

Destiny 891

Chapter 891 The Grim Reaper And The Shadow Dancer (Part 5)

.....

Bang!

Cling! Cling!

Shin continued his barrage of attacks at Diablo, slowly suppressing the latter. But the more he gained the upper hand, the stronger his uneasiness became.

His instincts were clearly warning about something!

Unfortunately, he couldn't understand what it was, making him just continue what he was doing.

Hu~!

But while he was doing it, he suddenly took a deep breath and further focused his mind to prepare himself for what was about to come.

Seeing the changes in Shin's eyes, Diablo knew that he could no longer delay his plans. If he let this opponent get more in the groove, he knew that the tables would further flip in his favor.

'Special Ocular Skill: Demon Eyes (Phase II)'

Activating the skill, Diablo's eyes suddenly released an even brighter glow, catching Shin's attention.

Shin immediately understood why his unease was coming from when he saw that purple glow. He wanted to stop the upcoming disaster but it was already too late at this point.

Swoosh!

The time seemed to stop from Diablo's point of view. Then a series of images and information suddenly entered his head.

Ugh!

He couldn't help but groan painfully due to the sudden headache that assaulted him alongside the information that he just received.

He already used this skill for a lot of time already but he still couldn't get used to the pain that accompanied it in every usage.

But when he was done processing all of the information, his discomfort immediately disappeared. It was replaced by a sensation where he could feel that he could destroy everything.

Whoosh!

Then his eyes took another change. This time, his pupils turned from deep purple to crimson red and the part around it was painted black even further.

It was at that moment when time resumed moving.

He stared at Shin straight in the eyes, sending a sudden chill on the latter's back!

The moment they made eye contact, Shin unconsciously raised his sabers and crossed them in front of him due to the sudden threat that he was getting.

Bang!

Then he was suddenly sent flying by an unknown force.

He didn't know what hit him but it was too strong for him to withstand. Fortunately, he managed to defend against it in time, making it unable to cause him any damage.

He adjusted his body in the air while continuing to look ahead. He refused to remove his eyes in front of him as he knew that this was only the start.

Shin immediately felt the power behind that attack right after his feet landed on the ground. And due to how strong it was, he was forced to put in extra effort to stop himself from sliding further.

His feet drew a long trail on the ground filled with snow during the process. Just looking at it could indicate how strong that previous attack was.

The snow on the ground was thrown in the air and created a thick cloud due to the previous explosion, obstructing Shin's line of sight.

Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh!

Under the cover of that curtain of snow, a group of daggers covered with purple mana was sent flying toward Shin. Each of them was carrying a strong force as they traveled in the air with extreme speed.

These flying daggers were thrown with great precision as they not only target Shin but they were also covering the places that could possibly be his path of retreat.

But that was not the only thing about them since Shin couldn't also use his magical attacks against it since it would create another cover that could obstruct his line of sight once again.

Shin wanted to use his Moonlight Steps and Void Steps to easily escape this situation, but he found it to be an obvious choice. It could be what his opponent was planning to make him do.

The two of them already familiarized themselves with each other to a certain degree, so it was natural for the two of them to have a certain level of understanding of how each other worked.

Trusting his instincts, Shin chose to hold his ground and decided to face the incoming daggers head-on.

He further strengthened the energies covering his sabers before deflecting every dagger with great accuracy.

Cling! Cling! Cling!

Swoosh!

Shin read Diablo's plans right which forced the latter to charge out of the curtain of snow, revealing himself once again.

But this time, there were some changes in his appearance. Aside from the glowing eyes he had, there was now a pair of black horns sticking out of each side of his forehead. They were curving towards the back of his head before pointing upwards when they reached the middle of his head.

The air surrounding him completely changed, giving Shin an immense threat that he only felt from a selected number of people.

Shin steadied his stance and waited for Diablo to reach a certain distance.

The latter continued to move fearlessly forward. He seemed to have no plan of using his movement skills yet and wanted to only rely on his raw speed this time.

Then Shin quickly swung the [Dawn Blade] forward right after Diablo reached the desirable range that he wanted. He threw a horizontal slash in the air while releasing the accumulated power of the Brilliant Sun that he gathered.

'Extra Skill: (Modified and Enhanced) Flame Burst'

Whoosh!

A crescent wave of white flame was sent flying toward Diablo, matching the speed of the daggers that were thrown earlier.

But the Shadow Dance was still continuing forward and not showing any sign of stopping. Instead, he leaped forward and flew over the blazing wave while executing a spinning roll in the air.

He then did a quick flip right after his foot touched the ground before continuing to move forward. And due to those movements, he managed to maintain the majority of his speed despite being hindered.

Whoosh!

But Shin quickly followed up his attack with another sword wave. Though, he used the [Dawn Blade] this time and released the power of the Abyssal Moon instead.

'Slayer Skill: (Modified and Enhanced) Half-Moon Slash'

This following crescent wave was perfectly timed and almost reached Diablo in an instant right after it was released.

But despite having his face right in front of the edge of that energy wave, Diablo remained calm and responded accordingly.

He moved his head alongside the path of the 'Half-Moon Slash' and leaned his body backward. And at the very same moment, his legs were also bending over and made him kneel.

He could feel the cold powers of this particular energy wave as it flew over his face.

Due to his insane speed, he still continued moving forward by sliding on the ground.

Then he forced his body to stand up before pouncing at Shin like a hungry beast, coming after its prey.

Shin quickly responded to it and immediately swung the [Dawn Blade] to greet Diablo in midair. He even bent over to make the trajectory of the saber upwards, limiting the path that the latter could use to dodge.

But to his surprise, Diablo managed to narrowly dodge his attack by doing a strange maneuver in the air that slowed him down.

Diablo bent his body and rolled in the air as Shin's saber barely missed him.

Shin since timed his counterattack perfectly, the slight delay that Diablo did to slow himself made that attack hit nothing but air.

Diablo flew over Shin's head and landed behind him before trying to strike Shin with his shortsword on the now exposed back.

'Extra Skill: (Modified) Backbreaker'

Shin might have been taken aback at that insane maneuver that Diablo had shown but he still managed to recover himself from the shock and quickly countered.

He used the momentum of his failed attack to jump in the air and spin around, borrowing the spinning force to strike his opponent with the [Dawn Blade]. His body also launched downward as he used an offensive to counter.

'Extra Skill: (Modified) Falling Lightblade'

Cling!

Their weapons clashed briefly, creating mental sparks that flew in the air, before continuing in their respective directions.

Shin might have avoided that crisis but since he was now kneeling on the ground, he could no longer be in a suitable position to attack.

'Slayer Skill: Moonlight Steps'

Swoosh!

He immediately used his movement skill to escape but Diablo was in his hot pursuit.

'Shadow Dancer Skill (Tier 2): Shadow Waltz'

Whoosh!

He predicted the spot where Shin was going to appear and quickly thrust his stiletto without any hint of hesitation. It was as if he was confident that this attack was going to land.

'Extra Skill: (Modified) Vital Strike'

Puchi!

(-34,992)

(-3,000) (Bleeding Damage)

And sure, it was!

It perfectly landed on Shin's waist right after his body re-materialized!

Due to how fast it happened, Shin didn't even have the time to execute a combat technique and use another charge of the skill.

Shin didn't have the time to dwell on what happened and quickly disappeared within an instant, trying to escape once again.

'Elemental Skill (Void): Void Steps'

Whoosh!

'Shadow Dancer Skill (Tier 2): Mors Ballo'

Whoosh!

Shin was teleported to a random location, ten meters away from his previous location. But Diablo was ahead of him once again and was already waiting for him.

Fortunately, Shin was already expecting it and quickly used another charge of 'Moonlight Steps' to get away. He was not in a position to attack, so he had no choice but to run for the time being.

The cycle continued as Shin experienced the real terror of what a Shadow Dancer could do. He was forced to repeatedly run away without retaliating.

He managed to block a couple of fatal attacks that could instantly kill but he failed to defend against the majority of attacks.

Fortunately, the Elemental Skill that he got from 'Whitie', the 'Holy Light', and 'Sacred Blessing', had some healing properties that he could use to recover his Health Bar.

There was also the 'Eclipse Pulse', a defensive skill, that forcefully put the series of attacks from Diablo to a sudden halt.

But those skills could only delay Diablo and buy him some time to recover. It still didn't change the fact that he was currently at a complete disadvantage.

If he didn't find the right solution to deal with the insane speed and crazy maneuvers that Diablo had showcased, then this duel already had a clear winner.

'It is always ahead of me! It is as if he is reading my movements like a book!' thought Shin to himself as he blocked yet another attack from his opponent.

'It is not Reality Manifestation since he is clearly giving off a different aura. It must be a skill,' he added as he looked at Diablo's glowing eyes. 'And it is most likely related to those eyes.'

Shin was still debating if he was going to use his own trump card, the Reality Manifestation. But he felt that he couldn't use it yet and endure a little more.

'It is not like I am already out of options yet. I still have a few cards that I have left,' He wanted to test his limits for the time being before using such a 'cheat-like' state that would instantly decide the outcome of this battle.

Chapter 892 Hyper Active Immersion And Demon Eyes (Part 1)

...

Diablo immediately snatched control of the battle right after he activated the real abilities of his 'Demon Eyes' to be able to read each of Shin's moves and enhanced his overall stats with the help of 'Devil Incarnation'.

He had been styling on Shin since that movement. He outclassed his opponent in every area, whether it was in terms of speed, battle style, and control, he got it better.

His insane mechanics were very amazing. He repeatedly pushed Shin to the verge of defeat, forcing the latter to show more of his cards.

"Light and Dark Reapers!" shouted Shin as he summoned Whitie and Blackie, activating his Elemental Possession.

'Elemental Spirit Possession (Light): Sacred Vanquisher'

'Elemental Spirit Possession (Darkness): Abyssal Conqueror'

After the two Elemental Spirits fused with the [Dawn Blade] and [Dusk Blade] respectively, Shin instantly gained a huge boost in his movement and attack speed. His magic affinity also reached another level.

With these enhancements, Shin was able to regain his footing a little. But despite that being the chase, he was still having a hard time matching Diablo's proactivity.

Diablo was still suppressing him despite his sudden enhancements. What baffled Shin, even more, was the fact that his 'Ultra Instincts' seemed to be not working how it was supposed to be.

Shin didn't know the reason why, but this gave him a wake-up call that he was still not utilizing his innate talent to its peak potential when he was not in Reality Manifestation State.

