

## Reincarnated Avatar; I got 2 SSS-Rank Unique Skills

### #Chapter 141: The brutality of level suppression - Read Reincarnated Avatar; I got 2 SSS-Rank Unique Skills Chapter 141: The brutality of level suppression

#### *Chapter 141: The brutality of level suppression*

In the Pro Alliance, Noah was widely known as the Battle God, alongside his Stinger of War Avatar due to their many exploits.

Few pro players could push him to the wall, but Jonathan just happened to be the shameless, unscrupulous few who could do it 2 times out of 10.

Noah took the ambush calmly, but not that damn sneak attack!

He didn't see it coming.

He smiled darkly at Crimson Saint. "You got me there, bastard!"

Jonathan laughed loudly, full of mischievous glee.

Knowing his opponent, Jonathan knew that the Noah would take note of all the enemies instantly after seeing them. This was why before making contact, he instructed the Assassin to use stealth.

There were skills to break the Assassin and Thief class's stealth mode, but Jonathan took the gamble that Lord Doom didn't have them.

And he was right.

The gamble paid off. And with it, they finally managed to push Lord Doom's HP to below 50%.

Jonathan could see victory close, the satisfying moment when he would get to watch as he trampled on the so-called untouchable Lord Doom.

"Start recording!" He instructed with glee.

Obediently following his captain's orders, one of the elite guild members of his club's in-game guild, the Spellblade started recording.

Noah sighed. "To even think you'd record a 1v10. I always knew you were shameless, but this..., you really a shameless".

Jonathan laughed. "Not as shameless as you though".

Lord Doom's eyes flickered, desperation shining in their depths even as his opponents rounded him up.

After that successful sneak attack, all the momentum was now on their side.

And worse still, it was a 1v10, and Noah's Lord Doom was literally 40 levels behind every single one of them!

'Dammit!'

Lord Doom was cornered.

And yet...

The difference between a veteran and a legend was adaptability.

This was not the first time that Noah clashed against Jonathan. Even in the pro stage, with Cyber Squad and Scarlet Rose at loggerheads during the first few seasons of the Pro Alliance.

Jonathan had cornered Noah lots of times before this, even in the 2nd and 3rd season of the Pro Alliance, in the Warstar RPG Champions League finals, but still, Noah led his team to victory.

Jonathan with his Crimson Saint was a veteran of the game and the pro scene, one of the most terrifying pros created by England, but still...

Noah was God Noah for a reason.

BAM! BAM! BAM!

The 2 Elementalists and Mage unleashed a barrage of attacks.

As the elemental barrage descended, Noah's eyes flashed coldly, and then...

{Guardian Golem=}

A low-level Summoner skill.

BOOM!

A massive stone golem erupted from the ground, throwing itself in the path of the incoming attacks.

Fire and ice tore through it, but the delay was enough.

With eyes now burning with single-minded focus and conviction, Noah lunged sideways, twisting mid-air as Aetherforge lit up with raw energy.

"Be careful!" Jonathan warned, recognizing that look in his old rival's eye but to him, it didn't matter.

Did it really not matter?

{Force Push=}

A low-level Psychic skill.

A telekinetic blast exploded outward at a devious angle, forming an arc in the air so it could reach more enemies. If Noah was sited behind a computer, it would have required incredible mouse control to attack at such a treacherous angle.

The Mechanic, Launcher, and the Spellblade were all blasted backward by the attack, smashing into each other.

Noah didn't hesitate.

{Overpower=}

A high-level Berserker skill.

Jonathan's eyes widened. 'How did he complete the input for a high-level skill in that short time?'

What he didn't know was that Noah didn't even need to type on a keyboard anymore. To attack, he simply needed to think of the right input for the skill.

A single, devastating blow as Aetherforge switched to its Greatsword form.

BAM!

Having targeted one of the Elementalists, Noah's lance punched straight through the Elementalist's barrier, impaling him to the ground in a brutal attack.

That attack was supposed to have taken a chunk of attack, if not an instant-kill in normal circumstances due to all the factors involved and yet, the disadvantage of level suppression struck again.

The attack only left the Elementalist temporarily crippled.

Having expected it though, Noah was already moving.

Jonathan was stunned. "You motherf...!"

Before he could complete his sentence and as the Mage attempted to cast, before any of it could be coherent, Noah already spun, raising his gun.

In that short sequence, he already switched to Aetherforge's Rifle form.

{Piercing Shot=}

A low-level Gunner skill.

BANG!

A double head-shot!

The shot tore through the Mage and clipped the second Elementalist, sending both staggering back.

Jonathan almost felt like rubbing his temple in exasperation.

These guys were talented, but still, there was always this feeling at the back of his mind that they would not be enough to take on Noah despite the level suppression and the numbers advantage.

And he was right.

'Damn! I should have swallowed my pride and brought the pro players!'

'But if others saw..., well, who cares?'

'Dammit! It's already done!'

The most infuriating thing was that he could see his apprentice. Watching Lord Doom in action, the look in Chris's eyes was beginning to change.

Jonathan recognized that look, it was the look of admiration.

'Damn bastard!' He felt like uttering a curse, and then...

"ENOUGH!"

Jonathan slammed his towering shield into the earth.

A holy eruption erupted, knocking Lord Doom off balance as divine light flooded the battlefield.

His teammates instantly recovered, and the Paladin behind Crimson Saint raised his shield, activating Divine Bulwark, a high-level Paladin skill, making their entire formation immune to damage for 5 seconds.

"You're good, Doom, or should I say Noah? But not good enough".

Lord Doom spat blood onto the grass. Noah glanced at the cooldown timers on his HUD. Not enough resources to fight ten of them.

The numbers were too overwhelming, the level gap too severe.

He exhaled slowly, then he grinned.

"You're right, Jonathan. I'm not good enough, but I don't need to be".

"Because I never intended to fight with such a handicap".

Jonathan's eyes narrowed. "What...?"

Then he heard it.

The distant rumble of hooves.

Ghost burst through the battlefield at full speed, his form a streak of celestial fire. And then, and then...

Jonathan's eyes widened, shock and disbelief written all over his Avatar's face. "W-when...?!"

"How?!"

Noah smirked. "Since the beginning".

*Chapter 142: Surprise, motherf\*ckers!*

Jonathan's eyes narrowed. "What...?"

And then the sky split apart.

From the distant horizon, a thunderous roar shook the battlefield as a meteor of light and shadow burst in and crashed down behind Noah.

Ghost had arrived.

The Celestial Warhorse reared up, his ethereal mane blazing with golden fire as his hooves tore the air itself asunder. But he wasn't alone.

Someone rode on his back, another Avatar, an Elementalist.

And not just an Elementalist.

Behind him, they came. A flood of black-clad figures, weapons gleaming, moving like specters of war.

Echelon had arrived.

Riding on top the Celestial Warhorse, the Elementalist grinned, a familiar voice reverberating through the grassland.

"Surprise, mother\*ckers!"

And then...

{Phoenix Call=}

An Awakened level Elementalist skill.

Every Awakened level skill required a sizeable amount of input, but having been riding with the warhorse all the way, Benjamin had the time to charge the Awakened level skill.

