

Destiny 741

Chapter 741 Continuing The Quest (Part 1)

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Swoosh!

Shin logged back in the game and immediately appeared in the last place where they logged out earlier.

Right after he appeared, he immediately saw the others who were already checking their respective gears. They also paused what they were doing when he noticed him and slightly nodded their heads before continuing.

Shin nodded back at them and immediately swept his gaze to look for Cloe. He heard what happened earlier when he was gone. He thought it was not a big deal, especially that the result was a draw. Neither of them won nor lose, so he didn't know why the others were urging him to console Cloe.

But since he promised to tell her what he discussed with Alice earlier, he still had no choice but to console her before he could bring that topic to her, especially when he was completely aware of how she was acted whenever she was sulking about something.

"Did you eat? You didn't I didn't see you at dinner earlier, I told you to wait for me," greeted Shin in an attempt to talk to Cloe.

Unfortunately, he was greeted with a shoulder as she didn't respond to him. In fact, she completely ignored him while browsing on the virtual screen in front of her.

Seeing that, Shin felt that he was currently standing in the middle of two cliffs with a thin line of the soil as his footing. He remembered that he experienced this kind of situation before, it was definitely telling him to choose his words wisely, or else a disaster was going to befall him.

The others immediately noticed the heavy surrounding the two, so they stealthily distanced themselves away from the lovebirds as they didn't want to get swept away by the storm that was about to come. But at the same time, they still stuck their ears as they could tell that this was good material for gossiping.

In the meantime, Shin currently didn't know what to do as he continued to stand in front of Cloe. At a time like this, he wished for Arthur and the others to arrive as soon as possible so that he could dodge this situation.

"A-are you mad at me?" asked Shin cautiously as he was trying to test the waters. He immediately got his answer when he saw Cloe give him a cold sidelong glance.

'Yeah, you are mad, without a doubt,' he said inside as he gulped a mouthful of saliva.

This time, he chose to be honest and said. "Can you at least tell me what upset you, so that I can have an idea how to console you? You know me, I am not good at these kinds of things."

Cloe narrowed her eyes as she stared at him. Then she turned her head away, indicating that he was on his own this time. "Hmph!"

Shin pursed his lips as he didn't know what to do. He could only release a helpless sigh apologizing. "I am really sorry. But I'm really don't have an idea what to do."

While he was saying that, someone suddenly arrived and immediately asked. "What is happening?"

Alice headed over to this place as soon as she could after getting the coordinates from the others. She felt bad for not being able to participate until now due to what happened in the real world. So, she wanted to start working as soon as possible to compensate them for her absence.

But when she saw the others gathered around at the entrance of the particular rundown house, she couldn't help but feel a little confused which was why she asked.

Shin couldn't help but turn his head towards the opened door when he heard the voice. He slightly knitted his eyebrows but didn't look into it since he was currently stacked in a sticky situation.

On the other hand, Cloe suddenly flinched when she heard the voice as she could immediately identify who was it. She unconsciously extended her hand and grabbed at Shin's cloak.

Shin raised his eyebrows when he sensed her actions and quickly turned his head back to her. He didn't know what happened, but seeing the anxious look that she currently had, he couldn't help but smile at her and patted her head. "What's with that look? It is not like I am going anywhere. I am not going to disappear, alright?"

He was not sure what was going on. But he was thankful that he didn't have to deal with the troublesome situation that he had. "Let's go. The others are waiting."

Cloe slightly nodded her head and stood up before following behind him. Looking at his back, she suddenly felt a strange feeling. She didn't where this sense of crisis was coming from, but she followed her intuition and asked with a soft voice. "You are really not going away, right? You will stay by my side like what you've promised, right?"

Shin suddenly halted his steps when he heard those words and quickly turned around. He looked at Cloe with a slight frown before saying. "I really don't know why are you acting strange right now. But you should know me better than anyone else. I always keep my promise."

Cloe slightly nodded her head. She then urged Shin to continue walking as she followed right behind him.

When they got out, they immediately saw the others who were currently having an awkward look on their faces while Charlotte, Alice's identity inside the game, stared at them with a strange look on her face. She didn't know why, but she felt a tightening feeling in her chest.

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Not long after, Arthur and his group finally arrived and joined the others. And right after their arrival, they immediately sensed the strange atmosphere surrounding the other group.

Arthur quickly headed over to Shin and asked. "Did something happen?"

Shin slightly shrugged his shoulders. It was as if he was saying that he also didn't know.

Seeing his actions, Arthur gave him a skeptical look before turning to Owen who was currently signaling him to come over.

Arthur quickly walked toward the knight and started inquiring about what happened. When he heard the details from Owen, he could help but shake his head and mutter to himself. "Looks like I really need to teach him the 'Skills of Lures'!"

Shin had no idea what they were talking about, so he quickly asked. "What you doing? I thought you want to clear this quest as soon as possible? Hurry up and fill us the details!"

"Tsk!" Arthur clicked his tongue when he heard those words and thought that this brother of his was really close to the boundary of 'beyond salvation'.

He then shook his head before answering. "I already told you during dinner earlier that the old man really lost his mind, he became a crazy person. If not for the token that we had, then I doubt that he was going to follow us here."

Hearing that, Shin turned his head at the extra person that Arthur brought alongside their group.

He observed the NPC with his 'True Sight' activated, trying to see if the old man was currently under a spell. But after discovering nothing, he couldn't help but shake his head as he felt that they hit another dead end.

The old man lost the focus on his eyes, his mind was definitely not with them. Talking to him was going to be really troublesome.

Then he heard Arthur's voice beside him. "Fortunately, we are currently inside the game. A crazy person is not really a crazy person here. As long as we find the 'keyword' that can trigger the quest, then we are going to be fine."

"We already tried everything earlier, but that old man really didn't respond to us. Tsk! Tsk!" he added while glaring at the old man.

"Are you sure that he is the right person that we are looking for?" asked Shin with a slight frown.

"Yeah, we are sure. The sub-quest that we have earlier is immediately cleared when we meet this old man," said Leonard as he joined the conversation.

Shin fell into deep thought when he heard those words before opening the quest panel once again. He was trying to look for a clue on how they were going to proceed on this quest.

After a long time of thinking without a result, he decided to put this quest on hold for a moment and deal with it later. "Let's drop this matter for now. How about we proceed on the other quest that we have. It is quite related to the original quest anyway, so we may get some clue along the way."

The other two quickly nodded their heads in agreement since they knew that they didn't have another choice at hand.

Seeing that the two of them agree, Shin quickly gathered everyone and told them what they were going to do next. "We don't have much clue right now, so let's proceed with what have right now."

He paused for a moment and turned to Alucard before continuing. "We are going to track a suspected vampire for now."

Chapter 742 Continuing The Quest (Part 2)

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"This is not going to work. We are able to find some traces of battles in different parts of this abandoned village but it keeps on leading us into a dead end," said Arthur with a deep frown as the team gathered once again in one of the rundown houses within the village.

"But if we look closely into it, those traces are also suspicious. It is as if we are being led into those places on purpose," commented Owen as he took a seat on the ground.

Shin nodded his head slightly as he felt the same time. It was also the reason why he kept on marking the locations on his virtual map to see if he could get some extra lead. He was also trying to see if he could draw some sort of pattern or symbol after connecting them.

Unfortunately, all he got was nothing but a bunch of scribbles. Despite how hard he tried to connect them.

"Maybe we are doing things wrong from the start," said Akailu as he was getting tired of going in circles since the time they arrived in this place.

The others also nodded their heads in agreement. They were feeling that there was something wrong with their investigation method, or they might overlook something in the process.

At the very least, their suspicion about their current target was right. Based on what Alucard had investigated so far, he confirmed that they were facing a vampire in this quest. And as additional information, he also discovered that it was just an infected vampire which was good news for them.

"The elemental mana in this place is quite chaotic. Maybe it is due to the instability caused by the dominant ice element within the vicinity," said Alice as a result of her investigation.

She paused for a couple of moments as if she was thinking about something before continuing. "But it was a little different compared to the other places of the Sky Deceiving Valley. It is probably because of the evil aura that is surrounding the village."

"There is a high chance that it is because of the influence that the vampire in this village," said Alucard as he started browsing on his virtual screen, looking for some information that they could use.

While he was doing that, Ithilien suddenly asked. "Then what about the signs of human activities in the area? Are we not going to investigate them?"

"They are some signs of dark magic in them. So, those signs are most likely left behind by our target to lead us to their scheme," said Alice. They naturally checked the places that Ithilien had investigated earlier, so she investigated those places properly to see if they were really a trap to lure them in.

"But we can't still deny that the traces of battle left behind in the scenes are real. So, there is still a possibility that there are some people hiding in the vicinity," refuted Leonard.

"That is also true," said Alice in agreement before turning silent.

In the meantime, Owen immediately added. "But most of them are old marks, so we can't be so sure that it is totally the case. The most recent one is at least a month old based on the traces that are left behind."

