

Destiny 1601

Chapter 1601 Trouble in Calm Waters (Part 2)

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"What should I do?"

Cloe sat on the ground as she pondered about how she was going to integrate her Martial Arts in the real world and her magic class within the game.

The two were not compatible with one another due to the differences in style and principles. Her Martial Arts was more compatible with the combat state of Reality Manifestation while her in-game class was meant for Magical Formations, which made it quite troubling for her.

Her situation was quite different from Alice and Owen's, which also made it quite troublesome to deal with. She could not even ask for some tips from the two since their combat states were compatible with their respective classes.

"Based on my situation, then Big Sister Shiella is the best person that I should ask," she mumbled.

After all, Shiella was a Martial Artist in the real world but possessed a magic class within the game.

Moreover, Cloe heard that Shiella had already created a unique version of her combat state and even mastered it not long after.

"Tsk! Is this what Master told me that talent is a huge gap that is difficult to bridge even with my efforts?" she pouted her lips as she thought about this.

Their situations were similar, yet the other party was able to solve the difficult problem that she was facing without encountering that many issues.

Sighing, Cloe could only double her hard work and trust her efforts to catch up with these geniuses around her.

After all, her master even told her that her aptitude in martial arts far surpassed anyone he knew due to her solid foundation and a vessel that was as clear as glass, which could give her a variety of choices on where she wanted to be.

Old Man Lin said that her aptitude in martial arts was a talent itself, which could evolve into something similar to special abilities or peak talents that the monsters around her possessed.

As she was contemplating herself, she suddenly saw Alice walk into the training room of the virtual space.

"Eh!?"

"Huh!?"

The two were surprised to see each other.

They stared at each other silently as an awkward atmosphere surrounded them not long after.

They might be teammates, but they rarely interact with each other aside from official business. They were regularly seeing each other at the academy during class and even rehearsed together during their club activities, but that did not mean that they were that close.

They also lived together before their house was blasted during the ambush by those mercenaries to assassinate Shin and attempt to abduct Cloe.

But the two of them were still unable to build up enough closeness with each other.

Alice was closer to Lorraine, who liked to interact with other people, while Cloe was somewhat wary of this girl as she felt that something was going on with her and Shin.

Even if Cloe heard that it might be because of Alice's big sister that Shin had met during his time in the training camp of the Black Serpent Mafia before he was adopted by the Springfield Family, she was still quite doubtful of the intention of this girl.

Her female instincts were telling her that there was something more to it.

Alice, on the other hand, was in a similar situation. She did not know why she was overly conscious of her actions around this girl in front of her.

There was also an uncomfortable feeling inside her chest whenever she saw Cloe and Shin together that she could not explain. But she was sure that she did not want to see those two be too close to one another.

Unfortunately, she did not have the right to interfere with the two of them, especially when the two had already been close since young.

She also did not want to overstep her boundaries, so she kept it to herself. But at the same time, she did not want to lose to Cloe in anything, unconsciously competing with the latter in certain things.

After an awkward silence, the two nodded to each other as a form of greeting.

Not wanting to be in this awkward situation, Cloe took the initiative to take. "Are you here for extra training as well?"

Alice paused and hesitated for a moment before nodding. "I've got some new inspirations after training with my parents, so I want to consolidate my gains before integrating them into my playing style."

"Then I can train them further after creating a couple more of new techniques based on them," she added before asking in return. "You as well? I can see that you are trying new things earlier during our team training."

Cloe hesitated as well before nodding. "I am trying to see if I can modify my combat state to match my martial arts and class fighting style. But I find it much harder than I have thought since there are too much of a difference between the two as well as too much complication."

Alice was somewhat taken aback when she heard that before falling in silence. She seemed to remember that Cloe was using Reality Manifestation as her combat state, which was quite rare for someone with a magic class.

But it was not that unique since there were also others in the top rankings, who were in a similar situation, like those with Battle Mage or Magic Swordsman Classes.

But it was indeed strange for someone with a priest-related class to have such a combat state. However, she also had to admit that Cloe was quite impressive, especially seeing her training with Shin and Leonard in a close-combat battle despite the difference in physical stats.

She might be able to keep herself alive for quite a long time while being besieged by assassins or other melee classes by relying on her melee combat techniques and foot techniques.

But in the long run, Alice could tell that Cloe would be at a great disadvantage, especially when she was facing a top-notch fighter with a combat state that perfectly complimented their fighting style within the game.

Cloe's shortcomings would be revealed in the long run since her combat state and in-game class were dragging each other.

Alice could fight in close combat as well, but her style relied more on her magical powers, which were still complemented by her class.

Adding her version of combat state, the 'Elemental Ignition', which not only strengthened her overall stats but also complimented her Elemental Spirit Possession, her battle state entered a perfect balance where everything was being enhanced and strengthened by one another.

This was Alice's greatest advantage, especially when she included the special and mysterious techniques of her secondary combat class that she had gotten not too long ago.

Unlike Cloe, who was facing complications between her Class, Fighting Style, and Martial Arts, Alice had a better standing.

"So, you are planning to find a way that will link those two before using the product as a main model for your version combat state?" asked Alice curiously.

Cloe paused before nodding. "Yeah."

Hesitating, Cloe bit her lower lip for a moment before summing her courage. "Can-... can you tell me how you have created your 'Elemental Ignition' combat state?"

"Eh!?" Alice was taken aback when she heard those words, unable to respond.

Seeing Alice's reaction and the expression that she was making, Cloe smiled before shaking her head. "Actually... never mind. I think it is not appropriate to ask for other's secrets. I'm sorry."

"Eh!?" Alice was surprised once again before forcefully recovering herself. "It is not that. I just don't know if I can help. My case is a little special."

From what she could see, the problem that Cloe was facing was completely different from when she created her version of the combat state.

The principles were not following the same path, after all.

Cloe stared at Alice silently for a while before smiling. "It is fine. I am just trying to see how you create your Elemental Ignition and understand the process. I want to see if I can get some inspiration."

Alice paused before nodding her head. "Alright, I'll share with you my experience when I am creating my Elemental Ignition. Then let me hear your main problem after, and I will try to see if I can help."

Alice sat across Cloe, getting ready to listen.

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After a while, Cloe sighed. "Actually, I am planning to ask Big Sister Shiella for some tips. After all, I heard that she has already created her version of combat state that complimented her Martial Arts and class inside the game."

Alice nodded. "I think I also heard about that from Big Sis Shiella when I called her earlier."

Alice felt a little conflicted as she listened to Cloe earlier. The latter's unique ideas inspired her a bit.

Due to Cloe's unusual background, her vision of Martial Arts did not follow a traditional path that everyone knew, especially when her instructors abroad also had a different view due to their tradition and other factors.

This made Alice to be somewhat curious about Cloe.

Chapter 1602 Trouble in Calm Waters (Part 3)

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As Cloe and Alice were currently discussing inside the virtual space, Shin could not help but frown his brows deeply as he saw that neither of them was online. "Eh!? That's strange. I am sure that the two of them are about to go log in to the game after our training session."

Confused, he connected with his real-world number, planning to call Cloe through her contact number in the real world.

But before he could even do that, he suddenly sensed something. His eyes suddenly turned sharp as he quickly swept his eyes in the surroundings.

He just got out of the city gate and planned to hunt some monsters to test his gains from the real world and apply the fully fused five-elemental breathing technique into the game while waiting for Cloe and Alice to respond.

He might still have not fully perfected fusing the five different breathing techniques to complement each of his innate attributes before this. But after his transformation earlier, he was able to find the perfect method to fully fuse them.

It might be able to call it a true fusion of the five techniques. It was more of a special method that formed a unique cycle that fused between the five breathing techniques, where he could smoothly switch between them just like the natural flow of nature while transitioning between seasons.

He had somewhat done it before to a certain extent, but it was further perfected after his body took a metamorphosis earlier.

"Heh! It looks like I don't have to trouble myself to look for some monsters to be my test subjects. Some idiots seem to have volunteered," he mumbled as she squinted his eyes while marking some trees inside his head.

After seeing Shin suddenly halt his tracks, those players hiding under the shades of the trees suddenly appeared one after another.

Since they had most likely been discovered by their target, it was better to reveal themselves now and get this over it.

"You have finally revealed yourself. We have been running around to look for your traces, but everyone in Empyrean Talons seems to be skilled at hiding your tracks," said by the leading figure of the group.

Looking over, Shin saw that it was Wolfkin who seemed to have a Berserker-related Class. Given that pair of huge battle axes on his back and the leather armor that he was wearing, it was easy to tell their major class.

After briefly glancing at the other party, Shin swept his gaze at the individuals appearing one another and saw that each of them was at least a level-155 expert.

From the mainstream players' perspective, these people belonged to the top-notch experts of the game. But for someone like Shin, who was one of those who currently stood at the peak of the rankings, these players were nothing but a bunch of decent training dummies.

