

Reincarnated Avatar; I got 2 SSS-Rank Unique Skills

#Chapter 151: Wrath of the Vengeful Wraith - Read Reincarnated Avatar; I got 2 SSS-Rank Unique Skills Chapter 151: Wrath of the Vengeful Wraith

Chapter 151: Wrath of the Vengeful Wraith

Hours later, Genevieve and Benjamin finally completed their Heavenly Domain Challenge, leaving the beginner domain.

This time, Nightingale was prepared, mobilizing the full force of guild Echelon to secure the passage of their champions.

Genevieve and Benjamin arrived in the Heavenly Domain safely.

Only Aria's Reckless Storm was killed.

...

An hour after Genevieve and Benjamin's arrival...

The inn's lanterns flickered, casting long shadows across the wooden walls. The atmosphere was unusually quiet for the core of Guild Echelon, as if the entire room held its breath.

Noah's Lord Doom leaned back against the window, arms crossed, his piercing gaze locked onto Aria's Reckless Storm.

Across from him, the Blademaster lounged in a chair, posture deceptively relaxed, though her fingers drummed rhythmically against the armrest.

She looked like a coiled viper, waiting to strike.

Caleb, Genevieve, Benjamin, and the others stood around, silent. They knew better than to interrupt, even Benjamin.

Noah finally spoke. "What did you drop?"

Aria smirked, flipping a dagger between her fingers. "Just an inconsequential spare sword".

A blatant lie.

She had definitely lost something valuable, but that wasn't the point.

Noah studied her. The way her golden eyes burned like embers, that barely restrained feral hunger in her expression. Noah sighed, he recognized that look.

Then she leaned forward, resting her elbows on her knees, and looked straight into Noah's eyes.

Slowly, a devilish grin stretched across her face.

"I want revenge".

Silence.

Three simple words. No one was surprised really, but they all felt the weight of those words.

Aria wasn't asking for some meaningless battlefield skirmish. She wasn't interested in ambushing stragglers or sniping at the edges of enemy territory.

No. She wanted something bigger, something unforgivable.

She wanted to march straight into Sanctuary City, the very heart of the top guilds in the Heavenly Domain, and tear it apart from the inside.

Noah grimaced. 'They just had to go provoke her of all people!'

'Killing me would have been even better'.

Caleb whistled in a low tone, shaking his head. "Damn, you're insane".

Genevieve frowned. "That's... reckless".

Benjamin, ever the joker, grinned. "I like it".

Noah, however, didn't react. Not yet. He studied her expression, watching for hesitation while coordinating his thoughts.

To his dismay though, there was no hesitation in her expression, just cold, ruthless, and firm determination.

Aria meant every word.

Finally, after what felt like an eternity, Noah exhaled. A slow, deliberate breath. 'There's no going back now'. He thought.

Then, the corners of his mouth curled into a smirk.

"Fine".

Just one word but it meant the whole world.

Chaos was about to descend upon Sanctuary City.

...

Sanctuary City, Guild hall of Scarlet Rose...

The room was buzzing with voices of triumph, the air thick with self-satisfaction. The pro players who had led the ambush against Aria stood tall, reporting their success to Jonathan, captain of Club Scarlet Rose, as guild members gathered around to listen.

For the operation to suppress guild Echelon and Lord Doom's growth, Jonathan was the default leader of the allied guild forces.

After reporting to Jonathan, they waited in anticipation.

They expected praise.

They expected Jonathan to grin, to commend them for taking down Aria, Reckless Storm's controller, one of Echelon's top fighters.

They expected anything but what actually happened.

At first, Jonathan stared at them in disbelief. Then he roared, slamming his palm against the ornate meeting table with a force that sent goblets and reports flying chaotically.

"What?!" He bellowed.

The room froze. Conversations died. Every head turned toward him, shock and confusion flickering across their faces.

Jonathan's face was drained of color, his usual composed expression shattering. His fingers trembled slightly as he pointed at the team standing before him.

"You... you guys killed Aria?!"

Pro players did not have a lot of time on their hands. Unlike Jonathan who was more than willing to come to the game to bully an old rival of his, other pro players were not as disposed.

This was why instead of the core pro players, the bench players and new recruits of the pro clubs were the ones to participate in this mission.

They were still better than normal game experts though.

The pro players looked at each other after Jonathan asked, uneasy. One of them, a Paladin, cleared his throat.

"Uh... yeah? She was outnumbered. We took the shot".

Jonathan cursed, his pulse pounding in his ears.

"F*ck! You just had to do it!"

The others exchanged confused glances, even Scarlet Rose's in-game guild leader and his subordinates. Why was their guild leader panicking?

They had just eliminated one of Echelon's top players, someone who had been wrecking their forces for weeks.

This should be good news.

One of the recruits chuckled. "Come on, boss. It's Aria. We outplayed her. She's not..."

Jonathan shot him a glare so intense that the words died in his throat.

"You have no idea what you've done". Jonathan growled.

The players shifted uncomfortably.

He ran a hand through his hair, feeling the cold sweat on his skin.

Jonathan knew Aria.

He had fought against her countless times in the pro scene. He had seen firsthand what she was capable of when she was pissed off, the way she tore through teams, how she adapted mid-fight, how she turned impossible odds into absolute victories.

Heck, he feared her.

Especially after that MVP-winning season.

She wasn't just a player; she was a force of nature, a mad dog.

And these idiots had just given her the perfect excuse to unleash that storm upon them, the perfect excuse to unleash her madness.

He swallowed. "Show me what she dropped".

One of the Spellblades, still smirking, pulled the sword from his inventory and placed it on the table.

Jonathan looked at it.

His breath hitched. "Curses!" He cursed again.

It wasn't worth it.

A spare sword, nothing of real value.

They hadn't crippled her; they hadn't ruined her progression. All they had done... was just piss her the f*ck off!

Jonathan leaned back in his chair, suddenly feeling exhausted.

The other guild leaders, top pro players, recruits, elites, were all watching him, waiting for an explanation.

He didn't have the energy to explain it to them though.

Instead, he exhaled slowly. Then, in a voice grim and unwavering, he issued a single warning.

"Prepare yourselves for war".

Some of the others chuckled nervously. "You're joking, right?"

"They wouldn't dare, would they?"

"Trouble was asleep and you decided to wake it, so...", Jonathan shrugged.

Then he stared at them, eyes as cold as steel.

"A vengeful wraith is coming".

Chapter 152: Assassin's creed

Sanctuary city was a monument to dominance, a bastion where the strongest guilds in the Heavenly Domain reigned supreme.

It was the most expensive region to enter and live in the Heavenly Domain, entering it was a proof of wealth and status.

Built atop a sprawling plateau, its golden walls gleamed under the eternal sunlight, towering over the land like the seat of divinity itself.

The city's architecture was an intricate mix of divine craftsmanship and player-built fortifications, pristine marble structures adorned with celestial engravings, towering ivory spires, and majestic halls where the elite held council.

At the city's heart lay the Sanctuary Keep, a massive citadel surrounded by concentric rings of defenses; magic-forged barricades, watchtowers bristling with enchanted weaponry, and legions of elite NPCs and players alike patrolling the streets.

The streets were bustling, not with ordinary players but the chosen few; ranked warriors, strategists, and commanders of the top guilds.

This was where the headquarters of the top guilds was located.

The air was thick with aura and prestige, an unspoken declaration that Sanctuary City was the seat of power, the nexus of authority in the Heavenly Domain.

A fortress so secure... that no sane person would dare infiltrate it.

Well, Aria was never truly sane.

Aria's plan was simple, she did not involve everybody, all she wanted was swift, capable, and deadly allies, the original cohort.