Hearing that, Arthur suddenly blurted out. "How many days are we investigating based on in-game time?"

"If we include the time when we first arrive here, then it is most likely a week already," answered Shin before turning silent. A sudden thought entered his mind.

'A month-old battle marks, and a week of discovering nothing,' thought Shin to himself before turning Chaotic Luck and instructed. "Luck, spread your skeleton soldiers in different parts of the village."

"Put out the sacred flames that are surrounding their bodies and let them act as some remains of dead people," he added urgently.

The others were quite confused at first but they immediately understand what he was thinking after hearing his next words. "There is a chance that there are some people who are still living in this place just based on the clue that we have from the quest that I got from the first village."

"And if my suspicion is right, then they are probably hiding somewhere near here and only coming out to get some supply of food or something like that."

Arthur quickly nodded his head and quickly added. "Then, based on the timing of things, it is about time for them to go out from their hiding place."

"Don't tell me, they are hiding inside a cave or an underground settlement just like those legends in some novels and movies," commented Owen.

Shin didn't deny the idea and quickly said. "That can also be the case."

He then turned to the others and quickly instructed. "Get ready for now. If our suspicion is right, then a fight is most likely going to break out between the NPCs and the Vampire sooner or later."

"Are we going to immediately help them or observe the situation first before making our move?" asked Cloe even though she already had an idea which was the answer that he was going to pick.

'Is she not upset anymore?' Shin knitted his eyebrows a little when he heard her and quickly answer. "We are obviously going to observe first to get a rough idea of what is going on. We can't just jump in the fight without knowing what is happening in this place."

He paused for a moment before continuing. "We are not going to make our move unless it is absolutely necessary. Wait for my signal before you take action. I am planning to make a scenario that is advantageable for us."

Boom!

While he explained what they needed to do, a loud explosion suddenly occurred on the eastern side of the village.

"Looks like it finally started," muttered Shin before turning his head to Chaotic Luck. "Share what you are seeing through your 'Shared Vision'!"

Hearing that, the Solaris Lich immediately opened a virtual screen that was projecting what he was currently seeing through his skill. Then Shin and the other immediately saw a group of people fighting a monster with a humanoid.

The battle was taking place at a distance a little far away from the skeleton soldier that spying for the group. But based on the silhouette of those people, Shin and the others could tell what was going on and how the fight was progressing.

"We are going. But to avoid being noticed, we are to divide ourselves into small groups," said Shin as he swept his gaze to the others before assigning their roles in quick succession.

"Chaotic Luck will stay here while giving us a constant update on what is going on. But don't just focus on the battle and keep an eye on the other parts of the village."

"Alice, Owen, and Cloe will be staying behind to protect him and be on guard for unexpected things that may arise later. Also, keep an eye on that old."

"Archimedes and Leo, you go together. Daulla team up with Arthur. Alucard and Akailu, the two of you will be pairing up. Ithilien, you will be coming with me."

"We are going in a different direction and move as sneaky as possible," he added before taking a quick glance at Cloe who was clearly showing her displeasure with the arrangement that he made.

He released a helpless sigh before explaining a little. "We are going to focus on his speed this time, so we are going with the fastest members of our group. If you guys don't have any questions, then let's get moving now."

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Boom! Boom!

Bang!

"Village Chief, the ground is going to collapse if this continues. We need to lure him away from the village before the villagers hiding underground get buried," said a man with a hunter's clothes that are made of animal leather and furs.

He loaded an arrow on his bow before aiming forward. "What should we do?"

A man with knight armor and a greatsword were currently standing in front of the vampire before answering. "Hold your ground as long as you can, I will think of a way to lure him away."

This knight currently had a solemn look on his face as he was completely aware of their current situation. But it was not because they were currently fighting a vampire nor due to the situation that the hunter had said earlier. Instead, it was because of the identity of the vampire that they were currently facing.

From a single look, the vampire looked like a person who lost his mind. Based on his bloodshot eyes and saliva that was drooling out from his mouth, on top of the low growls that he had, that person was no different from the monsters that they encountered in the woods.

This person who turned into an infected vampire was a resident of their village previously. And he suddenly became like this just like the other villagers in a single night.

'D*mn it! If only the church listens to our request during that time, this is not going to happen,' thought the Knight as he fended off another attack from the vampire

Ahh!

Then he suddenly heard a cry coming from behind him. And when he turned his head towards that direction, he saw his subordinates behind the attack by another two vampires that came out of nowhere.

"What is happening? What are these guys hunting together right now? They are supposedly hunting individually!" said the hunter earlier as he saved one of his colleagues.

He then put that person down when they got in a safe distance before shouting at the knight. "Village Chief! This is getting more and more serious!"

"Gather together!" shouted the knight urgently.

The others quickly complied with his words and moved closer with each other with their backs facing one another.

Grr! Grr! Grr!

On the other hand, the three vampires surrounded them from three different locations, entrapping the group.

Seeing their current situation, the knight couldn't help but feel terrible due to the crisis that they were currently facing. 'Is this where we are going to die?'

Chapter 743 The Bloody Ghost (Part 1)

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Shin and the others arrived at the scene when the village chief donned in knight armor and the villagers with hunter's clothing and weapons were surrounded by the three vampires.

Seeing that, Arthur immediately asked in the party chat channel. "Are we still going to wait? I think those guys are already screwed."

Shin didn't immediately reply as he knitted his brow and looked at what was happening in front of them. Especially when he saw the clothes that the vampires were wearing. From the look of it, those people were previously residents before they turned into vampires.

Then he suddenly remembered a certain phrase on the update of their quest earlier.

– "A plague that transformed all of the infected into a special type of undead while sharing his blood with a couple of worthy individuals." –

This was one of the information that was given to them by the system after the update of their quest. With this information alone, Shin could easily guess the identity of the 'descendant' mentioned in that quest.

"That person is most probably the first vampire, the progenitor of all vampires," muttered Shin as he also recalled the information that they got from Alucard.

After that, he whispered on the party chat to instruct the others. "Get ready, we are saving them."

The others quickly nodded their heads as they got ready to make their moves.

"Go!"

Shin quickly shouted when he saw that the vampires were about to jump on the village chief and the others.

Hearing his signal, Archimedes and Ithilien quickly loaded an arrow on their respective bows and aimed at one of three vampires before shooting the arrows at the same time. On the other hand, Alucard and Daulla targeted one each, stopping the other two vampires.

Swoosh! Swoosh!

Bang!

Crackle!

The arrows imbued with mana hit each leg of the first vampire, making it stumble a little.

At the same time, Alucard's silver bullet blasted the left chest of the other vampire, almost killing it in the process. It was just a pity that the vampire immediately sensed the incoming threat and was barely able to move its body to avoid its heart from being hit.

In the meantime, the lightning strike that Daulla had summoned hit the last vampire and immobilized it in the process.

That was when Shin, Arthur, and Leonard arrived and quickly picked a vampire to attack while Akailu and his summoned monsters surrounded the village chief and the residents to protect them.

But after the initial ambush, the vampires were able to quickly regain their footing and immediately started fighting back.

The vampire that suffered the most from Alucard was struggling for a moment. But it immediately fought back properly right after healing its injuries.

"Huh? Its regeneration rate is insane! It is normal for them to have that kind of self-healing abilities?" asked Shin after seeing the vampire in front of him almost heal the hole on its chest in an instant.

"It is possible. But it consumes a lot of energy in exchange, so its battle capabilities will immediately decrease after healing such a fatal injury," answered Alucard in an instant before loading another specialized bullet on his rifle.

"Their strength is no joke!" commented Arthur as he blocked the barrage of attacks that the vampire had thrown at him.

"Their speed too! They are moving way too fast!" said Leonard while trying to keep up with the vampire in front of him.

Alucard knitted his eyebrows for a moment before explaining. "Maybe because these 'infected' are about to evolve. I think they already consumed a lot of human blood and are about to reach a breakthrough on their strengths."

While Shin and the others were busy dealing with the vampires, the Village Chief and the people accompanying him stared at the sight with a blank expression on their faces.

"Who are these people? They are holding themselves against those monsters!" said the hunter beside the village chief.

"What your mouth, Johan! They are also residents of our village!" said the village chief who was wearing a knight's armor.

"Maybe they are those adventurers from the other world that is summoned by the gods! I heard about them when I visited the Mercenary Guild before," said the guy with a huge ax in his hand.

"It looks like Sheron is right, captain! Look they have different powers and races!" said another person who was carrying a huge bag behind him.

Hearing that he was addressed as captain, the village chief suddenly threw a sharp glare at that person before saying with a low voice. "I already told you not to call me captain. We are no longer a part of that church!"

The hunter nodded his head and seconded. "That is right, Kale. They already abandoned us. They didn't even send any help despite our desperate request!"

"Who knows, they may be the real reason why our colleagues suddenly disappeared out of nowhere," he added while wearing a solemn look on his face.

