

World 1481

Chapter 1481: Defending the Choke Points

Trinity Dawn similarly had three new spells from her special class, Royal Elemental Master. Her level 50 & level 60 spells were the same as Master who had the Elemental Master special class, which were the Elemental Turbulence and the Tri-elemental Storm.

Her level 70 spell was different. While Master got Sea of the Elementals for his level 70 spell, she received Elemental Rain. Elemental Rain conjured a rain that dropped three different elemental energies in turns. The first was fire rain. It was followed by ice rain and ended with lightning rain. Each rain lasted one minute, so the entire spell's duration was three minutes.

In terms of damage, the Sea of Elemental hit harder but it was an instant spell. Elemental Rain dealt smaller damage but if the enemies stayed within the rain area for the entire spell, the combined damage surpassed the Sea of Elemental.

In a defensive situation, the Elemental Rain was more advantageous because the enemies had to stay within the spell's AOE unless they wanted to retreat and halt their advance.

Fierce Flame was level 72. She also received a new skill when her Royal Arcane Archer hit level 70. Her new skill was Chaotic Arcane Shot.

During the activation of this skill, she entered an immobile stance. Her shooting speed was increased by 500%. Each arrow dealt an additional 100% damage from a random element. Each shot had a chance to inflict different status effects based on the elements. This skill ended if her stance was disrupted. If not, she would be in this rapid shot state for three minutes.

Jeanny supported them using her Beacon of Hope. Substantially increasing everyone's stats and healing them, giving them a higher survival chance against the enemy's relentless push.

The defenders took turns in defending the choke points. The ones who were low on HP retreated and were replaced by the reserves. This allowed them to continue this protracted battle.

The two other divisions of Jeanny's guild were led by Grace and Domon.

Grace was accompanied by Paytowin, The Man, and Bowler. On Domon's side, he was supported by Jet, Freddie, and his other old disciples.

They also summoned their companions, which comprised mostly of the ex-members of the Council of Charites. Out of all the chokepoints, the three defended by the Everlasting Heavenly Legends were the most stable and unbreakable.

Even though the defense on the other choke points didn't seem as easy as the one held by Everlasting Heavenly Legends, they were also holding. This went on for hours. The native defenders were high on morale and the players had high spirits.

They felt like they could defend these choke points for as long as they were needed.

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On the other side of the choke points, Master was waiting in the large cave hall near the main gate. His army cramped here while they waited for their turns to advance. Other gates had been broken and his army entered from those other entry points, but they similarly encountered barricades that prevented them from proceeding deeper into the capital.

"They were pretty smart to utilize the nature of this place," Master said.

"It can't be helped. This place is a natural fortress," Linda said. "If only we had some kind of a nuke to just bring the whole mountain down on this capital, we don't need to go through this hassle."

"Hmph. Even if there is such a weapon, this world doesn't work that way. This mountain's main structure won't crumble that easily. How is Spring Crown doing? He certainly takes his time."

Spring Crown's voice was heard then. "Come on, man. This place is crawling with troops. Do you think it's easy moving around?"

"Are you done with your survey?" Master asked.

"I still have a couple more tunnels in this section that I have to go and check," Spring Crown answered. "If I am to be thorough, I have to also go to the section where Boron's force was at."

"Out of the ones you have checked, which one has the weakest defenders?"

"I can see that you are out of patience. Are you sure you don't want me to finish checking the other tunnels?" Spring Crown asked.

"Take me to the weakest barricade from the ones you have checked," Master replied. "Long, Ronald, you come with me!"

"Aye, aye. This way, boss," Spring Crown said.

Long and Ronald followed without a word.

Linda stayed behind to continue organizing the troops. The war table had been moved into this cave hall so she could use this hall as their field base. She arranged for the troops to prepare near the tunnel where Master and Spring Crown were heading.

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At one of the tunnels connecting into the slum district, White Scarf and Offline Beast's members were holding the line with Palgrost native soldiers. The members of a few Palgrost's local guilds were with them but they were not familiar with those guilds. They tried to communicate so they could all work better together but those guilds preferred to do as they wished.

Jeanny had been appointed as the one in charge of the player guilds after the Licth Squad was demoted due to their fiasco in Num Maldur Pass.