But this didn't mean that Shin lost this battle. He was a Battle Genius for a reason, he could grow stronger as long as he continued to persevere until the end.

Diablo immediately noticed the small improvements that Shin had as the battle progressed, which also surprised him more and more as time went by.

'This guy is the real deal!' thought Diablo excitedly as dodged a horizontal slash from Shin with yet another narrow margin.

Swoosh!

He had no time to think about anything else as Shin was now throwing yet another strike. Diablo quickly adjusted his center of gravity and swiftly circled around his opponent, dodging that attack once again.

Shin couldn't afford to retaliate earlier because he was busy defending himself. But this time was completely different as he was now getting used to the unpredictable rhythm of his opponent.

If it was just about unpredictability, Shin also had a number of cards under his sleeves to match his opponent. It would not be an exaggeration to say that he was very familiar with such an ever-changing tempo.

After engaging in an intense battle with Diablo for such an extended period, Shin already realized that he would be at a complete disadvantage if he insisted on using his skills against his opponent.

He knew that Diablo's Class was a Shadow Dancer since he used his True Sight Skill to inspect earlier. Even if it was on the same rank as his Grim Reaper Profession, his skills couldn't be compared to his opponent when it came to execution time.

No matter how fast he used his magic-related skills, there was still a slight delay whenever he needed to activate them. It was because he needed to accumulate enough energy in order for him to release the sword waves.

There was no need to talk about the Tier 2 Skills under the Grim Reaper Class. They might be powerful but most of them needed some time to set up before they could be used. Even the Domain Skills needed at least a single second before being released.

With Diablo's current state and insane speed, that small window was more than enough for him to interrupt Shin.

Aside from the passive skills and the 'Purgatory Penta-Slash', none of his Tier 2 Skills could be used.

On the other hand, Diablo's Tier 2 Skills could be used within an instant. This was also the main reason why Shin was always being suppressed by him.

Due to this, Shin had no choice but to rely on his melee skills that could also be executed within an instant such as 'Destructive Slash', 'Solar Cut', 'Heart Seeker', 'Multiple Stabs', and others.

And to use them to their full potential, Shin was mixing these skills when he was executing the 'Infinity Edge' Combat Technique.

Since Diablo was now engaging in a melee battle once again, Shin thought it would be a choice to use this signature technique once again. Though, he couldn't utilize its real purpose since Diablo was also breaking the rhythm from time to time.

Diablo was aware of that technique, so there was no reason for him to continuously clash his weapons with Shin, where the force behind his attacks would be absorbed and return to him.

At the same time, he was also using his signature combat technique too, the 'Darkness Excursion'. It was a combination of irregular body movements, attack patterns, and strange foot techniques.

It was a combat technique that was even higher than the 'Infinity Edge' Combat Technique since it was a combination of multiple methods.

With the help of this technique, Diablo was still able to gain an advantage in this battle.

Shin was using his 'Eclipse Wielding' and 'Infinity Edge', a Pseudo-Legendary Energy Technique and an Epic Combat Technique, which made him extremely powerful.

But he was still a little inferior to Diablo who was wielding the 'Pure Demonic Energy' and 'Darkness Excursion' which were a Pseudo-Legendary Energy Source and a Legendary Combat Technique respectively.

Even Shin Dual Elemental Spirit Possession was only good enough to match the 'Devil's Incarnation' of his opponent.

Moreover, his 'Ultra Instincts' were being suppressed by the 'Demonic Eyes' for some unknown reason.

But this was still not the end of the road for Shin. For every setback that a person could experience, there would always be a lesson to be learned.

After witnessing the power of the 'Darkness Excursion' Legendary Combat Technique of his opponent, Shin suddenly got inspiration.

'If he can combine a powerful combat and complicated movement technique, then why can't I?' thought Shin as he quickly chose one of the foot techniques from his arsenal.

After thinking for a brief moment, he quickly chose the 'Mystic Movements' since it had a lot of similarities to his 'Infinity Edge'.

If the 'Infinity Edge' was absorbing the force behind his opponent's attacks and returning them twofold, then the 'Mystic Movements' was a footwork skill that accumulated more speed the more he moved.

'This foot technique may complement the areas that the Infinity Edge lacks,' thought Shin as he added the 'Mystic Movements' to the combat techniques that Shin was already executing.

Such a bold move could spell the demise of ordinary players. Using two combat techniques was already the limit for most talented individuals since it put a lot of burden on their minds.

But Shin was different, with his monstrous willpower alongside his experience of using the Reality Manifestation, such concern was the least he could think of.

Diablo immediately noticed the strange movements of his opponent the moment Shin executed the three techniques all at the same time.

At first, it was a little clumsy, costing Shin to continuously lose his Health Bar. But he only used his HP Bar as leverage to familiarize himself with his new technique. He still used the Holy Light, and Scared Blessing Elemental Skills to heal himself to further lengthen his life.

This time, Diablo experienced what a natural talent was.

Moreover, it was a talent that was fueled by a lot of hard work, making it even more terrifying.

He could only smile bitterly in front of it as he could do nothing to stop Shin from completing the technique.

He tried his best to overwhelm Shin with his rapid attacks and powerful combinations of skills, Shin was able to withstand all of it in a calm manner.

Moments later, a bona fide Legendary Combat Technique was formed right in front of Diablo's eyes.

As someone who spent countless failures in his research just to create his unique style, Diablo could only feel the bitterness of the sight in front of him.

Shin successfully created the Legendary Combat Technique he was too immersed in his trance to pay attention to the alerts that the system was showing him.

He rode this tide to continue his assault, planning to flip the state of the battle to his advantage. But how could Diablo, the former second-in-command of the Pandemonium Troupe, be defeated that easily?

He activated another phase of his special skill without any hesitation.

'Special Ocular Skill: Demonic Eyes (Phase III)'

Another set of images and information flashed through his mind. But unlike earlier, he didn't experience another headache.

Earlier, he only suffered that intense headache since the one added to his mind was a new set of information. But this time, it was refreshing all of the information that he accumulated since he started playing the game.

This set of information contained not only all of his experiences when facing the other experts of the game, but also all of the battle styles of the top godlike players he studied.

This new set of information was giving Diablo the ability to respond to all kinds of situations. He would be considered unparallel when he activated this Phase of his Demon Eyes, which was also the reason why most of the Pandemonium Troupe Members were too scared to face him.

Cling! Cling!

The two showed an insane series of exchanges that could make anyone dumbfounded.

Their movement and attack speed were one thing, but their insane mechanics and godly control were on a whole other level.

There were also insane and complex maneuvers that they were executing from time to time.

Whenever Shin was almost hitting Diablo with either of his sabers, the latter would always dodge with a very small margin before counterattacking almost at the same time.

This was a showdown between a pair of peak-class players wielding a Legendary Combat Technique.

And as the battle progressed, Diablo started to show some flaws because of his inferiority when it came to talent and felt helpless in front of Shin's monstrous willpower.

'Is this the limit of my average talent?' thought Diablo to himself as he started to doubt his hard work.

'No matter how much effort you put in it, an average person will still remain average in front of a real genius,' he remembered this phrase that someone had told him before.

But at the same time, he also recalled his own reply to that person. "It is unless that person wields absolute strength!"

He knew that his talent was average, but it didn't mean that it could stop him from achieving the so-called impossible.

He would still reach the summit that he was chasing after all this time.

"Bring back the glory of the Irregulars!"

Remembering his purpose, Diablo's mind suddenly started working at a much insane rate, costing him a warning from the system.

Ding!

System Warning: Your Synchronization Rate was increasing rapidly!

System Warning: Current Synchronization Rate 200%!

System: You set foot on the peak of Virtual Realization!

System: Entering the Hyper Active Immersion!

Chapter 893 Hyper Active Immersion And Demon Eyes (Part 2)

.....

Hyper Active Immersion.

It was a State of a player, where they could move their virtual avatars inside the game according to their imagination.

There were only a very small number of players could enter this state. And it was impossible for Martial Artists to enter this state since it was only limited to people who gained their real-life abilities through playing virtual games.

The reason being was that Martial Artists already build their foundation in the real world and it would only damage the already established foundation if they tried this method.

It was the same for the other Practitioners of the other disciplines.

Martial Artists, mentalists, Assassins, Swordsmen, and other types of Practitioners were said to have an advantage when they entered the virtual world since they already had a solid knowledge of how they were going to gain their strength and how to fully utilize it in battle.

But for ordinary people, who possessed below average or even had no talent in all kinds of disciplines, achieving such a feat would need them to walk through a torturous path of hardship.

With the advanced technology of the current era, a lot of studies had already proven that a person's hidden potential could be aroused by going through continuous hardships.

This was the reason why playing virtual games was very famous for decades. By playing the game, Martial Artists could hone their skills through continuous battles without fearing the consequence of dying.

Though, there were some talented individuals who chose not to play those games because they could achieve the same result by training themselves in the real world.

The 'ordinary' people, on the other hand, would receive a chance where they could change their pitiful fates. They could gain an ability that could also make them stronger.

Even if this was just a myth for most of them and almost forgotten, the fact that it still existed was undeniable. After all, there were some living proofs for it.

This was also the reason why there were a lot more experts in the virtual game compared to the talented individuals in the real world.

Even if the players couldn't gain the so-called abilities, these 'ordinary' people could still become powerful individuals within the game as long as they put enough effort into it.

Then the fortunate ones managed to awaken their slumbering talents through playing virtual games and even became real Practitioners in the real world, which they thought to be a luxury before.

Diablo happened to fall into this category.

He honed his skills within the game and spent a considerable amount of time in the real world to synchronize his mind and real body.

He actually wanted to volunteer to be a participant in the study of this area. Unfortunately, he couldn't find any trustworthy organization for it.

Especially after his experiences with the Pandemonium Descendants that were only using him as a tool to achieve their selfish goals.

He could only gather all of the funds that he earned after playing virtual games and add it to the inheritance that his father had left him to buy the most advanced gaming cabin alongside some top-quality vials.

It almost made him a beggar.

If there was something good that he gained from getting involved with the Pandemonium Descendants aside from the battle experiences, then it was the salary that he was getting from them was quite high.

It was much better than the white-collar people in the real world.

At that time, he was still too far from achieving the myth of 'Hyper Active Immersion', but he still showed some promise.

And right now, he finally reached this state that he had always been dreaming of.