She wanted to play Assassin's creed; enter unnoticed, kill an important figure, escape without being caught.

Then do it again. Rinse and repeat.

For the next few weeks, she was determined to be the bane of the top guilds, breaking their false belief of safety behind the walls of Sanctuary City.

And she started today.

...

Nightfall.

A silhouette darted across the rooftops, barely a whisper against the cold stone.

Aria moved with predatory grace, her figure blending into the shadows, her presence as fleeting as the wind.

And she wasn't alone.

At her back were the select few, the cohort she had chosen for this operation. Noah, Caleb, Nightingale, and two others. A team built not for war, but for death.

Their mission? Kill an important figure.

Disappear.

Then do it again.

Their first mark was Elias Winterbane, Guildmaster of White Dawn, a key strategist behind the alliance against Guild Echelon.

A man known for his meticulous planning and unshakable composure. A leader who had been orchestrating the suppression of Echelon's growth in the Heavenly Domain after his apprentice was humiliated in the beginner domain.

Well, tonight... he would die.

The infiltration was seamless and silent.

They moved like shadows in a world of light, threading through blind spots, scaling glistening white towers, and evading patrols with near-perfect coordination.

Aria led the way, her every step precise, her body tense with bloodthirsty anticipation.

Sanctuary Keep was a fortress designed to repel entire armies, but it was never built to stop ghosts.

They slipped inside through a narrow vent leading into the Guildmasters' Hall, their entry unseen unheard.

Inside, golden chandeliers bathed the corridors in celestial radiance, marble floors gleamed underfoot, and divine inscriptions pulsed with protective wards.

Guards patrolled in tight formations, elite players in full divine regalia, their presence a clear warning, this was no place for the weak.

But Aria and her squad were anything but weak.

Step by step, they closed in on their prey.

Elias Winterbane sat in his chamber, poring over tactical maps, unaware that death had already entered the room.

With a silent flick of the wrist, Aria hurled a dagger.

{Assassination=}

A high-level Assassin skill with a 100% chance of insta-killing a target if you successfully hit a vital organ like the throat, heart, or brain.

The blade sank deep into the throat of his bodyguard before the man could utter a sound. The NPC could not resist, killed in an instant.

Elias' eyes widened as he shot to his feet, but before he could even reach for his weapon...

Noah moved.

SWHING!

Aetherforge sang through the air in its battle lance form, its golden edge catching the light for a fraction of a second before it sliced through the Guildmaster's chest.

Almost at the same time, Aria appeared behind her opponent like a ghost, her twin swords flying off dangerously in a blur.

Benjamin activated an Elementalist skill, calling forth tree branches that curled out of the ground, binding the Guild Master in place.

In seconds, dozens of attacks flew between the assassins.

And then, Benjamin's skill dissipated.

Elias staggered back, gasping, his eyes filled with the stark realization..., this wasn't just a random attack.

This was an execution.

But he couldn't even scream, his Avatar's HP was already dangerously low, below 10%. He was already dead.

Aria finished it.

With a brutal downward slash, she severed his head clean from his shoulders.

The body collapsed.

Blood stained the golden floor.

The first head of many had fallen.

And before the alarms could ring, before the guards could storm in...

They were already gone.

...

That night, a commotion would start in Sanctuary City.

The top guilds tried to hide the information but with Nightingale's networks fanning the flames from the shadows, the news soon spread like wildfire in a dry harmattan. It could not be stopped.

News that assassins infiltrated Sanctuary City, precisely the Sanctuary Keep, and Elias Winterbane, the Guildmaster of White Dawn was killed.

"What?!"

"How???"

Infiltrating into the Sanctuary Keep alone was shocking enough, killing Elias Winterbane was borderline insane, and yet that was not the most shocking fact.

The most shocking fact was to escape safely after doing all that.

That night, the indomitability of the Sanctuary Keep was challenged, the sanctity of the domain of the top guilds was defiled.

That night, the Heavenly Domain was left reeling in shock.

And so it began...

This assassination was only the beginning.

For the next few weeks, Aria and her cohort of killers would turn Sanctuary City into a hunting ground.

No high-ranking guild member was safe.

No war council was uninterrupted.

Every night, a new body fell, and there was no damn thing that they could do about it.

It was scary.

Aria had become more than a player; she had become a myth.

The Vengeful Wraith of Sanctuary City.

Chapter 153: Revenge

They say revenge is best served cold.

For weeks, Sanctuary City had been under siege, not by armies, not by war, but by shadows.

Every dawn, a new corpse was discovered.

Every night, another high-ranking guild member fell.

They knew who the enemy was, they knew who was attacking them, but knowing them did not translate to stopping them. Despite devising one plan after the other, they could not stop them.

Aria and her cohort of assassins had turned the city of the powerful into a hunting ground, a place of fear, and now...

She had set her sights on the biggest target of them all. Jonathan.

Jonathan wasn't just another guild member. No, he was the captain of team Scarlet Rose, a bonafide veteran pro player of the English Pro Alliance.

And most importantly though, he was the mastermind behind the top guilds' coordinated suppression of Echelon's rise in the Heavenly Domain.

He was the reason why Aria's Reckless Storm was killed, losing a weapon in the process. He was the main target of Aria's ire and vengeful pursuit.

Not just a pro player, but a calculating strategist, and the one man everyone in the alliance deferred to.

Killing him wasn't just an assassination.

It was a declaration of war, but who cares?

Aria was ready.

...

Midnight...

Jonathan sat in the War Hall of Sanctuary Keep, surrounded by a dozen elite guards and four of the top guild leaders.

A war council was underway, a final meeting to regain control of the city and put an end to the assassinations.

Jonathan yawned. He was tired, having just played a grueling Pro Alliance game that Scarlet Rose barely won. He wanted to end this war council as fast as possible so he could catch up on his quality sleep.

No matter how entertaining he thought taking on his old rival, Noah seemed, in the end he was still a pro player under contract with obligations.

He was obligated to play at his best for Scarlet Rose in every professional game, and as the captain of such a big team, he had to set an example.

This was why he never played with his sleep time.

The doors of the War Hall were sealed, the room enchanted with barriers upon barriers, every possible entrance fortified.

This was a fortress within a fortress.

No one could get in, no one except Aria, and her crew.

Jonathan had prepared for everything, just before going to sleep. Afterall, most of the assassinations happened when he was already asleep.

Having played against him as a rival for so many years, his enemies knew him, including his sleep schedule like the back of their hand.

But today, Aria had planned for him.

The guards, the barriers, the patrols, none of it mattered. Because Aria had already infiltrated, before the meeting even began.

As Jonathan and the other guild leaders sat at their long, polished table, unraveling their strategy, they failed to notice the subtle distortions in the room.

They failed to see the faint shimmer in the shadows.

They failed to hear the whisper of movement above them.

Until it was too late.

Jonathan felt it first... the cold edge of steel against his throat.

The shock hit him like ice, his body stiffening, instincts screaming at him...

Assassins!

But how?!

In normal RPG games, the cold edge of steel against a throat did not mean much since it could not wipe out all of an Avatar's HP.

Not in Warstar though.

In Warstar, insta-kill was a very high probability, and it was influenced not by equipment, not by items, but skill.

With the right amount of skill and timing, and with the Assassination skill, slitting a player's throat could prove extremely lethal, dealing damage far above normal and insta-killing any Avatar.

This was why Jonathan tensed at the touch of the blade.

Before he could react, before anyone in the room could process the nightmare unfolding, it began.

Death descended.

Nightingale struck first. A bolt of shadow magic exploded in the room, shrouding the chamber in pure darkness. And then, a heartbeat later...

Noah moved.