These guilds agreed to follow Jeanny's arrangement about where they fought. But on how they fought, they didn't accept being commanded. These guilds' members fought haphazardly. They tried to compete in killing the enemies to get more exp and war contribution points. They ended up suffering more casualties than they had to.

White Scarfs and Nomodem could only do their best to do their parts. They acted more as a support to the native soldiers rather than competing for kills.

Suddenly, they heard a warning shout from the native soldier on the front line. "Incoming...!!!"

Silverwing didn't want to take chances. He called his members to use their defensive skills. Honeycomb, who was now a level 70 Sentinel, came in front of Silverwing and used Protection Field, just as a torrent of elemental flood washed over them. This flood contained fire, ice, and lightning energy.

Chapter 1482: Defenses Crumbling

Silverwing and his guildmates received damage and were pushed back by the force of the elemental flood, but Silverwing could see that the flood had been greatly weakened due to going through several protection skills at the front line. He saw many of the native soldiers at the front line had fallen to the ground.

Before those natives could get their bearings, another assault came. This time, it was a cacophony of storms. A fierce storm that contained fire, Ice, and lightning swept through the tunnel.

The storms didn't hit as far back as the flood just now. Silverwing and the others were safe, but he could see the front line was in big trouble.

"Brace yourself!" He bellowed. "Forward!! The enemy is making a big push! We have to stop them!"

Nomodern followed Silverwing's lead. He called his members to push forward.

The other guilds just stayed back and watched. They lost many members due to the elemental flood and storms just now. Silverwing was frustrated at them. When the situation was easy, they acted so passionately. Now when trouble came, these people lost their nerves.

Silverwing heard another commotion. The front line had just been hit by another wave of searing flames. A gigantic earth golem followed. It smashed into the barricade as if they were blocks of Legos. The air around the golem shimmered and twenty sharp wind blades lashed out and cut Palgrost soldiers who were still trying to get their bearings.

"Shit!" Silverwing cursed. He never saw it directly but he had heard reports. He hurriedly sent a message to Jeanny, "Send reinforcements! Master is at this spot. We are having trouble maintaining our defense!!!"

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After receiving Silverwing's reinforcement request, Jeanny sent a message to Viral Cora, who was stationed at the palace courtyard. The courtyard had been turned into a temporary command station. This was the place where they coordinated with the native army. Thelgrun was also there.

Jeanny asked Viral to send one of the admirals to Silverwing's side to reinforce him. Palgrost's admirals were equivalent to Themisphere's Lord Marshalls. Like Themisphere, Palgrost had three such admirals.

Unfortunately, one of the three admirals followed Boron. Hence, they only had two on their sides.

After hearing Jeanny's request, Viral told her that both admirals had already been dispatched. Liguridutum's high marshall, Oberon, was attacking one of the choke points, so an admiral was sent there. The second admiral was also sent to another choke point when a report of the third admiral who supported Boron was sighted. Right now, they could only send normal soldiers.

The appearance of Liguritudum's high marshall and Palgrost's third admiral was not a coincidence. Linda purposefully timed their attacks to draw the opponent's firepower before Master carried out his push. She also had those attacks at locations far away from where Master was, so the enemies couldn't provide help.

Jeanny told Viral to ask Thelgrun to send as many reinforcements as they could to Silverwing. She herself was heading there. The spot she was defending wasn't in danger. She could leave them to Fierce Flame and the others.

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Silverwing looked with concern as the front line getting pushed one step at a time. Many of the native soldiers had fallen. It had happened so fast that most didn't have enough time to pull back. Reserves continued to rush in to replace the fallen soldiers but they continued to lose their footholds.

Several Cheval de Frises and Scorpions, which were war tools, were originally installed at this choke point, but they had also been destroyed as the front line was pushed back. If this continued and the invaders pushed them out of the tunnel, then the choke points' advantage would be gone.

Silverwing knew that could not be allowed to happen. His members and Offline Beasts' members defended the place valiantly. They tried their best to resist the push.

The other guilds had mostly backed off. Some of them gathered their courage and went to fight the enemies, but they were quickly killed. Seeing their comrade's demise, their small flames of courage were quickly snuffed and they scurried away to safety.

Silverwing saw Master in the flesh now. After receiving attacks from almost everyone, Master's earth titan was finally destroyed. However, their vigorous effort only served to take off Master's titan suit. Master himself was completely fine. By the time they successfully achieved that, their formation was already a mess. The Liguritudum soldiers rushed in and pressed on the openings Master had created.