Phoenix Call is an Elementalist skill that summons a massive phoenix of fire to sweep across the battlefield, dealing massive damage and leaving behind fiery trails that continue to burn enemies.

KABOOM!

As the phoenix fire swept across, dealing hefty damage to the enemies, his voice kept on echoing in the background.

"Surprise mother\*ckers...!"

Jonathan's eyes widened even as his Crimson Saint Avatar took damage, shock and disbelief written all over his Avatar's face. "W-when...?!" He stammered.

"How?!"

Noah smirked. "Since the beginning".

...

A few minutes earlier, outside the game...

Club Echelon.

In the club building, things were going on as usual, Aria and the others going on about their own Heavenly Domain Challenge as they were all at level 60 now but this was when Nightingale suddenly rushed into the training grounds.

They all looked at him.

Seeing the look on his face, Aria frowned.

"What?"

Nightingale caught his breath and replied. "Noah is in trouble".

"Huh? I thought he is in the Heavenly Domain already".

"Yes, he's in trouble in the Heavenly Domain".

Well, how he got Noah's message was simple.

Noah was not just going to the Heavenly Domain as a lone Avatar, he was also going there as Guild Echelon's guild leader.

This was why before Noah completed his Heavenly Domain Challenge, Nightingale spent a chunk of money to buy a few level 100 Avatars that he intended to use to build guild Echelon's foundation in the Heavenly Domain.

They would help Lord Doom in building the guild's foundation.

As soon as Noah was ambushed and he realized that it was Jonathan, even as he trash-talked his old rival, the first thing he did was to ask for help.

He sent a private message to one of the level 100 accounts that Nightingale bought, and that was what notified the musician.

As soon as he got his message, Nightingale acted first, informing club Echelon's players and mobilizing them inside the game on the new level 100 accounts that he bought to back up their captain.

Not just that, how would they know Noah's current location?

Nightingale could buy a tracker but the logistics to get one whose range could encompass the Heavenly Domain was too much, and expensive too, that was why Noah decided to try an experiment.

He could already tell that Ghost was not like normal summons.

If so, could other players ride it once the mount acknowledges them as his allies? Could he send it to other players?

Noah tried it, and it worked.

He transferred Ghost to the level 100 Elementalist Avatar account that Benjamin took after being informed of the emergency, and riding the mount, feeling on top of the world, shamelessly yelling at the top of his lungs, Benjamin led the backup party to the grassland where Noah was being ambushed.

...

Back to the present...

"Surprise mother\*ckers!"

As the heat of the Elementalist's Phoenix Call swept through the enemy players, dealing incredible damage, Aria moved into action.

Her Blademaster Avatar landed with the force of a meteor, her twin sabers crackling with arcane lightning.

She locked eyes with the Spellblade who had just attacked Noah and grinned like a wolf scenting fresh blood.

"Oh? You guys look like you're having fun. Mind if I join?"

That player shuddered.

Next was Genevieve.

Her Cleric Avatar descended like an angel of wrath, golden wings of divine energy spreading wide as she used a skill to fly.

A single pulse of light washed over Noah, dispelling debuffs and restoring a chunk of his HP in an instant. Her voice was soft, but cold.

"Ganging up on one player? How unsightly".

As she spoke, her eyes were fixated on one Avatar... Crimson Saint.

Then Caleb.



The Summoner Avatar emerged in a pulse of eerie blue light, already channeling a summoning circle beneath his feet.

Tendrils of spectral energy coiled around him as an Abyssal Chimera materialized beside him, its three heads snapping hungrily toward Jonathan's team.

"Honestly, I expected better from you, Crimson Saint".

And then, Benjamin struck again.

On top the mighty Celestial Warhorse, he looked heroic and valiant, if only the player behind the scenes was not such a clown.

Benjamin chuckled. "Wow, Noah. I leave you alone for five minutes and you already got jumped? Classic".

And then, a final presence.

A figure clad in deep violet armor, a single long sword across his back, stepping from the shifting void itself.

Nightingale.

The boss of Club Echelon had arrived.

His Blademaster Avatar stood unmoving for a moment, his violet eyes scanning the battlefield with quiet amusement.

Then, he smirked.

"Oh, Jonathan. You really picked the wrong guy to mess with today".

Nightingale said that, but in his mind, he was hyperventilating. 'Oh my gosh! I can't believe it, I feel like it's a hall of fame gathering or something!'

'Hope I didn't sound cringe'.

The expression on his Blademaster Avatar didn't change though.

The entire landscape shifted.

From an ambush to an even fight. No, a one-sided massacre waiting to happen.

Knowing this, Jonathan stared at them, letting out a tense chuckle.

He took a step back, feeling the weight of the new arrivals pressing down on him. His teammates gripped their weapons tighter, realization dawning on them.

This wasn't just Lord Doom, this was Echelon.

And they had just walked into hell itself.

*Chapter 143: First victory in the Heavenly Domain*

Lord Doom survived.

To Noah and most especially Nightingale, that was all that mattered.

Warstar had a ruthless system that made the video game even more of a thriller, rewarding players for killing other players.

There was a penalty for dying in the game, a certain percentage of dropping equipment and items and this percentage increased exponentially after entering the Heavenly Domain.

And this was why Lord Doom must not die!

This was why Nightingale prepared for Lord Doom's arrival ahead of time. And though Jonathan blamed it on their past grudge, the truth was that he ambushed Lord Doom because of the increased drop percentage for every death.

A new English Pro Alliance season already started since a while ago, and yet, none of the big English Warstar Avatars had an SSS-Rank unique skill.

Heck, none of them even had an SSS-Rank weapon.

In all of England, Lord Doom was the only Avatar with not just an SSS-Rank unique skill, but two! Still not just that, but with an SSS-Rank weapon to boot.

Lord Doom was hotcake.

They may not show it but Jonathan was pretty sure that he was not the only one who thought about it. Elite clubs in the English eSports scene were secretly plotting behind the scenes on how to rob Lord Doom of his weapon, since they could not rob his unique skills.

Jonathan was just the first bold enough to execute the plan.

The true reason why he ambushed Lord Doom, shamelessly bringing so many people to tilt the scales of battle in his favor was Aetherforge.

And Noah knew this, hence why he called for help without hesitation.

As soon as his backup arrived, the situation changed.

Jonathan became the shameless one.

"Hah," he chuckled. "Noah, my old friend, long time no see. I always thought of having a glass of wine with you on your return, what do you say about having it now?"

Noah simply rolled his eyes.

He looked at the other Paladin beside the Crimson Saint, shaking his head. "Jonathan, are you really being that shameless in front of your apprentice?"

At that point, Chris, the young Scarlet Rose debutant this season who was tipped to inherit the Crimson Saint already understood the situation.

Chris may not be as shameless as his seniors, but he was talented, skilled, and most importantly he was smart.

'An Elementalist, a Blademaster, a Summoner, a Cleric...', he made the connections immediately. 'Senior Benjamin, Senior Aria, Senior Caleb, and Senior Genevieve'.

And after that connection, his rapid deductive skills made him analyze the situation immediately. 'We'll lose'.

And then, the first thought that entered the teenager's head was. 'Must protect Crimson Saint!'