Real World

World Gaming Organization Headquarters

The staffs of the monitoring team were very busy due to the new orders from the higher-ups. They needed to make sure that there were no 'accidents' going to happen within the game until the game-changing metamorphosis was presented to the players.

A lot of them were moving back and forth due to how busy they were. Some of the most hot-headed people were even shouting left and right, reporting their findings to their superiors.

Beep! Beep! Beep!

Then all of a sudden, a loud alarm rang, making them stop what they were doing. All of them had the same thoughts in mind.

– "What the f*ck is it this time?" –

They already heard this kind of alarm multiple times, so they were already familiar with it. And whenever they heard it, they could only think of two things. – "Overtime and Trouble" –

Bang!

A door adjacent to the room was suddenly swung open as the 'Final Boss' of this 'Dungeon' appeared.

"What the hell is it this time!" shouted Carlos as he walked out of his office. He was already wracking his brains about how he would deal with their current situation yet another trouble was already coming his way.

No one answered him directly as all of the staff within the room simultaneously turned their heads in a certain direction.

It was where the alarm was coming from.

The person who was assigned to that station couldn't help but curse his luck since he would definitely be the person who would be at the receiving end of their boss' wrath.

He first dejectedly turned to the monitor in front of him and started reporting. "Ahm... it said that someone is..."

But later, his eyes suddenly turned as he read the words at the bottom of the alert. His voice also turned louder, full of disbelief. "There is someone who triggered another Virtual Realization Alert! Someone managed to break through the 200% Synchronization Rate and enter the 'Hyper Active Immersion.'"

Hearing those words, his colleagues were entirely shocked and immediately became crazy!

"What!"

"Another Virtual Realization?"

"Two hundred percent Synchronization Rate?"

"Hyper Active Immersion? It has been a long since the last person entered that state!"

The news might be shocking but it was not as big as the ones that the 'Trouble Children' was giving them.

At the very least, this one was not entirely new to them since they already witnessed a number of people who also attained that state.

But the seemingly relieved expression on their faces was immediately replaced by a contorted expression when they heard the next words that came out of his mouth.

"A-and the person who unlocks it this time is the same guy who discovered and enhanced the 'Demon Eyes' skill."

Even Carlos help but feel troubled. If it was any other players, then it was still fine and acceptable.

But Diablo was completely different because the special skill called 'Demon Eyes' was too broken that it could be considered a cheat for the average player.

It was still acceptable for Titled Rankers since there were a lot of them who could deal with it, much less for Godlike Players who stood at the peak of the gaming world.

The skill could record all of the abilities of Diablo's opponents and find flaws in them. It was an artificial martial talent of the Chosen and Mighty Ones.

And the most troublesome about it was the ability that could transform Diablo into an absolute expert.

Carlos read through that Skill and knew that it currently had three phases.

The first phase was only for recording while the second phase was like analyzing, looking for the flaws in the recorded information.

Then there was the third phase where all of the recorded information would come together and grant Diablo a special ability.

In that phase, Diablo seemed to be creating a detailed map that contained all kinds of scenarios in battle. And alongside them were different kinds of solutions how to deal with them.

Those solutions were accumulated from the experiences of the experts that were recorded by the Demon Eyes.

This was the main reason why Diablo was included in the list of players that needed to be monitored closely. This special ocular skill that was produced by the system through his countless efforts had a lot of potentials that could rival some of the Miracle Players.

And now that Diablo achieved the Hyper Active Immersion, this Demon Eyes could now enter its next phase.

Based on the analysis that the research department had conducted, the fourth phase of the Demon Eyes would most likely be an ability that could help Diablo mimic the recorded information.

Copying the skills was too much from what they concluded, but they were sure that it was possible for Diablo to recreate some of the techniques executed by those expert players.

He would have a variety of techniques in his arsenal, which could also help him execute the more difficult and complex maneuvers in battle.

Carlos was in deep thought before asking. "What is that guy doing right now?"

The person who was assigned to watch Diablo immediately responded. "He is currently fighting a top expert, sir!"

"Who is it?" asked Carlos with squinting eyes. He was also curious who was the person that pushed a monster like Diablo for this 'evolution'.

His subordinate hesitated for a moment before replying carefully. "Ahm... It is a player in the Miracle Player List, Sir."

"That guy who first unlocked the 'Reality Manifestation' Virtual Realization," he added with a quieting voice, afraid that his boss would suddenly explode in anger.

Contrary to everyone's expectations, Carlos didn't react the way they envisioned. He just looked at the ceiling, close his eye, and muttered to himself. "Of course, only a freak of nature like him can push a monster to the limit."

"But why it involves him once again?" he added with full frustration.

He then turned to the person closest to him. "Contact the Research and Analysis department. Tell them that they will be receiving an assignment."

He paused for a moment and hesitated before smirking evilly. "And send them to the office of the Development Department's Head."

Chapter 894 Hyper Active Immersion Against Reality Manifestation (Part 1)

.....

Diablo was completely caught off-guard by the sudden notifications, almost costing him the outcome of this duel.

Fortunately, he was able to quickly execute a foot technique to save himself from the clutches of death at the very last moment.

He created enough distance between himself and his opponent within an instant, buying him enough time to clearly read the system notifications that he just received.

And when he read through it, he couldn't help but smile widely. He subconsciously tightened his grip over his weapons. "Finally! I finally did it!"

He couldn't explain how he was feeling right now. All of the efforts that he spent were meant for this and all of them paid off.

He could clearly feel the changes in his body. His senses were extremely sharp and his reflexes also improved greatly.

He ducked forward, dodging the saber that was coming after his neck.

Swoosh!

Shing!

Shin caught up to him and planned to continue attacking with his newly founded strength. This Legendary Combat Technique empowered with the 'Eclipse Wielding' was very strong.

Diablo could clearly feel it! He could move his body just like what he had envisioned inside his head. It looked like he could do more freely this time.

As long as his mind commanded it, his body would execute it exactly the way he wanted.

Right after dodging, Diablo moved his feet, executing another foot technique, disappearing from his current position and reappearing behind Shin like a shadow.

But instead of attacking immediately, he followed with another foot technique and re-positioning himself to another side. And that was when Shin threw another strike to his previous position.

Then Diablo quickly struck with his shortsword on the now exposed back of his opponent. His speed and timing for this particular attack greatly surpassed his previous moves, making it hard for Shin to avoid.

Fortunately, Shin's senses were extremely sharp and his reaction speed was instantaneous. Right after he sensed the threat coming from behind, he quickly executed a complicated foot technique to escape his current predicament.

He disappeared and reappeared a few meters away from Diablo. He successfully escaped but the rhythm of his attack was completely broken. The accumulated power through the 'Infinity Edge' and the gathered speed by the 'Mystic Movements' was instantly exhausted.

Swoosh!

Swoosh!

Shin didn't have the time to dwell on it since Diablo quickly went on the offensive. And for the next exchanges, Shin immediately sensed the changes in the movements of his opponent.

Everything that Diablo did still carried irregular movements and complex patterns, but this time, he executed all of them perfectly.

Shin was repeatedly thrown out of his rhythm because of this. He was even finding himself in a difficult predicament that was hard to escape from.

There were also times when Diablo was doing some unexpected moves that he didn't execute before. And due to that, the complexity of his movements became even harder to read.

From Shin's perspective, his opponent looked like a very skilled acrobat who was styling him in every possible way.

Having a closer look at Diablo, Shin discovered that the current state of his opponent seemed to be very unusual. He could feel the sense of familiarity from it but there were also some distinct differences that could be spotted.

Shin was starting to lose his footing and his form was slowly being broken. He was repeatedly being pushed back, having no time to catch his breath.

The current Diablo completely outmatched him in every area!

He couldn't let this happen as it would clearly lead to his defeat.

Having that thought, Shin could only think of a single thing. And that was revealing his real trump card and giving everything he could for the final exchange.

"It looks like he is using the Reality Manifestation. But, at the same time, it also feels completely different," muttered Shin as he closely watched each movement of his opponent.

Diablo clearly had the air of an expert but the essence of his each of his movements was completely different compared to how they were supposed to use.

He was currently wielding a large number of techniques but the way he was using them clearly defied the common knowledge about them.

Those techniques might be a little underwhelming compared to the great Martial Arts in the real world, but when they were gathered together within a single body and were used to their greatest potential, their combined strength didn't lose in comparison.

Hou~!

With all of that, Shin quickly focused his mind and entered a state where he could summon his real strength.

'Reality Manifestation!'

He then swung his saber with great force as a 'formal greeting'.

Bang!

A powerful explosion sent Diablo flying, catching him completely off-guard.

Fortunately, he was able to react in time, or else, he would surely suffer greatly if gotten hit by the unexpected strike from Shin.

He then raised his head and looked ahead of him, cautiously staring at the cloud of snow in a distance.

He could feel the immense threat coming from behind that veil of snow. It was as if a horrifying beast was hiding under its covers.

Swoosh!

Then he saw a huge hole appear, scattering the veil of snow. And at the same time, a tip of a saber was magnifying in front of his eyes in an incredibly fast manner.

Puff!

That attack indeed landed but Diablo's body immediately turned into black smoke at that very moment, indicating that he managed to escape.

Boom!

Then a powerful blast of wind suddenly swept that area, sending the snow on the ground to be thrown in the air and scatter in every direction.

Such a sight clearly indicated how powerful that simple thrust was.

Diablo appeared a few meters away from his previous locations, squinting his eyes as he looked at the new cloud of snow in there.

Then he saw Shin slowly walking out from it in a calm manner with his sabers being held on each of his sides and pointing at the ground. They were still releasing the signature energies of the 'Eclipse Wielding' but Diablo could clearly sense that there was some difference this time.

He couldn't put his finger on what exactly was it, but he was sure that it was much more dangerous this time.

Then he saw Shin's figure blur for an instant before arriving in front of him within that short timeframe. At the same time, the blazing [Dawn Blade] was already making its way toward him, leaving a trail of its white flame in the air.

That was a simple swing without any hint of assistance from the system or elements of the game. This indicated that it was neither a skill nor a combat technique.

But despite that being the case, the power behind this strike was entirely on a different level compared to what Shin had shown earlier.

Even in his current state, Diablo didn't dare to face this attack head-on.

Swoosh!

Inside his mind, a series of information was processed as he looked for the most optimal way to deal with this particular situation. At the same time, he was also formulating a few moves ahead that he was going to do after that.