The village chief quickly turned his head at him and glared. "I already told you to watch your mouth, Johan. We can't accuse them without having any solid evidence!"

Akailu was currently eavesdropping on them while ordering his summoned monsters to get information. 'Looks like we already get a major clue this time. The church that they are talking about, those vampires, and these knights, they are most likely related with each other.'

He quickly informed the other through the party chat channel to which they nodded their heads in response.

Arthur and Leonard also realized that this series of quests were somewhat time-gated. They could only continue the next part of the quest after a certain period. It was most likely why they didn't get any clue up until now.

They also suspected that it might be related to the next major update that the developers had announced previously. About the main racial regions for major races after the so-called prerequisites were met.

"Hey, Leo. What is your current level?" asked Arthur casually while trying to fend off the vampire in front of him.

He was not showing his capabilities yet since he was observing the skills, special abilities, and noticeable habits of the monster in front of him. The information that he could get might become useful later.

Leonard was also doing the same since this was a rare chance to observe a new type of monster that they were going to meet in the future. After all, they couldn't rely on the information that Alucard had since there might be some unexpected variables that might arise in the future.

Hearing what Arthur had said, he slightly tilted his head to the side before answering. "I am still level 148. Leveling up is really hard. Clearing some high-ranking quest is the only option we have to move forward."

"Tsk! I am the same. I really want to reach level 150 as soon as possible so that I can finally tackle my tier 3 promotion quest and head over to those major regions that are mentioned in the announcement," said Arthur as he clicked his tongue.

Grr! Grr! Grr!

Noticing that they were no match with the group in front of them, the three vampires suddenly gathered together.

They glared at Shin and the others for a couple of moments before quickly running away.

"Trying to run? As if I will let you run away," said Arthur as he prepared to attack with a powerful skill.

But before he could even finish channeling his mana on his spear, Shin suddenly put his hand in the way while. "Wait! Let run for now."

After that, he quickly turned to Alucard while shouting. "You have trackers, right?"

Alucard was already loading a special magazine on his rifle when he heard those words and aimed at the three vampires that were running away. "I already know! Hunting these guys is my main job after I changed my race and class."

Bang!

Swoosh!

A tracker bullet implanted itself on one of the vampires that were running away.

Meanwhile, Alucard immediately headed to Shin and the others after making sure that the track properly attached itself. "Done!"

"Careful, there is another one left!" shouted Johan after seeing the appearance that Alucard had.

He was also a vampire after all, so it was pretty natural for those people to mistake him as one of the monsters that were attacking him earlier.

Shin and the others, who were currently regrouping, turned their heads at him before shifting towards the group of NPCs that they just saved.

The boys seemed to have the same thoughts in mind as they found the situation rather funny. It looked like some cliché movements that usually happened in movies.

And to complete the scene, Shin immediately said as the current leader of the group. "Don't worry. He is one of us."

Arthur and Leonard were currently trying their hardest to suppress their laughter as this scene was really something similar to those movies.

"I know that I shouldn't be doing this, but I really can't help myself," whispered Arthur as he turned around.

Leonard nodded his head as his shoulders were moving up and down more intensely due to what Arthur had said.

Daulla and Ithilien were looking at them with a skeptical look as they couldn't understand what they were doing. – "I really can't understand why they found it funny." –

Chapter 744 The Bloody Ghost (Part 2)

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After Shin explained Alucard's situation to the village chief and the others, the chief immediately realized their rudeness and started apologizing.

Shin felt a little awkward when they see their actions, didn't know what to do. Since they didn't know what to do, they let the village chief and the others continued as they used their respective ocular skill to check on the NPCs' information.

NPC Name: Harold

Title:

-Chief of the Foggy Village

-Former Captain of an Elite Unit of the Righteous Council

Class: Tier 3 Elite Knight

Level: 150

Rank: Cavalier

NPC Name: Johan

Title: None

Class: Master Hunter/ Elite Knight

Level: 145

Rank: Cavalier

NPC Name: Sheron

Title: None

Class: Elite Knight

Level: 145

Rank: Cavalier

NPC Name: Kale

Title: None

Class: Porter/ Elite Knight

Level: 145

Rank: Cavalier

Shin slightly raised his eyebrows when he saw the basic information of the NPCs through his 'True Sight'. Based on what he saw, he could easily tell that they were a member of the knights that Chief Lucas Choi, the Village Chief of Misty Village, had mentioned.

Aside from that, he also couldn't help but wear a slight grin under his mask. It was because these Special NPCs might become a part of the city that he was planning to build within the area.

'Adding that so-called chief of the first village, we now at least have 5 special NPCs. Tsk! I can't let this chance slip on our hands, can I?' muttered Shin to himself as his grin curved further up.

After that, Shin started introducing the members of the group before telling them their purpose at coming to this place.

They also headed back to the place Cloe and the others were waiting while also explaining more details of their quest.

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"So you are sent by Commander Choi to investigate about that matter," muttered Village Chief Harold after hearing everything from Shin.

On the other hand, Shin couldn't help but raise his eyebrows after hearing a couple of keywords from the village chief's words. 'Commander? I guess that chief is really not that simple.'

Then the village chief turned to Shin before saying with an apologetic tone. "I am very sorry but I don't know we can assist you with your investigation because of the current crisis that our village has."

Shin and the others couldn't help but turn their heads to each other when they heard those words, especially Arthur and Leonard who were pretty much familiar with these kinds of dialog.

Shin slightly nodded his head before replying to the village chief words. "It is fine, sir. A little bit of information is fine. It can already be helpful to us since we are currently facing a dead end on our investigation."

He then paused for a moment, acting as if he was hesitating, before quickly adding. "But if you let us lend you hand, then we can offer you our help in the current problem that you are facing."

The village chief Harold opened and closed his mouth, planning to reject the offer of help that Shin was presenting them. But after recalling what happened earlier and seeing the strength of the group, the words that he wanted to say were suddenly stacked on his throat, unable to voice them out.

He couldn't refuse their offer right away since he was aware that their help could be helpful to them. He was now a leader of a village not just an elite knight that he used to be, so he needed to prioritize the wellbeing of his village instead of thinking about his pride.

Having that thought, Chief Harold couldn't help but turn his head at his colleagues, trying to ask for their opinion. But just like him, they seemed to be thinking about the same thing, accepting the offer of help that was presented right in front of them.

After hesitating for quite some time, Chief Harold slightly nodded his head before saying. "I am ashamed to say this, but we really need your help-... no-... in fact, we are really desperate this time."

Ding!

System: A quest has been initiated!

Shin and the group simultaneously clenched their fist as they could already tell that it was going to be a quest with bountiful reward since it involved a very powerful group of monsters, the vampires.

The village chief cleared his throat for a moment before replying. "During our early days in this place, this village seems to be no different from the other villages outside this region. And since the commander told us to find a village of our choosing to stay while we are investigating the disappearance of our colleagues, we chose this village as our main settlement."

"It is pretty peaceful at first and everybody is doing our daily lives normally. But all of it suddenly change when a strange plague broke out."

Chief Harold clenched his fist when he reached this point as he started to remember what happened in the past. "The first victim suffered flu which is why we thought it is not that rare. In fact, catching a cold and having flu is pretty common in here due to the unstable temperature that our place has."

"We are regularly checking on that person since he didn't have any relatives and only lived alone. But he is at least friendly to everyone and easy to get along with, that is the reason why there are a lot of people who care about his wellbeing."

"But the situation became strange when that person started showing other symptoms aside from serious cough and his high fever. They are also a time when he started hallucinating about some things."

"Then, after a few days, the people who regularly checked on him started to become sick too. And that was the time when we realized that it might be not an ordinary disease. And the chance of it being a contagious one is highly possible since a lot of people became infected."

Sigh!

With a deep sigh, the hunter Johan suddenly injected. "We also ask some doctors from the other villages around the area but none of them was able to identify the disease, much less cure it."

Sheron nodded his head and immediately added. "Since we are already at our wit's end during that time, we ask some help from the churches that we are affiliated with."

Reaching this point, the atmosphere suddenly dropped alongside the mood that the four NPC had. Then Johan suddenly gritted his teeth while saying. "But none of them respond. In fact, our requests are totally ignored as if we are forgotten."

Sigh!

With yet another sigh, the village chief continued. "Left with no other choice, we decided to deal with the issue ourselves. And with the help of some of the doctors who volunteered themselves, we tried to find the cure to that strange disease."

Then his tone suddenly turned solemn as he said more. "But one day, the person who our first patient became a madman all of a sudden."

"He started attacking the people who are taking care of him. He was even biting them in the neck for some unknown reason. And due to that, the village was immediately thrown into chaos. A lot had died including the previous village chief which is why I am currently shouldering his responsibilities up until now."

Chief Harold clenched his fist very tightly. "We wanted to save him but a regular knight is no match for him, much less the ordinary resident of our village. And since he already caused a lot of casualties, we have no other choice but to subdue him."