Aside from this leader and those two other players standing behind him, the rest were just meant to for decorations in Shin's eyes.

Further activating his True Sight, Shin saw that these people belonged to one of the top organizations that would be participating in the knockout rounds of the United Cup after winning all their matches just recently.

"Big Sis is just mentioning earlier that there may be some foolish cowards who will try to play some dirty tricks during this time when the Top 32 round of the United Cup is right around the corner," he

mumbled as he scanned his surroundings. "But I did not expect that someone would come knocking on my door this fast."

Glancing at the emblem on their chest that resembled a tower with a bright light on its peak, Shin said. "People from the Lighthouse Guild, am I right? I have heard of you guys. You are one of those guilds that have been brought by the 'Seven Seas Group' to work under their banner when they enter the game."

"And it looks like I don't have to guess your intentions given that you have brought a whole 'bag' of trash with you," he added.

Seeing the nonchalant attitude that Shin was giving them, the leader of the group slightly raised his brows. "It seems like you are confident in yourself."

"But do you think that we will come here without our confidence as well? We know you very well. We even studied your styles thoroughly to prepare for this, so do you think that we don't have anything against you?"

"Your reputation may be able to discourage those fools who only believe in the rumors. In the eyes of the big corporations, you are nothing but some random guy who got lucky to stumble upon a Transcendent Race and get a Transcendent Class."

"You are nothing without those," added the Wolfkin Berserker.

Hearing those words, Shin could not help but laugh as he found those words very funny. This was the problem with those fools who got contracted by big corporations from the outside world and trained to

become apex experts within the virtual world, they always thought that their background was always been the best compared to everyone else.

Shin could admit that they did have some skills given that they managed to reach the Awakened Continent. They must have a top-notch training facility within their Guild's virtual space to be able to quickly adjust to the environment of the second continent.

But for someone like Shin, their current strength was nothing but some fancy accessory that made them somewhat passable.

Big corporations in the real world indeed had some ability to build such advanced virtual space, which could rival those in the military. Adding the rich resources that they possessed to assist their expert players, the result shouldn't be that worse compared to the top-notch experts of the current stage of the game.

But all of those were still inferior to those apex experts, who had fully cracked the mysteries of the combat states within the game and completely made them their own.

Setting that aside, Shin found it even funnier that these dogs from a certain corporation were barking at him about how good their backer was.

If they were talking about a backer, then the Flying Dragon Corporation under the Levana Family was one of the biggest corporations that had a decent influence around the world. It was a world-class corporation after all.

Then there was the Military Forces under the Springfield Family, which was one of the most recognized forces in the world and was even feared by most organizations.

Neither of these backgrounds was afraid of the Seven Seas Corporations, which was one of the leading corporations of the Deep Blue Continent in the real world.

Even if he was not using these forces to flaunt his background, his identity as the adopted son of the Springfield Family alone was more than enough to deter some organizations from provoking him.

Then there were those old monsters behind him such as his Martial Master, Mentalism Teacher, Sword Instructor, and Academy Professor.

Shin could not hold his laughter after imagining how these people would react after learning about any of this.

Well, he was not planning to use those identities anyway, so there was no need to make it that big. He just could not believe that someone had the gall to say such words to him.

But setting that aside, Shin felt that those big organizations in the real world seemed to be actively getting involved in the game. They seemed to be investing more money and effort to absorb many guilds within the game, steadily growing their power.

Some were even getting bolder as there was some news of them trying to take over some teams that managed to pass the preliminary rounds of the United Cup.

The Seven Seas Corporations was just one of the business goliaths that did such a thing.

Setting that thought aside, Shin scratched the surface of his mask while looking at everyone. "Anyway, let's get down to business."

"Are we going to fight? Or do you guys want to continue chatting?" he asked as he looked at those assassins, who were getting ready for an ambush.

"If it is the former, then I can entertain you a little. But if it is the latter, you guys can look for someone else as I am quite busy," he added.

Seeing this, the Elven Archer behind the Wolfkin Berserker walked over and whispered. "I have already told you, Captain Jorn. Talking to him is useless. There will be no hope of acquiring their adventurer team. Let's just crush them just like everyone else."

"I must warn you first. The title Battle God is not unfounded. You guys better be careful and prepare for the worst," the voice of the hooded person not too far behind them also sounded, reminding them not to underestimate Shin.

"I suggest you use that drug as soon as possible before things get ugly, or else you will never know how you have died," he added as he stepped back, entering the shades of the trees and disappearing from the shadows.

Chapter 1603 Trouble in Calm Waters (Part 4)

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Shin swept his gaze at everyone, trying to see what they were planning. From his observation up until now, these guys were not the problem. It was that mysterious hooded person, who suddenly disappeared under the shade of the trees.

He knew that that guy did not leave and just hid in the dark to observe.

'Drugs? Are they carrying something like a berserk medicine?' he thought as he squinted his eyes.

On the other hand, the Wolfkin Berserker named Jorn refused to admit that he was weaker than those famous Godlike Players, who were being worshipped by players.

He was one of the top Titled Rankers under the banner of the Lighthouse Guild, which quickly became a Super Guild that was right below the Powerhouse Guilds.

He had to admit that those Godlike Players were strong, but he still believed that he was not weaker than them after undergoing the special training that the Seven Seas Corporation had prepared for them.

He might not be one of those chosen talents that were specifically nurtured by the corporation, but he believed that he was not that inferior to them, especially when he had already gained the unique powers from his hidden Ascended Class.

He then raised his hand, giving out a signal to use the drugs that were given to them by the corporation. He might not be willing to use his, but he knew that these weaklings at least needed to rely on it to be able to withstand a blow against a monster like the one in front of them.

Without any hesitation, the assassins took out a vial from their respective inventory bag before quickly uncorking it and swiftly drinking its contents.

From Shin's perspective, this blue liquid looked like a mana potion based on their appearance alone. But at the same time, he could also feel something strange from the contents of the vials, which greatly reminded him of the dark powers of Corrupted Monsters.

He did not make a move to stop them as he was curious about what these mysterious drugs could provide these players.

Roar! Roar! Roar!

Not long after, the players, who had drunk the drugs, started releasing a vicious aura around their bodies. The black auras were visible to the naked eye, making Shin slightly raise his brows as they found this somewhat familiar, but he could not accurately recall when he had seen them.

As he was distracted with his thoughts, Uno's voice suddenly sounded in his ears.

[Unforgiven Ones. Their auras are similar to the Unforgiven Ones from the real world, who are the evil practitioners that slaughtered countless lives of innocent children to artificially create a 'seed of hatred' before letting it consume them.]

[These powers may be inferior to what the true Unforgiven Ones possessed, but the characteristics and energy fluctuations that they are releasing greatly resemble one another.]

Hearing those words, Shin could not help but frown deeply. "Why are they in possession of such a drug within the game? Moreover, is it possible to have such a reaction just by drinking it within the virtual world?"

This question confused Shin greatly. How were these people able to project such power within the game when it was supposed to be something that could only be found in the real world?

Uno, on the other hand, seemed to have an idea. He then solemnly informed Shin.

[There is only one explanation for this. These guys must have undergone an experiment that let them host such powers in the real world. Then it is triggered by those drugs so that they could project these evil powers into the game through their corrupted consciousness.]

Shin might not have fully understood what Uno meant, but he could at least grasp the major principle of those words. "You mean to say that these guys have activated the powers of their artificial 'seed of hatred' in the real world while playing the game?"

"That was nuts!" he could not help but exclaimed inwardly as he swept his gaze at the players, who were entering a berserk state that seemed to have fully lost their minds.

He knew how dangerous this situation was. If these people were unable to control their minds and let the Seed of Hatred within them run rampant, then it would not take that long before these guys completely lost their minds and turned into mindless demons.

Their seeds of hatred might only be artificial, but he could tell from Uno's voice that it shouldn't be something that could be underestimated. It was still an evil power, nevertheless!

Having the thought of these people turning into mindless demons due to those drugs, Shin could not help but shudder, especially after imagining the outcome of such an immoral experiment.

[If you want to at least save them, or at least the tiniest strand of their consciousness and personality, then I suggest you kill them as soon as possible.]

Uno warned Shin as even he, himself, felt that this experiment was way beyond the boundaries.

Shin's eyes suddenly turned sharp as he realized the gravity of the situation. He was no longer in the mood to test his new gains from the real world and took this matter more seriously.

He was planning to go all-out from the start.

"Void Reaper!"

Swoosh!

With a mumble, Shin quickly initiated an Elemental Spirit Possession while also entering the combat state of Reality Manifestation.

He even chose Hanzo for the possession to make sure that he was in the form with the fastest speed, widest range, and decently strong attacks with powerful penetration effects.

'Elemental Spirit Possession: (Void) Dimension Cutter'

Right after Hanzo fused with the [Yamato], Shin's aura quickly erupted alongside the heavy pressure that his body was emitting.