Aetherforge sliced through the air in its battle lance form, cutting down the nearest bodyguard before he even registered what was happening.

Caleb unleashed the demons.

Hell's Key opened, and twisted infernal entities erupted into the war room, ripping through defenses, disrupting spells, and sowing chaos.

The council was in disarray, elite warriors scrambling, spells flaring.

And in that chaos, in that split second of disorder, Aria struck...

But Jonathan was no ordinary player.

A pro, a warrior, a legend, an active one.

As soon as he felt the blade at his throat, he acted.

Aria let it though. If she wanted, she would have assassinated him before he knew what happened, but no, that was not what she wanted.

That would be letting him off the hook.

Aria wanted him to know, wanted him to feel helplessness, just as she felt, even in the skin of his God level Avatar, before he died.

This was why she let him react.

Maybe Jonathan also knew this too, but it didn't matter, he still reacted to protect his life and maybe coordinate his allies, could he?

With a surge of movement, he spun, shattering the illusion of helplessness, his long sword roaring to life in a brilliant arc of divine energy, almost at the same time his shield materializing to life in his left arm.

But Aria was faster.

She ducked low, dodging the attack, one of her swords whipping through the air in a brutal counter...

CLANG!

Steel met steel.

Jonathan's eyes narrowed, muscles tensing as he recognized his opponent.

He already guessed it, but confirming that it was the real thing, he tensed. His greatest fear had come true.

Aria had come for him.

And for that vengeful fiend to come for him this deep in his territory, despite knowing the defenses, the number of enemies, she must be reasonably confident in her chances of killing him.

'Damnation!' He cursed.

Chapter 154: Aria's wrath

'Damnation!' Jonathan cursed.

Then, the room vanished to them.

The chaos, the dying screams, the battle..., none of it mattered.

It was just Aria and Jonathan.

A battle of instincts, skill, and sheer unrelenting will.

Aria didn't just want to have her revenge, at the same time, she wanted to prove to this shameless bastard that she didn't need to resort to over-the-top dirty tactics to end him.

'Crazy maniac!' Jonathan cursed again but he didn't hesitate.

He moved like a storm, a powerhouse of calculated destruction.

As for Aria? She moved like a wraith, fast, unpredictable, and utterly ruthless with her twin swords that struck like Vipers.

Twin swords clashed against shield and sword again and again, sparks flying, light and shadow intertwining in a brutal dance.

Around them, it was a slaughter, Noah and the others going on a wanton slaughter, wilting the numbers of high-ranking guild members and guild leaders that participated in this guild meeting.

While they slaughtered, they left the stage for Aria and Jonathan.

Just like she wanted.

Jonathan attacked with precision, strength, and battlefield control. Aria countered with speed, deception, and an unpredictable ferocity.

It was a crazy duel.

He was the King of Suppression, while she was the Vengeful Wraith.

And tonight, one of them would fall.

After a few seconds of going at it, exchanging dozens upon dozens of blows, chipping at each other's HP...

Jonathan gritted his teeth.

He had fought Aria before. He knew her style, knew her aggression, knew her deadly instinct for battle. But there was something different about her now.

This wasn't just the Aria he had faced in the pro scene; this was Aria reborn.

The Aria who had spent weeks killing, the Aria who had turned revenge into an art, the Aria who had become death itself.

And then..., she tricked him.

A feint. A slight misstep, a calculated flaw.

But Jonathan didn't see it, caught in her cadence already, and he fell for it.

Just for a second, just long enough, then...

BAM!

Aria's blade plunged into his chest, twisting into his heart, through a tiny gap in his steel armor.

{CRITICAL HIT=}

Jonathan's breath hitched, his long sword falling from his grasp as a large chunk of his HP disappeared with that blow.

All remnants of his HP were wiped out with that critical hit.

Thud!

His knees hit the ground in a theatrical manner. His eyes, wide with shock... and resignation.

He had lost, and he knew it.

Jonathan looked at her in his last few moments and grinned, spitting. "Vengeful fiend..., which woman behaves like this?!" He growled.

Then, a nasty smile plastered his face. "No wonder you don't have a boyfriend".

Silence briefly reigned.

And as Jonathan collapsed, the last remnants of resistance in the war room crumbling, Aria stood over him, sword dripping with his blood.

She knelt. Leaned close.

And in a whisper only he could hear, she spoke. "Checkmate".

She seemed to hesitate slightly and then she eventually said. "Fool, who said I don't have a boyfriend?"

Jonathan stared at her, a new gleam shining in his eyes, that of surprise.

And then, it also disappeared as with one final stroke, she severed his head.

Later, by the time reinforcements arrived, by the time the alarm finally rang, by the time the top guilds realized what had happened...

Aria and her crew were already gone, almost like they never came.

And Sanctuary city would never be the same, because the King of Suppression was dead.

Because Guild Echelon had struck at the heart of their enemies, where they thought they were most secure, striking fear into them.

The Vengeful Wraith had written her name in blood.

They felt the weight of Aria's Wrath.

That night, only Jonathan knew, during that duel, he felt glimpses of an opponent he once knew long ago... the Sword Saintess.

Somewhere in Leeds...

In his room, Jonathan shivered. "Those bastards".

"They're really serious about making it back to the pro scene".

He sighed; all signs of sleep having left his face already as he went to the kitchen where he brewed a cup of coffee.

The Sword Saintess, that was what she was once known as, Sprinkling Brooks controller, Cyber Squad's Aria.

These days, she was no longer Cyber Squad's though.

Sipping his coffee, Jonathan could not help but smile darkly thinking of Cyber Squad. 'You guys have no idea the demons you just unleashed'.

Having faced them countless times in the arena, he knew best, what that cohort was capable of doing when truly determined.

"F*ck! Why am I thinking of them like some devils?" He cursed.

"It's nothing. It's not as if they're even in the Pro Alliance yet, and before that, they have to make it through the Promotion Tournament first".

Thinking of that, Jonathan remembered something and quickly picked his iPhone, accessing the internet.

There, he saw something that quickly attracted his attention.

[Promotion Tournament Starts in 3 days:]

[Total Number of Challenging Teams Registered: 313]

Every season in the English Pro Alliance, at the end of the season, 3 pro clubs, those at the bottom of the table are relegated while 3 new pro clubs are inducted into the Pro Alliance to take the place of the relegated clubs in the new season.

2 of the promotion slots are auctioned off by the league every season for a ridiculous amount of money, but the 3rd slot is free.

The 3rd slot is gotten through the Promotion Tournament.

A tournament where any aspiring pro player can participate. In the tournament, the best assembled teams compete, including clubs that were relegated in the previous season, they could all compete again for the 3rd slot.

After multiple grueling rounds of team battles, the team that is left standing after the final wins the 3rd slot for the English Pro Alliance.

By now, Jonathan already did his research and knew that Nightingale, the popular hip-hop musician was Club Echelon's sponsor.

But still, knowing the kind of personalities that his rivals had, especially with people like Noah and Aria in the squad, he felt that they won't let the popular musician spend the money to buy one of the 2 auctioned slots.

Rather, they would fight in the Promotion Tournament to secure the 3rd slot.

Using his phone, he searched for a name among the competing teams in the tournament and he was right.

[Target Found: Challenger Club Echelon]

Jonathan took a deep breath, blowing on his hot coffee. "Things are about to become interesting". He muttered.

Chapter 155: Promotion tournament [1]

3 days later, the Promotion Tournament finally started.

The usual commentator preceded over the popular event in England.

"Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to the Promotion Tournament, the talent breeding ground where the best players get a chance at competing and showcasing their skills at the pro stage".

"After months since the portal was open, the registration portal finally closed and today, the first qualification round begins".

"358 teams registered for the Promotion Tournament this time".