Just as Stinger of War was the cornerstone of Club Cyber Squad, Crimson Saint was Club Scarlet Rose's lifeline. They could not afford to let the Paladin die, risking the chance of one of its iconic equipment dropping for the enemies.

This was why on the spot, Chris got ready to hold his last stand against the enemies, buying a chance for his captain to escape.

But Jonathan was faster.

His years of experience playing Warstar were not in vain. As soon as he saw Benjamin, he already knew the situation he was in.

While he spoke to Noah, he already sent messages to his allies through a private chat, and then all hell broke loose.

BOOM!

Both sides clashed right there in the Heavenly Domain.

The Crimson Saint didn't linger though. After ordering his remaining 8 allies to sacrifice themselves in a last stand, he led his apprentice and escaped.

Noah was crazy good in the game, his friends too, but Jonathan was also a legend and veteran of the game.

When he decides to escape, he could.

Noah knew this though, and this was why he didn't pursue too hard. Afterall, who knew if that shameless bastard had another ambush laid up ahead?

And so, alongside his friends, they preyed on the 8 allies that Jonathan left behind, Benjamin cursing the life out of him in the process as he escaped.

At the end of the chaotic battle, Benjamin laughed, full of evil glee as he went across the battlefield, picking up the drops that their victims left.

The guild leader of Club Scarlet Rose's guild, the Launcher was especially unlucky. The poor guy lost his main Launcher.

Benjamin cackled as he picked up the level 100 A-Rank equipment. "What a harvest!" He rejoiced.

At the end of it all, Aria looked at him. "You couldn't help coming here with a bang, right?"

Noah chuckled. "What can I say? Trouble seems to find me wherever I am".

Aria scoffed, shaking her head.

"At least you didn't die," Genevieve said. "The last thing we want to hear is that you lost Aetherforge".

"Me? Die?" Noah chuckled. "Those guys don't have the skill".

Benjamin rolled his eyes. "Who was the bastard pissing his pants and calling for reinforcement?"

Noah laughed, not feeling ashamed at all. "That was just an option".

"Shameless!" Benjamin cursed.

Caleb laughed.

...

Far away from the battlefield, two Paladins continued jogging through the massive grassland, silence reigning between them.

And then, a message popped up.

Ding!

{Captain, I lost my main weapon.}

Jonathan quickly typed back.

{It's fine, get a new one, I'll take the heat.}

{Thank you, captain.}

As they jogged, Jonathan could not help but look at his apprentice. For some reason, he seemed down and out.

"You good, buddy?"

Chris nodded absentmindedly.

Jonathan rolled his eyes. "Spill it".

The boy hesitated, but then he spoke. "Umm, I understand why we had to run, but...", he looked down. "The Crimson Saint is known for its unyielding spirit, running like that, I feel like it was diminishing".

"Diminishing?" Jonathan chuckled.

"Well, I'm glad you experienced it now. This is a lesson that you'll have to learn sooner or later. Not every battle is won through unyielding spirit".

He looked the boy in the eye. "Sometimes, we run to lose the battle so that we can win the war".

The boy still looked confused.

Jonathan raised his long sword. "Imagine if we really had a heroic last stand and let's say, I eventually die and I drop my sword. Would that be considered winning?"

"Umm..., no".

"Good, now chin up!" He grinned. "We won".

## *Chapter 144: Map of the Heavenly Domain*

[Current Location: Obsidian Citadel]

After the battle and picking up the battle spoils, Noah and his friends didn't stay in the wild. Alongside Nightingale, they went to the nearest safe city, the city where the Obsidian Citadel was located.

There, they hired a room in an inn where they were now gathered.

On the way, Noah had to answer a lot of questions as his friends were curious to learn about Ghost, his mouth and the new updates to the rewards of the Heavenly Domain Challenge.

Ghost was truly a unique existence in Warstar.

Noah didn't hide anything, telling how he got the Celestial Warhorse, including the other rewards that he got from the Heavenly Domain.

"F\*ck! I also want a mount!" Benjamin complained.

They were all eager to continue their Heavenly Domain Challenge, but before that, as the core of club Echelon, they had important things to discuss and was why they hired a room inside an inn.

Club Echelon's growth was directly tied to the growth of the in-game guild.

Before, all they had to contend with to grow the guild were the subsidiary guild leaders that were sent to the 11th server but now, having expanded to the Heavenly Domain, they had to change their approach.

Afterall, this was a domain teeming with experts, crouching Tigers and hidden Dragons, retired pro players, and talented solo experts. All types of players, they were here in the Heavenly Domain.

And here was where the headquarters of the top guilds in England's Heavenly Domain were located.

To thrive as a new guild here, they had to employ new tactics.

Noah knew this having helped in the growth of Club Cyber Squad's in-game guild years ago, this was why he called Nightingale to this meeting.

Noah looked up at his boss. "Did you buy what I requested?"

"The map? Yeah". Nightingale put the map on the table before pushing it towards Noah.

Warstar was popular for its revolutionary gameplay, power system, graphics, and most importantly the lore and world building.

This lore and world building was mostly in the Heavenly Domain.

The Heavenly Domain is a colossal, seamless world unique to each country where players from all over the country compete, explore, and wage war.

It was divided into diverse regions, each with unique environments, resources, and corresponding danger.

Noah picked up the map that Nightingale pushed towards him, his lips curling upward in a smile. It was not easy to get a map that encompassed the whole Heavenly Domain. Afterall, it was just so big.

The Heavenly Domain as a world of limitless adventure offered everything, from icy wastelands and scorching deserts to thriving cities and celestial realms.

Noah focused on the map. "We need to carve a space for ourselves, for guild Echelon in the boundless world of the Heavenly Domain".

Even as experienced as Noah was with 10+ years of experience playing Warstar, he was yet to explore the whole map of the Heavenly Domain.

Holding the map, he hit the project icon, making the system to project the world map in a large form before all the Avatars in this room.

What appeared was a map depicting a world, blue waters on one side, greenery on other sides, and towering mountain peaks on some parts.

On the side, in a compendium, the vast regions of the Heavenly Domain were listed. It was divided into 6 main regions.

[The Northern Lands- Frostbound Territories]

\*Eternal Glacier: An endless expanse of ice, home to legendary Frost Dragons.

\*Valharen Peaks: Snow-capped mountains where Valkyrie NPCs reside, guarding ancient relics.

\*Stormwatch Tundra: A deadly frozen wasteland with unpredictable blizzards and towering ice golems.

[The Western Expanse- Sunscorched Dominions]

\*Ashen Dunes: A sea of black sand, crawling with scorpion behemoths.

\*The Golden Mirage: A constantly shifting city rumored to hold mythical treasures.

\*Redfang Canyon: A jagged ravine ruled by bandit kings and nomadic raiders.

#### [The Central Realm- Heart of Civilization]

\*Elysium Meadows: Vast, rolling grasslands where filled with majestic wildlife. The Obsidian Citadel is one of the cities in the Elysium Meadows.

\*Sanctuary City: The central hub, a towering metropolis where guilds establish dominance.

\*The Verdant Expanse: Lush forests and tranquil lakes, home to the elusive elves.

#### [The Eastern Tides- Oceanic Kingdoms]

\*Azure Depths: A colossal underwater city ruled by merfolk and leviathans.