"But he is so powerful which is why some of our fellow knights sacrificed themselves just to kill him," added Sheron as a pained expression was clearly reflected on his face.

Shin and the others remained quiet as if they were sharing the pain the other NPC had shown them. Unfortunately, they only chose to do that because they still hadn't received the quest that they were expecting.

Then the village chief continued. "After that incident, we thought that everything was over. But we are so wrong since the other patients who also caught his disease also became madmen."

"No-... they became monsters who didn't know anything aside from slaughtering the people residing within our village," said Johan, cutting the words of the village chief.

Chief Harold didn't say anything this time nor scold the hunter since he also knew that what the latter had said was true.

On the other hand, the porter Kale, who remained quiet up until now, suddenly said. "Those three that we encountered earlier are previously residents of our village."

Hearing that, Daulla couldn't help but ask unconsciously. "Are they people who got infected by that disease?"

The four NPCs were quiet for a moment before the village chief gave her his answer. "No. Those people become like that because they got bitten by the villagers who originally got sick after taking care of the first patient."

With that statement, the group practically confirmed their suspicion. After all, those things that they just heard were common characteristics and cases that Alucard had mentioned to them earlier when he was discussing the information that he knew about vampires.

Ding!

Then the system notification that they were waiting for finally arrived.

Chapter 745 The Bloody Ghost (Part 3)

...

Ding!

System: A quest had been initiated.

Quest Name: The Mysterious Plague

Quest Type: Hidden Investigative Quest (side quest)

Quest Difficulty: Hell (SSS+)

Quest Details: While you are investigating the disappearance of the Elite Knights of the Righteous Churches, you stumble upon the mysterious incident in the Foggy Village.

The current village chief and the previous Elite Knight, Knight Harold, asked you a favor to help them with the crisis that they were currently facing.

From the information that you heard from the 'Devil Hunter, the mysterious plague that spread in the village was caused by a vampire.

Quest Condition (0%):

– Save as many villagers as you can.

Note: The number of villagers that are saved will affect your completion of the quest.

Number of villagers: 50/50

Number of Knights: 4/4

– Find the vampire that was spreading the plague and kill him.

Quest Reward:

+5 Levels

+200 Fame Points

+20 000 Reputation Points

+15 LP (Legacy Points)

- Your favorability with Chief Choi and the other knights will rise significantly

-Additional Rewards will be given based on the number of villagers that are saved.

Quest Penalties:

-10 Levels

-40 000 Reputation Points

-Destruction of Foggy Village

-Death of Village Chief Harold and his subordinates

-Your favorability with Chief Choi will drop significantly

Shin slightly knitted his eyebrows when he saw the details of the quest. Even though they already got the gist of what they had to do, after hearing some of the details from Alucard. After all, he said that hunting vampires and demons was his main job. So as long as they had a lead, finding their target was going to be easy.

The group browsed on the quest details before nodding their heads. Then they turned to the NPCs walking alongside them and continued to move forward.

But not long after, another system notification caught their attention.

System Notice: Your level was already approaching the current limit of the game. The excess level would be saved and locked until you passed your Tier 3 Promotion Quest.

The accumulated experience points would be given once the promotion quest was completed.

Additional Note: You can also exchange the accumulated experience points in the 'Hall of Heroes' for special rewards.

...

The group simultaneously halted their steps when they saw the notification before exchanging glances with each other.

"Hoh~! This is interesting! So they already have the surprises waiting for us when we reach the current cap of the game," commented Arthur while wearing a huge grin.

"Hall of Heroes? That is new. I am looking forward to this one," seconded Leonard as he nodded his head repeatedly.

Then the others started discussing the new information that they got for the next patch of the game. They resumed walking but they continued to talk about that matter since it was a rather interesting topic.

The World Gaming Organization already released a couple of information about the next major update that they were going to do such as what were the places that were going to be released alongside it.

Humanity's famed Divine Empire, Beastmen's Endless Territory, Ocean People's Atlantis Kingdom, and the Origin Domain of all undead.

There was also the famous land of Fairies and Elves of light, the Alfheim Kingdom. And the Svartalfheim Kingdom, the home of Dwarves, Gnomes, and Elves of Darkness.

These were the regions that were said to be released during the next update. There were also other regions scheduled to be released in the future, so the group couldn't help but feel a little excited after remembering this matter.

"It is said that the next update is going to be triggered once requirements are met. What are they again?" muttered Arthur as he tried to remember the notice post by the World Gaming Organization in the official forums.

Hearing that, Daulla quickly answered. "It is said that 'we', the players, need to unlock a couple of races and the region first."

"There is also another requirement, they said that the number of players who reached level 150 should be enough. They also need them to be promoted to Tier 3 before they could enter the said regions," added Ithilien.

In the meantime, Shin was currently in deep thought as if he was thinking hard about something else.

Leonard, who was walking no far from him, instantly noticed that his mind was currently flying elsewhere, so he couldn't help but lightly tugged the latter's arm. "Yo! Is there something wrong? Based on the expression that you are currently wearing, I can tell that trouble is coming our way."

p Shin was immediately brought back to reality when he felt the slight pull on his arm. He then turned his head to the side before answering. "It is nothing. I just got an additional quest aside from the one that we got."

"Really? Is it also interesting? Let us see!" said Leonard.

Hearing her, the others also turned their attention to them, interested.

"Tsk! Don't tell me you are planning to hug another pie just for yourself? Don't be greedy and share it with us!" said Arthur while clicking his tongue repeatedly.

The others didn't voice out anything but they still nodded their heads in agreement. It was also pretty clear that they want to see the quest that he just received.

"It is a solo quest though," replied Shin as he shared the details of the quest with them.

Quest Name: The Bloody Ghost

Quest Type: Elemental Spirit Quest

Quest Difficulty: Special

Quest Details:

After the evolution of your Crimson Reaper, the Blood Prince Vladimir, he needed enough power to stabilize his new powers.

As a Noblesse Crimson Spirit, he had the authority to control curses and blood elemental mana. So learning that there were other creatures similar to him, he felt that his authority was being challenged and wanted to prove that he was the strongest and most mighty being when it came to controlling the blood mana.

Quest Conditions:

Your Crimson Reaper wanted to challenge every vampire that you would encounter in the future.

Quest Reward:

Vladimir would increase his strength and absorb the powers of the defeated vampires after the challenge was successful.

Quest Penalty:

Every time Vladimir lost a battle, his strength would significantly decrease.

Note: Solo Quest – This quest can't be shared with anyone.

Browsing at the information of the quest for another time, Shin couldn't help but frown his eyebrow even further. 'This conceited guy! Can he at least be contended to the new powers that he already received?'

And sure enough, Arthur couldn't contain his laughter after hearing looking at the quest details. "What the heck? You have one hell of a conceited Elemental Companion. Heh!"

Even Leonard couldn't hide the weird look that he was currently wearing. He also had crazy Elemental Companions, but they were not as troublesome as this one. Or at the very least, the quests that he was getting from them were completely different from this one.

Realizing the trouble that was ahead of Shin, Leonard patted the shoulder of his friend out of sympathy.

Shin didn't become angry or get annoyed. He just nodded his head as he was already getting tired of the trouble that was waiting for him in the near future.

While Shin and the others regrouping with each other, the three infected vampires that the group fought earlier were currently running towards a particular cave not too far from the village.

When they arrived, there were already a lot of lesser vampires kneeling on the ground. The rows that they were forming was clearly indicating that their group was pretty organized. And as the three vampires joined, more and more vampires seemed to arrive one after another.

They continued to kneel on the ground as if they were currently waiting for someone to walk out of that cave.

Tak! Tak! Tak!

Not long after, a series of light but loud footsteps could be heard from the cave. But despite hearing those, none of the vampires dared to raise their heads to take a look at who it was.

Their current appearance might make them look like madmen, especially with their bloodshot eyes. But despite that being the case, a clear sign of fear could be found within their eyes after hearing those footsteps.

In the meantime, a silhouette of a person was getting clearer at the entrance of the cave as the footsteps were getting nearer.

Tak!

But before the appearance of that person was clearly revealed, the footsteps suddenly came into a halt right behind the shade of the cave.

"Looks like there were some decent hatchlings this time," then a seductive feminine voice could be heard from every direction when that person started to talk.

She was currently sweeping her gaze at the vampires kneeling in front of the cave. Then her gaze suddenly paused when she saw that three of them seemed to have suffered some serious injuries.

The regeneration rate of vampires was pretty much insane even if it was the lowest rank vampires. But seeing that the injuries that those three vampires were still in the middle of regenerating, it was pretty clear to her that they encountered a powerful opponent.

"Interesting. Did those bastards from the Righteous Council finally bend?" she muttered to herself.

Then her eyes started shining alongside the eyes of the three vampires that were heavily injured.

Not long after, her lips suddenly curved upwards as an expression full of interest was formed on her face. "This is rather peculiar. To think that people from different races are going to gather together and fight side by side once again?"