"Among them are well-known clubs that we know before now, and new teams that we are seeing for the first time. Will there be an underdog this time?"

"No one knows, but one thing is for sure".

"Warstar tournaments are always exciting!"

"Now, grab your popcorns, strap your seatbelts, and enjoy the show".

"As is customary, the first 6 weeks shall be reserved for the free for all battle royale, a round where all the teams will be placed in large-scale battlefield arenas, a test to weed the pretenders away from the challengers".

"At the end of 6 weeks of bloodshed, only 8 teams shall remain to participate in the main playoffs event".

"Don't miss a thing!"

The Promotion Tournament was just like the commentator described.

It was the ultimate battleground for rising legends, the one shot at securing a coveted spot in the Pro Alliance.

At first, it was 313 competing teams but within the last few days of registration, 55 more teams registered.

With 358 teams vying for eight available spots in the playoffs, the tournament's opening round was nothing short of a bloodbath.

Like the commentator said, to separate contenders from pretenders, the tournament opened with a Battle Royale format.

For six weeks, teams would engage in relentless combat across a massive battlefield, a shifting warzone filled with strategic chokepoints, hidden dangers, and limited safe zones. A location where skill and teamwork could blossom.

The goal?

Survive.

By the end of the battle royale phase, only eight teams would remain.

After the format on the Battle Royale was drawn across the period of 6 weeks, for the first day battle, Club Echelon was not drafted.

For the first day battle, 10 teams out of the 358 competed.

Only the last 2 surviving would progress.

The battlefield stretched across a vast, ever-changing landscape, ranging from forests and deserts to abandoned cities and cursed ruins.

As soon as the tournament began, the warzone erupted into pure carnage.

Before the tournament, many teams had come in confident, arrogant, thinking they had what it took to claim a Pro Alliance spot.

Afterall, fighting against fellow casuals in the game with a bit of skill had an infuriating habit of inflating ego.

For these delusional guys, they only needed 10 minutes and that illusion was brutally shattered, suddenly forced to face reality.

A team of nobodies from the lower ranks found themselves pitted against Apex Reign, a team led by two retired pro players.

They barely lasted twenty seconds.

The Kill Leaderboard updated instantly.

[Apex Reign – 4 Kills]

Not 4 players, but 4 teams.

Apex Reign wiped out 4 teams!

As the first major execution of the tournament, the first day battle set the tone. This wasn't a casual scrimmage.

This was war.

At the end of the day, Apex Reign and one other team survived, every other team brutally demoted out of the tournament.

...

Day 2...

This time, 13 teams competed.

Today, the location was in the Desert Plains, one of the more popular arena locations in the game. There, a vicious skirmish unfolded between 13 teams.

Chaos Inc., a mid-tier rising guild in the Heavenly Domain created a team, and today they were the stand-out performers.

Having strategically positioned themselves atop the dunes, they forced most teams that ran into them into a harrowing no-win scenario.

For the next twenty minutes, they rained destruction upon any prey that dared approach them, claiming the most kills.

Atop the dunes, they were unstoppable.

Snipers picking off isolated teams, mages conjuring sandstorms to blind their enemies, traps hidden beneath the dunes, catching unsuspecting teams in explosive devastation.

They showed that they were a step above the rest of their competitors.

By the time the dust settled, the leaderboard updated again.

[Chaos Inc – 8 Kills]

They annihilated 8 teams singlehandedly!

They may not have killed all the players of the 8 teams they annihilated themselves, but their attacks was what dealt the killing blow to the last surviving members of the 8 teams.

Singlehandedly, they wiped out more than half of the competing teams.

Those who underestimated them did not live to tell the tale.

The other team that qualified among them only wiped out 2 teams, but that was enough to qualify with them since 2 teams were needed to qualify.

...

Day 3...

Not all battle royales were one-sided massacres.

Unlike in Day 1 and Day 2 when Apex Reign and Chaos Inc. dominated respectively, on Day 3, the battle royale was much tighter and more exciting.

In the Ruined City, there were numerous stunning skirmishes across the location, but some stood out...

In the Ruined City, a team of no-names, Silverfang, found themselves cornered by Iron Brigade, a team formed by a high-ranking guild known for its merciless aggression in the game.

Outnumbered five to ten, it should've been an easy wipe, except...

Silverfang didn't go down.

Rather, they fought. They fought with calculated precision, they used the environment to their advantage, clawing themselves away from predicted defeat.

Setting explosive ambushes in abandoned buildings, forcing Iron Brigade into choke points as they cleverly used the terrain, while countering brute force with strategy, they managed to do the impossible.

One by one, Iron Brigade fell, their fans stunned in disbelief.

Other upsets like this happened on Day 3, exciting the neutral fans to no end. And when the dust settled, the leaderboard updated once more.

[Silverfang – 2 Kills]

[QuickRain – 1 Kill]

A team with only 1 team wipe managed to progress, leaving all the others. This was because among the numerous teams with 1 team wipe, they killed the most players in the battle royale.

And most shocking of all, Silverfang, the underdog team managed to wipe out 2 teams, progressing as the best team.

A nobody team had just taken down multiple higher-rated teams.

The neutral crowd watching from the virtual arenas exploded in cheers.

And then,

Day 4...

Chapter 156: Promotion tournament [2]

Day 4...

Once again, another day of bloodshed in the arena.

It started, multiple teams going at each other, eager to tear themselves apart.

And as the day progressed, the true contenders started showing themselves, making their moves to overwhelm lesser challengers.

This time, 2 high-rated teams found themselves on a collision course in the battle royale, in the Frozen Wastes..., Ashen Barrow and Ivory Warriors.

What followed was a masterclass in high-level team warfare.

Lightning-fast counterattacks, coordinated spell barrages, clutch escapes and impossible recoveries, these bastards used everything available to them.

The amusing fact was that they could have temporarily allied, deciding to hunt the lesser teams instead of fighting each other in a self-destructive war but no, fueled by pride, they fought to the death.

To them, pride and bragging rights meant everything.

The battle raged for thirty minutes, neither side willing to retreat, neither side backing down. It was the first true test of elite gameplay.

And in the end... Ashen Barrow emerged victorious.

Barely.

Their victory was short-lived though. Because exhausted and worn-out, after winning against their opponents, they went even further and let their guard down due to the euphoria of victory.

That was when a hidden third-party team struck.

It was bittersweet and ironic.

Within seconds, the once mighty Ashen Barrow team, what was left of it was ambushed and slaughtered.

Their elimination sent a shockwave through the battlefield.

No one was safe.

But to the neutral fans, they were having the time of their lives. The Promotion Tournament was extremely exciting.

And for some time, its viewership even got to the level of that of the Pro Alliance. Even if this was only temporary, it was still a great thing.

Day 4 broke the online viewership record.

...

Day 5...

And then, on Day 5, Echelon finally competed.

For 4 days, the battlefield had been a warzone of carnage, betrayals, and desperate survival.

The weak had been culled.

The strong had been tempered in fire, and then...

Echelon finally entered the fray.

Against 14 other opponents that were put into the arena, the moment Noah, Aria, Caleb, Genevieve, and Benjamin stepped onto the battlefield, even with accounts that were still under level 70, a presence followed them.

And an eerie silence fell across the warzone.

Every surviving team, every guild team felt it. A shift in the air.

Like predators sensing a greater beast stepping onto their hunting ground. And when the storm hit, it was absolute domination.

Unlike other teams who cautiously navigated the battlefield, conserving resources, Echelon did the opposite.

They hunted.

With Noah leading the charge, they sliced through teams like a scythe through wheat, utterly unstoppable.

Aria was the Blademaster Wraith. She moved like a ghost, cutting down enemies before they even realized she was there.