Boom!

The expression of Jorn and his right-hand man, the Elven Archer behind him, quickly changed as they did not expect Shin to immediately enter his strongest state.

This did not align with their assessment of him when he usually tried to test the strength of his opponent while also trying to test a couple of new skills and techniques to experiment during the battle.

Whoosh!

Not long after, Jorn and the Elven Archer sensed an invisible force that swept the entire battlefield.

Then they felt that the space around them seemed to have been locked by that invisible force, forming a dome-like cage that trapped everyone inside.

Click!

Then they heard a subtle sound that reverberated within the entire dome as Shin flicked his thumb onto the sword, revealing a small portion of the blade in the gap between the sword and the sheath.

Shing!

'Jade Kirin Scripture: Quick Draw (Void) – (Enlarged) Flash Firmament'

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

Not long after, a series of sword flashes filled the air, cutting through the space and slicing through the bodies of the players who were still in the middle of their berserk transformation.

The range of the sword flashes covered the entire interior of the dome, not letting anyone escape.

Aside from Jorn, who was able to quickly respond and block with his powerful defensive technique, and the Elven Archer behind him, who had executed a mysterious foot technique to dodge every sword flash coming their way, no one was spared by this attack.

When everything settled down, the expression of Jorn and the Elven Archer turned solemn as they warily looked at Shin, who seemed to not have moved since the beginning and maintained his standing posture.

They seemed to have finally realized the true might of someone who stood at the peak of the Hall of Fame and possessed a very high standing within the Godly Ranking List.

"I don't know if you are aware of it, but letting your subordinates undergo such an immoral practice, I don't know if you are worthy of your position of being a leader," mumbled Shin with a sigh.

He did not know if they voluntarily underwent such an inhumane experiment or if they were unaware that they had become such guinea pigs after being fooled by their superiors. Either way, he could not forgive any of them for sacrificing countless lives of innocent children in exchange for power.

"Sigh~! My mood is now completely ruined. I no longer have the time to play with you. Let's end this so that I can talk with the person in charge," he said with a cold voice.

Hearing the chillness from his tone, Jorn and the Elven Archer could not help but shudder. They were under intense pressure that seemed to have crushed them to the ground under the gaze of this monster in front of them.

From their perspective, Shin seemed to have transformed into the silhouette of a humongous monster with cold eyes.

It was looking at them as if they were nothing but a pair of bugs that could be crushed anytime.

Gritting their teeth, they rolled their tongues in their mouths, taking out the black pill that they had always hidden with through special methods. This method was inspired by those ancient assassins during the cultivation era.

Shin raised his brows and wanted to stop them, especially when he could sense a much denser aura coming from those pills compared to the liquified drugs that their subordinates had drunk earlier.

But he was a step too late. The two decisively bitten the pills and swallowed them, leading them to another transformation. It was similar to the other players' earlier one but with a much more exaggerated scene.

Even if Shin wanted to attack now, he would be unable to stop them due to the black transparent membrane that suddenly surrounded the two.

He could only squint his eyes further as he watched them undergo a metamorphosis.

Within the shadows, the mysterious player, who was accompanying the group earlier, watched everything unfold while recording the entire process with a high-end spying stone.

He watched intently at the scene before mumbling to the call that was currently connected.
"Experimental trial number one. Asking to monitor the subjects' parameters."

At the same time, the person from the other side of the call quickly responded. [The monitoring team is on standby. Initiation of Project Beta is in progress.]

Chapter 1604 Trouble in Calm Waters (Part 5)

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Shin watched the two transform with calm eyes. Even though he could feel an immense threat coming from them, it was still manageable with his current strength.

What worried him a little was the situation of these two top experts of the game in the real world. If what Uno had said earlier was true, then there was a high chance that these two would be squeezed dry if the battle took longer.

This meant that he had to end this battle as soon as possible to make sure that he could at least save their lives.

Even if these guys did not sound like good people, he could tell that they were not at the point where they had to do immortal things.

He could at least feel that they were true experts of the game. He just did not know if they knew about the artificial seed of hatred implanted in them or if they were aware of the consequences of taking those drugs.

He did not know if they were tricked by the power backing them or if they volunteered to become guinea pigs for such an immoral experiment.

Regardless, he had to defeat them as soon as possible before things could get ugly.

Bang! Bang!

Not long after, Jorn and his right-hand man finally finished their berserk forms. The transparent membrane that was protecting them earlier also disappeared.

There were not many changes between their current selves and previous ones. Aside from the mixture of black and crimson auras that were covering their bodies and the bloodshot eyes, which signified that they somewhat losing themselves, there were no noticeable changes in their appearance.

Shin slightly frowned as he could sense that this would require him a little effort to take down these two. But it shouldn't be a problem so long as he went all out from the start.

The problem was the mysterious guy, who was hiding in the dark. If he was even a bit careless, then he could get ambushed by that person and suffer considerable damage.

He had to pay close attention to his surroundings while trying to take down these two before him as soon as possible.

Bang!

Not waiting for him to respond, Jorn, the Tier 3 Woflkin Berserker, suddenly kicked the ground and swiftly propelled himself toward Shin like an aggressive predator pouncing on its prey.

Swoosh!

Jorn appeared before Shin within an instant and swung one of his battle axes down, carrying an unimaginable amount of strength.

Whoosh!

Shin could even hear the wind being split apart as the battle-ax descended towards him. Adding the dangerous and sinister aura enveloping the sharp edge of the ax, this attack shouldn't lose to Leonard even for a bit.

Click!

Slightly raising his brows, Shin pushed the sword with a thumb as his right hand grabbed the hilt before unsheathing the [Yamato] and swinging it diagonally.

Shing!

Boom!

The collision of the blades quickly produced a massive shockwave that spread in every direction, sweeping through the entire place.

He was about to cut down this Wolfkin, but the latter seemed to have a much sharper sense compared to their original state.

Jorn swiftly retreated with a couple of steps back before disappearing in front of Shin.

Swoosh!

Immediately after, Shin was greeted by a flying arrow that was shining with crimson light, heading straight in his direction.

Given the speed and might of this attack, it was impossible to underestimate it, especially when Shin could see that even the space itself was being distorted by the energies surrounding the arrow through his True Sight ocular skill.

Swoosh!

Swiftly flipping the sword in hand, Shin circulated the energies within his body and activated the Void Powers he gained through his contact with Hanzo before coating his sword and body with it.

He then suddenly swung the sword down in a very gentle manner, seemingly drawing a stroke in the air with a brush.

Crack!

But contrary to his gentle actions, the response of the space before him seemed to be a little violent.

Crack! Crack!

A series of cracks appeared in the air before turning into a huge dimensional fracture that welcomed the incoming arrow.

He was planning to use the power of the void against the spatial powers of his opponent.

'Myriad Transformation Swordsmanship (Void): Spatial Tear'

Shoo!

The destructive arrow was swallowed by the dimensional fracture before it disappeared into the void. Then the tear in the space slowly melded as the world repaired itself.

But that was not the end as Jorn suddenly appeared behind Shin like a ghost while brandishing his battle axes.

Boom!

The air seemed to have exploded as the power behind those actions seemed to have carried the ability to crush mountains despite how ordinary they looked.

Shin could even feel the powerful danger that could pose an immense threat to his life.

With a slight frown, Shin took a quick step forward before spinning around.

At the same time, his left hand flipped the sheath that he was holding with it, switching into a forehand grip, before borrowing his spinning momentum to swing the sheath down.

During the process, the sheath transformed into a greatsword, which was quickly possessed by Astaroth within an instant.

'Legacy Skill: Mondi's Style – Judgment Form'

'Elemental Spirit Possession: (Metallic Earth) Summit Splitter'

At the same time, his breathing automatically switched into the 'Grand Dominator Technique' to utilize the power of Earth Element while the flowing energies within his body followed the cycle of his unique Mentalism Method.

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

Swoosh!

As the broad blade of the greatsword glowed with yellow light and became a blade made of earth and rock, Jorn suddenly felt that his body turned heavy.

It felt like the gravity became twice as strong the moment when the earthen greatsword locked on him.

Boom!

The clash of the two sides produced an even more terrifying collision. The surrounding air exploded, sending violent ripples in every direction, while the ground shook before sinking deeply and creating a deep crater.

"Urgh!"

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Jorn could not help but groan painfully due to the heavy strike that he forcefully received. Even though his class was supposed to have the advantage in terms of strength and vitality, he was still put in a disadvantageous situation.

This signified how terrifying the stars of his opponent were.

Fortunately, he was not a regular player. He was able to quickly recover himself despite slightly being affected by the corruption in his mind.

He ignored the splitting headache that he was suffering and took advantage of the passive skill of his class

Berserk!

A special ability of berserkers that provided them strong offensive powers and aggressiveness the more damage they received.

They would exchange their injuries with bonus stats. The lower their health bars, the more strength, attack speed, and regeneration they received from their passive skill.