The curve of her lips rose even further as she muttered with a soft voice. "It looks like the time is finally approaching."

She then started laughing heartedly before turning around and starting to walk back inside the cave. "Our Lord is finally coming back! I can't wait to see the face of his majesty once again!"

Chapter 746 A Visit (Part 1)

...

Right after regrouping with Cloe and the others, the group quickly followed after Chief Harold without delay. They already spent quite a lot of time on this quest after all, so they at least needed to move as fast as they could.

Not long after, they were led in front of a ruined house within the village. What surprising about it was the very house right beside it was the one where Ithilien discovered some signs of human activity before.

Seeing that the group was looking at the other house, the village chief suddenly explained. "It a form of code to contact with each other. We are lighting up the stove there whenever we are going back to the main base or every time someone is planning to visit us."

"As you can see, we can no longer live in these houses because we are continuously being attacked by those monsters."

"Leaving this place alongside the villagers is also going to be very hard. We can't risk their lives just to get out of this hell, so we have no choice but to stay underground," he added with a bitter tone.

Hearing that, Daulla couldn't hold curiosity and asked. "You can live underground?"

The hunter Johan slightly nodded his head when he heard her. "It is originally our evacuation center whenever we are being invaded by the other monsters living in this place. But it now becomes our new home after that strange plague spread."

Then Sheron suddenly injected. "We are leaving the base from time to time to hunt some animals in the boundary of the Valley. Sometimes, we are also trading some supplies in the Mercenary Guild that is based within this place."

The group came to a sudden halt when they heard those words. – "A Mercenary Guild within this place? How come we haven't seen it after exploring almost every corner of this map?" –

'Is it also hidden somewhere?' thought Shin to himself. 'No, that is not the issue here. What I should be asking is why a Mercenary Guild is in a place like this.'

He then turned his head and exchanged glances with Arthur and Leonard. They could easily tell that they currently had the same thoughts in their mind, so they slightly nodded their heads. – "It looks like there is another matter that we need to investigate." –

After that, they continued to follow Chief Harold and entered the ruined house in front of them. And right after entering, the village chief touched a couple of things within that house before standing in front of a stone stove.

Rumble!

Then the group felt a slight shake of the ground before seeing a stair that was leading underground appear.

'What a meticulous way of setting up the entrance. No wonder we are having a hard time discovering it,' thought Shin as an expression full of interest was formed on his face.

After that, they climbed down the stairs with Chief Harold as their lead. And not long after, Shin and the others were immediately greeted by an awful sight.

They were led into a cave that was enough to occupy a hundred people. So with only fifty people present, the space within the cave was pretty wide. And the only source of light that they had was the torches that were stuck on the wall of the cave.

But aside from it being wide, there was nothing good to see within it.

The people were currently sitting over the blankets that they laid on the ground. They were also wearing dirty clothes that were almost close to being a rag.

Their current appearance was clearly unpleasant to the eyes. But at the very least, they looked rather healthy despite the dirty look that they had.

"It was probably because of the regular hunting that Chief Harold and his subordinates," muttered Shin with a quiet voice before casting his gaze at Kale who was carrying a large bag on his back.

After that, he continued to sweep his gaze on the surroundings, observing the place more. And after a few more moments of walking, the group finally arrived in a secluded area where a small desk was located.

Kale, the porter, immediately put down the huge back that he was carrying before quickly. "I will be going for now. I still need to prepare for the distribution of food later."

"Then I should be going too. I also need to organize a couple of things and check the state of my equipment," said Sheron before also separating from the group.

In the meantime, Chief Harold sat on the chair behind the wooden table powerlessly. It was pretty clear that he was completely exhausted after everything that had happened.

Johan was also left behind and quietly stood behind the village chief like a close attendant. He was also quite tired after all of the hunting and the escorting of the food supplies that Sheron had traded with the Mercenary Guild. But despite that being the case, he still needed to do his duty and support his former captain.

Naturally, Chief Choi also knew what he was currently thinking, so he couldn't but smile bitterly before saying. "I know that you are also tired, so you can rest for now."

He then paused for a moment and turned to Shin and the group before quickly adding. "And it looks like our guests are not in a hurry either, so you can relax for the time being."

The group quickly understood what his words meant and slightly nodded their heads.

'So, we still can't get the information that we want unless we show them our side, huh? That makes sense given the difficulty of our quest. It couldn't be that simple. What's more, he is also a special NPC.'

thought Shin before looking at his teammates and sneakily giving them orders through the party chat channel.

Sickarius: Let's investigate separately for now.

The others slightly nodded their heads before telling the chief that they were going to continue looking around the underground base. Though, their real purpose was gathering some information from the villagers who managed to survive the crisis that their village had suffered.

Seeing that the others were leaving, Johan was caught in a dilemma on what he was going to do. He didn't know if it was right for him to stay here and guard his former captain or monitor the others who just left.

"It is fine, you can leave us behind," said the village chief to help Johan to decide.

The hunter hesitated for a couple of moments before bowing at Chief Harold and excusing himself to him.

With that, Shin was the only one left behind alongside Chief Harold.

Silence lingered in the air for a couple of moments before the village chief chose to open his mouth first. "I am not going to beat around the bush, young man. Are you sent here by the Righteous Council?"

Shin immediately understood what Chief Harold was trying to say, so he quickly shook his head and slightly explained their current circumstances. "I am sorry to disappoint you but we are currently in this place for another purpose."

A clear look of disappointment could be seen on the village chief's face when he heard those words. In fact, he already had a suspicion earlier since these people seemed to have no idea what happened to their village.

He already reported this matter to the higher-ups before. He asked that question just to have confirmation.

"I see. I can feel the powers of Light from that female priest that come alongside you, so I thought that council finally listen to our request. I guess it is just my wishful thinking," muttered the village chief in disappointment.

He then turned to Shin before quickly adding. "And now that I have a closer look on your mask, I think you are the rumored new Envoy of the Church of the Sun and Moon."

Hoh~!

Shin was suddenly taken aback when he heard those words and raised his eyebrows. But it only took a second since this was not the first time when a special NPC recognized the [Nephilim's Gemini Mask].

In the meantime, in the teleportation hall of the Holy City, Zero arrived alongside his sole teammate, Seven.

"Hoh~! This place sure has a lot of changes since our last visit," said Seven right after they walked out of the Teleportation Hall.

Zero gave him a slight nod as he also thought the same time. The plaza where the teleportation hall was located was currently filled with a lot of players.

They were divided into three groups.

First was the group of players who were coming in and out of the teleportation hall. Then there were those players who put up a stall in the plaza to sell a variety of items and equipment. And there were those players who were strolling around the place, trying to look for suitable items that they could find.

Basically, it was no different from the previous plaza that the two had remembered. But what took their interest was the current size of the plaza itself. It was so big and wide to the point that it looked like a marketplace in the real world.

There were also a couple of NPC buildings a few meters away from the teleportation hall. They were so tall that they could rival a couple of skyscrapers in the real world.

"It looks like the Holy City is already promoted to Capital City and very close to being a Royal City," muttered Seven as he turned his gaze at those buildings.

"Tsk! Tsk! No wonder those guilds don't care about the sacrifices just to take root in this city. Too bad, the Hydra Guild, Titan Guild, Dragon Pavilion, and Wing's Alliance already solidified their foot in this place," he added while shaking his head.

Zero swept his gaze at the plaza once again before walking forward. "That's enough for sightseeing. Let's get moving now."

Chapter 747 A Visit (Part 2)

...

Zero was currently sitting on the edge on top of a tall tower while looking down at the whole city.

A few moments later, Seven suddenly arrived and quickly bowed a few meters behind Zero. "I've returned, young master."

Tsk!

Zero clicked his tongue when he heard those words before saying. "I already told you many times before that you don't have to address me like that. We are not even in the real world."

"What is the point of me using a disguise inside the game if you keep on broadcasting that I am your clan's young master?" he added with an annoyed tone.

He then took a brief pause before continuing with a quiet voice. "What's more, I am not even the legitimate heir of the clan. Have you forgotten already why I choose to travel with my father despite my mother's pleas?"

Seven continued to lower his head and didn't immediately reply. But based on the slight tremble of his body after hearing the last phrase that Zero had said, it was pretty clear that it had some effect on him.

After that, he further lowered his head before apologizing. "I am very sorry. It is just my habit. I will make sure to fix it as soon as possible."

Zero just waved his head said without turning Seven. "It is fine. You don't have to take it too seriously. You should know that I am always getting worked up when it comes to matters concerning the clan."

"Anyway, enough of that already. Just report what you've got this time," he said to change the topic.

Seven inhaled deeply before standing up straight and giving his report. "Just like what we have heard, the war between the HeadHunter Guild and the Wing's Alliance is still ongoing. And from the looks of it, both sides are planning to prolong the war."