A single dash, a flash of steel, and entire squad formations collapsed before they could react.

Echelon didn't even need to be in a formation. Individually, they were enough.

As for Caleb, with Hell's Key, he unleashed a horde of demons, overwhelming teams with sheer chaos.

After using it the first time in the public eye during the ambush led by those striving to suppress guild Echelon, Caleb no longer saw a reason to hide the existence of the S-Ranked item, and so he used it freely.

On this battlefield, his summons crushed formations, forcing enemies into kill zones set up by the others.

Genevieve was untouchable.

She was never in one place, moving from one place to the other, deciding which of her teammates to support.

Every attack against one of her teammates when she was close by was negated, her healing keeping them in an unkillable loop. The enemy teams couldn't break through, not even when they allied together.

And this was because she wouldn't let them.

As for Benjamin, the clown? If Aria was a silent assassin, he was a force of nature, at least, if there is one whose mouth never seemed to cease talking.

With his SS-Rank unique skill, he was a menace, an Elemental Cataclysm.

Firestorms, ice spikes, chain lightning, and endless trash talking, he turned the battlefield into hell itself.

And Noah?

He was death incarnate.

Aetherforge warped through space, changing forms to his will, cutting down enemies from impossible and unpredictable angles.

He ripped through entire teams alone, turning what should've been dangerous battles into one-sided slaughters.

The leaderboard updated.

[Echelon – 13 Kills]

Out of the 14 enemy teams, they wiped out 13, the highest in the tournament by a landslide.

The last surviving qualified alongside them.

At the end of the first week challenges, the tournament had already claimed over 70 teams, eliminating all of them.

Those who had underestimated the challenge were already being weeded out. Only those who were worthy would be left.

In subsequent weeks, more teams competed in epic battles.

By the 5th week, all 358 teams finally engaged in the battle royales. And at the end of it, 50 teams were left standing.

And once again, all 50 teams were put in the meatgrinder of a battle royale, this one with different elimination rules.

For 5 days, the 50 teams would be put in the same large-scale arena where they would fight in another deadly battle royale, this would victory would be decided by the team with most kills at the end.

And not just that, the kills that they've had in the previous battle royales would be added also. It was not team wipes anymore, but individual kill count.

The leaderboard was updated.

[Echelon – 72 Kills]

[Chaos Inc. – 13 Kills]

[Silverfang – 10 Kills]

[Apex Reign – 9 Kills]

[...]

[...]

Immediately after the new leaderboard was made, one thing was clear immediately, Echelon was miles ahead of other challenges.

The moment Echelon skyrocketed to the top of the kill rankings, the top teams in the tournament reacted exactly as expected.

They allied.

Because if they didn't stop Echelon now, they wouldn't be able to stop them ever. Not now, and definitely not in the playoffs.

On Day 1 of the 6th week, a coalition of 12 teams gathered, planning to eliminate Echelon in one decisive

Chapter 157: Promotion tournament [3]

[You have leveled up!]

[You are now level 70!]

After months of working hard, grinding to level up his Avatar, Noah crossed another big milestone with his Lord Doom Avatar.

Lord Doom was now level 70, the first in his crew.

And it coincided with Day 1 of the 6th week of the elimination round battle royales, where a coalition of 12 teams gathered against them.

They planned to eliminate Echelon in one decisive strike.

It was a flawless plan. A 12-team coordinated ambush should've been an instant death sentence, it should've been an unbeatable force.

Yet, it wasn't.

Because they had forgotten one thing.

Echelon didn't just play the game, they controlled it. They had been controlling it from the very beginning of the Promotion Tournament.

The coalition's trap was perfectly laid. They surrounded Echelon in a ruined fortress, cutting off every exit.

They launched a full-frontal assault, magic and arrows darkening the sky.

It should've been the end, but...

Noah only laughed. And that laugh, sounded far more ominous than anything these challengers had ever heard in the game.

"Unleash the demons". Noah said.

And Caleb activated Hell's Key. In an instant, the world went mad.

A flood of demons erupted, throwing the battlefield into chaos. As Caleb leveled up, so did his demons become even more fearsome.

And he was not alone, he had allies, fearsome allies.

Benjamin's firestorm turned the ambush into a death trap, deviously using his SS-Ranked unique skill to weave chaos among the enemy ranks like an art.

Aria vanished into the shadows, becoming the Reaper of Life. She only reappeared behind the enemy commanders, attacking at rapid speed, cutting them down in mere seconds.

She was like a phantom of death.

As for Genevieve, she was the cornerstone of the team. She shielded the team from every attack, making them unkillable.

And Noah?

He simply tore through them.

Aetherforge warped through space, striking from angles no one could predict. The coalition's ambush turned into a massacre.

No matter how strong pro players were, it was not logical for so few players to overwhelm so many. The true secret behind this impossibility made possible was teamwork, a coalition of multiple elite players, the best of the best.

Maybe Noah could take on 10 of them alone, maybe 20 if pushed to his limits, but that would still leave dozens of enemies.

That was where the math came to fore.

In Echelon, $1 + 1$ did not necessarily mean 2.

In Echelon, Noah + Aria alone could be translated to $10 + 10$ if not $15 + 10$. When you do the math, both of them end up taking the role of 25 enemies.

This was also not just because of their individual skill, it was because of their perfect synergy that has been honed through years of fighting against powerful enemies and rivals in the pro scene, pitting themselves against the best of the best.

Passing through these trials together made them the perfect comrades in arms, monsters honed in Warstar's fantastical world.

And so..., Noah + Aria + Genevieve + Caleb + Benjamin was far more than the direct sum of the individual parts.

It was not a team of individual players fighting, rather, it was cogs of a well-oiled cutting-edge technology machine cutting through lesser machines like a hot knife through butter, turning fearsome opposition to weak prey.

And so, the perfect ambush turned into a perfect massacre.

They tried to retreat, but Noah didn't let them.

By the time it was over...

Twelve teams were wiped from the tournament, more than 60 players brutally killed in the process.

And the leaderboard updated again.

[Echelon – 135 Kills]

Day 1 ended in bloodcurdling fashion.

And from that moment on, the tournament changed.

...

After the terrifying culling that resulted from the decision of multiple teams to gang up on Echelon, the tournament changed.

No one tried to fight Echelon head-on anymore.

They ran, they hid.

They fought each other to avoid being next on Echelon's kill list.

And just like that, the days of the last week passed, the spectators bearing witness to the bloodbath that occurred on the arena every day.

Due to every team avoiding Echelon like a plague, their kill count reduced in the next 4 days but it didn't matter.

No team managed to catch up to them.

Echelon stood undefeated.

They didn't just qualify for the playoff rounds; they owned the battlefield.

They didn't just win; they made a statement with their performance.

And then, it was decided, the top 4 teams that progressed to the playoffs from the elimination round.

[Echelon – 135 Kills]

[Chaos Inc. – 83 Kills]

[Apex Reign – 53 Kills]

[Silverfang – 49 Kills]

Silverfang, the underdogs did it.

They managed to go all the way, securing a playoff spot after the last bloodbath that lasted a week in the arenas.

Yes, the playoff spots were reserved for 8 teams, but only 4 of them are eligible to qualify from the elimination rounds.

The others were decided through a seed system by the tournament organizers, selecting from past relegated teams from the English Pro Alliance.

The remaining 4 playoff spots were reserved for relegated pro teams.

There was a 2-day break after the end of the elimination round battles before the draw. And then, on Monday morning, the draw was made.

[Quarterfinal Draw Randomizing, please wait...]

[Draw complete!]

>Chaos Inc. vs Crimson Vale<

...

>Apex Reign vs Iron Dominion<

...