Silverwing couldn't deny the pressure of facing Master was suffocating. Even without the titan suit, Master was still more than formidable. Each of his spells packed a punch. Even his normal attacks dealt lots of damage. Players were mostly powerless against him.

What's worse was Master had lots of AOE spells and he never ran out of minions. The native soldiers he brought were also all elites. They were Liguritudum's special units, the Celestial Knights, Ghost mages, Emphyrean Priests, and worst of all, the Dread Knights.

These special units were led by three expertly powerful players, Long, Spring Crown, and Ronald.

Spring Crown fought with uncanny synchronization with the native soldiers. He fully understood their strengths and weaknesses and adjusted his fighting style accordingly to achieve the most effective result. He also easily spotted the enemy's weak points and led the soldiers to take advantage of them. Under his command, the defender's already chaotic formation crumbled even more quickly.

Long was the opposite. He didn't care about his allies. He just rushed forward by himself into the midst of the enemy and wreaked havoc. His speed and perfect body control made him almost untouchable by the enemies. No one was able to land a hit on him while his fists slew one opponent after another.

Ronald similarly didn't care about coordination. He simply shot at any enemies he saw.

The situation was truly not good. Silverwing called for his members who still had the Amulets of Rebirth to wear them, but he told them to not retreat. They had to defend this place no matter what.

He then saw on the other side, that Nomodem was killed by Long. Nomodem tried surrounding Long with his comrades, but they ended up getting cut in half by a flaming saber conjured by Long's hands.

Silverwing had no time to pity his comrade's demise because he found Master to have suddenly appeared above him. Master's body was shrouded with dark energy, a visual cue of Warlock's Demonic Possession.

Master's Demonic Possession was an evolved version, Superior Demonic Possession. With the buff, Master cast another spell, Hail of Ice Calamity. Ice swords magically appeared from the tunnel's ceiling and rained on defenders.

Silverwing threw his flying knives at Master. The flying knives stopped just before hitting Master.

Master had used Telekinesis to stop the knives. He flicked his staff. The knives turned around and shot back. Their speed was twice their original speed. Silverwing was unable to dodge. The knives struck his vital points and caused critical damage.

He fell to the ground as the invaders broke through the last line of defense.

Chapter 1483: Layers of Defense

With one choke point breached, the Liguritutum army poured forth and went to nearby choke points, striking the defenders from the rear. The ones who were guarding those choke points were shocked to find the enemies attacking from behind. Pinned from two sides, they were quickly routed, allowing those choke points to be breached as well.

Master was leading the charge as he destroyed one choke point after another. His spells continued to reap victims.

As he cast spells in a frenzy, he suddenly sensed strong mana from his flank. He canceled his casting and turned to where he sensed the attack was coming from. His staff formed a magic shield with the shape of a large tower shield.

From the direction he faced, he saw a large energy drill that skewered through his soldiers. This energy drill dealt large damage and it continued onward without slowing down despite the many soldiers in its way.

"Heavenly Spear Drill?" Master identified the skill.

The drill crashed into his magic shield. Master's magic shield was especially sturdy due to his abnormally high intelligence stat. Additionally, he also used mana manipulation to strengthen it. The drill was unable to destroy the magic shield.

Master also used Knight's Enhanced Block which stopped any skill or spell that could pierce through targets. The Heavenly Spear Drill was unable to pass through Master and was forcefully stopped. The skill's user came into view then.

"You again?" Master uttered when he saw Jeanny.

The Heavenly Spear Drill was Brave Lancer's level 70 skill. Jeanny was currently level 72. She didn't let the surprise of having her skill forcefully stopped to halt her movements. Her spear stabbed with inhuman speed.

Master felt a rapid impact on his magic shield six times. At the sixth impact, his magic shield was shattered and he was thrown back by a powerful force. He also suffered some damage.

He was shocked that Jeanny was able to pull the feat. He was very confident of his magic shield due to his high intelligence and mana manipulation.

What Jeanny used after the Heavenly Spear Drill was her martial art, Seven Spears Assaulting Heaven. If it was only either the skill or the martial art, they wouldn't have been able to break Master's magic shield. But the skill had weakened the magic shield with the first impact, the spear art came soon after without a pause. The combo multiplier added to the damage and this enabled Jeanny to destroy Master's magic shield.