They would continuously grow stronger the longer the battle they were fighting.

This passive skill was further enhanced after the player reached Tier 3 of the class, making them even stronger.

"Argh!"

With a deafening roar, Jorn aggressively stepped forward, challenging Shin in a frontal confrontation.

He fearlessly brandished his battle axes, leaving multiple afterimages in the air alongside a series of air explosions that were produced by each swing.

Shin was not afraid to accept the challenge but he had to also pay attention to the Elven Archer who was keeping an eye on him and waiting for an opening in his defense.

Hu~!

He regulated his breathing as he expanded his senses with the help of the 'Boundless Ocean Technique'. His senses were heightened while his strength and speed grew.

Using the Boundless Ocean Technique and Grand Dominator Technique together, Shin was filled with overwhelming strength alongside very sharp senses.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

Not long after, he exchanged a series of blows against Jorn, who was further strengthened by a series of buffs.

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

During their clash, Shin instantly sensed the series of arrows that were flying at him from different angles, targeting the flaws of his defense that were opened as he fought Jorn.

Jorn even coordinated with his partner well as he suddenly increased the pressure on Shin by attacking more aggressively.

"Ha!!!"

But despite all of that, Shin remained calm. He coldly stared at Jorn while blocking each strike of the latter.

At the same time, his Spiritual Sense swept through all the incoming arrows while he activated his 'Sensing Circle'.

Bang!

Not long after, he pushed Jorn back by sending a powerful strike with his greatsword. Then he took advantage of that little space he created and used the brief time that he had brought himself to change the form of his left-hand sword.

The blade of the sword turned extremely thin with an unimaginable flexibility. It also became incredibly light as it became extended, turning into a whip-like sword.

'Legacy Skill: Mondi's Style – Abyssal Form'

Alongside the Boundless Ocean Technique, he manipulated the energy within his body and activated the power of the Primordial Waters.

'Four Symbol Scripture: Heavenly Black Turtle – Serpent Dance'

Waving his arm, the tape-like blade of his whip sword turned into a water serpent that revolved around Shin and formed a spinning water curtain that blocked the incoming arrows.

Clang! Clang! Clang!

Pulling his arm backward, Shin put the sword horizontally across his chest as its long and flexible blade retracted.

Then his breathing changed once again, switching to the Solar Breathing Technique, as he summoned the power of the Eternal Flame.

The sword changed form for another time and transformed into a rapier, which was enfolded with blazing flame.

'Legacy Skill: Mondi's Style – Conviction Form'

This form might not be able to be possessed by Solus due to incompatibility, but it still contained a strong power that was destructive enough to burn the surrounding space.

He then stabbed the sword forward, leaving a beautiful trail of fire in the air.

'Four Symbol Scripture: Celestial Vermilion Bird – Phoenix Annihilation'

Swoosh!

A powerful beam of fire flew forward, burning evening on its path and trying to devour his Jorn, who was standing in front of it.

Boom!

Not long after, Jorn's figure was revealed again. He was still standing strong, but his body was currently charred black by that blazing wave.

He was wearing a solemn expression, as his Health Bar had a sliver of health left, barely hanging on to his life.

If not for him activating his Tier 3 life-saving skill, the Undying Will, he would likely have died already.

Chapter 1605 Trouble in Calm Waters (Part 6)

...

Shin stared at the charred body of his opponent, who still had some hint of blazing embers in different parts of his body, before frowning.

The aura of Jorn was much more intense compared to earlier, especially when he saw the already bloodshot eyes completely dyed by blood.

At this moment, Jorn, who had a Berserker-related Class, reached the point where he was at his strongest point. With his sliver of health, which was almost reaching the bottom of the HP Bar above his head, maximized the boosts in his stats, particularly his strength, movement and attack speed, rapid regeneration, and high magic resistance.

His overall stat reached an unimaginable level after a series of buffs attached to the current condition of his body.

Alongside the skill called the Undying Will, which could make him invulnerable to all kinds of attacks for 5 minutes, the current Jorn was at his peak power.

The only problem was he had already lost his rationality as the berserk state inside the game along with the corruption of the seed of hatred in the real world reached its peak.

This completely clouded his mind, transforming him into a mindless demon, who knew nothing but destruction.

"Tsk! It seems like his class makes it a perfect class to hasten the process of corruption," Shin clicked his tongue when he saw this happen.

But what happened already happened. He could no longer change it, so he could only end the latter's suffering.

Unfortunately, the other party was currently in a state of full invulnerability. If he wanted to 'help' Jorn, then he still had to wait for the Undying Will to end in five minutes, which was not a short time given the current situation.

"Tsk! What an unlucky fellow," mumbled Shin as his figure suddenly flickered.

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

It was at that moment when a series of arrows 'pierced' through his body before landing on the ground.

Fortunately, what was left in that place was Shin's fading figure as he already appeared a couple of meters away, avoiding the sudden ambush.

Since he could not kill Jorn for the time being due to his invulnerability skill, Shin chose to target the Elven Archer instead.

But that guy was quite slippery as most of his skills seemed to focus more on movement and escaping skills rather than a series of offensive skills. But that did not mean that the offensive skills that he had were weak, they were just as strong as those that could threaten Shin to a certain extent, especially when they were carrying a hint of spatial powers that could tear through space.

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

Shin left a series of after images behind as he ran toward the elven archer as fast as he could, trying to catch the latter and end them as soon as possible.

At the same time, Jorn, who had already lost his rationality, was closely chasing after Shin. He was not losing in terms of speed despite his stats not focusing on AGI Stat. It was because of his current state, which had the maximum boost for Berserk Skill of Berserkers and related classes.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

Shin continued to chase after the elven archer, skillfully dodging all the arrows while also intensely exchanging blows against the berserk Jorn during the process.

The battle slowly escalated as the two started to show their powerful skills one after another, especially so when they were being affected by the corruption of the seed of hatred in the real world.

Swoosh!

Then Shin suddenly shifted his footwork and moved mysteriously. His figure flickered repeatedly as a cloud-like aura shrouded his body and hid his tracks.

Whoosh!

He then seemed to have transformed into a gust of wind as he accelerated forward.

'Four Symbol Scripture: Holy Azure Dragon – Threading through the Clouds'

Swoosh!

With his mysterious movements, where his speed seemed to be supported by the wind, the elven archer started to feel immense pressure from Shin.

Shin, on the other hand, wanted to use one of his new trump cards.

Following the principles of the five elements, the Wind Element was said to be another form of the Wood Element.

The wood also represented the wind as it nourished the fire with a flow of oxygen based on the regenerative Cycle of the Five Elements.

Shin wanted to use this change to familiarize himself with the power of the Natural Wood that he had gotten from his new Elemental Spirit, the little dragon girl Silvana.

It also came at the right time, especially with the current situation that he was in.

With a smile, he suddenly mumbled. "Nature Reaper."

...

Meanwhile, on one of the tree branches around, the mysterious player was currently being hidden by the shades as he watched the entire battle while also recovering the entire process.

"As expected, the members of the Empyrean Talons are the perfect target for the test. We have gotten a little lucky to bump into one of the best candidates that we have, the Battle God," he mumbled as he watched the battle.

He then fell into deep thought as he tried to compare his current strength to Shin, thinking how he would do if he was the one fighting in the battle if he was in Jorn or the elven archer's shoes.

He then shook his head as he realized that he was still far from matching the legendary players of the game even with the help of the special serums, especially after remembering that this was still far from the full power of Shin. He might only stand a chance if he managed to get his hands on the perfected version.

Not long after, he suddenly whispered to the call. "The second phase is starting. Prepare to inject the serums."

...

Real World

On the other side of the call, inside the secret laboratory that was being funded by the Seven Seas Corporation, a group of scientists were currently gathered while watching the broadcast that the other side was providing them.

Two of these scientists were currently standing before two huge tube containers, where a pair of people were being submerged inside a special liquid.

There were a series of wires connected to different parts of the body of these two, which reached their parameters, and tubes stuck on their back, which seemed to connect them with a mysterious solution that was being supplied by another huge cylindrical container behind them.

Seeing the spiking parameters, one of the scientists suddenly said. "Prepare to inject the second solution. Make sure to maintain the parameters right below the limit."

Not long after, one of the scientists watching the broadcast, who also happened to be responsible for answering the call earlier. "Professor, Sir Cardel said that the second phase is starting!"

Hearing that, an old scientist, who was holding a virtual tablet before the two huge containers, nodded his head and ordered. "Inject Solution II to subject no. 1. Prepare Solution III as well while waiting for the signal."

The scientists quickly busied themselves, preparing for the next stage of the test.

Weng! Weng! Weng!

Not long after, red lights kept on flashing one of the containers, warning them about the dangerously high parameters.

The old scientist, who seemed to be the leader of the group, suddenly said. "Inject Solution III now. Prepare for Solution IV next."