>Silverfang vs Nightshroud<

...

>Echelon vs Aetherlight Syndicate<

The first game of the playoffs, the quarterfinal games was between Chaos Inc. of the elimination round and Crimson Vale, the relegated pro team.

Crimson Vale, once a mid-tier powerhouse of the English Pro Alliance known for relentless aggression, now fallen from grace and desperate to claw their way back. They didn't have the funds to purchase one of the other 2 spots.

And so, the Promotion Tournament was their only hope of returning to the English Pro Alliance.

To them, it was not a matter of victory or defeat. Rather, it was a matter of life and death.

A day after the draw, the first game of the playoff was broadcasted.

...

(Promotion Tournament:)

(Quarterfinal:)

>Chaos Inc. vs Crimson Vale<

[Location: Ravaged Wasteland]

[A fractured battlefield with shifting terrain, crumbling structures, and intermittent sandstorms that obscure vision and disrupt long-range attacks.]

The atmosphere was electric in Anfield.

Tens of thousands of Warstar fans gathered, buzzing with anticipation as two storied but battered clubs stepped into the fire.

On one side, Chaos Inc., the wild, unpredictable challengers whose every match was a gamble; high risk, high reward.

On the other, Crimson Vale, a fallen warrior of the old guard, disciplined and ruthless, desperate to reclaim lost glory.

The match began with a detonation. Chaos Inc. lived up to their name, opening with an explosive five-man Blitz that targeted Vale's backline.

Their Elementalist, Singe, rained down flame storms like a man possessed, forcing Vale's support unit into disarray.

But Crimsom Vale wasn't to be shaken so easily. Valen, their captain and a Paladin class controller called for a phalanx formation.

Shields raised, spells linked, they absorbed the chaos, and then retaliated in brutal harmony.

Nerida, their Assassin blinked through space, isolating and eliminating Chaos Inc.'s healer in a moment of genius and graceful dance of death.

Still, Chaos Inc. didn't crumble, even without their healer.

Midway through the match, the terrain began to shift, massive stone spires bursting from the ground as a sandstorm rolled in.

Using it to their advantage, Talon, Chaos Inc.'s Brawler captain activated his skill Shadow Carnival, a field-wide stealth barrage.

In seconds, three Crimson Vale members were dropped, one after the other having lost a chunk of HP since.

The tides turned again.

With just Valen and Nerida standing, they regrouped under the eye of the storm. Valen roared, casting Unbreakable Line, a skill that shielded Nerida long enough for her to charge her Awakened level skill, Veilpiercer.

The Assassin vanished from sight, then reappeared behind Talon, blades poised. But Talon had been waiting.

"...!"

She realized too late that it was a trap.

{Counteredge: Paradox Bloom=}

A Brawler trap skill.

The instant Nerida struck, the trap snapped shut, reversing the damage and stunning her in place!

Chaos Inc. surged.

Singe's Infernal Cage dropped like a meteor, drowning the battlefield.

The battlefield became hell, and in a stunning final sequence, Crimson Vale's last two players were eliminated in sync.

---<VICTORY>---

The familiar victor screen flashed in the stadium.

Anfield was stunned..., what an upset!

Chaos Inc. won!

The crowd erupted as Talon raised his daggers to the sky, a grin on his face.

"Order's dead," Talon said still in the Arena, he had a big but exhausted grin on his face. "Long live chaos". He muttered.

And just like that, one of the favorites of the playoff stage, Crimson Vale were eliminated from the tournament early.

How the mighty have fallen.

With Day 1 out of the way, all eyes turned to Day 2's game.

Apex Reign and Iron Dominion, who would win? Would the challengers win again or would the relegated pro club show again that they had what it takes to make it back to the pro scene?

No one knew. They could just wait, and speculate.

Chapter 158: Promotion tournament [4]

[Promotion Tournament:]

[Quarterfinal fixtures:]

>Chaos Inc. vs Crimson Vale<

>Winner- Chaos Inc.<

...

>Apex Reign vs Iron Dominion<

...

>Silverfang vs Nightshroud<

...

>Echelon vs Aetherlight Syndicate<

Day 1 of the quarterfinal came to an end with a great upset.

It was the perfect game to set the expectations of the fans for the other games of the quarterfinal fixtures.

Immediately after the game, multiple highlights of Chaos Inc.'s legendary game against the old pro club went viral.

There were multiple bloodcurdling highlights from the game. Afterall, no matter how far Crimson Vale had fallen, it was still once a bonafide pro club. To beat them, every single player in Chaos Inc.'s 5-man squad gave everything.

Of the big performances though, the one of Chaos Inc.'s captain hogged the most attention. And after that unforgettable game, the captain enjoyed overnight popularity, shooting to fame.

While Warstar fans partly focused on the highlights of the incredible game, more of them decided to focus on Day 2's matchups instead.

On the next quarterfinal game of the Promotion Tournament, Apex Reign would be taking on Iron Dominion.

Like their name reflected, Iron Dominion was a team dominated by their heavy-armor class use. Unlike Crimson Vale though, though Iron Dominion was also an ex pro club, it was more than 3 seasons ago since they last played in the English Pro Alliance.

Despite this fact, they recently recruited the services of a player that was listed in the new Warstar list of rising superstars.

Iron Dominion's team comprised of 2 Paladins, 1 Blademaster, 1 Cleric, and a Ghostblade. A Ghostblade is not necessarily a heavy-armor class, but it still had better and heavier armor than paper classes like Assassin and Elementalists.

Iron Dominion's captain was one of the 2 Paladins, but in this tournament, their secret weapon was their new recruit, the Blademaster.

Apparently, the boy was already good enough to play in the pro alliance but only signed for Iron Dominion because of their history in the pro alliance.

Also because the club was based in his hometown, Leicester City.

Abel was Iron Dominion's trump card.

Excited Iron Dominion fans were already calling the teenage prodigy the next Sword Saint of the English Pro Alliance.

As for Apex Reign, the main thing going for them was their fame. Afterall, though they've never made it to the English Pro Alliance, they were well-known for regularly making deep runs in the Promotion Tournament every year.

Last year made it the 8th straight year that the Birmingham-based club made it to the semifinal of the Promotion Tournament.

Could they do it again this year?

Against Iron Dominion?

Well, this was the source of drama that every Warstar fan wanted.

Online, it was a storm.

The 2 fanbases clashed in notable social media platforms, creating more than enough banter, the exact drug that the tournament organizers needed to fan the flames of the growing popularity of the game.

The banter started in the evening, going well into the night and into the next day, fanning the flames of the blockbuster clash between the 2 teams.

And then...

Day 2.

In the blink of an eye, D-day was already here.

(Promotion Tournament:)

(Quarterfinal:)

>Apex Reign vs Iron Dominion<

[Location: Sword Domain]

[A fractured battlefield that resulted from a terrible battle between 2 Sovereigns, a Sword Saint vs the Queen of Worms. The Sword Saint won after a mighty clash, leaving vestiges of his power in the ruined battlefield, triggering a phenomenon of falling swords.]

Unlike the previous day's battle that took place in the Ravaged Wasteland, Sword Domain was a relatively new arena location that a lot of players were not used to yet.

Afterall, it was introduced with the new update to the game, the update that came with the 11th server and the introduction of SSS-Rank, SS-Rank, and S-Rank unique skills.

An hour before the clash at 10:00am England time, the official lineup of both teams was dropped on the online platform.

Like expected, both teams started with their usual V lineup of players.

Iron Dominion started with 2 Paladins, 1 Cleric, the Ghostblade, and their trump card, the Blademaster.

As for Apex Reign? Theirs was a more conventional lineup of players and classes, covering the 3 main aspects of RPG game combat, an attacker, a tank, and a capable healer.