Master planted his feet and forced his skidding to stop. When he looked at Jeanny, the woman had retreated.

Jeanny retreated while shouting orders for her allies to retreat. Once she saw the enemy break through a choke point, she sent messages to the other choke points. They were all doing tactical retreats at the moment.

Balgadur was a massive capital. The number of interconnecting cave halls that formed the capital was in the hundreds. John didn't just prepare one layer of choke points in case the enemy broke into the capital. He prepared several layers of them. If the first layer of choke point defense was breached, then the defenders should retreat to the second layer in which defenders and war tool barricades had been prepared beforehand.

Jeanny attacked Master because Master's offensive power was too fierce. The defenders couldn't retreat properly. Now that Master's offense rhythm was broken and added with Jeanny's instructions, the defenders gathered themselves and did a proper retreat.

"Want me to take care of her?" Spring Crown came to Master's side.

"... Suit yourself, but do not kill her," Master answered.

"Huh? Why?" Spring Crown asked.

Master didn't bother to explain. He resumed leading his soldiers to target the nearby choke points, allowing more of his force to enter.

After receiving Jeanny's instruction, everyone was on the move to the second layer of choke point positions. However, a good portion of the defenders were trapped in the area where Master had broken through the first. Jeanny led them to slowly retreat while resisting the enemy, but casualties kept on mounting.

It was a good thing Master prioritized opening up the other choke points over dealing with the retreating Palgrost soldiers, but the pressure was still heavy. If they were to save a majority of the force here, they would have to sacrifice some people to block the enemy while the rest made a run.

Jeanny was too kind to give that order.

When she was in that dilemma, a giant energy drill pierced through the defenders and came at her.

"What?! How...?" She was momentarily stunned by the scene. That incoming drill was the Heavenly Spear Drill. The skill she had used not long ago to stop Master.

She was late to react due to the surprise. Thankfully, Giant Steve had come to assist her. He came in front of Jeanny and activated Fortress. This defensive skill similarly stopped the Heavenly Spear Drill's advance as Knight's Enhanced Block. Spring Crown was seen before Giant Steve's tower shield.

Spring Crown was still smiling even when his skill was blocked. He followed up using Weapon Storm and Weapons Festival back-to-back. Giant Steve and those around were assailed by the multiple melee weapons flying around.

Jeanny had recovered from his shock. She swung and stabbed her spears to deflect Spring Crown's weapons.

"How can you use Heavenly Spear Drill?" Jeanny asked.

"Hehe," Spring Crown answered with a chuckle.

They continued to retreat as Jeanny and Giant Steve defended against Spring Crown. Spring Crown continued to change his weapons as he fought, fully utilizing his Weapon Ruler's weapon-switching bonus.

Because Jeanny and Giant Steve had to continue to back off, this put them in a passive position. Spring Crown expertly exploited the situation and chipped their HP bit by bit. He even killed some of the players who were with them on occasion.

Spring Crown changed his weapon again. This time he was using dual one-handed swords. A pair of additional arms sprouted from his back. These extra arms held one-handed swords.

"That... That is Blade Dancer's Asura!" Jeanny exclaimed.

Chapter 1484: Sacrifice Oneself for Atonement

"How can you use Blade Dancer's skill?!" Jeanny asked.

A scary thought crossed through Jeanny's mind for a moment. Could Spring Crown also acquire a second class? But she quickly dismissed it. Her spear had clashed with Spring Crown's weapons. Neither his

strength nor speed was of someone who possessed two classes. A bit above average players perhaps, but not drastic. He only had the attributes of one class.

Spring Crown just gave her his typical smile without explaining. This silent mock was more effective as it caused Jeanny to become vexed.

Jeanny forced herself to keep calm. They were in an unadvantageous situation. If she lost her calm, the people she led would do so as well.

What Spring Crown used was his special class' level 70 skill. At this level, Weapon Ruler gained the Copy Weapon Skill. This skill could copy any skill that used a weapon but Spring Crown had to see the skill being performed first. Once he saw someone executing the skill, he could also perform the skill by equipping the required weapon.