Zero slightly knitted his eyebrows and quickly said. "It is not strange for the Wing's Alliance since they have the advantage at prolonging the war, especially with the home advantage. But it is the same for the HeadHunter Guild? That is something suspicious."

"Indeed, that is why I take a closer look in this matter," responded Seven in an instant before opening a virtual screen and sharing it with Zero. "These are the information that I've gathered after taking a trip in the Assassin Union."

"From the looks of it, the HeadHunter Guild found a supplier that can assist them in prolonging the war. I am not sure which group it is but it looks that they wanted this war to last for as long as possible."

He then took a brief pause to open another virtual screen before continuing. "As for the side of the Wing's Alliance, it seems like the internal conflict within their guild become serious. I even heard that that Alliance Leader is starting to show some signs of getting involved."

Zero slightly knitted his eyebrows when he heard that before asking. "But their main base of operation is pretty far from here, so how it is related to the ongoing war?"

Seven did a series of quick taps on the virtual screen and showed a couple of photos before answering. "Because the opposition within their guild is planning to use this war to get rid of the other side. Or at least weaken their forces for as much as possible."

"Tsk! Politics! This is the reason why being in an organization is troublesome," commented Zero.

Then he took a quick look at the photos projected in the virtual screen before knitting his brow. "Strange, why did the Slaying Feathers got involved?"

"Even the Assassin Union find it strange. Unfortunately, they also couldn't figure out the reason," answered Seven in an instant.

Zero was silent for a moment before continuing. "What about the other matter that I ask you to do? Did you find any traces of their group?"

Seven couldn't reply when he heard the quest but he immediately picked up himself and quickly answered. "I am sorry. But I can find any trace of that group. But from the information that the Assassin Union have provided, they seemed to be moving to clear another high-ranking quest."

"Unfortunately, that is all they know. It seems like the whole team suddenly disappeared out of nowhere," he added with a slight frown.

"Is that so? Too bad, I want to spar a bit with those two before looking for the next piece of [Excalibur] that appeared," muttered Zero to himself with a clear disappointment.

Seven hesitated for a moment before adding with an unwilling tone. "Though, I heard from Assassin Union that a couple of their members are last spotted in the Maple Cloud City."

"Oh~! Is that so? Then let's head over there right away!" said Zero as he stood up front where he was sitting.

'I knew it!' thought Seven with a sigh before asking. "Are you sure about that? Are you really not going to check the shops around? It seems like there are a lot of good things and top-quality equips to check there."

Unfortunately for him, Zero seemed to not show any interest in what he just said. "I don't need to. My gears are still perfect for the current stage of the game, so there is no need to change them yet."

The corner of Seven's mouth suddenly twitched when he heard those words before. 'Of course, you are going to say that. But how about me? I still need to find a set of equipment that will suit me perfectly.'

"You can look around if want. There is no need for you to accompany me anyway," said Zero as if he could read what was running inside Seven's mind. And before the latter could even say anything, the Sword God disappeared from his spot alongside wind.

Sigh~!

With a helpless sigh, Seven lowered his head and shook his head in a helpless manner. "That battle junkie. If not hunting a powerful monster or pursuing those people from the 'Pandemonium Descendants', he is looking for someone to spar with him."

"Well, I can't do anything to stop him anyway, so what is the point of preventing him from doing anything?" he added with a dejected tone.

But immediately after that, the expression on his face changed all of a sudden before clenching his hands. "On the other hand, it is a rare chance for me to relax! I will look around for a good piece of equipment this time!"

"This is the same direction where I can feel the piece of the broken [Excalibur]," muttered Zero as he walked around the Maple Cloud City.

He was trying to look for some clues that could point him where the members of the Empyrean Talons were spotted in this place. Unfortunately, he couldn't find any of them despite his effort.

Though, he also saw a couple of suspicious places where most of the players were being restricted.

He wanted to take a look at them. But after seeing the emblem of the players guarding those places had, he had no choice but to drop that matter instantly.

After walking around without any positive result, Zero decided to head over to the place where the broken [Excalibur] was pointing at. But before he could even get far enough from the city, he was suddenly blocked by an unexpected player.

"What do you think are you doing, Frost Goddess?" asked Zero with a solemn tone.

Shiella, or rather Snow White inside the game, was currently standing in front of Zero and blocking his way. She smirked a little with the latter's question before replying. "I should be the one asking you that question, Sword God. 'What' are you doing here?"

"I am afraid that it is none of your business," answered Zero back.

Snow White giggles a little when she heard the hostility from Zero's tone before refuting. "Well, that is true if you are an ordinary independent player. Unfortunately, that is not the case."

"Do you realize what have you done?" asked with a sharp tone.

Zero knitted his brow in confusion when he heard those words before asking with uncertainty. "What are you talking about?"

Snow White sighed for a moment before answering. "Because of you, the meticulous plan that we prepared is ruined. Since you take a 'casual stroll' on the Maple Cloud City, those powers that are keeping an eye on you will now cast their attention on that place."

Zero was frozen stiff when he heard those words as he immediately realized what she was trying to say. He remembered the places that were being guarded within Maple Cloud City.

"I am sorry about. Let me compensate your losses later when I am done with my current task," he said before trying to dodge Shiella.

Swoosh!

But before he could even take a step forward, an ice shard suddenly stabbed the ground in front of him, preventing him from moving forward.

"Who said that you can just leave like that? What's more, I also doubt that you are able to compensate our losses in this matter. Do you even have any idea how troublesome is the problem that you are giving us with that 'casual stroll' or yours?" said Snow White with a cold tone.

'Tsk! Looks like I can avoid this fight. Well, this works out as well. I am looking for a suitable sparring partner anyway,' thought Zero before putting his hands on the hilt of his swords. "I hope that you will not regret your actions."

Hearing that, Snow White couldn't help but smirk before replying back. "That is the exact words that I want to say."

Chapter 748 Frost Goddess Snow White (Part 1)

...

A powerful gust of wind was starting to gather around Zero as he continued to stare at the person in front of him. And from the amount of mana circling around him alone, it was pretty clear that was taking this matter seriously.

But despite that being the case, Snow White, the Frost Goddess, seemed to be unaffected by the pressure that he was emitting. In fact, she even started smirking at his actions and continued to stand on her spot, not showing any movements.

"Are you sure that you want to continue this?" asked Shiella with a smirking. She even added before Zero could even reply. "I may be inactive these last a couple of years, but it doesn't mean that you can take me on lightly. You may lose that number spot that you currently hold up until now."

"We will never know about that unless we try," refuted Zero as he started to take his battle stance.

Unfortunately, Shiella had no intention of fighting him in this place, so she quickly stopped him from making more actions before the situation could even escalate into a more troublesome stage. "I know that you are quite eager to get your ass kicked. But this is not a good place for our it."

She swept her gaze on their surroundings before saying. "Those eyes that are keeping you in check are all over the place already, so I think it is better if we look for a more suitable location before continuing."

Zero also take a quick glance where he could sense the gazes locked on him were coming from. And after seeing that there were quite a lot of them, he decided to withdraw all of the aura that he was emitting before relaxing his stance a little.

In the meantime, Shiella suddenly started walking towards the direction of the city before saying. "Follow me."

Zero frowned his eyebrows when he heard her commanding tone. But despite that being the case, he silently nodded his head before following after her.

...

Saint Heaven Kingdom, Dawn City.

Shiella brought Zero to a particular area that was under the jurisdiction of the Hand of Midas Trading Firm. She originally wanted to settle this matter quietly but since the latter created a 'mess' in Maple Cloud City, she needed to redirect the attention of the other organizations away from that place.

She couldn't risk their operations from getting ruined.

On top of that, her little brothers and their little team were currently doing a quest in Sky Deceiving Valley. It was going to be even more troublesome if those organizations managed to sniff their movements.

After all, their team created quite a lot of commotion recently, so it was pretty obvious that the other powerhouses would keep an eye on them to monitor their movements.

Shiella already went into a lot of trouble to redirect the attention of those forces away from their group. She even went as far as secretly supporting the HeadHunter Guild a little to prolong the ongoing war that they had against the Wing's Alliance.

"This should be enough, I guess?" asked Shiella as she looked at the man standing a few meters away from her.

"It is not that bad," answered Zero as started putting each of his hands on the hilt of his sheathed swords. And at the same time, an overwhelming amount of mana was instantly released from his body.

"Heh! Really are impatient, aren't you?" said Shiella sneeringly when he saw his actions. Though, at the same time, she also summoned her staff and lightly tap its bottom on the ground, spreading a cold aura in every direction.

"Let me warn you. If you don't go all out from the start, then I will make sure that you will regret it," she added as the floor of the training arena became frozen starting from her feet.

"That was the plan from the very start!" replied Zero before disappearing from his spot.

Swoosh!

And within an instant, he managed to appear behind Shiella while swinging both of his swords.

Swoosh!

Cling! Cling!

But a wall of ice suddenly appeared in between them and blocked his swords from advancing forward.