Apex Reign comprised of a Blademaster, an Elementalist, a Combat Mage, a Cleric, and a Thief.

Yes, a Thief.

The Thief class was one of the least popular classes in Warstar but in the hands of the right player, the Thief sub class was treacherous and powerful.

The venue of the game was the gigantic Tottenham Hotspur Stadium in London, one of the biggest stadiums in all of England.

Tens of thousands of Iron Dominion fans filled the gigantic stadium, dwarfing their opposition fans as they came out in droves to support their team.

And then, the countdown started...

10... 9... 8... ... 3... 2... 1!

START!

Both teams started in opposite directions in the gigantic map, and as soon as the signal was given, all hell broke loose.

Both teams didn't hesitate.

They moved immediately after the signal to start the clash, rushing towards the middle of the arena, the already identified strategic point of the game.

The first contest in this battle was the contest of speed.

The whole of the gigantic Arena was covered by swords, swords that could damage players by just getting close to them.

But it was not the only hazard of the Sword Domain, neither was it the most devious hazard. Apart from the swords that lay scattered about, there are also unpredictable storm swords that erupt at intervals, exceedingly deadly to players.

And then, the final and most deadly hazard, the sword judgement.

Apparently, it was caused by the lingering will of the Sword Saint who once battled the Queen of Worms. And when triggered, it causes a literal storm of swords to erupt from the atmosphere, impaling any unlucky player in its region to death.

It was an insta-kill hazard!

This was the main strategic feature of this location. But there was a facet to it; there was a safe zone in the Sword Domain.

The only safe zone in the Sword Domain was located at its very center, the platform there. But it was only small enough to contain a team of 5 players.

Meaning victory in this battle was directly proportional to claiming ownership of the main platform. Any team that managed to solidify their hold over the safe zone would be the winner of this battle.

And so, the race started.

As soon as the fight started, Iron Dominion's Ghostblade cast a swift boundary, a special spell that increased the speed of all allies that stepped into its boundary before the spell zone disappears.

Iron Dominion's Blademaster stepped into the swift boundary alongside the others, and then he exploded away from the main team with speed.

His job was to secure the safe zone.

Unlike Iron Dominion that was comfortable with sending only 1 player along, Apex Reign did not dare employ the same bold strategy.

Apex Reign did not have the daring boldness of their opponents, but their captain was smart. And so, after a tactical meeting yesterday with his teammates, they made a gamble based on his guess.

He entered Iron Dominion's head, predicting their first move.

He predicted that they would send their trump card to secure the safe zone as soon as the location for the battle was decided.

This was why he sent his 2 fastest players, his Blademaster and Combat Mage to intercept Iron Dominion's Blademaster.

He knew that their only chance of victory relied on this gamble.

If they were able to double-team and kill the Blademaster before his allies arrived, Apex Reign had a big chance of winning.

But sometimes, plans fail to account for everything in a battlefield.

This time, what they failed to account for was the full depth of Iron Dominion Blademaster's might.

The Blademaster was dubbed the new Sword Saint for a reason.

Despite watching old videos and highlight reels, analyzing his playstyle, nothing prepared Apex Reign's Blademaster and Combat Mage for the storm that they faced against the teenage wonder.

Like a hurricane, he erupted as soon as he arrived at the safe zone, meeting the 2 players that the opposing team sent.

And just as he erupted, like an avalanche, he swept them aside.

A 2v1!

"...!"

The stadium went wild, roaring like mad dogs.

The teenage wonder announced himself to the rest of the Warstar eSports scene in mad fashion, and from there on, Iron Dominion's advantage accumulated.

They were better than their opponents individually, and not just that, together, when the sword will be triggered, they managed to push the surviving 2 players of Apex Reign out of the safe zone, dooming them.

The sword will did the rest, the storm of swords annihilating the 2 players.

---<VICTORY>---

It flashed on the screen.

Tottenham Hotspur Stadium was stunned... what a victory!

Apex Reign lost simply because they failed to account for the might of a single opposition player.

Chapter 159: Promotion tournament [5]

(Promotion Tournament:)

(Quarterfinal:)

>Silverfang vs Nightshroud<

[Location: LO49]

[LO49- Lunar Observatory Forty Nine. An ancient lunar observatory close to the ocean in Antarctica that succumbed to a Nightmare apocalypse, overrun by Nightmare Creatures.]

[NOTE: Beware! There are rumors of an impossibly powerful Nightmare Creature that beguiles its prey into a mind hex, before devouring them!]

Day 2 of the Promotion Tournament ended in spectacular fashion, Iron Dominion completely blowing Apex Reign out of the way with their tyrannical might, mostly due to the MVP display of their Blademaster prodigy.

After all the banter leading up to the game, trust Iron Dominion fans, they trolled Apex Reign fans all day after the end of the game.

With that out of the way, like usual, all attention went to Day 3 and the exciting matchup that was assigned to it, a clash between the underdogs, Silverfang and another ex pro club, Nightshroud.

Like Iron Dominion, it had been a long time since Nightshroud played in the English pro alliance, precisely 5 years.

In all this time, the once mid-tier Pro Alliance club failed to retain the services of their best players as they ended up being poached by other pro clubs.

Nightshroud lost all its star players, but like the big pro clubs in England, Nightshroud employed a strategy that now saved the club from dying completely.

Like the big clubs in the name of Scarlet Rose, Phoenix Rising, and Cyber Squad, Nightshroud had a Warstar academy.

Just like famous football clubs have football academies where they train talented players from a young age in the football doctrine of their club, this strategy started being employed by Warstar pro clubs a few years ago.

Nightshroud was one of the first pro clubs to adopt the strategy, and now, their academy kept them afloat.

All 5 players of team Nightshroud that were registered in the tournament came from their academy.

They may not be bonafide pro players yet, relatively obscure, but they've spent at least a year learning under Nightshroud's Warstar coach, polishing their skills and gaining experience to become pro players.

Now, they were put to the test against Silverfang.

And just like in Day 2's clash, the arena of the clash between Silverfang and Nightshroud was a special one.

Afterall, it was another new arena that came with the game update.

LO49 had a simple design divided into 3 main locations; the road leading to the ruin of the once heavily fortified Lunar Observatory, the ruin of the Lunar Observatory itself, and then its edges where a part of the ocean was visible.

The ocean was not a big feature of the arena, players rarely went to fight underwater, but well, things came from the ocean to meet the players.

Like the arena description said, strange creatures called Nightmare Creatures were responsible for razing the lunar observatory to the ground.

In most situations, Nightmare Creatures randomly crawl out of the Ocean, flooding the lunar observatory to attack players.

And then there was the most devious of the Nightmare Creatures, the Beguiling Demon Queen.

The powerful boss was obviously modeled after the Psychic class, as all of her powers entailed dealing high mental damage through psychic attacks, including a strange mind hex.

Once players are caught in the mind hex, there are only 2 ways to survive.

You survive either by having enough mental resistance to break the hex, or to be intercepted by teammates before you enter the ocean to be devoured by the terrifying Beguiling Demon Queen.

Of course, even after being intercepted by teammates, unless the hex is broken, the passive psychic attack attributed to the hex can kill an Avatar.

All the Beguiling Demon Queen needed was time.

LO49 was an even more unique arena location than the Sword Domain.

And finally, D-day was here.

Day 3...

Like expected, neither team tweaked their lineup for the epic clash.

Silverfang played with their already familiar lineup of 2 Combat Mages, a Summoner, an Elemental, and a Cleric. It was a relatively balanced formation covering offensive DPS, adequate battlefield control, and a healer.