The copied skill lasted for as long as the cooldown of the Copy Weapon Skill but not longer than the original skill's duration. At its first level, the Copy Weapon Skill's cooldown was ten minutes. Spring Crown had max-leveled this skill. This brought its cooldown to only five minutes. This meant he could copy another skill only five minutes after the first copied skill was used.

He could use the Heavenly Spear Drill after watching Jeanny use it on Master earlier. As for the Asura, he watched one nearby player use it. The copied skill followed the skill's original cooldown, though. For example, the Asura's cooldown was one hour. If after his Copy Weapon Skill's five-minute cooldown ended, he saw another person performing Asura, he wouldn't be able to use that skill again even if he copied it.

This skill shone when the user fought against multiple enemies because this gave him a variety of skills to copy every five minutes, especially if the skills he copied were high-level skills with long cooldowns. He could execute different high-level skills every five minutes, provided his copy skill was not on cooldown when he saw them being performed.

With this copy skill and his original skills, Spring Crown gave Jeanny and the others a hard time in retreat. Jeanny understood if she didn't make the hard decision soon, the enemy's main army might come and trap them. At that time, none of them would be able to escape. She had to make a sacrifice!

When she was about to offer herself and ask her guildmates to sacrifice themselves to cover the majority of the army, a large group came charging at the army Spring Crown led. Jeanny looked over and found that the group was the guild players from the Licth Squad.

One of its members, HeroV, was a level 71 Paladin. He rushed in Jeanny's direction, throwing Holy Hammers as he approached, forcing Spring Crown to back off. He then cast Soothing Light at Giant Steve, healing his lost HP. Without a word, he engaged Spring Crown.

When Jeanny was about to give help, a voice stopped her.

"Lead the others to retreat to the second layer!"

Jeanny turned and saw the Licth Squad's leader, Viking, who was a level 71 Berserker.

"We retreat together!" Jeanny said.

"No! We will hold them here. You lead the others away!"

"But... You will be surrounded," Jeanny said.

"Yes, but you will all survive," Viking replied. "Go!!"

He stopped arguing and charged ahead to engage the enemy with HeroV. Kenny Boy and Dragonmasta, who were Technocraft and Dragoon respectively, followed closely behind him and provided backup.

When Jeanny was still unsure, Genesis who stayed behind since he was a Reaver, said to her, "Go. This is our atonement for losing the Num Maldur Pass. Our greed got the better of us. It shouldn't have happened. We are already grateful President Thelgrun still trusts us enough to not kick us out. This is our chance to erase our shame. Please let us do this."

Jeanny didn't waste time. She knew hesitation could be fatal during a war. She said to Genesis, "President Thelgrun trusts your guild because you are honorable people. Everyone makes a mistake once in a while. Your mistake might be severe but I think it is still redeemable. Thank you. We will leave this place to you."

Genesis nodded without looking back. He was busy using his soul orb to heal his guild mates.

Jeanny called for everyone to make a quick dash while the Licth Squad held the ground. Everyone stopped fighting. They turned and ran. Those who had steeds summoned them for faster movement speed. Jeanny looked at the Licth Squad who was barely holding the ground before she climbed onto her hippogriff and flew away.

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All the defenders from the first layer's choke points were fleeing toward the second layer. Some were fortunate enough that they retreated without the enemy's interference. Some were not as lucky. Enemy soldiers harassed them as they retreated.

The group that True Death Associates were with was one of the unlucky ones. Enemy soldiers came chasing them as they were retreating.

Black Death was more decisive than Jeanny. She didn't hesitate to order a portion of her members to hold the enemy down while the majority retreated.

However, one small enemy group came at them from their flanks.

Red Death saw the incoming enemy group. She rushed forward and used her Ice God Barrage. The twenty large ice balls hit the group. The ones who didn't die from the divine skill were frozen.

One enemy skillfully dodged the ice balls. He continued onward even when only he alone was left. Stonecleave went forward to engage this lone enemy.

"Stonecleave, don't face him alone!" Red Death shouted.

Her warning came too late. Stonecleave and this lone enemy had come into the melee range. Stonecleave used Weapons Festival and swung all nine melee weapons at this enemy, who turned out to be Long.

Long used Eighteen Subduing Dragon Palms. All the weapons were swept away by the powerful force of the martial art. The force also caused Stonecleave to stagger. He was unable to adopt a stance.