\*Stormwrath Isles: A fragmented chain of islands, plagued by pirates and sea monsters.

\*Temple of the Tide: A sacred site where the ocean itself is said to whisper prophecies.

#### [The Southern Abyss- Lands of Wrath]

\*Obsidian Wastes: A volcanic wasteland where fire elementals roam free.

\*The Infernal Crater: The site of an ancient war, still burning with cursed flames.

\*The Hellspire Citadel: A fortress where fallen warriors seek redemption through endless combat.

#### [The Sky Domains- Celestial Sanctuaries]

\*Aetherial Sanctum: A floating city, home to divine beings and legendary quests.

\*Zephyr Archipelago: A network of sky islands connected by bridges of light.

\*The Starforged Throne: A place where only the strongest warriors ascend to challenge the gods.

This was the map of the Heavenly Domain.

The room inside the inn was dimly lit, a warm glow from the lanterns casting flickering shadows across the wooden walls. Lord Doom's hand was on the map on top the large circular table from where it was being projected.



The Heavenly Domain was a world of endless possibilities, yet it was also a battlefield where Guild Echelon would have to carve out its place among giants.

Noah leaned back in his chair, arms crossed as his piercing gaze swept across the map and its many regions.

Around him, his teammates and Nightingale sat, their eyes also locked onto the map. The sheer vastness of the Heavenly Domain was staggering, towering mountains, sprawling plains, endless deserts, storm-wracked seas, and ruins older than time itself.

It was an open-world kingdom, but one ruled by the strongest.

Noah's voice, cool and deliberate, cut through the silence. "We all know the top guilds aren't going to let us grow in peace, right?"

He looked around. "Jonathan was just the first, it won't be the last".

"So... we need to discuss".

#### *Chapter 145: Threat*

Noah looked at his teammates and Nightingale, piercing them with a calm gaze as they also drew their gaze from the map, focusing on him.

He continued. "Guild Echelon is a threat".

"A threat to the status quo that has been established since the inception of the Pro Alliance when the top guilds rose, becoming top guilds".

"Since then, they've had an iron grip of the game, always unchallenged but Lord Doom's rise has challenged that iron grip, first in the 11th server".

"In the 11th server, they tacitly let it after that guild war. They were helpless, too weak to do anything, and so they let us grow".

"But in here? In their backyard," Noah shook his head. "I'm not naïve enough to believe that they'll let us do what we want".

"The moment we establish ourselves, they'll suppress us at every turn". He leaned forward, tapping the map. "They'll choke off resources, block raids, monopolize dungeons, and even go as far as hunting us down in the field".

"They'll throw everything at us to make sure Guild Echelon stays beneath them. It's what top guilds do, it's what keeps them in power".

Noah's words were like drenching them in cold water. With slightly grim looks on their faces, they kept their focus on him.

Nightingale exhaled sharply, adjusting his gloves. "They won't just let a wildcard guild like us rise uncontested. They'll see us as a threat the moment we set foot here," he paused. "And we already did".

Aria, ever brash, smirked. "Let them come. I wouldn't mind cracking some skulls".

Caleb, more calculated, rubbed his chin. "The problem isn't just fighting them. It's that they have the numbers, the resources, and the influence".

"Besides, apart from numbers, we can't oppress them with quality anymore".

"Pro players see it beneath them to come into the game and fight in skirmishes against normal players, but like Jonathan already showed, if it's against us, against Lord Doom, against Noah, they'll do it". He smiled darkly.

"We need to be smart about where we build our headquarters. A bad location could cripple us before we even begin".

A grim silence settled over the room.

And then, Genevieve, always the voice of reason, nodded. "Then we should pick a location that minimizes our weaknesses and plays to our strengths".

Noah's fingers drummed against the table as he spoke. "We need somewhere defensible but also resource-rich. Somewhere with a lot of dungeons where we won't be starved of growth".

"Somewhere with tactical advantages, but not so obvious that we become an immediate target". His eyes flicked across the map, scanning the varied landscapes. "A place where we can dictate the terms of engagement".

The group fell into a deep discussion, throwing out ideas.

The mountains strongholds to the north, the hidden valleys in the east, the island fortresses off the western shores, the shifting dunes of the south. Each had strengths and weaknesses, each with their own unique features.

They had a lot of things to consider, they could not be hasty about it.

But then, at some point in the conversation, Nightingale's gaze settled on a particular area. His lips curled into a knowing smirk.

"What about here?"

He pointed at the projection of the map, pointing to an unassuming location, a vast canyon network, riddled with ancient ruins and unpredictable terrain.

"The Labyrinthine Expanse". Benjamin muttered.

Nightingale nodded. "It's difficult to navigate, easy to fortify, and filled with hidden pathways. Perfect for ambush tactics".

Noah's eyes gleamed with approval. "Now that... that's interesting".

Without hesitation, he clicked on the part of the map where Nightingale just pointed at, expanding it to show more details.

The Labyrinthine Expanse is located in the southwestern region of the Heavenly Domain, near the border between the burning Obsidian Wastes and the Ashen Dunes in the Western Expanse.

It is a sprawling canyon network filled with ancient ruins, twisting ravines, and unpredictable terrain, making it a natural fortress.

This location was truly good for what they had in mind.

With a maze-like structure, a terrain formed by a complex web of narrow paths, towering canyon walls, and underground tunnels, it would make it difficult for outsiders to navigate.

The ruins of an ancient civilization dot the landscape, offering natural fortifications and secret chambers.

With the right amount of work and money, they could turn this labyrinthine expanse into a hidden stronghold, their headquarters.

And of course, the importance of strategic ambush points could not be understated. The terrain had many chokepoints and elevated vantage points, making it ideal for guerilla tactics.

Also, there was the advantage of proximity to resources.

While the land itself is harsh, nearby regions offer crucial supplies, veins of rare minerals in the Obsidian Wastes and hidden oases in the Ashen Dunes.

Also, there would be no lack of monsters to slay, and dungeons!

The Ashen Dunes was crawling with scorpion behemoths, and it had 8 dungeons, 3 of them being level 100 dungeons.

On the other side, the Obsidian Wastes is a volcanic wasteland where fire elementals roam free. There was no lack of monsters and dungeons.

And finally, the Labyrinthine Expanse is difficult to siege.

If in an act of madness from any top guild or even a coalition of top guilds to suppress them, any large-scale attack would struggle with the terrain, forcing enemies into unfavorable engagements.

This location plays perfectly into Guild Echelon's strengths. They may be small in number, but with iconic figures like God Noah and his crew holding the helm, they had the qualifications to pull this off.

Once settled, they may be small in number but with such terrain, they were bound to be devastating in execution, unpredictable, and nearly impossible to root out once entrenched.

A nightmare for larger guilds hoping to suppress them.

'Sweet!' Noah thought, his eyes flickering in excitement.

The Labyrinthine Expanse was not exactly perfect, having its fair share of problems and disadvantages, but it was a devil that they could tolerate.

A devil that could work for them and not against them.

Noah stood up. "That's it then, we've found our headquarters".

"The Labyrinthine Expanse it is".

*Chapter 146: Stuck in the game*

Noah stood up. "That's it then, we've found our headquarters".