After repeating the process a couple of times, the parameters of the subject finally stabilized. But despite that, the old scientist could not help but frown deeply.

He then turned to the person beside him and asked. "How many solutions?"

The assistant checked on a tablet that was passed to him earlier before answering. "We have reached the seventh serum, Professor. We are still far from meeting our target."

Frowning deeply, the old scientist briefly nodded before turning to the other container. "How is subject number two doing?"

The assistant quickly answered after skimming through the parameters displayed on the tablet. "Surprisingly, he is holding on quite well. The parameters tell us that he can maintain a rational mind despite reaching the critical state."

"Oh~! Interesting," the old scientist could not help but become a little interested, especially when the one that they were expecting Subject No. 1 the one who was supposed to have such reading.

"Watch over him closely and make sure that he maintains his rationality once he logs out. Once he is in the game, follow the protocol. I will report to Professor Kang," said the old scientist as he nodded.

He then turned to the broadcast and watched for a while before turning around.

As he left, one of the scientists, who seemed to be normally doing his job, suddenly turned at the closing door of the laboratory. He then tapped the back of his ear and whispered, acting as if he was mumbling to himself. "It seems like they have done it. Please relay the news to the headquarters."

At the same time, he pushed up his glasses as he turned to the broadcast, watching it with his special lenses.

After a while, he mumbled. "I had already expected this to happen when they said the target, but to think that the young master is this strong within the game. I wonder how strong he is at his peak power."

Chapter 1606 More Serious Than Expected

...

Bang! Bang! Bang!

Shin's figure could be seen everywhere as he executed a series of movement techniques during the battle.

His speed lets him leave a series of afterimages while trying to catch up with the Elven Archer., who was keeping a decent distance away from him while shooting a series of arrows.

Shin was having slight trouble catching up to this person, especially when he noticed that the Elven Archer was able to maintain his sanity despite the growing demonic corruption that was trying to dominate his mind.

It was as if he was able to control the powers of the artificial seed of hatred unlike Jorn, who had already lost himself ages ago and became a mindless demon.

The five-minute duration of Jorn's invulnerability passed not long ago, giving Shin the window to end his life, and forcing him to log out of the game.

But the Elven Archer, on the other hand, was able to hold his ground for a couple of minutes more before dying under Shin's sword.

But despite that being the case, Shin felt a little unsatisfied, especially after seeing the calm eyes of the latter. He could feel that Even Archer had successfully become a true Unforgiven One in the real world.

He clearly understood the meaning of this incident and what kind of impact it could have in the future.

Regardless of the result of the battle, the opposing side, particularly the huge force hiding behind it, had already achieved what they wanted.

He might have won the battle, but it was a bitter one due to what had happened.

"I guess I have to inform Uncle Nathan about this," he mumbled before sweeping his senses in the entire surrounding.

He had spread his Spiritual Sense in every direction, trying to find that mysterious individual accompanying Jorn and the Elven Archer earlier.

He could feel that they were watched earlier during the battle and knew that everything was being recorded by that person. But he did not have the time to deal with them earlier since he was currently being occupied by the two.

He was planning to deal with them after he had executed the two, but it seemed like they were quite decisive at retreating after achieving what they wanted.

"Tsk! They sure ran fast," Shin clicked his tongue after realizing that the person had already left.

After that, he organized his discoveries before sending them to Shiella. He then told her to closely monitor the movements of the guild that had been absorbed by the Seven Seas Corporation.

At the same time, he also told her to be careful of the top experts from those organizations since they were experimenting with such a dangerous thing.

After some thought, he also sent a message to David, informing him about what happened, before connecting with his real-world account and sending a message to Nathan.

After making sure that no one was around, Shin went deeper into the map and looked for a spot for grinding.

He had somewhat lost his interest in testing his current progress with his Mentalism Method and Swordsmanship, applying all his gains from the real world and converting and integrating them into his fighting style with the game while also consolidating his realm.

But after careful consideration, he decided to still do just that while waiting for Cloe and Alice to respond to him.

The two seemed to be busy with something as they were still not logging in to the game despite being online in the virtual space.

It seemed like they were still training, so he didn't want to disturb them yet. He was not in a hurry anyway, so he could still wait for them to finish before asking for their help with his quest.

"I guess I should look for Leonard later to spar with him after I am done consolidating my realm," I mumbled as he went deeper into the forest.

In the meantime, Cloe was currently chatting with Shiella as she consulted the latter about her situation.

After listening for a while, Shiella laughed as she answered. "Why are you making it too complicated? Just look for a secondary combat class that is meant for melee battle. But make sure that it is compatible with your main to maintain your advantages."

"For example, since your class is a combination of a Holy Mage and a Priest, you can try looking for a Paladin-related class since it is also capable of wielding divine powers."

"With it as a base, you can try experimenting when creating a combat state unique to you. Silly girl, you don't have to follow me as an example since our situation is different despite being somewhat similar."

"I can share my experience when creating my unique combat state to give you some inspiration, but you can just copy my method since my situation is unique."

"Eh!?" as Shiella was explaining, she suddenly got a message from Shin. Then her expression suddenly turned serious after reading through its contents.

Seeing the sudden change in Shiella's expression, Cloe could not help but ask. "What's wrong, Big Sis Shiella? Did something happen?"

Shiella sighed before smiling bitterly. "That little brother of mine has discovered something troublesome and wants me to investigate."

She then clicked her tongue as she complained. "Tsk! He keeps on giving me a headache every time I am free. I think he is doing this on purpose!"

"Shin?" asked Cloe as she could only think of him after hearing those words. Arthur was currently busy with the preparations for his breakthrough so there was only Shin who could give Shiella a headache right now.

She then smiled at Cloe as she said. "Anyway, that's it for now. I have to deal with this first since it sounds a little serious."

"I send you a message about my experience of creating my combat state later," she added before saying goodbye.

After ending the call, Cloe could not help but mumbled. "I guess Shin gives here another problem to deal with."

"Speaking of which, I think he asked something earlier," she added as she finally remembered that Shin was asking her about her Runemaster profession.

"I guess I should log back in the game now," she mumbled to herself before turning to Alice, who was currently training in the distance.

Meanwhile, in the main headquarters of the military forces of the Springfield Family, Nathan was currently reading the reports sent to him by their spies when he received a message from Shin.

Skimming through it, he knitted his brows quite deeply before mumbling. "Tsk! It seems like this nephew of mine is quite capable even with the virtual world."

He just sent a message saying that he got it before turning his head up front.

On the sofa inside his office, Joaquin was currently relaxing while eating some fruits prepared on the table.

"Are you sure about what you have said?" asked Nathan with a solemn tone.

Joaquin clicked his tongue as he answered. "Tsk! Do you think I have the time for jokes? I assure you that it is a hundred percent accurate."

"I have been living the life of a top-notch spy during my younger days, and you know it, so this information is true," he added before plucking a grape from the table and throwing it into his mouth.

He then continued. "The tail of the rat that we are chasing leads us to both the Top Military School and the Magic Ace Academy, so there is a high chance that there is more than one mole in our ranks."

"What's more, they have penetrated quite deeply as they even reached our core," he paused for a moment before adding seriously. "I am one hundred percent sure that it is one of the members of the Elder Council."

"As you know, there is no way for an ordinary member to know the mission that Bernard had before his capture. Aside from the core members of the council and us, there is no way for others to know about it."

"You and I are also aware of Bernard's strength. He may not be our match, but he is still a top-notch expert in Domain Realm, capturing him near our borders without our notice is something only an overwhelming power could do."

Joaquin paused before continuing. "Not even the either of us can do that, so only an expert that is of Elder's Level can do that."

Nathan wore a serious expression as killing intent leaked out from his body. "We have to find who it is."

"But we can't dig any deeper since it is an elder from the council. We can't just blindly step into it," said Joaquin.

"Are we going to inform your father?" he asked.

Nathan went silent for a moment before answering. "Let's avoid it telling my father for now. Given his personality, I am sure that he will get to the bottom of this even if he is alone."

"Both Professor Plum and Grandmaster Benn are not present as they guard the forbidden lands while the other elders monitor the movements of other top masters."

"Father will be alone, so it is better to hide it from him for the time being."

Joaquin nodded his head before squinting his eyes and staring at Nathan. "You are not thinking of doing something stupid like investigating it alone, are you?"

Nathan looked at Joaquin with a strange expression. "Do you think I am that foolish?"

Hearing that, Joaquin could finally relax and nodded. "That's good. At least you are not blinded by your rage."

"Anyway, I will be going for now. I still have other things to do. I'll contact you again later once I've more information," he added before leaving.

In the meantime, Nathan went silent as he leaned his back on the chair before staring at the ceiling. He silently and repeatedly tapped his finger on the armrest while his thoughts were unknown.

Chapter 1607 The Disturbed King (Part 1)

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Deep within the wilderness of the Divine Empire, a group of players found a ruin that looked like a fallen ancient city.