Long's palm turned into a fist then. Nine suns gathered into his fist as he punched that fist straight into Stonecleave's chest. Stonecleave flew back with chained explosions detonating from within his body.

On the fifth explosion, his HP reached zero and his body exploded into a gory mess. The scene caused everyone to take a step back.

The explosive energy from the Nine Yang Exploding Fist didn't stop even after it killed Stonecleave. The remaining four explosions continued onward, heading toward Red Death who happened to run toward it because she tried to help Stonecleave.

She stabbed her daggers to the front and used her weapon's ability, Demon's Tooth. The image of a demon's head appeared as it bit the explosive energy from the Nine Yang Exploding Fist.

The clash between the weapon skill and the ancient art produced a shockwave that threw Red Death back.

Chapter 1485: Driving Long Away

"Haha! Martial sister, it has been some time since we spar," Long laughed. He sent Red Death a Ki Bullet when she was still staggered.

Red Death disappeared before the Ki Bullet hit. She appeared right behind Long using Phase Kill. The skill gave her an increased speed that would have killed any opponent before they could react, but Long wasn't just any opponent.

Additionally, Long had seen her skill in action and had expected it. He spun back with one leg accurately kicking Red Death's hand that was in the middle of stabbing. His other leg went for her head.

She dodged the lightning-fast kick by a hairbreadth. She then jumped back as Long's fist which was infused with dark energy came punching from above. The fist slammed into the ground and caused cracks.

Mid-jump, Red Death sensed an incoming attack from below her. She was unable to dodge. She crossed her two daggers to defend herself just as a force erupted from the ground and hit her.

After hitting Red Death with Ki Geyser, Long spun while his body enlarged due to Muscle Tendon Transformation. With pinpoint accuracy, his fist struck Blue Death's arm which was swinging a cleaver from behind him. Additional punches landed on Blue Death's body when Long used Infinite Lightning Punches.

Blue Death's body shattered. It was not his real body. It was his spectral projection. His real body was a distance away, preparing a spectral discharge that shot ranged attacks at Long. Blue Death didn't imagine his spectral body to be defeated so fast. He would have died if he had engaged Long directly.

Long's body swayed as he dodged the shots from Spectral Discharge and advanced at the same time. Blue Death couldn't help but feel intimidated. He subconsciously took several steps back. He didn't dare to let Long come into his melee range.

Scarface cast Arcane Turbulence, which erupted on the ground between Blue Death and Long. The spell stopped Long's advance. Long sensed another attack coming. He stopped his Imaginary Bamboo Sways, transformed into a dragon form, and flew away just as a pitch-black sphere materialized. This sphere damaged everything it touched.

"You miss me, Auntie Clara," Long said from the air.

The black sphere was a spell cast by Black Death. It was the level 60 spell from her Mad Demonologist, Hell Abyss.

"Can you give me face and leave?" Black Death said.

"Hehe. Not this time, I'm afraid." Long punched the air and an image of a giant fist headed to Black Death. This was Lord's Fist, a skill from Long's special class, Fist Lord.

Blue Death used Displace. He created a portal in front of Black Death. The giant fist was sucked into this portal and was discharged by a second portal, which he aimed at Long.

Long easily dodged this returned fist, but Red Death suddenly appeared behind him in the air using Phase Strike. He sensed this ambush and moved away, but her next attack was very fast. She used her Mad Slayer level 70 skill, Diabolic Stab. The skill conjured a large black knife that stabbed forward. The black knife had a range of three meters. This skill dealt high chaos damage and had the chance to wound the opponent.

Long didn't expect such a reach from Red Death. He was still able to dodge from getting impaled, but the knife hit one of his wings. That wing was cut clean off. Losing one wing, he lost his ability to fly.

"Everyone, fire!!" Black Death ordered once Long landed on the ground.

All the long-ranged players fired their attacks. Red Death ran away to avoid getting friendly fire.

Facing these many attacks, his Imaginary Bamboo Sways wouldn't be able to dodge them all. Instead of dodging them, Long punched his fist forward. As he did, numerous small comets shot out from his fist. These comets hit all directions. All the incoming attacks were struck by these comets.

This comet attack was his Fist Lord's level 60 skill, Infinite Comet Fists.

Red Death rushed back to Long with the other melee players when Long was blocking all these ranged attacks. They now surrounded him and were about to strike together. A voice stopped them.