He then moved his feet to a certain footwork pattern to avoid confronting the incoming attack. But this time, he didn't move too far from Shin nor positioned himself behind the latter.

Instead, he took a step backward to create a space between himself and his opponent before moving sideways to avoid the descending blade of the blazing saber.

Whoosh!

Then he suddenly shifted his foot and took a burst step forward to instantly close the distance between him and Shin. And while he was doing that, the stiletto on his left hand lunged toward the waist of his opponent.

Clang!

His movements were seamless and fast. But to his surprise, Shin deflected his weapon with the same saber that missed its target.

Shin shifted his footing and took a large step in the opposite direction that Diablo took as he changed the trajectory of his previous swing, making the saber and stiletto collide with each other.

Such a precise series of movements greatly surprised Diablo as the data that he had inside his head didn't predict that move.

Diablo tried to out-maneuver Shin a couple of times but the latter had a solid defense, repelling each of his attempts perfectly. And what was more surprising about that was the fact that Shin didn't use any kind of skill or combat technique during the process.

It was at that moment when Diablo realized that Shin was no longer restricted by the limitations within the game. He was freely moving his body the exact way he wanted it.

Diablo also noticed that Shin was in a state that was similar to his yet also somewhat different.

"He is using real Martial Arts within the game!" Diablo realized the truth after a few more exchanges with Shin.

"That is also possible?" he couldn't believe it at first but he later acknowledge it since it was theoretically possible.

After all, the game also had the Self-Created Skill, Combat Techniques, Class Fighting Styles, and similar systems which were not entirely different from Martial Arts in the real world.

"We are opposites. He brought his real strength from the real world and used it within the game while I did the opposite. I gained my Martial Prowess in the real world after learning it within the game."

"But in the state of Hyper Active Immersion, my mental strength and great focus greatly help my in-game avatar. I can move it according to my will and imagination."

Diablo could tell that Shin was using Advanced Martial Arts which was why his attacks were not working against his opponent.

"What I am lacking right now is a set of skills and techniques that can rival that Martial Arts!" this was the thought that was running inside his head as he remembered how he improved the 'Demon Eyes' Ocular Skill.

"If the ones that I currently possessed are still lacking, then all I have to do is to improve all of them with the help of Demon Eyes!"

"Something like this is impossible to do in the real world given my limited talent. But inside this game and with my current state, everything is possible," he thought as he decided to make a gamble.

He could feel the burden of using the 'Hyper Active Immersion' and the fourth phase of the 'Demon Eyes'. But this was a very rare chance that might not happen again in the future.

His talent in the real world was limited and the only place where he could prove himself was inside the game. In this world, he could stand toe to toe against the so-called geniuses and prodigies from reality!

"It is all or nothing!"

Diablo took advantage of the 'Hyper Active Immersion' to force his way toward the next phase of the Demon Eyes.

The information recorded within that skill started to make some changes. The combat and foot techniques started to improve at an alarming rate before flashing inside Diablo's head.

'Special Ocular Skill: Demon Eyes (Phase V)'

The headache that assaulted him this time was on a completely different level compared to the ones that he experienced before. He could even imagine his brain cells being toasted by it during the process.

But despite all of that, Diablo chose to endure. There was no going back right now!

"Ah...!"

His shout was more like a bestial roar as he continued to block all the attacks from Shin. And when everything was completely processed inside his head, a shockwave came out from his body, sending his opponent away from him.

Shin was slightly taken aback by it but he still remained calm. He stood up and squinted his eyes while looking ahead.

A few meters away from him, he saw Diablo walking out from the cloud of snow in a steady and calm manner. His body was also releasing a purple steam of mana that was flowing upwards before disappearing into the air.

Shin could feel the air of an expert around Diablo. There was also the essence of a mysteriousness in each of his moves.

If earlier, he could only see Diablo as a top-class player without much understanding of Martial Arts, then he was now seeing a real Martial Artist with a deep knowledge of his craft!

"Incredible! Did he just gain a Martial Enlightenment?" muttered Shin as he looked at the sudden transformation of Diablo.

His face was full of amazement!

"I've changed my mind! I now want to enjoy this moment to the fullest!" he said as this was going to be his first time battling a player while using the 'Reality Manifestation'.

Little did he know that this was also going to be an important event for the development of the gaming industry.

This would be one of the peaks of Virtual Battle.

It was the collision between the legendary state of 'Hyper Active Immersion' and the one that was created based on it, the 'Reality Manifestation'.

Regardless of the outcome of this battle, the Virtual World would be bound to take another step toward a more advanced future!

Chapter 895 Hyper Active Immersion Against Reality Manifestation (Part 2)

.....

Shin and Diablo stood in their respective positions completely unmoved. They stared at each other and observed the current state of the opposing side.

As they studied each other, the respective auras that they were emitting spread outward before clashing against each other the moment they meet.

A powerful ripple was sent in every direction at that collision, making the surrounding air move violently. It was like a powerful vortex of wind centering the two who caused it.

The alternating black and white mana that Shin had and Diablo's purple mana created another layer of a vortex that made the surrounding area even more chaotic.

Bang! Bang!

Then the two of them suddenly kicked the ground and disappeared from their respective positions, signifying how fast their current speed was.

Swoosh! Swoosh!

Cling!

The loud sound of metal clashing against each other could be heard as Shin and Diablo met at the center point between their previous locations.

There seemed to be nothing noteworthy in that collision since nothing happened.

Yet...

They stood still and held their positions, trying to overwhelm each other with their strengths. But neither of them moved.

Boom!

It was at that moment when sonic booms followed their previous actions before colliding with one another and causing a powerful shockwave in every direction, centering the two once again.

This shockwave was much stronger than earlier as it resonated in every area. The ground tremble and sent the snow on the ground up in the air before being swept away by a strong gust of wind that circled the area.

The nearby trees shook violently, almost making them fall. It was as if a devastating storm arrived alongside the sudden occurrence of a world-shaking earthquake.

The two stared each other straight in the eyes while carrying the calm look on their faces. Then they disappeared once again before reappearing in a different location alongside another collision.

Bang!

This process repeatedly occurred as the two continued to exchange blows. The whole area was completely devastated due to their repeated collision. This sight signified the current strength of the two while they were being reinforced by their respective states.

The exchanges were slowly getting more and more intense as time went by. Shin was also starting to showcase his superior strength and martial prowess, making Diablo take caution whenever he attempted a bold offensive.

But it didn't mean that he was at disadvantage. His class still had a clear advantage in terms of speed. And with the help of the advanced techniques that the 'Demon Eyes' had provided him, the battle remained to be on equal ground.

Diablo properly utilized the techniques recorded by the 'Demon Eyes' and skillfully executed them in battle. He even made those 'stolen' techniques became his own. They also properly fused with his style which made him even stronger.

Alongside the foot techniques designated for Shadow Dancer Class, Diablo was able to circle around Shin while launching attacks from different directions.

The fighting style that he had right now was derived from all of the experiences of the experts that he had faced so far, which made it even more unpredictable. This was also the reason why his attacks always came with all kinds of strange angles that were hard to figure out.

But despite that being the chase, he still failed properly land a clean hit at his opponent. Shin's defensive maneuvers were still solid as ever.

And since he was not using the 'Reality Manifestation', his 'Ultra Instincts' innate trait was properly working once again. He now broke away from the clutches of the strange method that was restricting it earlier.

Shin didn't know how Diablo did it earlier, but it became less significant when he learned that this innate trait couldn't be restricted when he assimilated with it in the 'Reality Manifestation' State.

Setting that thought aside, Shin couldn't help but become more surprised at Diablo the longer they fought.

Shin might not be using any advanced moves from his swordsmanship yet, but all of the skills that he just used were more than enough to suppress most of his opponents with it.

Unless that person was as strong and talented as him, and also possess a similar level of Martial Arts that he was using, fighting him on an equal footing was close to impossible.

But Diablo still achieved it!

This signified how talent Diablo. Though, most of the credit should go to the 'Demon Eyes' since it was able to create a set of techniques that was comparable to the moves that Shin was currently showing.

But it was still too early to give the full evaluation for that ocular skill since Shin was still not showing the real power of Yin-Yang Swordsmanship.

"Let's try picking up the pace then," muttered Shin as he executed the real version of the 'Infinity Edge' combat technique.

'Yin-Yang Swordsmanship: Sword Transmigration'

Sword flashes with black and white colors suddenly surrounded Shin as he executed the sword technique, warding off the shadow blades that were coming from every direction.

Seeing how powerful the technique was, Diablo had no choice but to retreat for a moment to have a clear look at Shin.

He then gritted his teeth when he realized the real strength of Shin's swordsmanship. But he refused to give in and use his strongest technique and accepted the challenge.

'Legendary Combat Technique: Darkness Excursion'

Supported by the 'Hyper Active Immersion' State, Diablo went back to the offensive.

Whoosh! Whoosh!

Cling! Cling!

Since the 'Darkness Excursion' was a combination of foot and offensive techniques, Diablo was able to move at insane speed, circling around Shin, while also attacking during the process.

While Shin was surrounded by the black and white sword flashes, Diablo suddenly transformed into a purple shadow moving at a speed that was impossible to be spotted by the naked eye.

The speedy exchanges lasted for a few moments before Shin was able to predict Diablo's next move and executed another sword technique.

'Yin-Yang Swordsmanship: Sword Progression'

He pointed the [Dawn Blade] in a certain direction and lunged forward with a speed that was comparable to Diablo's.

Swoosh!

And while he was moving forward, the white flame surrounding the [Dawn Blade] moved in a spiral manner before creating a pointed tip at the head of the saber.

His movements might be too sudden but Diablo was able to quickly respond in time and executed a foot technique before turning into black smoke.

'Shadow Dancer Skill (Tier 2): Shadow Waltz'

Swoosh!

He then appeared behind Shin and struck with his stiletto as his opponent was brushing past him.

Purple mana surrounding his body gathered at his weapon before creating a layer around it, increasing its size.

'Extra Skill: (Empowered) Vital Strike'

Swoosh!

Before the tip of the stiletto struck Shin, he quickly halted his movements and hopped away from the Diablo to create some distance. But the latter persisted and chance after him, not willing to let go.

Midair, Shin rotated his wrists to flip the sabers that he was holding a couple of times, building up good momentum. Then he swung them in a horizontal manner. They might be close to each other but their respective trajectories were parallel with one another.

'Yin-Yang Swordsmanship: Beheading Blade'

The tip of Diablo's stiletto was almost upon him at that time but he still retaliated with a speed rivaling his opponent.