"Commander, this place seems to be a quest area," said a Tier 3 Twilight (Elven Thief) as he returned from investigating the area ahead.

The commander of the team, who seemed to have a priest-related class and an elven variation, fell into deep thought before looking around. "What do you think? Do we continue exploring ahead or return first to replenish our potions and scrolls?"

One of the members, who seemed to have a hidden class of elven knights and who was also their main tank, shook his head. "I think we can continue first and see what is ahead. We can first confirm if there is anything worthy to explore here before deciding to continue or go back altogether."

The main marksman of the group, an elven archer, nodded as she seconded. "I agree with Yuwon. We should try to confirm if we are not wasting our time here."

"We have been exploring the areas around here for quite a long time already, yet we haven't gained anything up until now. I think it is better to see if there is something beneficial to us in there before deciding to invest more time," she added with a rational mind.

"Let's continue. We have gotten nothing from this exploration. It is better to try our luck since we are already here," said an Elven Elementalist.

The members of the twenty-man team started voicing their respective opinions one after another before they finally decided to continue exploring ahead.

These ruins seemed to be quite ancient and given their past experiences and accumulated knowledge from the previous games that they had played before, there was a high chance that this area could give them a special quest.

They could not just give up and leave right now, especially when there was a high possibility that they could finally get something after spending quite a long time exploring this place.

Given that there was now a constant flow of elites arriving at the Awakened Continent one after another, those who managed to arrive first needed to look for more opportunities to get ahead of the others.

Adjusting to the new environment of the Awakened Continent would require a lot of time and effort, especially when the concentration of the surrounding mana in this place was much denser compared to the Aurora Continent.

The players needed to spend quite a long time training in certain facilities scattered around Divinity City and put quite an effort into the process before they could even move freely in such an environment.

This adventurer team that managed to get a little ahead of the others wanted to keep their momentum so that they could maintain their advantage over the other groups or guilds.

They did not expect that the monsters in this place were absurdly strong as it would require them a full team alongside a bunch of their trump cards before they could even take down a single group of regular monsters.

Then there were those Elite Monsters, that could threaten to wipe them out, possessing a power that comparable to the strongest monsters of the Aurora Continent.

Aside from that, they also needed to put quite an effort into harvesting the materials from the bodies of the monsters that they had killed, consuming quite a lot of their time.

If they wanted to maintain their advantage over the others, they had to keep advancing while sacrificing some of their resting time.

They also could not afford the back-and-forth travel toward the city to replenish their supplies since the return scrolls being sold in the shops were quite costly.

A thousand gold for a single return scroll could hurt their pockets, especially when it was the lousiest scroll that would require a full minute before it could activate and teleport them out of the place.

The slightly expensive ones that would require the 30 seconds and 10 seconds activation time costed a whooping 10 thousand and 100 thousand respectively.

As for the return scroll that could instantaneously activate to bring them away, its price was so absurd that it could make the players cough blood. It cost a million gold coins, rivaling the price of some decently good items.

Such a price was already crazy, but the advantage of these scrolls was they could be activated anywhere in the Awakened Continent. They were unlike the return scrolls of the Aurora Continent, where the players needed to have different scrolls for different major or minor cities.

These return scrolls of the Awakened Continent could be linked to any city within the continent so long as they had already been in that place. They could just put a mark on the cities that they had visited, and they could set it as the default destination for their return scrolls.

But there were also a limited number of cities that they could mark depending on the type of scrolls that they possessed. If they wanted to have more destinations, then they needed a teleportation scroll that was a tier higher than the regular return scrolls.

These teleportation scrolls could be used to teleport to any destination they wanted so long as they had put their mark on that place. It could be any city, town, village, or even an outpost at the very edge of the continent.

Unlike the return scrolls that could only be used to return to the default city that they had set as their returning destination, the teleportation scrolls could be used to any destination they wanted.

They no longer needed to return to their main city before using their teleportation halls to head to their next destination. As long as they put their mark on a certain city, they could teleport to those places anytime and anywhere with these teleportation scrolls.

Naturally, the price of these teleportation scrolls was also much crazier than the return scrolls. Each scroll was ten times the price of the return scroll with the corresponding activation time.

It might sound crazy, but the top experts and huge guilds understood the significance of these scrolls, especially with the harsh environment of the Awakened Continent and the vast land that it had.

In their eyes, these return and teleportation scrolls would be the main resource that they needed when exploring the continent, particularly those extremely high-level maps and regions.

But this was only one of the items that the players needed when exploring the wild. The potions and other form scroll that the players required were also being sold from different shops within the city.

The health and mana potions were still fine as their prices were relatively fair given the place that they were in. But the other types of supplies that could help the players when exploring the wilderness such as invisibility potions, aggro-clearing potions, underwater breathing pills, and other forms of buff potions and pills were also on display in different shops around the Divinity City.

Then there were also some large-scale destruction scrolls, sealing scrolls, curse scrolls, restrictive scrolls, and others with utility effects from the scroll shops.

These resources were something that the top experts of the game needed when exploring or grinding. These were some sort of necessities that they needed when adventuring.

Moreover, the prices of these special scrolls, uncommon potions, and unique pills were as absurd as the return and teleportation scrolls.

Even the wealthiest tycoons of the game would have their pockets bleed if they wanted to stack or replenish their supplies with these 'necessities'.

This was one of the reasons why the experts scattered on different maps around Divinity City were doing their best to look for any opportunities to increase their strengths and improve their equipment.

If they wanted to get the investment that they had poured into the supplies they were carrying, then they had to double their effort and spend more time in the wild while trying to look for extra benefits.

So long as they landed big on a certain map, acquired a rare item or treasure, or even got a high-end quest, everything would be worth it.

As the adventurer team explored the ancient ruins, they somehow found an underground passage that led them to a spacious hall that looked like a huge treasure trove.

The hall did not contain actual treasures, but its walls and pillars were clearly made of expensive materials.

Adding to the luxurious design of the entire hall, the group could tell that this place was something of great importance.

"What is this place? It is beautiful!" said the elven archer as she moved her eyes in every corner of the hall.

The elven knight then reached the center of the hall and found a huge golden casket at the center. Given its size and the special engravings on its surface, this casket looked more like an ancient coffin used for powerful individuals or kings of the past.

Seeing this, the eyes of the group suddenly turned bright as if they had finally found a great treasure that could make the name of their team resound on the continent.

They quickly ran toward the ancient coffin with excited faces, planning to see what it was.

Little did they know that these actions of theirs could cause a massive disaster.

Chapter 1608 The Disturbed King (Part 2)

...

After quite some time of exploring the Awakened Continent, the top guilds and huge organizations within the game quickly understood its importance for the current progress of the game.

The Awakened Continent was not only full of top-notch resources that they could use to strengthen themselves, but it was also a land of opportunity that they could help them improve their power, particularly with its special environment that could be used as some sort of training.

Due to this these guilds and organizations had no choice but to divide their attention between the two continents.

The top experts who were qualified to enter the Awakened Continent were sent in there to train while those who were slightly short in terms of abilities were forced to stay and focus more on the ongoing war between the major factions of the game.

This was one of the reasons why there was a constant flow of top players arriving at the Divinity City these last few days.

Given that these superpowers had already sent a number of experts first and successfully cracked some secrets about the Royal Cities situated at the high-level neutral regions of the Aurora Continent, they were able to find a way to constantly send their players to the second continent.

Naturally, this did not go unnoticed. Some of the top Mercenary Groups and Adventurer Teams with decent information networks were also able to find these secrets and started directing their attention in this direction and joined the track.

Some top independent players used their connections to find the key to entering the Royal Cities and joined those who managed to arrive at the Awakened Continent.

With the current number of players that managed to enter the Divinity City, the minimum requirement for a certain event was finally triggered.

Of course, the players also needed to find the main trigger for this event, which happened to be found by one of the top adventurer teams that were exploring deep in the surrounding hunting maps of the Divinity City.

The impact of this event was much more serious than the team had expected.

They did not know that their actions would lead to a huge event that was announced to every player that was currently in the Divine Empire.

Within a huge VIP Room of a high-class restaurant within the Divinity City, the executives of the Dragon Pavilion, who first arrived at the Awakened Continent were currently gathered.

"I know that you all have already received the regional announcement, so I will go straight to the point. What do you think we should do?" said Yuan, the current Pavilion Leader of the guild right after entering the room.

"This sounds like a huge event, so I suggest we invest more people if we are going to join," replied Miracle Dragon.

Martial Dragon also nodded his head as he seconded. "There is still the countdown, so it will take a while before the event fully starts. I think we still have enough time to gather more people and send them here from the Aurora Continent."

"But we have to sacrifice our process in there if we do that," said Green Dragon, objecting to the suggestion of the two.

This expert was one of the top experts of the Dragon Pavilion. He was one of the known Godlike Players of the guild, bearing the title of 'God of the Falling Sky'.