"Don't go near him!!"

Red Death and the others didn't stop because they listened to the warning. They stopped because they felt their bodies were paralyzed by the voice. The voice that stopped them was infused with very strong mana manipulation.

Long was holding his two palms together. It was blazing with raging flames. He was about to execute his Nine Yang Scorching Blade to take out the melee players surrounding him, but the voice ruined his plan. He then saw the one who had uttered the shout jump toward him.

It was Domon, his glaive was glowing. He slashed forward, which conjured an explosion of energy in the shape of a giant tiger's head. This tiger's head opened its mouth and was about to swallow Long whole.

Long swung his blazing hand. The image of a giant flaming blade collided with the tiger's head empowered by strong mana manipulation. The impact created a shockwave that not only threw Domon and him away but also the nearby melee players.

Domon's skill just now was Tiger Ki Strike. It was his special class, Tiger Arms Guardian's level 70 skill.

"Master Domon...", Long greeted. He saw Jet and Freddie who he had fought before also approached. There was also Leavemealone who had now regrouped with Domon. "Heh, dealing with all of you all by myself is still too much."

He summoned his new pet. A large serpent with two forelegs and a horned dragon head appeared. It was Celestial Lindworm, a mythical-grade draconic monster.

Long climbed onto the lindworm's neck and the serpent flew away. It had no wings but it could ride the air like Long's previous pet, the Sky Wyrn.

No one stopped him. Everyone from True Death Associates was glad this man left.

Long didn't truly leave. He joined the soldiers who were fighting the defenders while retreating. He had rushed in with a small team to score more kills, but he admitted he had overestimated himself too much. Maybe if it was against normal players, he could deal with them even if their number was ten times more. But with Domon in the mix, he had no choice but to retreat and join the army.

Without Long hindering their way, True Death Associates and the others resumed their retreat. Most arrived safely at the second layer of choke points. However, they also ended up sacrificing more numbers with Long aiding the pursuing force.

Chapter 1486: The Fall of a Country Guardian

While the defenders were valiantly defending the capital inside the mountain, the two country guardians continued their tussle outside.

During demonization, Uddroth's physical attributes increased exponentially. Suzaki who didn't excel in melees was forced into a disadvantageous situation. However, Uddroth also couldn't defeat the phoenix. Suzaki took an evasive approach until the demonization ended, which had a one-hour duration. Afterward, Suzaki went back to offense.

Suzaki had a very high HP regeneration ability. After Uddroth's demonization ended, the dragon couldn't land enough hits to continue the damage. Hence, Suzaki's HP slowly recovered.

Once the cooldown of demonization ended, which was six hours, Uddroth used the ability again. This cycle continued.

When the defenders retreated to fortify the second layer of choke points, almost one day had passed. Uddroth was in his fourth demonization since the battle started. He lost more HP compared to Suzaki because he had a weaker regeneration ability. His HP was below sixty percent while Suzaki was still above eighty percent.

Even so, Uddroth's tone sounded like he was the one winning.

"Give it up, old bird! Your time is approaching!" Uddroth exclaimed. "Any time soon, you will have to leave. Your army will lose its protector. I will then show that impudent army below what it means to disturb the place under my charge."

Uddroth had been throwing such statements a few times. Suzaki just responded with silence. Even when the time was almost up, Suzaki didn't show any signs of urgency. This confused Uddroth. Had the phoenix truly given up?

Uddroth's demonization ended and they continued their fight. When it was at the twenty-fourth hour since their battle started, Uddroth bellowed, "This will end soon, old bird!"

This time, Suzaki responded, "You are right. This will end soon."

Suzaki's calmness unsettled Uddroth, which made him stop his offense. He watched Suzaki who had also stopped.

"What are you plotting, old bird?" Uddroth asked. He didn't believe Suzaki gave up just like this.

"Despite you trying your best not to use your fire element, you still emit it with every attack," Suzaki said. "You can't prevent it. It is your nature."

"... What are you talking about?" Uddroth asked.

"Do you remember the fireball I produced when I received your flame breath?" Suzaki asked back.

Uddroth didn't answer.

"It is my special ability that is called Fire Domination," Suzaki said. "I take the fire elements from the environment as well as from enemy's attacks and convert them into a weapon."

Uddroth's eyes narrowed upon hearing the explanation.