Diablo calculated inside his head after seeing Shin's fearless straightforwardness. He then realized that he would be at a disadvantage in this exchange. He might be able to land a clean hit that would deal a lot of damage but his opponent would claim his head in exchange.

Without any hesitation, Diablo stopped his attack by retracting his arm before disappearing in front of Shin without leaving a single trace.

'Shadow Dancer Skill (Tier 2): Extreme Vanish'

He might be forced to take a step back but he still didn't give up on offense.

Instead of retreating, he used the one-second invulnerability and momentary boost of the speed of his skill to fearlessly move forward.

The invisibility effect of the skill also granted him the chance to get near Shin without being noticed.

He ducked forward, barely dodging the sabers of his opponent that were moving like the pair of blades of a scissor.

Right after closing the distance, he quickly swung his shortsword horizontally at the exposed waist of his opponent. The purple aura surrounding his body also reinforced the shortsword just like what happened to his stiletto earlier.

'Twilight Skill: (Empowered) Deadly Laceration'

Diablo was confident that this attack was going to land since Shin was still suspended in the air which also prevented the latter from executing any movement techniques. And due to the previous actions that Shin did, his arms were now in an awkward position to counterattack.

Unfortunately for Diablo, Shin still had a way to move in midair.

'Legacy Skill: Mondi's Jump'

Pa!

He kicked the air to propel himself away from his opponent and narrowly escape his dangerous predicament.

Swoosh!

Diablo was taken aback by what happened but still managed to recover himself within an instant before chasing after Shin.

At the same time, he swung his shortsword and stiletto in the air, sending a series of purple waves toward his opponent.

'Class Fighting Style: Shadow Cyclone'

Seeing the barrage of energy waves flying at him at extreme speed, Shin also did the same and sent a series of sword waves forward. But instead of using the normal way of using his in-game skills, he used them as a medium to execute an advanced sword technique from his arsenal.

'Yin-Yang Swordsmanship: Sword Crusade'

Swoosh! Swoosh!

Whoosh!

Bang! Bang!

A series of violent explosions immediately occurred right after opposing energy waves clashed against each other.

But despite seeing how powerful the series of explosions were, Diablo continued to move forward, ignoring violent ripples in the air and the chaotic aura left lingering in the air.

His shadow seemed to move and enfolded himself, protecting him from the explosions as he moved ahead. And when he broke through, his speed suddenly accelerated, turning himself into a purple flash of light.

'Class Fighting Style: Killing Shadow'

While moving ahead, Diablo was thrusting his stiletto forward, cutting through the air on his path. A sonic boom was accompanying him alongside the spiraling aura that was spearheading his charge.

'Basic Combat Technique: Second Drive'

'Class Fighting Style: Final Strike'

Shin stopped moving backward when he saw that before flipping the [Dusk Blade] with a twist of his wrist.

The power of the Abyssal Moon enhanced the dark light surrounding it, covering the entire blade of the saber and turning it to pitch black weapon. He then waited for a brief moment before swinging that saber forward in a horizontal manner.

His actions might be simple but it was executed in a very swift manner, leaving a black trail in the air as it continued to move forward.

'Yin-Yang: Swordsmanship: Blade Culling'

A flash of light occurred when the two brushed past each other and suffered a huge amount of damage due to their respective moves.

(-89,440)

(-90,002)

They failed to land the hit on their targeted spots but the damage was still enormous for their respective Health Bars. And since they already suffered a few scratches in their earlier exchange, these particular strikes almost emptied their remaining Hit Points.

Then they paused for a brief moment to take an Advance Health Potions to recover their HP Bars back to a desirable amount before resuming their battle.

The next exchanges reached an extremely high intensity, completely showcasing their respective skills and styles.

Diablo cycled his in-game skills perfectly and executed them in a manner that broke the logic of the game. He also used the improved combat techniques recorded by the 'Demon Eyes' to compensate for the areas where he was lacking and also treated them as if they were a real form of Martial Arts.

On the other hand, Shin showcased a godly display of his swordsmanship as if he was in the real world. He surpassed the limitations of the virtual world as he summoned his real strength within the game. Each of his moves contained the essence of his real Martial Arts and Swordsmanship, unrestricted by the system.

The two continued to lose their Hit Points as they continued the duel.

They could feel proud of themselves as they showcased the pinnacle of the virtual battle. Any player who would watch this battle in the future was going to be inspired regardless of their standing in the real world.

Especially when these two individuals represented both types of players.

One of the sides was an ordinary person who surpassed the limitations of the game and became a better version of himself. Broke free from his limited talent in the real world and showed the possible evolution of humanity.

On the other hand, the other person was a Practitioner who ignored the restrictions of the virtual world and summoned his real strength in this game. He showed that this world was no different from reality.

Alas, no matter how amazing this battle was, it still needed to come to an end. And the outcome would be decided by a final exchange just like any other legendary battle.

Chapter 896 Unconvincing Outcome, Making Connection

.....

Bang!

Shin and Diablo pushed themselves from each other with a powerful strike. They borrowed the forces behind each other's attacks to create enough distance away from one another.

This duel was already been extended for much longer than they had expected, but neither of them minded it.

Both of them already gained something from this battle, especially Diablo who finally attained the state that he was aiming for.

Shin, on the other hand, already tested his limits when using the Reality Manifestation and saw how it would work against a top-class player. Though, he was also curious about the state that Diablo was in. It was the same as the Reality Manifestation yet also different at the same time.

He knew that Diablo also achieved a lot of things in this battle. And the greatest one of them was most likely that special state. He could clearly see the growth of his opponent during this battle, especially when using those foot and combat techniques to their peak potential and made it look like they were a real form of Martial Arts.

Shin couldn't help but admire this particular player.

He could now understand why Zero said that Diablo was being feared by the Pandemonium Descendants.

With this kind of power, he would give the organization a lot of headaches if he started assassinating their core moments, especially when his class was perfect with the job. They would also have a hard time catching up with him due to the same reason.

On top of that, he was also very familiar with the Pandemonium Descendants and their methods.

The scariest opponent that anyone would be always like Diablo – someone who had understand his enemies very well and could also hide in the dark while picking them out one by one.

He was really tempted to invite Diablo to join the Empyrean Talons. "I loved to ask him to join us, but unfortunately, this is not the right time for it."

Just like he was exhausting himself after using the 'Reality Manifestation' while keeping the 'Eclipse Wielding' and 'Elemental Spirit Possession' up all this time, Diablo should also be doing the same.

He was not sure what method his opponent was using but he could at least tell them that the opposing side was almost hitting the limit.

Diablo should also be reaching the point where he could no longer endure the mental burden, so he should need to log out of the game after this battle. It was for him to make sure that his body in the real world was able to handle the mental exhaustion.

Shin definitely had the advantage in this area. He would never have to worry about that problem since his monstrous mental strength could still handle this much mental burden.

Knowing that it was time to end this duel, Shin took a deep breath and assumed a stance for the final exchange.

The air surrounding him immediately changed as the opposing energies enfolding each of his sabers became even more powerful.

The power of the Brilliant Sun became more violent and released a heat that melted all of the snow in the area that it was facing and left the ground scorched. On the other hand, the power of the Abyssal Moon turned even darker and colder, transforming the area on its side into a frozen land.

There was an inferno on one side and an ice age on the other.

Seeing that seen, Diablo immediately understood what Shin was planning to do. He was also reaching the limit, so this was the perfect time to end this duel.

He flipped his shortsword and stiletto, holding them in a reverse-grip manner before crossing his arms in front of him. Then the purple aura that was surrounding his body became violent and created a violent storm surrounding him.

A few seconds later, his shadow seemed to move out of the ground and slowly climbed on his body. It then became shadow armor that protected his body as a shadowy cape with tattered edges extended from his back.

That cape made of shadows grew larger with every second, spreading widely before dancing alongside the violent wind.

The two refused to move an inch as they waited for their respective powers to reach their peaks while watching the opposing side respectively.

Bang! Bang!

And when the accumulated powers reached their peaks, the two suddenly kicked the ground at the same time and launched themselves forward with a speed that surpassed their previous performance.

Swoosh! Swoosh!

After reaching the perfect distance to attack, the two swung their weapons at the same time and released all of their accumulated powers during the process, exhausting their remaining strengths just for these final strikes.

'Yin-Yang Swordsmanship: Advance Form – Firmament Chaos'

'Shadow Dancer Pinnacle Skill: (Taboo) Ruling of the Shadows'

Boom!!!

This explosion surpassed all of the previous ones as it created a series of fissures in the space surrounding the two.

Crackle! Crackle!

Black lightning continued to crackle as the collision between the two powers grew to a larger degree.

The Health Bars of the two were also dropping slowly after being exposed to the clashing energies and violent mana surrounding them.

A small briefly appeared in between the colliding powers, devouring the surrounding energies before disappearing once again and immediately creating another explosion after.

Boom!

The explosion created a dome-shaped violent energy that devoured everything on its path while expanding.

This explosion also shook the whole area and send a violent gust of wind in every direction, making the other people sense it despite them being too far from it.

Even the resident beast monsters within the are the region turned their heads towards the direction of that explosion as they could sense how powerful it was.

Going back to the place where it occurred, Shin stood at the center of a gigantic crater, looking completely exhausted.

He looked at the man kneeling on one knee a meter away from him, clearly showing the outcome of the battle.

But despite winning the duel, Shin was wearing a deep frown on his face. He was quite displeased at what happened.

He might have won but the way achieved it was not convincing.

At the very end of the battle, where their Heath Bars took the final stroke, one of the skills attached to his armor was suddenly activated at the final moment.

Equipment Skill: Death Exemption (Passive): You can defy death after receiving a fatal hit that could kill you.

Became invulnerable for 5 seconds upon the activation.

During the 2-second timeframe after the skill duration ended, you can convert some of your MP to HP.

MP to HP conversion: $1\% \text{ MP} = 2\% \text{ HP}$

Maximum Conversion: 25% MP

Cooldown: 4 Hours.

Because of this skill, the system recognized him as the winner of the duel even if both of their Health Bars hit zero at the same time.

He knew that this skill was a part of his strength, but he still couldn't feel a little empty at the result of the battle.

For him, this battle should at least be judged as a draw.

Regardless, a win was still a win at the end of the day, no matter how he achieved it.

He sheathed his sabers and walked towards Diablo and extended his hand, offering help for the latter. "That was a good fight."