"The Labyrinthine Expanse it is".

The decision was made, but its implementation was not going to be immediate. After all, the rest of guild Echelon's core was yet to make the transition to the Heavenly Domain.

Of Echelon's core, only Noah's Lord Doom had made it to the Heavenly Domain, the rest of the cohort were still stuck clearing their Heavenly Domain challenge.

Before embarking on their ambitious plan, they needed all of them.

This was why immediately after the conversation, Aria bid her farewell first, logging out of the game to return to her original Avatar in the beginner domain.

Silently, Genevieve and Caleb followed.

When it got to Benjamin's turn though, he looked at the two people remaining with him, his captain and his boss and whistled. "Boss, don't you think a bonus is necessary as motivation to clear the Heavenly Domain Challenge?"

Noah glared at him.

"Uhh, I was just saying". He chuckled. "Anyways, nevermind".

With that, Benjamin also logged off, returning to the beginner domain.

Nightingale looked at Noah as soon as all the others left. "What will you be doing in this time?"

"What else? Leveling up of course". He shrugged.

"Are you not scared of being ambushed again?"

Noah smiled. "You see, as a celebrity, there's this thing called upholding public face". He chuckled. "Jonathan, that bastard only ambushed me because no one else knew where I would arrive in the Heavenly Domain".

"I was isolated, and hence nothing held him back".

He grinned. "But guess what I'm going to do after leaving this inn? I'm going to stroll through this citadel, announce myself to the world".

"Make it known that Lord Doom is in the Obsidian Citadel".

"Wherever I am, I'll make myself known. That way, those bastards won't have the justification to attack me brazenly".

"Afterall, they're not just gamers, they're celebrity idols too".

"Scarlet Rose fans want their captain to challenge me and defeat me fair and square on the competitive stage, not shamelessly in the game".

Nightingale's eyes widened. "You mean once the attention of the Heavenly Domain is on you, they won't dare attack brazenly?"

Noah nodded.

Nightingale frowned. "It's just like I can't go to eat in my favorite local restaurants anymore. Afterall, fans expect me, Nightingale to only eat in the best, fanciest, and most expensive restaurants".

"You get it". Noah smiled.

"Their own popularity will be working against them".

Noah nodded. "But of course, they can easily avoid this though. That is if they use alternate accounts to shamelessly come after me".

"But don't worry, I'll be prepared for them".

Nightingale nodded. If anyone else said this, he would not have believed, even other pro players but since it was God Noah, he believed him.

Looking at his boss, Noah smiled. "What's on your mind?"

"Huh?"

"There's clearly something on your mind".

Hearing that, Nightingale sighed. He looked at him. "You said you'll tell me the truth about why you can't come to the club headquarters yet".

"Oh, that?" Noah nodded nonchalantly, and then...

"I'm stuck in the game".

He said it casually, just like that.

"...!"

Silence reigned; then Nightingale's eyes widened. "What? I don't understand".

Noah laughed. "It's simple really, I'm literally stuck in the game. I can't leave".

"Huh?"

Seeing the look on Nightingale's face, Noah felt like teasing him some more but then, with a sigh, he told him everything.

Afterall, Nightingale already showed enough sincerity so far.

Whether he liked it or not, they were now tied together through Club Echelon. As employer and employee, Noah felt that Nightingale deserved to know.

When Noah was done explaining, silence reigned.

In the end, Nightingale just said. "Wow..."

He hesitated for a few seconds, then he continued, looking at Lord Doom with a complicated expression. "Wow". He said again. "Honestly, of all the guesses I had, I never expected this".

"You mean you've been living in the game for months?"

"How is that even possible?"

Noah shrugged.

Nightingale's eyes flickered, his hands on his chin as thoughts went through his head. Mumbling under his breath, he rapidly analyzed the situation, then...

"It doesn't add up". He suddenly said.

"What doesn't?"

"I mean, if you were really reincarnated or transmigrated into the game like you think," he looked at Noah. "Do you really think you'll still be here with us?"

"Personally, I think you'd have been in a parallel version of Warstar, possibly a world where you interact with NPCs, not us".

"Everything points to transmigration, but then, the timeline is still the same, everything else is normal, you interact with us as if you're playing the game normally, just stuck inside the game". Nightingale rubbed his chin.

Noah looked at him. "What are you thinking?"

Nightingale looked at him again. "Doesn't this remind you of something?"

Noah smiled, he already guessed what was going through Nightingale's mind. Afterall, even he already had the thought after months of staying like this.

"Neural technology?"

"Yes," Nightingale nodded. "Precisely, VR technology".

"Before Warstar, a lot of people thought the end of normal digital video gaming was over, that VR technology games would take over the scene".

"But then Warstar came, taking the world by storm, dominating and suppressing the once budding VR age".

"What I mean is your current state feels more like playing the game through VR technology rather than actually being transmigrated into the game".

"I thought of that too," Noah finally interjected. "But then, if I'm really playing Warstar through VR technology, then where the hell is my body?"

"How did it leave the café?"

"When Genevieve learned of my condition, she went back to the café where I disappeared and did her investigations, yet she found nothing".

"It is as I think, I just suddenly disappeared".

Nightingale frowned, thinking of something. Before he knew it, one of his fingers started scratching his forehead and that was when his frown suddenly deepened as if he just realized something.

Noah looked at him, paying closer attention.

"What if...?" Nightingale looked at him.

"What if you were kidnapped?"

"..."

#### *Chapter 147: Kidnapped*

Silence.

For a few seconds, silence reigned in this room, both Avatars looking at each other. Eventually, Noah broke the silence.

"What?"

"Listen to me," Nightingale raised his hands to calm him down. "I know it sounds crazy, but what if you were just kidnapped?"

"Kidnapped?" Noah looked at him. "Are you crazy? Who would kidnap me? And why? What do I have that a kidnapper wants?"

Nightingale's eyes narrowed. "Your skill".

"Huh?"

Nightingale clasped his hands together, his hands gleaming with a cold light. "This is my theory. Instead of the fantastical scenario of being reincarnated or transmigrated, this is what I believe".



"We're in an age of rapid technological development, mostly neural technology. Heck, a few years ago, we witnessed the first A.I-enhanced human".

"With A.I and neural technology, a lot of things can happen now".

"Deaf people can hear, blind people can see, all through integrated IOT sensors that can seamlessly fuse with the human body".

Nightingale face changed, looking at Noah with an unamused smile. "Did your really just ask me what a kidnapper may want by kidnapping you?"

Noah was confused, staring at him.

Nightingale chuckled at his confused face. "You really don't know how high your status was, or should I say is, right?"

"Warstar is more than just a game. In many ways, it's already a religion".

"A few years ago, nobody would have imagined that the final of an eSports game would be played in Wembley Stadium".

"Wembley Stadium is one of the best stadiums in the world!"

"In a lot of ways, video games were just that, games, a way of relaxation for people but with Warstar, all of that changed".

"Warstar introduced something new, a thrill, a world, an adventure unlike any other that the world has never seen before".

"Nations adopted it like it was some international treasure".

"As one of the first countries in the world to adopt the game, England's passion for Warstar is well..., you should know more than me since you were in the thick of it for over 10 years".