Seeing that his initial attack failed, Zero wanted to follow it up with a skill to start a series of attacks. But before he could even put his thoughts into action, he suddenly felt an immense threat coming from the thick wall of ice in front of him.

Without further ado, he quickly kicked that wall and jumped away from it to escape.

Bang!

The wall of ice exploded and the pieces that came from it flew in every direction like deadly shrapnel. A few of them were even chasing after Zero as if they had eyes of their own.

Seeing that, the Sword God did a quick flip in the air and adjusted his center of gravity before swinging his swords left and right.

Clang! Clang! Clang!

Tap-tap!

When his feet touched the frozen ground, he immediately sensed threats that were coming from every direction. And when he raised his head to take a look at them, he immediately discovered that he was currently surrounded by floating ice spears.

"Heh! This is nothing," muttered Zero as he gathered his mana and infused them on his swords.

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

And quickly after that, gusts of wind started to gather on both of his swords before forming a layer of aura that surrounded their blades.

"Come!" shouted Zero to which Shiella had responded with a simple flick of her wrist.

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

Bang! Bang! Bang!

Zero repeatedly swung his swords and destroyed all of the spears that were trying to approach him. His actions sent a lot of ice debris in every direction alongside some fog that was starting to block his field of vision.

Realizing what was happening, Zero put infused more mana on each of his swords releasing them at the same time by drawing a horizontal circle in the air.

'Sword King Skill: Dark Tempest'

Swoosh!

Bang! Bang! Bang!

Consecutive explosions immediately followed right after the wind circle that sent out collided with the remaining ice spears, destroying them in the process.

But despite that being the case, Zero couldn't let his guard down because the threat that was sent was still lingering in the air.

Swoosh!

And just like what he was expecting, the fog that was created from previous explosions was torn apart as a huge sword made of ice flew straight to him.

He quickly crossed his swords in front of his chest while reinforcing them with his mana. And at the same time, a wind wall appeared in front of him out of nowhere, seemingly planning to lessen the momentum of the incoming ice sword.

Bang!

But despite immediate response and quick actions to set up a series of defenses, he was still blown away by the ice swords right after he came in contact with it.

Swoosh!

Bang!

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He then collided at the wall of the training ground, almost burying him on it.

Tap! Tap! Tap!

Then a series of light steps could be heard as Shiella slowly approach Zero. She stopped at a safe distance and looked at the latter before saying. "I already told you. You will regret it if you keep on holding yourself back. I am not the same as those idiots that you've fought previously."

Zero stopped up and lightly tapped his clothes to remove the dust from them before turning to Shiella. "So this is the strength of the previous top god, huh?"

Hearing those words, Shiella couldn't help but frown her brows as she didn't like what she just heard. "Previous you say? I guess you stood on that spot for way too long to become that arrogant."

"I am still far away from being replaced by the likes of you," she added with a cold tone which made the temperature of the surroundings drop with a great margin.

"I already told you, we will never know unless we give it a try," said Zero provokingly as released a much powerful aura than what he had earlier. And due to that, the gusts of wind started to gather from every direction and spun around him, forming a storm-like tornado within the training ground.

At the same time, his body started to emit an immense amount of mana with jade color. Then it danced along with the gust of wind circling around him, making his appearance look like a divine being.

Shiella clicked her tongue when he saw the arrogant look on Zero's face before muttering to herself. "It looks like I am being underestimated a little too much."

Bang!

Then an overwhelming amount of mana was also released from her body which also affected the temptation within the training ground to drop further.

Swoosh! Swoosh!

Bang! Bang! Bang!

Not long after, pillars of ice started to shoot from the ground one after another, surprising Zero a little. He was about to scoff at that sight as thought that it was just some fancy trick. But that thought immediately changed when he saw that the entire training ground turned into a palace all of a sudden.

"This skill-... could it be...?" Zero was trying to recall the name of the skill. But before he could even voice it out, he suddenly heard Shiella's voice that sent an intense shiver on his spine.

"I guess I need to teach you a lesson to remind the world why I am called the Frost Goddess."

Chapter 749 Frost Goddess Snow White (Part 2)

...

Frost Palace

This was the famous technique that made the Frost Goddess known in every game that she took part in. It was her signature technique that overpowered almost all of the top-ranking players of the virtual world.

In a sense, it was a domain skill that almost had everything. It was granting her a lot of advantages during the battle.

First, it was restricting the movements of her opponents due to the cold temperature of the field. On top of that, she could also cast her spells much faster and easier because of the frost flakes that were lingering in the air.

With 'Frost Place', defeating the Frost Goddess was nigh impossible.

It was her domain, her territory!

...

Bang!

Zero was struck by yet another spell and sent him towards the wall of the training ground.

'How come the gap is so huge?' he thought to himself as he raised his head with difficulty and looked at Shiella.

He was fighting her for quite some time already yet she was not even showing any signs of slowing down, her casting speed was still as fast as ever.

But the main problem that really gave him a lot of trouble was her godly control over her spells and her extreme precision. She would never miss a skill at him, or even if she did, it was actually a setup for her next attack.

Zero was forced to block all of the spells with his skills since he couldn't afford to let even a fraction of their mana touch him. Or else, he would surely freeze to death slowly but surely.

He didn't even have the time to take a break nor gain a proper breathing space for himself. The series of attacks were raining down at him continuously without showing any sign of stopping.

To make the matter even worse for him, his wind elemental mana was also currently useless against his opponent's frost power. He was currently facing the worse possible opponent that he could face.

Hu~!

Zero quickly regulated his breathing the moment he saw Shiella pause her attacks. But despite that being the case, he still kept his guard up since he knew that this was going to be dangerous if he let his guard down even for a brief moment.

'Why did she stop? Did she finally run out of mana or her spells are now in cooldown?' he thought as he stared at his opponent with extreme caution.

But it didn't take long for him to erase those thoughts inside his head. 'No, that is impossible. Given her precise control over her skills, it is impossible for her not to be able to control the cooldown of her spells. Their rotations are almost been perfect up until now.'

And sure enough, Shiella didn't stop because of the reasons that he was currently thinking. "Are we going to continue like this? How about your 'Elemental Possession'? I heard transcendent races can make a contract to Elemental Spirits and turn them into their personal companions."

She paused for a brief moment and squinted her eyes before continuing. "And if I am not wrong, it must be those floating specks of lights circling around you."

Zero was suddenly taken aback after hearing those words. It was not because of the fact that she was aware that he had a Transcendent Race since he didn't bother to hide his identity this time. Instead, it was because of the fact that she could see his Elemental Companions.

From what he knew, only a player with a Transcendent Race like him could see them. And given that he could see that Shiella's race is a Half-Elf, she was supposedly not able to see the specks of lights around him.

'Looks like I really can't avoid this. Tsk! I should be blaming myself since I asked for it,' said Zero to himself with a bitter sigh.

After that, he suddenly sheathed both of his swords and put them away. "Then I guess we should start over."

He then took out a Health Potion from his inventory and drank it to recover his hp back to full. Shiella didn't even stop him and just waited patiently in the distance.

A few moments later, the look on Zero's face suddenly changed as he looked at his opponent who was confidently waiting for him.

"Balin!"

Then he shouted the names of his first Elemental Companion to initiate an Elemental Possession.

Right after he called out that name, one of the specks of lights circling around his body suddenly broke away from the group before appearing behind him in its humanoid form.

It was a knight with two swords while wearing a knight's armor that seemed to have a pattern of a dragon scale. It was not wearing a helm which was why its long hair was fluttering along with the wind.

That Elemental Spirit stayed floating behind for a couple of moments before turning into a pair of lights that suddenly flew on each of Zero's hands.

Not long after, a pair of swords with similar style and patterns appeared on each of his hands while enhancing most of his stats.

'Elemental Sword Materialization (Balin): Knight of the Two Swords'

Right after the twin swords were formed, the aura surrounding Zero instantly changed. Not only did the air around him become heavy, but the pressure that he was giving up earlier also became more powerful.

A single look at him alone was more than enough for Shiella to know that the boost that Zero had received through the Elemental Possession was huge.

On top of that, she could also feel that he received some magical resistance the moment that pair of swords appeared.

But despite being threatened, Shiella started grinning from ear to ear instead. "Yeah, that is right. If you want to win this fight, you at least need to give your all and do not hold anything back."

After that, she did a couple of taps on the ground with her staff, activating a spell. And within an instant, the frost on the ground started to climb at her and covered her entire body.

A huge block of ice was formed with Shiella being hidden within it.

Crack! Crack! Crack!

Not long after, small cracks started to appear on the surface of the block of ice before spreading everywhere.

Bang!

Then it suddenly exploded and revealed Shiella who was now donned with an elegant armor made of ice.

'Epic Combat Technique: Queen of Winter'

Aside from the armor that she was wearing, her staff also took a slight change. Instead of a simple magical staff, it now transformed into a spear with a sharp and pointed triangular tip.