Diablo could feel the sincerity from those words. He could see how genuine Shin felt about the duel, making him accept the help. He grabbed the offered hand and stood up. "Yeah, it is indeed satisfying."

Ugh!

He was about to continue the conversation when he suddenly felt an unbearable headache. He deeply creased his brow as he felt a little dizzy. 'I can no longer endure the mental fatigue.'

He then turned to Shin and spoke. "As much as I want to stay and listen to your proposal, my mind and body are completely exhausted."

He knew that Shin was the central figure of the expedition group earlier and he was also aware of the purpose of why the latter had approached him. After all, he was also thinking the same.

Unfortunately, that discussion needed to wait until he took a proper rest and recover his peak form.

After all, he didn't have the same monstrous willpower as Shin nor possessed a body that was properly trained by a powerful Martial Arts.

Shin understood Diablo and could only nod his head. "I understand."

But before they really wrapped this up, they still needed to clarify a few things, so Shin quickly added. "Then let me at least hear if you are interested in working with us for the time being."

"We are aware of your conflict with the Pandemonium Descendants. We also suspect that you are here to stop them from completing their task in this place, so we want to extend possible cooperation."

Diablo already figured that out. He also had more detailed information about the said operation of the Pandemonium Descendants and also knew that his individual strength would not be enough to stop them. This was the reason why he changed his mind and was also considering working with Shin and the others earlier.

Unfortunately, they didn't have enough time to discuss the details since he was really at his limit. He could only give his brief answer. "We still can't fully trust each other, but given the current situation, I can at least say that I will not be a threat to you all."

"That is more than enough for us," answered Shin as he understood Diablo's point of view.

He then hesitated for a moment before sending a friend request to the latter. "Even if our situation is still not the greatest, we can still exchange some insights from time to time and also spar if the opportunity presented itself."

Diablo was slightly taken aback by it and stared at Shin with an odd look on his face. But he immediately shook his head and smile bitterly as he accepted the friend request. "I guess that is also a good idea."

He then started walking away to look for a safe spot to log out. But he suddenly paused his steps when he remembered something and quickly turned around. "Those guys are definitely going to approach you and propose cooperation."

"The decision is still up to you, but I suggest not working with them since the quest that they are doing is impactful enough that it can affect the entire world negatively."

Shin raised his brows when he heard those words. He briefly fell into deep thought before replying with a smirking tone. "Is that so? Then it will work perfectly for us since we can use it to our advantage."

Diablo was surprised by Shin's words once again as he could read the meaning of those words. He then started laughing loudly. "You really are an interesting fellow."

He then turned around and waved his hand before disappearing like a ghost.

On the other hand, Shin continued to stand in his place a bit longer before also disappearing in the same manner. "Well, at least, everything went well."

Chapter 897 A Signal For Progression

...

Real World.

World Gaming Organization Headquarters.

A couple of people were walking out of Troy's office. It was hard to tell what they were thinking because of the mixed emotion reflected on their faces.

They just watched a battle that was going to be recorded in the history of the gaming world. A collision between the 'Hyper Active Immersion' and 'Reality Manifestation'.

The two people that just walked out of the office were the heads of the 'Analysis' and 'Research' Departments. Their jobs were to dissect all of the data that they got from the battle between Shin and Diablo and study all of it in every detail.

In the meantime, there were only three people left inside the office, and they were Carlos, Troy, and the Chairman of the World Gaming Organization.

There was a brief moment of silence within the room as they watched Shin and Diablo wrapped their battle. And when they saw the two separate, the Chairman turned to Carlos. "Cooperate with those two departments and inform me of your discovery."

"Yes, Chairman!" replied Carlos while standing up. He hesitated for a moment before finally voicing his current concern. "But what are we going with Diablo, Sir?"

"There may be a few numbers of people who already achieved the state of 'Hyper Active Immersion' when playing the game but they are not that rare given that a lot of great games are already been released in the past few years."

"But even among the top players who achieved it, none of them come close to Diablo. He is the first person to manage to utilize that state to its perfection since the time it was first discovered."

"At least, since the time when that particular generation of players revealed it to the public," he added with a careful tone.

The Chairman stroke his chin for a moment, thinking. Then he turned back to Carlos and ask. "So, what do you suggest?"

Hearing that Carlos no longer hesitated and immediately said. "I think it is better if we invite Diablo to participate in the research in this area."

The Chairman raised his eyebrows when he heard and refuted. "But we can't directly involve with the players of the game. It will break the balance. It is going to be more complicated for us to solve."

"I am not talking about inviting him to be part of us but to put him on a special program, Sir," clarified Carlos before adding. "There is already a lot of research about this area and already produced positive results. And those are also one of the reasons why we manage to successfully create the system for the 'Reality Manifestation'."

"But it still not enough reason for us to directly involve ourselves with a player," pointed the Chairman sharply. "There are also large guilds who are already doing similar research for their members."

"The information about the Hyper Active Immersion State is not a secrete, after all. This is the reason why the large organizations supporting those powerful guilds are nurturing their talents. And from what I remember, they are already close to achieving similar results based on their recent progress."

Carlos understood the point but he still couldn't give up on Diablo. From what he could see, this particular player would be a key figure that would lead the Virtual World to its new era. "But Diablo is a special case, Sir. What's more, he is not a part of any kind of organization, so he will not survive long if we leave him alone."

"Being in a Hyper Active Immersion is indeed amazing, but staying in that state will also put a lot of burden on the mind of the user. If that person is not supported properly, they are going to become a cripple sooner or later."

"Worst, they could even die while playing the game, Sir," the expression on Carlos' face was getting gloomy while thinking of they were going to lose such a talented person.

Unfortunately, the chairman remained unconvinced and sternly replied. "As I said, we can't directly involve the players. We can't be biased just because that person shows a remarkable feat and overwhelming potential."

"If you really want to support him, then you can just send him a message through the system and inform him that his situation can lead him into something dangerous. Isn't that also a part of your job as the head of the Monitoring Department?"

"You can also give him a prescription on how he will deal with it. But anything beyond that is no concern since it will no longer be the scope of our authority."

"It is up to him to look for the solution to his problem. He can look for a suitable organization that will help him or looks for another way if he stubbornly wants to remain an independent player."

"Everything else is up to fate," he added while looking at Carlos with full seriousness.

Carlos still wanted to continue convincing the chairman but he suddenly saw Troy shaking his head at him, saying that it was pointless.

Carlos could only nod his head and bow. "I understand, Sir. And sorry for my imprudence."

The Chairman waved his hand, telling him that it was fine before saying. "If that is everything, you can go now."

Carlos bowed once again before excusing himself. "Yes, Sir."

When Carlos left the room, Troy, who remained quiet since earlier finally turned to the chairman and spoke. "I understand your point, Sir. But isn't it a bit too harsh? After all, Carlos' intention is pure."

"He only cares about the advancement of our technology and the well-being of our players. After all, this is the reason why he chooses to be in the Monitoring Department despite his talent and vast knowledge in our field."

Strangely, the Chairman didn't reprimand those words and chuckled a little. "I know it very well. But we still need to remain neutral in everything. If we directly interfere with the private lives of the players, it will destroy the balance."

"We can't also support them with our funds and facilities even if they show us a potential that will be beneficial to our growth. It will lead us to break the Oath that we take before making this Organization."

Hearing that, Troy could only sigh helplessly. "Then I guess there is really no way for us to help that kid even though he is really a good prospect."

"And given his background and past experiences, he will not join any kind of organization despite knowing how dire his situation is."

"Actually, we can even forget about that. Given his level of Hyper Active Immersion, there is actually no place in the world that can help that kid aside from our facilities."

"This is the real reason why Carlos wants the Organization to support that kid," he added as he found that it would be a pity to lose such a precious talent.

It was at this moment that the chairman smirked. "Heh! Who says that?"

Troy was taken aback by those words and quickly turned to the chairman with a confused look on his face. "Eh? What do you mean by that, Sir?"

The chairman didn't give him an answer and just stared at him with a profound look instead. It was as if he was saying that Troy already knew the place that he was referring to.

Troy stared blankly at the chairman as he was trying to look for the answer inside his head. Then a few places on par with the World Gaming Organization indeed popped into his mind.

"Ah! Are you planning to send the kid in that place, Sir?" he blurted out as he thought of a particular place that perfectly fit the situation.

The chairman smiled mysteriously as he answered. "Just like what you and Carlos had said, we can't afford to lose that kid. We are not in a position to support him, but it didn't mean that we can give up on him."

"So... why not we send him to our friend to do our job instead? It is not like we are breaking the Oath this way. We can save the kid and get the data that we need at the same time."

Troy immediately understood what the chairman was planning to do, but there was still an issue that needed to be addressed. "But how can we be sure that the professor will agree with it? After all, there are a lot of projects that need to be dealt with in that place."

"I doubt that the professor will agree to this," he added with concern.

Hearing that, the chairman laughed out loud as he found that concern hilarious. He then turned to Troy and replied with a scornful tone. "You underestimated the curiosity of that guy a little too much."

"Have you already forgotten why that old fool agreed to participate in creating this game despite his busy schedule? It is because Virtual Development piqued his interest."

"What's more, he is also one of the leading figures who develop the Reality Manifestation State. So, tell me, what will be his reaction when he learned that there is a person who can use the 'Hyper Active Immersion' to its peak potential."

Troy could now see where the confidence of the chairman was coming from. No researcher would refuse this kind of project when presented to them.

Moreover, he could also see that this particular topic was not only concerning the 'Reality Manifestation' and 'Hyper Active Immersion' states. This also included the mystery of the human mind and its potential.

Chapter 898 Impressions And Preparation Of Schemes

.....

Atlas World.

Somewhere deep within the forest of the Frozen Kingdom.

Boom!

The powerful explosion shook almost half of the entire Frozen Kingdom. And due to how strong it was, everyone who was present in the area sensed it.

All of them looked in that direction regardless of which group they belonged to. Whether they were the members of the Pandemonium Descendants, the resident NPC and ruling monsters of the Kingdom, or the people from the expedition team, all of them instinctively turned their heads in the direction where that explosion was coming from.

Anyone could tell that it was not an ordinary explosion, but the most powerful individuals from each group could at least deduce what exactly happened.

"That direction, isn't it the area that is assigned to Shin? Don't tell me he takes all of the fun on himself again?" muttered Arthur as he looked in the said direction with an odd gaze.

