the combat state or elemental possession independently since it could give them similar results in the real world, albeit a little milder.

Of course, using those states simultaneously for a short time was also not a problem. So long as they did not exceed a certain period, then they would still be fine.

Even if the drawbacks were still present, they would not be as serious as much.

But they did decide not to gamble on it since they didn't want to affect their current progress, wanting to clear this dungeon as soon as possible.

...

Shin picked up a golden marble on the ground, which was the only item that the Komodo Drake had dropped. He observed it a little as it was releasing a somewhat different glow from the previous ones that they had gotten up until now.

He then started grinning when he realized that it was. He turned at Arthur, who was walking toward the flowing diagram that the Komodo Drake was guarding, before shouting. "It looks like your luck is finally here. We've finally gotten a Lesser Dragon Core!"

Arthur paused his steps for a moment before signaling Shin to keep it for him. He then took out the palm-sized coin they had gotten before extending it toward the floating compass diagram.

Ding

Right after the two merged, the group suddenly received a series of notifications from the system, informing them about different things based on what they needed.

The group stared blankly at the notifications before them before exchanging glances at each other.

Based on the expression that they were making, it seemed like they did not expect something like this to happen.