Alongside all of that, the Froze Palace seemed to resonate with her transformation. It was as if the palace itself possessed an ego and recognized its owner.

Seeing everything right after his own transformation, Zero couldn't help but smile bitterly before saying to himself. "I guess I am still way too far from reaching the summit. These monsters from the previous ranking list kept on popping out one after another."

He was now starting to feel that he looked like a frog in the bottom of the well.

Regardless, he still felt excited. It has been a while since he met someone this strong, so strong that they could make him feel small.

After that, he erased all of the useless thoughts inside his head before focusing his mind solely on this fight.

Hu~!

With a deep breath, Zero started gathering his mana and infused all of them on both of his swords. And this time, instead of jade-colored wind elemental mana, both of his swords were emitting a radiant yet evil glow.

He didn't hesitate this time and initiated the attack all of a sudden.

Swoosh!

He threw a cross slash in the air in front of him while releasing the accumulated mana on both of his swords. A cross-shaped sword wave was sent towards Shiella which was carrying a very strong destructive power.

Hmph!

But Shiella didn't get intimidated and casually waved her hand in the air, summoning a series of walls made of ice to block the path of the incoming attack.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

It only took three ice walls to completely exhausted all of the energy behind that sword wave. But not long after it dissipated in the air, a streak of silver light suddenly pierced through the blockade of ice walls, destroying the remaining ones in the process.

Swoosh!

Boom!

And within an instant, Zero suddenly arrived right in front of Shiella, ducking and currently in the middle of swinging his swords.

This was his first time getting near his opponent since the start of the match, so he would definitely not let this chance slip away from him. He even cast a territorial skill that would silence his opponent to prevent her from using Blink.

But to his surprise, Shiella didn't attempt to use any teleportation skill to escape nor took a step backward to retreat.

Instead, she took a brief step forward before vertically swinging her staff-turned-spear.

Swoosh!

Being greeted by such a precise counterattack, Zero was forced to abandon the idea of continuing his attack and decided to defend himself.

His rich experience in battle was definitely telling him that he was going to die from this attack if he didn't defend against it.

Having that thought, he was forced to cross his sword above him and lowered his stance, preparing to block the falling ice blade.

Boom!

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Despite being able to block the attack completely, the damage that he received was still no joke. In fact, his feet even sank on the ground as a huge spiderweb crack instantly appeared.

It was at this moment that Zero realized how strong was the player who previously held the top spot of the absolute ranking list alongside the King of Games himself!

Chapter 750 Frost Goddess Snow White (Part 3)

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Zero laid himself on the ground, fully exhausted and completely powerless. He was currently looking at the ceiling of the training ground while reflecting on himself.

He replayed the previous battle inside his head countless times already yet he couldn't find the right way to win the fight. No matter how much hard he assessed his performance and study the battle style of his opponent, he never found a path that could lead him to victory.

What was worse in it was the fact that he got destroyed by the Frost Goddess completely. He didn't even manage to land a single hit at her despite revealing all of his cards.

This might be an unofficial match, but his ego couldn't help but become hurt a little.

"To think that those people are this strong? I wonder how powerful is 'that guy'. He used to hold the number one spot after all," muttered Zero to himself as he tried to imagine the strength of the previous number one player before him.

While he was still trying to reflect on himself, Shiella suddenly walked over to him before saying. "If you are that curious, then go challenge him yourself. He just makes a comeback recently, so don't you think this is your best chance to experience his strength yourself?"

"A battle between the previous and the current number one, anyone will love to witness such a dream-like battle. Unfortunately, I doubt that you will stand a chance against him with your current level," she added, striking Zero where it could hurt him.

Zero quickly picked himself up from the ground and stood before asking. "How strong is he currently? You used to be his fiercest rival, so you should be familiar with his strength."

Shiella thought for a couple of moments before replying. "I doubt that he is my match given that he just entered this game. Levels, skills, equipment, and a lot more – I am way ahead of him when it comes to all of these, so I am pretty confident that I am currently more powerful than him."

"But if he managed to regain his previous strength, then even if you gather the current top 5 in the Godlike Ranking List and you gang up on him, I doubt that you guys will stand a chance against that bastard."

"He is that powerful," she added to emphasize her point.

Zero was stunned when he heard those words. He couldn't believe that the person who was crowned as the King of Games was that powerful.

It was before his battle against Shiella, then he would confidently refute her words. But after experiencing the might of the Frost Goddess firsthand, then he had no other choice but to believe her assessment.

He then unconsciously clenched his fists as his eyes showed signs of intense fighting spirit. And when Shiella saw the expression that he was making, she couldn't help but grin a little before saying. "It is good that you feel that way. But if you didn't grow stronger than the current you, then even catching the edge of his clothes is going to be impossible. Much less, putting up a proper fight."

"I understand," answered Zero while nodding his head.

After that, Shiella suddenly turned around and walked towards the exit of the training ground while saying. "Then stop dillydallying. We need to hurry if want to avoid those scouts spying on you."

Zero looked at her with a confused expression before asking. "Huh? Where are we going?"

Sheila continued to walk away and answered without looking back. "I heard that you are looking for those rascals-... I mean, Empyrean Talons. I know where they are, so just follow my lead."

"I also happen to have some business with a certain rascal in their group. And since I am going to be busy for the next couple of days, I need to settle my business with him as soon as possible, now that I have some free time. I can't afford to deal with him when things get hectic again."

'How dare he 'scheme' behind my back! Now, I am at disadvantage in our next deal! All of my preparations are gone to waste! Urrg!' she thought while gritting her teeth.

In the meantime, Zero stared at her back for a couple of moments before shrugging his shoulder and following after her.

But not long after, Shiella came into a sudden halt before turning around. "Oh! Before I forgot. I need to tell you something. I recorded our match earlier and planning to post it on the official site of the game after it got edited."

Zero suddenly flinched when he heard those words before staring at her with a weird expression on his face.

Being able to understand what Zero was currently thinking, Shiella couldn't help but smirk before saying. "Don't worry, I am not planning to show them the entire fight. I will only take a couple of parts in the entire thing where we are properly exchanging attacks."

"And I hired a professional, so there is nothing to worry about. I can assure you that the final product will only make us good and show our best, nothing else. Not even the result will be shown."

Zero knew that Shiella did that out of respect for his current standing within the game. But despite that being the case, he still couldn't help himself but feel a little unpleasant.

Regardless, he still couldn't do anything about it since he was the loser of the match, so he just put his thought at the back of his head and silently nodded his head.

On the other hand, Shiella felt a little impressed with Zero for holding himself. If it was other people, then they were most likely throwing an outburst about it already. 'This kid's mentality is not that bad.'

"Alright, let's go," she said before resuming to walk towards the exit.

In the meantime, the players residing within the Saint Heaven Kingdom went crazy once again. This particular place was always been lively since a particular individual appeared.

Most of the players who were lurking around the online forums were already tired of seeing the news about that player. After all, almost all of the hot topics regarding this Kingdom involved that person.

Fortunately, the news that was currently circulating in the online forums was not about him. Instead, it was about a person who currently held the top spot on the Godlike Ranking List, the Sword God Zero.

In the eyes of many players, Zero was currently the brightest star in the sky that they could look up to. And since he was always acting alone and sneaky, it was pretty hard to know his movements.

If not for the particular player that was always following around him, most of the people would not know what he was doing.

Because of the mysterious air surrounding him, players were tended to seek anything about him, it was making them curious about what he was up to. And due to that, any news about Zero would bound to get a lot of attention.

Just recently, there was a player within Holy City who managed to spot the Sword God. And from the photo that had been taken, it seemed that he just arrived in the kingdom since he was walking out of the teleportation hall.

Seeing that, the players within the Kingdom couldn't help but become excited. Since he was the current 'number one player', people were bound to think that something big was about to happen wherever he went.

The players were keeping an eye on this news the moment it appeared in the online forums. Some of the crazy players even logged in the game just to see the legend in person. Unfortunately, none of them were successful.

Not long after, another post appeared, saying that Zero appeared in the Maple Cloud City at the border of the Saint Heaven Kingdom.

The players immediately started moving and headed towards the said location. But immediately after the post was posted, another one suddenly appeared and reported that the Sword God met the Frost Goddess.

It was a challenge!

The players were sure of it since Zero was notorious for challenging any strong player that he encountered. And their suspicion immediately became a fact when the two suddenly disappeared.

Everyone felt a little anxious yet also excited when they heard that news. They were sure that yet another legendary battle video was going to be released soon.

They patiently waited for the clip to be posted. Some of them even had their hands full of sweat due to their anxiousness while the others were keeping an on the forums and unwilling to remove their eyes from it as they kept on refreshing the page.

After who knew how long, someone finally answered their call and posted the battle video not only on the official website of the game but also on other online platforms as well.

When they saw the familiar bunny logo at the start of the video, everyone knew that this was going to be worth watching. And just like what they were expecting, what they saw blew up their minds.