He could even see the bright light that was coming from the distance. It was clearly reflected in the sky, so it could be easily spotted. He didn't know what it was but he was sure that it was something 'fun' and 'exciting'.

Turing the scene towards a different location, Leonard was also looking in the same direction while wearing a deep form. "Tsk! Tsk! Who did he fight this time?"

"What a pity. I think that it is worth hunting whoever or whatever he encountered in that place," he added before going back to his job. If he couldn't get an opponent who was worth hunting, then it was better for him to relieve his stress by killing more enemies.

In a different location, Zero was sitting on high ground, giving him a clear view of that explosion. He could see a dome-shaped light of massive size. It was too bright, giving the impression that the sun was just rising in that direction.

He stared in that direction until it disappeared before muttering to himself. "Given the chaotic energy that that explosion had, I am pretty sure that those guys used skills that surpassed the current limit of their strength."

He then fell into deep thought and further commented. "I guess this 'Reality Manifestation' has a lot of secrets. It looks like we can use the advanced form of our Martial Arts when in that state."

"This will greatly help us understand our respective disciplines more deeply and experience their real powers that we couldn't reach yet in the real world," he added as he smiled excitedly.

He couldn't wait to try and test out the sword techniques that he couldn't use yet because of his limited sword attainment from the real world.

In another place within the Frozen Kingdom, near the towering wall of ice, Immortal and the members of the Silent Night Adventurer Team and Earners Mercenary Group just walked out of the special portal.

Boom!

Tremble!

The explosion was much nearer to them compared to the other players present in the area, so they could clearly feel how strong it was.

They all turned their heads in the direction of that explosion, wearing deep frowns as they could feel a hint of fear from it.

Immortal creased his brow deeply as he could feel familiar energy mixed in that explosion. A particular player flashed through his mind as he stared at the brilliant light illuminating the sky.

It was the same for Justin. As one of the people who personally experienced the strength of the owner of that energy, he also got an idea of who caused this powerful explosion.

On the other hand, Flouree, who managed to catch the change of expression between the two, couldn't help but become more interested in the person who was behind such a stunning sight.

Even if she didn't know who it was, she could still get the rough idea given how solemn the expression Immortal and Justin had. "Interesting~! That person must be the famous Battle God, who is continuously rising in terms of fame and ranks."

Aside from that person, there was also another player who piqued her interest. It was the same player who was the reason why she accepted this commission from the Corrupted Cult.

"I wonder how is that guy doing. Given that he loves to show off, I am sure that he will not let this scene outshine his feats," she muttered with a mystifying tone.

But a frown suddenly appeared on her face as she remembered something. "But before everything else, let me first teach him a lesson."

It was still unknown the reason for the sudden change of her mood, but given the cold tone that she had, it could be interpreted as her having some history with the person that she had mentioned.

Going back to the place where the rest of the group was located, Arthur suddenly felt a chill that ran through his back for some unknown reason.

"What was that?" he muttered with a confused look on his face before turning back to the others.
"Sickarius just contacted me and said that he encountered Diablo just now."

"He also said that he is currently resting after engaging in a friendly battle with him," he added, emphasizing the word 'friendly' to tell the others that they were currently on good terms with the said player.

Hearing that, the rest immediately understood what just happened. And they also figured out that the previous explosion was caused by that battle

But at the same time, it also gave them a good idea of how powerful Diablo given that he pushed Shin to the point where they needed to cause such a stunning event.

A little different from their thoughts, Arthur couldn't help but put more thought into it. He knew that Shin could enter the 'Reality Manifestation' State where he could unleash his strength on par, if not stronger, with what he had in the real world.

On top of that, there was also the topic of Martial Arts in consideration. If Shin was using the 'Reality Manifestation' and still couldn't overwhelm his opponent with it, then this guy Diablo was much stronger than they had imagined.

"I guess, I need to ask Shin about it later," muttered Arthur as he couldn't contain his curiosity about this matter.

Ding!

Then he suddenly got another message from Shin that they needed to regroup as soon as possible.

Arthur couldn't help but further knit his brow when he read the message, thinking what was the serious matter that they needed to regroup urgently.

Regardless, he relayed the message to the other members of the group and told them to start preparing to move out. They already cleared this area anyway, so it would not hurt their plan if they regrouped with Shin and the others.

In the meantime, Shin just closed the message window after reading its content for another time.

It was a message from David, informing him that Immortal had led an elite group of players to sneak into the Frozen Kingdom.

The message also contained information about the Corrupted Cult mobilizing their hidden experts to deal with him which was why he couldn't stop the group from entering the region.

"Now this is a little complicated," muttered Shin with a deep frown due to this development.

But at the same time, he also viewed this situation as a good opportunity. Based on what he just heard from Diablo earlier, Shin could deduce that the Pandemonium Descendants needed their group to clear their quest before the organization could proceed with the one on their side.

He still didn't know the exact details, but he could at least use this piece of information to con those guys. Based on this, it was obvious that their side had the advantage of the Pandemonium Descendants indeed approached them and proposed cooperation.

He didn't know whether to laugh or cry when he thought about it. After all, it seemed like the Corrupted Cult was unintentionally helping them clear their quest much easier by just showing their intention of getting in their way.

The only matter that he needed to consider was how he was going to lure Diablo to their side. Based on the performance of the latter, it would be a complete waste if they let such a talented individual slip away.

"From what Zero had mentioned before, Diablo seemed to be a fan of the legendary adventurer team, the Irregulars. From what I remember, the reason why his relationship with the Pandemonium Descendants falls out is that because those guys are somewhat tarnishing the reputation of that group."

Shin fell into deep thought as he also recalled that Arthur mentioned the same thing when they were creating the Empyrean Talons. It was also the reason why they named their team that way.

"I guess, I need to ask Arthur about the Irregulars to learn more about them," he muttered as he couldn't help but become curious about the legendary adventurer team.

He wanted to know how that group of players influenced such a number of highly skilled players.

Aside from that, he was also curious about the state that Diablo had earlier. It was clearly related to the 'Reality Manifestation' to some degree. Even if there were distinct differences between the two states, Shin could still see the similarities present between them.

"It looks like, I need to consult Professor Henry about this," muttered Shin as he remembered that it was the professor who told him about the 'Reality Manifestation'.

After that, he slowly stood up as he was now done recuperating himself. He took a quick glance at the message that Arthur had sent him. It was the coordinates of their rendezvous point.

He took another look at the massive crater a few distances away from him before turning around and disappearing like a shadow.

Chapter 899 Then Next Enemies In Line

.....

Shin was the last member of the group who arrived at the rendezvous point. Even though he had a very quick movement speed, he was still the farthest among them, so it took quite some time before he could reach the meeting place.

When he arrived, he immediately spotted Owen and Chaotic Luck who just recently joined the group.

Chaotic Luck didn't need Shin to tell him what he needed to do as he was already spreading out his skeleton warriors in different directions to scout the area. They were also creating a special defensive formation that would block their opponents when the situation called for it.

Shin quickly gathered the others to immediately share his thoughts with them. "I've come in contact with Diablo, and he showed a positive response about cooperating with us."

"Though, we also didn't have enough time to discuss it in detail since he needed to log out of the game for the time being," he added.

"So, are we going to team up with him once he comes back online?" asked Arthur in an instant.

Shin turned to him and clarified. "It is not exactly like that. But he also said that he will at least not get in our way. His main target is the Pandemonium Descendants after all."

"Speaking of them, it seems like they are doing a World Quest right now," he added with a casual tone, making the others look at him with weird gazes.

"Is it confirmed by that guy Diablo?" asked Black Hand to voice out the thoughts of everyone.

Shin shook his head and answered. "It is not exactly like that. But it is what I just concluded after putting all the information that we have together."

"Diablo mentioned earlier that the quest that the Pandemonium Descendants were doing can affect the entire Atlas World. And they also need us to clear our quest before they could proceed with their quest."

"Since the current classification of the one that we are doing is Empire Quest, then it is highly possible for the other side to have a higher difficulty."

"Moreover, it is obvious too. After all, their organization was supposedly doing their operation secretly from the dark, which was why only the Powerhouse Guilds and strong organizations are aware of their existence."

"Most of the time, they are cooperating with the Corrupted Cult and make those guys act as the front runners. But recently, the Pandemonium Descendants are now making some bold moves."

"They are mobilizing their forces more aggressively just like what is happening right now. The number of Sweepers stationed in this region is pretty much their main force."

"This only signified how important this quest is to them," he explained in a lengthy yet patient manner.

He then took a brief pause before continuing. "Putting this together and adding the fact that those guys are mainly part of the Demonic Churches, we can say that their quests are mostly related to Demons."

This time, Faker quickly figured out his point. "And our current quest is also somewhat connected to it since it is related to Vampires."

"And since the first vampire is a contractor of a Great Demon King, the Pandemonium Descendants want something from him," added Alucard.

But Black Hand shook his head and pointed out. "Or more most probably his dead body. Since the Pandemonium Descendants need us to finish our quest, then what they need is most likely the corpse of the first vampire and not the lord of the vampires himself."

"But isn't the vampires turn into ashes once they die?" asked Arthur out of curiosity.

"There is always an exemption on everything. And we also don't know if it is also the face of the first vampire," answered Alucard.

Then it was Shin's turn once again. "That-... or what they need is the power of the first vampire. Or to be more precise, the power of the contract that is made with the Great Demon King."

Hearing that, the others couldn't help but think that it was most likely the case.

"But what are they going to use that for? Are they planning to contact that powerful demon through it?" asked Cloe, joining in.

"Most likely," muttered S.Tigris as the expression on his face became serious. He could already see how complicated this quest had become.

The Wing's Alliance already did quite a lot of high-ranking quests and most of them varied from S to SSS rank difficulty. But he didn't expect that an Empire Quest could scale to this degree.

Then Shin suddenly added with a solemn tone. "Or worst-case scenario, it can also lead to them establishing a bridge that will connect the Atlas World to the Underworld where the Demons reside."

"What!?"

The others showed a violent reaction, but they couldn't refute his words. After all, based on the course of events that happened in different parts of the Atlas World recently, such an outcome could be possible.

At first, the Corrupted Cult was actively creating chaos. Not only to the Saint Heaven Kingdom but also to other parts of the world. Their operation in the said kingdom just happened to be much larger compared to the others.

There was also the manipulation of public information present in the event which was why the players were putting more attention to the Saint Heaven Kingdom compared to the other places.