Their only shortcoming was perhaps the lack of a defensive minded player, a tank, but Silverfang had been successful with this lineup so far.

As for Nightshroud, embodying the focus of the club's academy, Nightshroud's lineup comprised of 2 Assassins, a Thief, a Warlock, and a Paladin.

Their Paladin was just like Gabriel's Dain Ironvalor. Though much weaker, the Paladin Avatar could substitute as a healer.

Nightshroud's lineup was one of the most peculiar in all of Warstar history.

It was extremely rare to witness a lineup of players comprising of almost only dirty and rogue classes, all they needed was a Brawler instead of a Paladin to complete a street gang lineup.

But this was Nightshroud's ideology, theirs was a club that believed in staying in the dark, staying elusive, scouting and then delivering one debilitating attack to disable their enemies.

All night, Silverfang practiced, targeting to neutralize their opponent's usual strategy and lineup of players.

But in the end, the outcome was not set in stone.

Both sides had their advantages.

Silverfang battled hard, their Cleric constantly casting Holy Light that bathed the battlefield in light, limiting places where their opponents could hide.

But then, LO49's monster struck.

The terrifying Nightmare Creature became the catalyst of change. Compared to classes like Thieves and Assassins, classes like Combat Mages had far more mental defenses against the hex of the terrifying creature.

At the same time as majority of players in both teams succumbed to the hex, Silverfang went all out, taking the risk of attacking Nightshroud's players.

They saw the Thief, the Warlock, and the Paladin especially who did a good job at protecting his teammates as he also evaded the mind hex of the creature.

Despite this, Nightshroud was comfortably losing.

No Silverfang player succumbed to the mind hex immediately, and so they swarmed their opponents.

Beasts summoned by the Summoner attacked, the Elementalist drowning them in terrible elemental attacks, while the Cleric stood at the ready in the dark.

It was a terrible and intense battle filled with thrill and passion.

But, everyone, including the spectating fans forgot one thing...

Nightshroud's 2 Assassins were nowhere to be seen on the main battlefield.

Where were they?

By the time they realized, it was already too late...

Chapter 160: Promotion tournament [6]

One moment, Silverfang went all-out, attacking Nightshroud's players with impunity who were mostly defenseless subjected to the mind hex of the terrible Nightmare Creature.

Protecting their backs was their Cleric. And to protect their back, she had to be behind them... a mistake.

BZZZ!

It happened suddenly.

Swift, unseen.

{Shadow Clone Technique=}

The Assassin class's special displacement technique.

Two Assassins descended on a lone and unprotected Cleric.

Two ultra-high damage classes against a healer class, well, it was safe to say that Silverfang was screwed.

Putting too much faith in utilizing the arena's environment in their favor, which in this case was the terrible Nightmare Creature of LO49, too overzealous in attack, Silverfang failed to account for their unprotected Cleric.

In high level pro battles, it was a no brainer to always keep your Cleric in sight, protecting her. Silverfang, the underdogs failed this simple task today.

And it spelled their doom.

As soon as the two Assassins appeared from the shadows, Silverfang's captain, one of the Combat Mages reacted immediately, already turning around to go intercept but the Assassins were too swift, too disciplined, and too ruthless.

{Back Stab=}

{Cutthroat=}

{Assassination=}

All 3 were devious and feared Assassin skills, and cleverly chained together in a silky-smooth combo move, the Cleric was doomed.

The first Assassin appeared from the shadows, using backstab on the Cleric, taking more than 10% HP with one attack.

Backstabs have an 80% chance of being a critical hit.

{CRITICAL HIT!}

From 12%, the attack took 18% HP in one go!

The force of the Assassin's attack made the Cleric stumble forward, and before she could react, the other Assassin already arrived ahead of her, smoothly climbing her body, placing his legs around her neck, then...

Whoosh!

A ghostly whistling sound reverberated as a dagger cut across, making blood blossom from the neck of the Cleric.

Another CRITICAL HIT!

And Cutthroat took even more damage than Back Stab. The Cleric lost 21% HP with that one attack, adding to the previous 18% HP to make a combined total of 39% HP lost in less than a second.

She never had the chance to recover though.

After the initial Back Stab skill, while the second assassin attacked with Cutthroat, the first assassin stayed back, charging the Awakened level version of the Assassin skill.

At the Awakened level, the Assassination skill had the caveat of giving an Assassin an option to sacrifice his HP for more damage to the enemy.

To increase its lethality to the maximum, the Assassin sacrificed 20% of his HP. And the result?

Well, it was nothing short of devastating.

BAM!

The dagger sank into the soft flesh of the Cleric.

The Cleric shuddered, and then... like a drain her HP emptied.

More than 60% HP was drained in one attack!

And just like that, Silverfang's cornerstone, their Cleric was gone.

Just as Silverfang's captain arrived, the Combat Mage, the Assassins swiftly escaped back into the shadows without a shred of shame.

And so, Nightshroud's true strategy finally started.

{Witch Powder=}

Nightshroud's Warlock used the high-level skill, Witch Powder to temporarily remove the mind hex of the terrible Nightmare Creature from her teammates, and then they started implementing the true battle plan.

Everyone of them was adept at hiding their steps, staying elusive, and striking from the dark at decisive moments.

After losing their Cleric, the remaining Silverfang players quickly regrouped, huddling together, no longer willing to go on the attack.

But Nightshroud's players were patient, they were fine with the status quo.

Like Pro Alliance games, the Promotion Tournament games had a time limit. If the time limit was exceeded as it is, having killed one of the enemy players and with all their players intact, Nightshroud would win by default.

For minutes, Silverfang waited, huddled together, too wary to go on the offensive again but when they eventually realized the shameless strategy of their opponents, their faces grew ugly.

"These bastards...!" Silverfang captain's face contorted in a grimace.

In the end, a minute to the end of the game, they had no choice but to go on the offensive. And that was exactly what Nightshroud had been waiting for.

Having bid their time patiently since, planting and growing seeds of hesitation, frustration, and anger, Silverfang's attack was full of desperation and fury, lacking their usual coordination and teamwork.

Nightshroud struck at this detail with ruthless efficiency.

{Dark Shururu=}

The Warlock cast a Dark Shururu, unleashing a black witch's cloth that grabbed one of the Silverfang players, isolating him... the Summoner.

With most of his summons having met their cooldown and disappearing since, the frustrated Summoner was a sitting duck.

With 2 Assassins, a Warlock, and a devious Thief descending on him while the Paladin went to stall his teammates, the Summoner stood no chance.

He died in less than a minute.

With Nightshroud's Paladin having bought enough time for them, skillfully, the Paladin tried to retreat into the shadows again.

This time though, the angered Silverfang players were persistent.

They chased after him, determined to at least take him down with them and in that rapid chase, they failed to notice when their Elementalist suddenly fell behind. Nightshroud already stole the poor guy.

Just like the poor Summoner, they ganged up on him and peppered him.

Poor guy died feeling extremely grievant.

By the time Silverfang's captain realized what was happening, it was already too late, it was now only him and the other Combat Mage remaining.

And still, the infuriating Nightshroud refused to face them in battle despite the numbers superiority and advantage.

Afterall, they were called Combat Mages for a reason.

Combat Mages were the singular most deadly class in PvP combat alongside the Blademaster class, and so they decided to stay in the shadows.

'What the hell?!'

'Even with just 2 of us remaining...???!'

Silverfang's captain almost coughed blood.

In the end, Nightshroud were perfectly ok with waiting the time out. And that was what they did, shamelessly.

---<VICTORY>---

Seeing that screen as his own screen turned grey, Silverfang captain's face turned purple behind his monitor.

"Bastards!" He cursed.

Well, he ended up truly coughing blood.