"You asked what a kidnapper wants with you".

"Well, in case you don't know, in England, God Noah, you were and still is the poster boy of Warstar".

"In the game loved by millions, you set yourself apart".

"You were not just a pro, among the best, you were the best of the best".

"The benchmark, that is what you are, the Godfather of Warstar".

He paused. "...The Battle God".

"So yes, crazy people do actually see a lot of value in kidnapping you if they wanted to implement certain ideas relating to the game".

Nightingale raised two fingers up. "I think at least one of these two scenarios is what actually happened to you".

"First, either the Warstar developing country itself is trying to implement neural technology into the game to launch a VR version of Warstar".

"If this is the case and they're meeting a lot of challenges, to implement it, if they need to experiment, I don't see a better experiment target than Noah Harrington, the pro player widely known as the Godfather of Warstar".

"And if this is not the case, then the second scenario is if another game developing country wants to usurp Warstar, most likely a game company that is focused on developing VR games".

"If they want to dissect Warstar from inside out to create a better version of the game, a VR version, and they need to experiment, then like I said, there's no better test subject in the world than you".

Nightingale looked at Noah. "This is what I think happened to you".

Silence.

For a few seconds, almost a minute after Nightingale spoke, Noah could not talk, just staring back at him with a dumbfounded expression on his face.

Suddenly assaulted by an image of his body locked inside a lab, most likely an underground lab, with numerous wires connected to his body and his brain, testing different telemetry, sustaining his body in some biological fluid even as he was stuck in the game, Noah shuddered.

"This... this..."

This was too much for him to take.

Well, Nightingale was not the first person to think about this.

Noah had been trying to avoid the train of thought for a long time, but at the back of his mind, it nagged.

What if he was kidnapped?

He tried not to think too deeply about it but when someone else other than him placed it before him like this, with rock-hard argument, unable to refute it, Noah felt like an invisible hand was grasping his heart, slowly enclosing it.

"This..."

At that moment, Nightingale suddenly smiled. "And who knows? Maybe I'm just rambling and you really transmigrated".

Noah shook his head. "I think you're right".

"I didn't tell you this before but stuck inside the game, I had to learn new things and adapt to my strange state to continue playing the game".

"Yes, I can move my body like I'm truly living inside the game but then, I noticed that to fight and use skills, I don't even need to train".

"All I need to do to use a skill is think of the real-life input and automatically, the skill will be triggered".

His eyes narrowed. "This aligns more with the idea that I was kidnapped than if I was transmigrated".

"If I truly transmigrated, why do I need to know the input of a skill using a keyboard and mouse to activate it?"

Laughing mirthfully, his eyes darkened. "Most likely, when I think of the right input for that skill, their VR technology registers it and is what is enabling me to use skills so seamlessly".

Hearing that, Nightingale's face also turned solemn.

He couldn't hide behind the mask of nonchalance anymore. "If this is true..., then this is serious".

Noah kept quiet, dark thoughts going through his mind.

"What will you do? Will you tell your friends?"

Noah shook his head. "Not yet, I'll just tell Aria for now".

Thinking of something, Noah smiled and looked at Nightingale. "Boss, if I remember correctly, you have a lot of money, right?"

Nightingale shifted uncomfortably, but then he answered. "Yeah, I guess".

Noah took a deep breath. "Then please, can you use your money to scour the earth and look for where my real body is hidden, kidnapped?"

"Rescue me".

He hesitated, and then he added. "I want one last chance at glory, and stuck being kidnapped, I can't do it".

"Boss, I need your help".

#### *Chapter 148: Elysium meadows*

A week had passed since the discussion about Guild Echelon's headquarters in the inn, and the Heavenly Domain had settled into a new rhythm.

With Nightingale having set the strings in motion already with his money, the already establishing itself in the Labyrinthine Expanse, Noah had no interest in mundane logistics.

His goal remained the same, to dominate the game in his own way.

Well, during his personal conversation with Nightingale, having asked in such a manner, there was no way the handsome hip hop celebrity was going to reject him. Nightingale agreed.

When he eventually told Aria about it, the fiery lady simply shrugged and said. "I'm not surprised, I always imagined you being kidnapped for such a reason".

Noah was appalled.

Well, what else did he expect from Aria?

And now, while his teammates were at the end of their Heavenly Domain Challenge, dominating the Arena in his absence, while the boss of Club Echelon took on two main tasks, establishing a search team to look for traces of Noah's body and his kidnappers, whoever they are, while also taking charge of the guild establishment in the Heavenly Domain, Noah focused on one thing, leveling up.

And that led him to the heart of the Elysium Meadows.

The Obsidian Citadel was just one city in this region of the Heavenly Domain, the Elysium Meadows, a vast and deceptively beautiful region teeming with both wonders and deadly challenges.

A realm of beauty and peril.

The Elysium Meadows was a breathtaking expanse of rolling golden fields, crystalline rivers, and towering silver-barked trees that hummed with latent magic.

Wildflowers bloomed in colors unseen in the real world, their petals swirling in the wind like enchanted fireflies.

But beneath this picturesque façade lurked a playground of death, monsters that could turn a careless adventurer into nothing but an echo on the wind.

And Noah? He was here alone.

Aetherforge gleamed in his grip as he strode through the tall grass, the wind teasing the red cloak floating behind him.

The system constantly threw party-recommended warnings at him, but he ignored them. In dungeons and in the field, going solo meant no distractions, no dead weight, and no one to slow him down.

Like every other region of the Heavenly Domain, there were monsters who took the Elysium Meadows as home.

His first encounter was against the Celestial Stags, and it came swiftly.

A herd of Celestial Stags, massive, radiant creatures with silver antlers crackling with electricity.

Their movement was ethereal and ghostly, almost like mirages, flickering through the meadows with unnatural speed. Most players wouldn't dare attack a full herd alone.

And yet, Noah didn't hesitate.

With a sharp leap forward, he activated Force Push, sending a shockwave through the herd, disrupting their formation.

The moment one staggered, Aetherforge's form changed, igniting as he executed Piercing Shot in close range, turning into a high-powered energy blast that speared through one stag and into the next.

A powerful shockwave rippled through them, leaving only smoldering remains. But the stags weren't just prey.

The Herd Guardian emerged, a monstrous, six-horned Thunderhorn Alpha three times the size of the others, its body flickering with arcs of lightning, towering above Lord Doom like a giant.

It charged, faster than anything that big had a right to be.

Noah grinned.

At the moment of impact, he activated the Levitate skill, lifting himself just out of its reach. Before the beast could react, he counterattacked.

Twisting midair, channeling the Berserker high level skill, Overpower into his blade, he slammed downward.

BOOM!

The explosive shockwave from the strike created a crater on the ground beneath them, and the Thunderhorn Alpha collapsed in a convulsing heap.

[You have slain a Field Boss: Thunderhorn Alpha!]

"Sweet!" Noah grinned.

He didn't stop there.

Following the hunt, he ventured into a hidden dungeon.

[You have entered a dungeon: Verdant Maw]

Inside the dungeon was a twisted labyrinth of vines, roots, and eerie bioluminescent plants.

At the heart of the dungeon lay the Blooming Horror, a massive, flower-like monstrosity with razor-sharp petals and toxic pollen capable of melting armor.