Aside from those events, the Demonic Churches were also now making their moves. And Shin and the others happened to be caught in it.

Given this course of events, it would not be long before the Righteous Churches make their moves. They would most likely issue a lot of quests that would make the players crazy.

The factions would be starting to clash against each other if this continued. Wars were also going to be inevitable when that happened, making the situation more chaotic.

But was not necessarily a bad thing since there were also a lot of opportunities present during the chaos.

Shin could already picture how the next course of events was going to happen which also gave him a sense of urgency.

He needed to proceed with his plans as fast as possible. That way, he would have a decent footing when everything happened. That was also where his real income would steadily flow his way.

Putting that aside temporarily, he turned to the others and proceed with the next topic that he wanted to discuss. "Anyway, there is also a suggestion that I want to make."

He waited for the others to turn to him before continuing. "How about we 'cooperate' with the Pandemonium Descendants for the time being."

"Huh?"

"Eh?"

"What did you just say?"

"Are you serious?"

"You sure are different!"

Sure enough, his words caused him to get different reactions from the others. Some of them were surprised and completely taken aback, the others laughed at him, while the rest looked at him helplessly.

"Hey! Can't you see that they are not willing to work with us? They kept on attacking us despite us showing our intention of cooperating with them?" said Arthur skeptically.

"Yeah, yeah! Understand where you are coming from. They will not listen to us if we approach them," said Shin in response.

He then paused for a moment and swept his gaze before continuing. "But what if they approach us instead?"

Arthur was still wearing a skeptical look on his face. "What? Are you going to give us your 'deductions' again? Haven't you gotten enough of their stubbornness yet?"

Shin chuckled a little at those words before continuing. "Don't worry, I am confident that they are going to approach us this time."

"What are you planning this time?" asked Lawless fully interested in how Shin was going to make it happen.

Contrary to his expectations, Shin was not planning anything. Instead, he was purely relying on the information that he got recently. "As I said earlier, the Pandemonium Descendants need us to at least kill the First Vampire to make their job much easier."

"I am not doubting their battle capabilities or anything, but there must be a reason why they can't kill the first vampire themselves. And it is most likely because of the contract made with the Great Demon King."

"It is preventing them from taking any actions against the First Vampire. That is the reason that I can think of why they need someone else to finish off that Quest Boss."

Hearing that, the others could already see the reason why Pandemonium Descendants need to approach them. But it was still not enough to convince the group.

That was the right moment for Shin to add the other piece of information that he received just recently. "And that was where the Corrupted Cult will 'help' us. Their presence alone will make the Pandemonium Descendants restless."

"After all, Immortal brings a quite troublesome group of people along with him," he added, making the others turn at him with odd looks on their faces.

Seeing that, Shin slightly nodded his head and turned to Arthur as well as giving Cloe a meaningful look. "It looks like we are going to face Silent Night this time."

"And from what our contacts had said, they are being accompanied by a powerful Mercenary Group. They seemed to be called Earners or something," he added, making Lawless and Faker wore a strange looks on their faces.

Even S.Tigris, Ara, and Black Hand started wearing solemn expressions when they heard that name.

Shin didn't know who those people were, but based on the reaction that he got, it looked like they were not as simple as their name had suggested.

Chapter 900 The Earners Mercenary Group

...

Immortal and the rest of his group were currently surveying the area as they familiarized themselves with the current environment of the Frozen Kingdom.

After roaming around for a few minutes, Flouree, the current leader of the Earners Mercenary Group, turned to Immortal and spoke. "This should be enough. We are going on our separate ways for now."

Immortal raised his eyebrows and asked. "Are you sure that you will be fine by yourselves? We are not talking about an ordinary group of players this time."

"I know that your Mercenary Group is strong, but your current opponents this time are not weak either. They are much stronger than you may think," he added, trying to discourage Flouree.

He personally experienced how strong Shin and the others were, which was also the reason why he invited this group of players to join him. The rest of the Empyrean Talons were not that simple either, each of them had a unique fighting style which was quite troublesome to deal with.

Moreover, Zero and his right-hand man were also currently with Shin and the others. This fact alone was more than enough to make people like Immortal take caution.

After his consecutive failures, he couldn't help but reevaluate himself, both in a negative and positive way.

He might be confident about his current strength, but that didn't make him arrogant. He might be foolish during the previous battles with the Empyrean Talons, but he was not a fool who would fight them without proper preparation.

Especially when the opponents had the God Slayer and Death God on their side. Those two might be away from virtual games for a little more than two years but they were steadily regaining their previous forms, so it would be a grave mistake to underestimate them.

Flouree couldn't help but smirk when he saw the infamous Immortal was acting this way. This was a player who was feared by most of the players. Those who knew about his previous achievements would tremble with fear just by hearing his name.

But at this point, this fearless expert, who would fight anyone, seemed to be afraid of fighting his current opponents. It was something that many players would not believe and could not think of.

"Hoh~! What is this? What happened to the infamous Lick God Immortal? Why are you acting out of character right now?" said Flouree with a provoking tone.

"Are your previous defeats give you trauma?" she added while squinting her eyes. She wanted to know how Immortal was going to respond.

Immortal could see through her intentions. He could tell that she wanted to know if he became weaker. That was understandable given that he was really acting very differently compared to how he used to be.

But contrary to her expectations, he just became more rational about things. He might be much stronger than his previous self, given the lessons that he learned from his recent failures.

He shook his head and let her do what she wanted. "Fine, do whatever you want. After all, your contract is to make those guys fail their quest at all costs. Just do your job and do not make any mistakes."

Flouree was quite disappointed with the reply and decided not to pursue it anymore. She just turned around and lead her group in a random direction. "Then we will be going ahead."

Immortal watched them walked away before turning to Justin and the rest of the Silent Night. "How about you? Do you guys also want to go on your way?"

Justin scoffed at the lich after hearing those words. "Do try to provoke me too, Immortal. You know our objective at joining now. We don't care about anything else as long as I achieve what I want."

Immortal shook his head and answered. "You want to regain your prestige, right? Then I will let you have that opportunity first. I also don't care what you want to do, but just make sure to do your job properly."

"Let's go, we need to make our preparation first before we face those guys," he didn't wait for Justin to reply to him as he quickly turned around and walked in a certain direction.

Flouree might separate from them, but that didn't affect his plans for his next face-off against the members of Empyrean Talons. The strength of Silent Night was more than enough for him it accomplished his goal.

Justin didn't say anything either and just led the rest of his group, following right behind Immortal.

...

A few moments after separating ways with Immortal and the Silent Night, Flouree led her group to go deeper into the Frozen Kingdom.

Along the way, they encountered quite a lot of powerful monsters. The level and rank of those monsters were quite high which surprised the entire group. But at the same time, they also became overjoyed as they saw those monsters as some sort of resource.

"This place has an abundant resource, it is a perfect training ground for high-leveled players like us," said a player carrying a huge hammer. He just finished smashing the head of an Ice Troll with it.

A few meters from him was a player with twin sabers chopping the libs of another Ice Troll, killing it in the process. He turned to Flouree and the rest of the group before asking. "What do you think of staying in this place after we are done with our job?"

"We can think about it when we are down with our current commission," said another mage of the group as she burned another Ice Troll with a barrage of fire spells.

Flouree neither agree nor reject their idea as she simply nodded her head in response.

She continued to sweep her gaze at the surroundings. She looked in a certain direction before giving out an order. "Mirage, survey the area around that place. It seems like we are being watched by an unknown individual from that direction."

"Got it, Capt'n," said an Elven Archer as he skillfully climbed a tree with a single jump and a couple of climbing maneuvers before jumping from one tree to another, heading towards the direction that Flouree had indicated.

At the same time, the mage who just talked earlier turned to their team captain and asked curiously. "I still can't understand why you accept this commission, Sister Ree."

Flouree gave the mage a sidelong glance before saying. "How many times do I have to tell you that you have to address me as 'Captain when we are on the official job, Jia?'"

Despite the stern look that Flouree had, the mage named Jia continued to call her captain with a nickname in a teasing tone. "Sister Ree, you know that it is impossible. I will call you Sister Ree because you are Sister Ree."

Flouree just shook her head in a helpless manner when she heard that before turning to the other two previously commented earlier. "Basion, Sabec, stop fooling around and get back in your positions. Let the thieves harvest the bodies of those monsters. You two are wasting too much of those precious products."

Basion, the Warrior King with a huge hammer, and Sabec, the Wolfkin Berserker with twin sabers, clicked their tongues before stopping what they were doing and heading back to their positions.

In the meantime, two of the thieves of their group continued to harvest the blood of the Ice Trolls in a skillful manner.

On the other hand, Jia hadn't forgotten the topic that she was most interested in before coming all the way here. "Hey! Don't change the topic, Sister Ree! Answer me first! Why did you accept this commission out of all the good offers that we have?"

The rest of the group who were doing their respective jobs couldn't help but pricked their ears as they were also curious about what their Captain was going to say.

"The pay is good, and we are going to face a powerful group of people, isn't enough reason for us to accept it? After all, you guys are so eager to face the top Adventurer Teams for quite some time now," said Flouree in a nonchalant manner.

The group couldn't help but roll their eyes as they knew that there was something more to it. They could still remember her reaction when Immortal mentioned the Empyrean Talons during the meeting. It was such a rare sight to see since she normally not acting that way.

They were really curious why she acted that way but seeing that she was not willing to tell them the reason, then they had no choice but to forget about it.

At least until Jia managed to trick Flouree somehow.

A few moments later, Mirage, the Elven Archer, finally came back and reported his discovery. "We are indeed being observed from afar. I've disposed of them but there are still a few skilled ones who managed to get away."

"Hoh~!? And who are they may be?" asked Flouree out of curiosity. She already had an idea who those guys were, but it would not hurt to confirm it.

Mirage put the long bow behind him before replying. "Based on their fighting styles and habits, they must be Sweepers of the Pandemonium Descendants."

"Hoh~! Are those guys want to get in our way?" muttered Flouree with a slight frown.

But a moment after that, she quickly wore an amused look on her face before continuing. "We are going to hit them for a little warning, let's see how they are going to respond after that."

"We will deal with them after they give us their answer," she added as a cruel smile curved with her alluring lips.

Seeing that smile, the rest of her group couldn't help but feel a shiver that ran through their spines as they knew the meaning behind it.

The Pandemonium Descendants would suffer greatly if she did not like their response.