He possessed an unrivaled sniping ability that could be ranked as one of the top marksmen among all the apex experts of the virtual games. One of his legendary achievements was when he shot dozens of warships in the previous game that he had played, where a huge war between their guild and another superpower took place.

Then he earned and solidified this title after participating in a series of official tournaments of the virtual world, including the Hegemon Cup and Guild Wars.

He might not have won any of those tournaments due to the legendary individuals who participated, but his results were always good. He even had some victory over some ranked gods of the virtual world under his belt, and this excluded his assassinations of some famous guild leaders from big guilds during in-game wars.

"Moreover, our forces participating in the faction war will be greatly weakened. We can't afford to lose especially when those snakes from the Hydra Guild are constantly targeting us," he added before turning to the person beside him.

It was a person with black scales that covered always every corner of his body. Aside from his face, almost every part of his body was covered with black scales.

The scales around his neck, which covered his chin and spread up to the back of his ears, added to the handsome features that he had. The pair of small antlers sticking out of his forehead further enhanced his charisma.

His leather armor was slightly hidden by the grey cloak, while a string of flying daggers was displayed hanging on his tactical belt.

He was also playing with a pair of daggers that seemed to be made of a special branch of an ancient tree.

It was quite obvious that his class belonged to Thieves or Assassins.

He seemed to be uninterested in the meeting that they were having, but he still answered when he sensed the gaze of his guild leader. "I agree with Brother Green this time. Even if our forces are strong, we still can't afford to direct too much of our attention here since the benefits that the previous continent is not that small either."

"That place is also our foundation, so we can't just abandon it, especially when the next batch of experts needed a place to develop when they joined the game."

He paused for a moment as he thought of something before continuing. "Moreover, those Royal Cities also need our attention. The resources and facilities that they can provide us are only slightly inferior to this place. We can't ignore them either."

This person might not have an official title, but he was one of the greatest experts of the Dragon Pavilion – Maverick God comparable to the previous three.

He was Rouge Dragon more known as the 'Scheming Dragon' as he was one of the brains of the Dragon Pavilion since its founding. These executives of the guild trusted him very much as he had proven himself every time the guild needed his brains.

"I suggest that we should cooperate with other forces instead. Didn't the Titan Guild have also quite a solid lineup to operate here? There is also the Purple Crows. We have quite a close relationship with them, why not invite them instead?" he added as he playfully juggled his daggers.

These five were the main force that the Dragon Pavilion stationed in Divinity City, as Yuan had already sent the other experts to the other cities to investigate.

The resources of this giant city might be good, but they were not enough to satisfy all the top guilds and other organizations gathered here. It was better to look for another place to avoid weakening their forces due to some unwanted conflict, which would only delay their progress.

The group exchanged their insights and opinions for quite a while before they came up with a conclusion.

Yuan turned to Miracle Dragon and Martial Dragon. "Then I will entrust the preparation to you."

After that, he looked at Green Dragon and Rouge Dragon. "As for the two of you – I hope you can handle the negotiations well."

"Understood!"

"Leave it to us, Head Dragon!"

Yuan then nodded before dismissing everyone.

In an isolated place in the depths of the forest, the heads of the dark guilds and notorious superpowers within the game were also having a similar meeting.

However, unlike the other top guilds, these people took the initiative to contact one another to form an alliance.

"I hope that everyone is agreeing to cooperate for this event?" asked one of the leading figures while looking at everyone.

"The key here is to look for the main initiators of the event. Once we get our hands on them, then we will be ahead of the others," said another hooded individual.

The others also agreed and started discussing their plans until someone said. "What about the members of the Empyrean Talons? Don't we have an agreement to eliminate them or at least delay their progress as much as we can, so that we can catch to their progress?"

The others also nodded as this was also one of their main issues.

One of the leading figures, who was wearing a crimson cloak, suddenly stepped forward as he answered. "Don't worry. Our Blood Carnival is already marking their locations. We can start moving once we have gotten our chance."

Then, the other leaders also voiced their thoughts, revealing that their forces were already stationed in specific places to launch an ambush on the key members of the Empyrean Talons.

"Then I hope for our success!"

Chapter 1609 The Disturbed King (Part 3)

...

Shin was hunting deep in the wilderness when he got an unexpected notification from the system. Then he slightly frowned his brows as he learned that it was a regional announcement, informing every player within the Divine Empire about it.

...

Regional System Announcement: Someone had intruded the resting place of an ancient king and disturbed their rest, causing an ancient curse and mysterious plague to be released.

The curse was already affecting the surrounding environment of the king's tomb, affecting the local inhabitants of the nearby village while the plague was transforming the living creatures into ferocious monsters that were neither demonic nor corrupted.

These transformed creatures possessed corrosive powers that could terraform the environment they were in while transforming and converting creatures that they had bitten into their 'kin'.

The Adventurer Guild had gotten the news of this event and invited all the adventurers to investigate the main cause of this disaster and prevent it from spreading to the main vicinity of Divinity City.

Regional System Announcement: The Adventurer Guild of the Divinity City is recruiting people for a crusade to eradicate cursed monsters that were trying to cross the safe borders around the city.

Regional System Announcement: The Church of Light and Church of the Sun and Moon have joined forces and are looking for Clerics, Priests, Holy Mages, and Paladins with decently high holy powers that can purify the spreading plague.

Regional System Announcement: The Martial Alliance is summoning all its nearby members to join the crusade. Everyone with high martial attainment is required to answer the summon as the emergency alarm is set at the highest level.

Regional System Announcement: ...

Regional System Announcement: ...

Time Limit Before the registration ends (in-game time): 2 days: 23 hours: 59 minutes: 59 seconds.

...

Shin skimmed through a string of notifications and could not help but raise his brows. "It looks like that Adventurer Team have hit a jackpot this time for triggering such a huge event."

He became quite interested in this, especially when quite a lot of NPC organizations under the Righteous Factions were joining the event.

This was just the first big event of the Divine Empire, yet it seemed to be quite a big one for pulling in quite a lot of organizations.

Shin could not help but think about the identity of the said king, who was resting in that tomb. Their identity should be quite special given that they could cause such an intense reaction from different NPC organizations.

"Should we join the fun?" he mumbled, considering if he would invite the rest of the Empyrean Talons to participate in this event.

But after putting more thought into it, he felt that there was no need for it. After all, those others were busy with their respective quests that were not that inferior to this event.

Based on Shin's understanding of the flow of the game so far, this event seemed to be purposely set to accelerate the progress of the players within the Awakened Continent so that those, who chose to grind in the high-level neutral regions of the Aurora Continent, could not get way ahead of them.

After all, there was a decently long time before the players within the Awakened Continent to adjust themselves to the new environment and unlock the secrets of the continent one after another.

Unlike those players, who now had access to the Royal Cities and took the resources from the high-level neutral regions, the players here in the second continent needed to take one step at a time as if they were starting from the very beginning once again.

Given that there were already quite a lot of experts gathered here in the Awakened Continent, conflicts between one another would be a common accordance, especially when they were fighting over rare resources.

The system needed something that could return the balance over everything. This was why it had to put a 'common enemy' that everyone had to face.

But unlike these experts, who were constantly running around the Divinity City and blindly looking for opportunities, Shin and the rest of the Empyrean Talons did not need to go through such troubles since their status within the Divine Empire was quite special.

Aside from the rewards that they had gotten from being the first explorers of the Divine Empire, they had also gotten some extra benefits through the pioneering rights that they had gotten alongside those.

This was why they were able to easily trigger a lot of quests from the NPCs within the Divine Empire, which was why they were being targeted by most of the top guilds. It was to delay them and slow down their progress.

Moreover, the team was being targeted by those guilds due to them being way ahead of the others for being the pioneers.

"Maye I should discuss this with them before deciding," he mumbled before looking at his friend list and skimming through the grouped names meant for the members of Empyrean Talons.

But to his surprise, most of them were unable – some were offline while the others were within a special dimension and could not be contacted.

He slightly frowned his brows, somewhat confused, before shaking his head. "Never mind. I'll just send a warning to them in our team chat channel."

After sending the message to the team, Shin thought of something before smiling. "Hey, are you also bored? Want to play for a bit?"

He might look like talking to himself, but he was talking to Uno.

Naturally, Uno had no time to entertain Shin and did not want to respond. But since the latter was quite persistent, he scolded. [If you have a lot of time in your hands, then you should look for more clues about the locations where you can find the materials for the 'True Phantom.]

Hearing that, the corner of Shin's mouth twitched as he refuted. "It is not like I don't want to look for any clues. But there is no information about them no matter where I look online."

"Staying in the library is a waste of time as well since all I can access is the lowest floor, which only has the history of the Atlas World."

"It is better to wait for Molton to arrive and let him swim in those books before asking for the information that we are looking for."

"There are still quite a few things that I have to deal with rather than staying in that place," he added before suddenly clicking his tongue. "However, those things are also currently pending due to certain circumstances."