The ensuing fight was brutal.

Poison clouds filled the air, forcing Noah to weave between cover while launching Bullet Storm from mid-range. Vine tendrils lashed out, but Guardian Golem intercepted, holding the line while Noah repositioned.

The Blooming Horror's final form forced Noah to unleash Sniper's Focus, landing a perfectly timed shot in its exposed core.

In the ensuing aftermath of that devastating shot, he shattered the beast in an eruption of light.

The dungeon collapsed behind him as he strode out, a rare Verdant Emblem now in his inventory, marking his dominance over the Elysium Meadows.

Noah wiped the dust from his armor, smirked, and whispered.

"Next".

This had been his schedule for the past week.

He constantly went to the wild, hunting monsters, challenging dungeons, while all the while staying alert for an ambush.

None of it came though.

For some reason, after Jonathan failed in his ambush, others were reluctant to engage him in battle. Noah did not know the exact reason for this.

Yes, he already revealed his presence in the Heavenly Domain, restricting the movement of the most famous English pro players but still, he expected them to have attacked using alternate accounts.

So why?

Noah could not claim to know their thought processes though, and so he continued fighting beasts, doing his thing, leveling up.

After leaving the Verdant Maw dungeon, he roamed about, tracking and hunting more monsters and finally, Noah received a system notification that he had been anticipating since.

[You have received XP!]

[You have leveled up!]

[You are now level 61!]

In the heavenly domain now, he required even more kills and XP to level up but Noah was not deterred, determined to face the task.

Later that evening, he got news.

Surprisingly, of the 4, Caleb was the first to complete his Heavenly Domain Challenge but just 2 minutes after Caleb completed his, Aria followed in his footsteps, arriving in the Heavenly Domain.

"Finally". Noah muttered, going to meet up with his friends.

For some reason, he felt that their enemies have held back on their ambush all for this moment when his friends would arrive.

'Let's see what you guys have planned'.

*Chapter 149: Common enemy no. 1 [1]*

Back in the beginner domain, Lord Doom and his crew did some pretty crazy things, ridiculing the top guilds and as a result, they were public enemy no. 1 now in the Heavenly Domain.

After the initial ambush on Lord Doom led by Jonathan, there was no such obvious ambush anymore as on the combat side, they let guild Echelon breath.

In a way, it could also be translated to them admitting defeat.

Afterall, it was no news that facing God Noah in combat was a nightmare. To them, it was the last resort.

They would only resort to violence if all other plans were rendered moot.

With violence out of the way, in the borders of the Labyrinthine Expanse between the Ashen Dunes and the Obsidian Wastes, they let guild Echelon build their headquarters in peace.

But this reprieve was only restricted to violence.

In other areas that a guild can grow in the Heavenly Domain, the top guilds did not hesitate to frustrate guild Echelon's efforts, concentrating on their efforts to build a landmark guild headquarters in the Labyrinthine Expanse.

The world of Warstar was modeled after the real world in a lot of ways, just more fantastical. Just like in the real world, people needed resources to build mansions. Guild Echelon also needed resources to build their headquarters.

They may not be attacking guild Echelon on the open directly, but underground, in the business and trade aspects of the Heavenly Domain, the top guilds frustrated Echelon's efforts to get building materials.

Afterall, due to their deep foundations in the Heavenly Domain, a lot of things circulated through them, even trades with certain NPCs.

This was the reason why the building progress was so slow.

It didn't matter much though.

This was because today, Noah knew that they would break this status quo.

...

The moment Caleb stepped into the Heavenly Domain, he felt it.



A silent tension, a feeling that he was being watched.

Unlike Noah's grand, world-shaking entrance, Caleb's arrival was marked by a swift descent into chaos. He barely had time to send Noah his location before the first wave struck.

BZZZ!

It happened instantly.

A rain of arrows, spells, and bullets ripping through the space where he had just been standing. It came suddenly, but prepared, Caleb was able to react.

He dove forward, rolling across the uneven stone path of the Twilight Ravine, a narrow canyon surrounded by jagged cliffs. Bad terrain for an escape, but a perfect terrain for a trap.

Once Caleb realized where he appeared in the Heavenly Domain, he was stunned. 'What are the chances of me appearing here...? 40%? 20%? Maybe 12%? But even at that...'

He didn't have time to make his mathematical analysis though.

From the speed at which they appeared, and the fact that he didn't recognize any of the famous Avatars that he knew in the pro scene, Caleb realized something.

'They clearly spread their forces thin to cover a lot of regions in the Heavenly Domain, to react at the quickest speed to our arrival'.

His eyes narrowed. 'Persistent'.

They didn't leave him waiting.

It was a coordinated ambush from Guild Scarlet Rose, Nightfall Battalion, and Frozen Throne, three major powerhouses that had joined forces for one goal, to eliminate Guild Echelon's key players before they could establish themselves in the Heavenly Domain and if possible, get their equipment.

Afterall, by now, it was no news that every single player in Lord Doom's crew was stacked. Caleb's Enlightened Flame in particular was rumored to have an S-Ranked equipment..., they wanted that.

As they attacked, entering a state of clarity, Caleb's math-like precision kicked in immediately as he did a threat assessment on the spot.

'40 enemy players, at least 15 ranged attackers on the cliffs, a vanguard of melee specialists waiting below, and a high-tier Elementalist channeling a spell that screamed instant death if it landed..., Boulder Barrage... or Dust Devil?'

Even as he thought that, the face of facing an Awakened level Elementalist skill hanging in the air, his brain already geared into overdrive, drafting solutions.

'Escape? No', his eyes gleamed. 'The terrain is against me'.

'Hold out until Noah arrived? Possible. But for how long?'

'A counterattack? Insane, but possible'.

Caleb's mind raced.

His Summoner class had its limits in direct PvP, even more due to the level suppression birth from the difference in levels.

But in this situation, it also favored his Summoner class because his strength lay in control and prediction. He needed to tilt the battle in his favor, NOW.

As soon as Caleb thought it, he did it.

The counterattack began.

His Golem Core burned with energy as he activated Titan's Descent, summoning his Colossus Warden, a massive stone-armored summon that landed with a ground-shattering impact.

The shockwave sent enemy melee fighters staggering back, resulting in momentary chaos. And he seized it.

He commanded his Colossus Warden to charge, forcing enemies to scatter.

At the same time, he activated Frostbound Chains, launching spectral ice tendrils that ensnared the Elementalist mid-cast, interrupting the catastrophic spell just before it could erase him.

And then with precision rotated positioning, he used his own summons as physical cover to block ranged attacks.

Caleb summoned his Storm Raven after, which soared high and unleashed a disruptive Tempest Field, distorting enemy projectiles.

He was burning through MP like water.

For a moment, he had control. But then the second wave hit.

From the cliffside, a high-level Assassin cloaked in shadow flashed down. A blur of motion, Caleb barely managed to twist out of the way as a poisoned dagger sliced across his shoulder.

A Debuff notification popped up.

DING!

[You have been affected by Paralysis Venom!]

[Movement speed reduced!]

Caleb gritted his teeth. 'Numbers, patterns, adapt!'

His Colossus Warden swung at the Assassin, but the rogue vanished in a flicker, appearing behind him. Another dagger strike.

The only reason why he was still alive was the fact that these guys were not pro players. Still, they were the elite players in the game.

To survive, Caleb had to think faster.

He activated Reverse Summon, swapping places with his Storm Raven mid-air, dodging the Assassin's follow-up attack.

Midfall, he cast Thunderstrike, the delayed activation tricking the Assassin into countering too early, leaving him exposed.

Caleb's eyes gleamed, then...

BAM!

The Colossus Warden crushed the Assassin with a seismic hammer blow.

It didn't kill the Assassin, but he was temporarily crippled.

One threat down, but there were more.

The third wave closed in; more melee fighters, a Launcher preparing a spreadfire artillery barrage, and the cliffside mages finishing their chant.

Caleb's HP had dropped to 30%, and his summons were weakening. He wouldn't last much longer, then...

In a clap of thunder, a thunderous roar ripped through the canyon.

The sky darkened.

A shadow blazed through the battlefield, armor glinting gold and white, a red cloak billowing behind like a banner of war.

Noah.

And he wasn't alone.

The reinforcements had arrived, and now, Guild Echelon's counterattack.

Looking at the battlefield, Noah was honestly astonished at the number of people they had in waiting for Caleb but then he laughed and roared.

"Caleb, unleash the demons!"

[You have accessed S-Ranked Item: Hell's Key!]

BZZZ!

The next ten seconds turned the battlefield upside down!

*Chapter 150: Common enemy no. 1 [2]*

Noah's voice rang through the battlefield, a calm command wrapped in absolute dominance.

Caleb grinned, wiping blood from his lips.

"Finally".

He lifted Hell's Key, the S-Ranked artifact gleaming in his grasp. The key pulsed, chains rattling violently in the air, its ancient, malevolent presence warping the very atmosphere.

The ground cracked.

A storm of abyssal energy erupted from beneath Caleb's feet, forming a pitch-black vortex that swallowed all light. The very laws of the Heavenly Domain trembled, invaded by a much more sinister, demonic law.

And then...

BZZZ!

A towering, infernal gate tore into existence behind him.

Its colossal doors, wrought from obsidian and dripping with molten embers, shuddered. Runes of demonic scripture blazed, burning in the forgotten tongue of the Underworld.

"...!"

Shock spread through the battlefield.

The enemy froze, a wave of primal fear washing through them.

They had heard of the unique S-Ranked item that the Summoner of Echelon, most likely Caleb had. But they had never explicitly seen it in action, till today.

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

The gates quaked, something monstrous slamming against them from the other side. Then, they burst open.

A demonic onslaught followed.

A maelstrom of pure nightmare exploded from the gate. From the abyssal depths of Demon's Tower, they came.

Shadow Wraiths, ethereal specters that flickered in and out of existence, striking with cursed tendrils of darkness that bypassed armor.

Dusk Stalkers, four-armed, demonic assassins with serrated blades, appearing behind enemy lines, gutting them before they could react.

Hellforged Sentinels, towering, metal-plated demons infused with molten cores, their fists shattering the ground with every strike.

Nightmare Gorgers, grotesque horrors that fed on fear itself, distorting reality around them. And then at the front, a familiar face appeared.

Magoth, the Duke of Hell.

His massive, demonic form towered over the battlefield, six infernal eyes burning with malevolence and amusement. His clawed hands flexed, wreathed in hellfire, and his voice rumbled like an earthquake.

"Ah... fresh souls to rend and devour".

Every single Demon that appeared on this battlefield was the same level as Caleb's Avatar, Enlightened Flame, all level 60.

But the sheer number of them...

Panic erupted in the enemy ranks.

Hell was unleashed, and Guild Echelon struck in perfect synchronization.

Noah moved first. A gold and white blur, his Aetherforge glowed ominously as he tore through the stunned enemies, while leading the Cleric to Caleb's position so the guy could heal the weakened Summoner.

As he charged, his sword sand through the air, shockwaves detonating on impact, sending enemy Paladins and Spellblades flying like ragdolls.

At the moment, Genevieve and Benjamin were indisposed, still in the heat of their Arena challenge in the beginner domain. Aria, also having just made the transition to the Heavenly Domain could not come immediately.

So, the reinforcement?

Well, the guild part of the building in Club Echelon's building in London was no longer unpopulated. Nightingale was the Vice Guild Leader, and under his leadership, he already hired willing Lord Doom fans who helped him govern the guild directly from the club building.

They were on a salary, and these guys were guild Echelon's core.

With the main crew indisposed, they were the reinforcements that came at this moment to rescue Caleb.

A Cleric invoked Holy Judgment, a pillar of celestial energy vaporizing an entire squad of mages, dealing devastating damage to them.

A group of Elementalists raised their staff, chanting in tandem, combining to summon an Awakened level Elementalist skill.

{Volcanic Geyser=}

An Awakened Elementalist skill that merges fire and water to erupt molten jets from the ground, causing burn damage and knocking enemies into the air.

KABOOM!

The battlefield turned upside down.

Other Elementalists continued the barrage, sending Aetherfire Meteors that descended from the sky, obliterating the petrified snipers on the cliffs.

They didn't need to be overly precise. Afterall, there was so many enemies to target clustered in this single battlefield.

The melee experts rampaged through the frontlines, swinging their dual swords, battle lances, and Greatswords to devastating effect, slashing through armor like paper as they went after their guild leader.

Lord Doom's red cape moving in the battlefield was like a beacon of light for them, making them give their all to tear the enemies apart.

Meanwhile, Caleb stood in the center of the chaos he had orchestrated.

He wasn't just summoning demons; he was commanding them. And now after being healed, he became unbridled.

He pointed at the enemy Launcher preparing an explosive barrage and instantly a Dusk Stalker appeared behind him, twin daggers carving open his throat.

He gestured toward the Elementalists struggling to cast spells, and Shadow Wraiths coiled around them, sucking the life from their bodies.

He whispered a command and the Duke of Hell, Magoth launched himself forward like an unstoppable train, cleaving through enemy ranks like a living apocalypse. He was unstoppable.

The battle had turned. In mere moments, the ambushers had become the ambushed.

It was total annihilation.

With no pro player leading them, and with Noah and Caleb now leading the other side, they stood no chance.

Scarlet Rose, Nightfall Battalion, and Frozen Throne's forces crumbled.

Some tried to flee, but Noah appeared in front of them like a ghost, his red cloak fluttering as he grinned.

"I didn't say you could leave".

One slash, Aether explosion and they were gone.

Others begged for mercy.

Caleb looked down at them, unimpressed. "Should've done the math".

No one was spared. In ten minutes, it was over. The ambush had failed, and they suffered catastrophic damage in return.

Guild Echelon stood victorious. Hell's Key had been fully unleashed in the Heavenly Domain, for the first time under public eye.

And the world?

The world had just witnessed a massacre.

They won, but Noah was not smiling. This was because at this moment, he was looking at his interface, having navigated to a name on his friend list.

The name was now gray.

[Avatar- Reckless Storm]

His face darkened.

He and the backup arrived on time to rescue Caleb from the ambush, but Aria did not enjoy the same privilege.

Aria's Reckless Storm died.