As he was talking about this, he suddenly paused as he remembered something. "Ah! I seem to remember to read something about one just now!"

He then swiftly pulled out a virtual screen and logged into the official website of the game. He skimmed through the latest news and read the background information of the current event that was about to take place in the Awakened Continent.

There was not much difference compared to the initial information that the system had given them, but there was a slight clue hidden in them.

It was not about any background of the mysterious king since it was one of the main conditions that the players needed to find out during the entire event.

What attracted Shin was one of the rewards that the players could get once everything had been settled.

Skimming through the list, Shin finally found what he was looking for. "Soul Stone!"

It was one of the materials that he needed for the creation of his perfect clone, the True Phantom.

True Phantom Creation

Materials needed:

0/1 Black Heart

0/1 Soul Stone

0/1 A liter of Dragon's Blood (Best Choice, Green Dragon)

0/1 Essence of Nine Constellations

0/1 A hundred grams of Star Dust

Note: The grade of the True Phantom is dependent on the quality and quantity of the materials collected.

Glancing at the list of materials, he could not help but be silent for a moment before shaking his head with a bitter smile. "I guess I still have to join this event no matter what."

He had already spent all the Green Dragon's blood that he had gotten previously to nurture the dragon egg, where Silvana was born from, so he needed to look for another source for it.

In the worst-case scenario, he would be asking some from Silvana herself.

Now that he had gotten another clue about another material, he could not just let it pass, especially when it was rare to find something like this. "Tsk! I guess I have to join the event even by myself if the others are not interested in joining."

Thinking about this, Shin suddenly thought of something before turning to a friend list once again. He then stared at a certain name for quite a while. It was Shiella, who kept complaining about him giving her a lot of tasks whenever he got the chance.

"Tsk! I don't want to do this, but I don't have a choice," he mumbled as he sighed.

He then prayed before sending a message to Shiella, asking for detailed information on the teams or guilds that managed to arrive at the Awakened Continent.

He was planning to prepare ahead of time, taking note of those who were worthy of his attention. "Let's see how this will work out."

Chapter 1610 Looking for a way to free the Forgotten God of the Sea (Part 1)

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While Shin was considering what he was going to do next, he suddenly received a notification, telling him that Cloe had finally gone online. And right after the notification, she also sent him a message, asking him where he was.

Considering it for a moment, Shin replied. "Wait for me at our team's usual meeting place. I'll be there in a moment."

After that, he spread his Spiritual Sense in every direction and activated his Sensing Circle to the fullest, making sure that there was no one around before taking out a return scroll and activating it.

His return scroll was quite special as it was provided to him by the Church of the Sun and Moon. Unlike the common scroll that the players could buy from the shops within the Divinity City, which was a one-time consumable, this scroll could be repeatedly used so long as it had enough energy stored in it.

Moreover, it was also connected to all the branches of the church in every corner of the Divine Empire. It just that the consumption of the energy was dependent on the distance that he wanted to go. The farther it was, the more energy was consumed.

The activation time was also the same. The faster the activation time he wanted, the larger the energy was required.

He just needed to recharge the energy of the scroll regularly at the Church of the Sun and Moon to make sure that it had the minimum amount of energy for each activated.

It was quite a precious treasure, but it was something that he needed when exploring the surrounding map of Divinity City.

After all, he was the Envoy of the Church of the Sun and Moon, so it would be a disgrace if he did not have something like this in his possession.

This was just one of the treasures that the church had given him to protect himself. Although he would rarely have the chance to use them, they could still save him from serious harm due to how powerful they were.

Shin felt somewhat frugal to use them since they were precious treasures. Aside from the one that he could use repeatedly like the special return scroll of the Church of the Sun and Moon, he would save the rest for emergency purposes.

Swoosh!

After waiting for a whole minute, Shin transformed into a streak of light that flew in the air and flew towards the direction of the Divinity City.

Whoosh!

Not long after, Shin appeared in the Teleportation Hall of the Divinity City. This hall was one of the biggest buildings in the city, yet it was somewhat desolate due to the small number of people using it.

Aside from the NPCs with high military and social statuses, only those wealthy players and executives of huge guilds and organizations were capable of using this place.

Any player who appeared in this place would, without a doubt, have a powerful background or overwhelming strength.

Given this, anyone who appeared in this Teleportation Hall would be instantly recorded in the list of the top guilds and huge organizations within the game once their scouts spotted them.

"Hmm?" Shin could not help but frown deeply once he appeared in one of the Teleportation Circles.

He instantly sensed the sharp eyes that were observing him right after he appeared. He could also tell that they were trying to gauge his strength by applying some pressure on him.

"Heh!" Shin found it amusing that these guys were trying to assess his power with such a lousy attempt.

He immediately knew that these guys were the scouts stationed here by their superiors to monitor the Teleportation Hall and mark those powerful individuals for future reference.

"Cute~..." commented Shin as he suddenly released his own pressure, erupting with an unimaginable power.

Boom!

"Argh!"

"Urgh!"

"Ahh!"

Right after he released a portion of his power, those scouts that were bold enough to try testing him, suddenly felt a huge backlash after their respective methods were rejected by Shin.

They felt like there was a clap of thunder inside their heads, disturbing their focus and canceling their respective techniques.

Their focus scattered as their control over their powers broke like a fragile glass.

It was as if something terrifying stepped into their minds, trying to crush them with its absolute force.

As they were trying to regain themselves, they suddenly 'saw' a humongous shadow of a mysterious monster.

No-...

It was not just a single monster. There was a group of monsters ferociously staring at them behind those shadows.

The pressure of each of these monsters was strong enough to crush them individually, much less five of them.

Shin skillfully controlled his power, specifically targeting those scouts who were bold enough to provoke him. He avoided those innocent NPCs and players, who chose to be a bystander.

Such meticulous and skillful control showcased how much Shin had mastered his powers.

"Trying to test my mental strength? Foolish!" he mumbled before heading toward the exit.

In the meantime, those scouts, who were trying to regain footing, were currently kneeling on the ground and gasping rapidly.

Those with a slightly weaker mentality were already lying on the floor, either hugging their head or clutching their chests.

The most pitiful ones, on the other hand, were already rolling on the ground or completely unconscious.

Such a display of power stunned those, who were watching in the distance. It also shocked the other apex experts, who wanted to watch the fun.

They all realized that these foolish scouts had bumped into a real monster. They could not help but shake their heads as they scolded these scouts inside their heads. It was fine to be confident and overbearing, but being blinded by their backgrounds was a foolish thing to do, especially when the Divinity was filled with hidden dragons and crouching tigers.

Bumping into one was nothing special, so it was their fault for being too blind. In the eyes of these experts, it was only right for these scouts to kick such a steel wall after trying to showcase their 'powers'.

At the same time, these experts could not help but look at Shin's back, who was already walking away and acting as if nothing had happened.

"Tsk! What a monster!"

"Not bad!"

"Interesting."

"Showoff."

They displayed different kinds of reactions, showing their opinions. Some were impressed, others were skeptical, while the rest were interested and itching for a fight.

Unfortunately, Shin immediately disappeared from their field of vision after activating one of his stealth skills, escaping the eyes of those who were trying to tail him.

...

Not long after, Shin finally arrived at his destination. He straight up opened the door of the small house that was situated at the most secluded place in the city, which was rarely visited by any people.

Right after entering, Shin could not help but pause his steps as he felt an intense coldness within the room. It was as if he was thrown in the middle of a snowstorm at the center of a frozen world.

He did not know if there was someone who managed to sneak inside their meeting and planned to ambush him.

This was a special building that the others had brought after pooling their money together and using the influence of their adventurer team. It was their current headquarters within the Divine Empire.

Shin slowly raised his head and saw that Cloe and Alice were currently sitting on the sofa opposite each other while silently staring at one another.

Shin did not know if he was seeing things, but he felt that the two were emitting a chilling aura cold enough to affect the atmosphere. Also, invisible sparks clashed between them as they stared at each other.

They seemed to have not noticed Shin's arrival as they continued to stare at the opposition.

"What is happening?" the corner of Shin's mouth twitched as he watched the two from the door.

Shing!

Shin then felt a sharp flash that assaulted him as the two turned their heads at him simultaneously.

"You are finally here," said Cloe with a calm tone before flashing a bright smile. "Can you explain why you have 'summoned' the two of us at the same time?"

"Ah—... Ahm—..." Shin tried to open and close his mouth, but he failed to voice his words as they were suddenly stuck inside his throat after he saw the col gazes that the two were giving him.

He did not know what happened or whether he had done something to upset these two. But given the fierceness hidden behind their calm eyes, he could not help but gulp hard while trying to figure out what was happening.

He had to carefully choose his words as his instincts were telling him that some disaster would fall in this place right after he said something wrong.

The main problem was-... he was sure that he had not done something wrong, so he was very confused about this situation.