"This mountain was rich with the fire element," Suzaki continued. "I can understand why you chose this place as your home. At the same time, you also provided me with an abundance of fire elements."

"You..."

"I have been accumulating the flame for almost a day, Uddroth. If I produce a small fireball from your single attack, how big do you think I can create from our long fight?"

"Where? Where do you...," Uddroth sensed it then. A growing sensation that was coming from above. He looked up.

Red hues appeared on the thick cloud above. They were then incinerated as a humongous ball of fire descended. Suzaki had been absorbing the fire elements and gathering them way high above the sky. Out of sight and out of Uddroth's mana sense. Now that the end of her one-day duration was approaching, she brought the accumulated fire down.

Uddroth's eyes turned wide as he watched the descending fireball. It was almost as large as the mountain below, which made it larger than the capital itself.

"How... How did you gather so much fire...?" Uddroth stammered.

"With patience," Suzaki answered. She then added, "I'm sorry, child."

The huge fireball above burst apart, turning into a blinding firework. Uncountable streaks of fire from the burst fireball rushed downward.

Uddroth moved by instinct. He flew at his top speed, but the fire streaks were as if alive. They were also faster than his flying speed. They chased after him and came at him from all directions.

Seeing that he couldn't flee, his only option was to defend himself. Multiple runic shields appeared around him, forming a sphere. His two huge wings also clasped around him, covering him. The flames arrived then.

They battered the runic sphere. The sphere held at first, but the streaks of fire that came battering were as if infinite. After enduring for some time, small holes finally appeared on the surface of the runic sphere. These holes slowly expanded, like paper being burned.

The streaks of fire entered through these holes and started hammering Uddroth's wing shield. Even when the runic sphere was completely burned, the streaks of fire continued to come.

They merged and reformed the colossal fireball. Uddroth was at the center of this fireball, where the heat was the fiercest.

As a fire dragon, Uddroth had very high fire resistance, but he was not completely immune. The fireball seemed calm from the outside. But inside, it was a raging firestorm. Uddroth continued to suffer damage every second.

He tried to fly away when his HP got dangerously low, but the fireball was as if alive. It followed his movement. It kept the dragon at its center.

Uddroth couldn't flee.

When his HP dropped to zero, he uttered a soul-piercing cry. A portion of the Liguritutum army was still outside the mountain. The soldiers in this army dropped to the ground from the pressure of the cry. Even those who were inside the capital could hear the cry.

Uddroth's body then exploded into a supernova. The explosion obliterated a partial of Mount Sedgebare's summit. The army below was spared because they were too far away, but the shockwave from the explosion kept them lying still on the ground.

No loot was dropped from Uddroth's death because he was killed by another native without interference from players. Even though a country guardian was considered under a sovereign, Master was too far away to trigger either the exp or loot drops.

Suzaki gazed at the falling ashes that were the remains of the once-great dragon. A part of Uddroth's head that was still recognizable dropped to the ground far below. Unlike the wilderness dragons which were considered monsters, true dragons were considered natives. They didn't turn to dust when they died.

There was sadness in Suzaki's eyes as she watched Uddroth's remains but it was soon gone. Her one-day duration arrived then. She turned into a streak of fire and disappeared from there.

Chapter 1487: The Reinforcement from Themisphere

Thelgrun was notified when Uddroth fell. He dropped to his knees when he heard the notification. He wasn't close to the country guardian. Uddroth was already protecting this country even before he was born. Even so, losing a country guardian not only meant a country lost its strongest battle power, but it also lost its symbol.

He couldn't believe the successive blows suffered by his country. First the rebellion, then the invasion. Now, their country guardian was gone. Was this country doomed? Was this his fate?

The adjutants by Thelgrun's sides panicked after seeing Thelgrun dropped to his knees. They thought something sinister had happened to the president. Perhaps the enemy used some kind of a long-range spell or a special item?

Seeing his followers' responses, Thelgrun quickly steeled himself and stood back up. He told everyone he was all right. He just had a sudden tiredness. At this time, he couldn't afford to show weakness. He kept the country guardian's demise to himself. Otherwise, the army morale would be lowered.

However, even if Thelgrun wanted to keep the incident secret, the enemy had a different thought. Linda had the soldiers, who were still trying to breach the second layer of choke points, shouting about Uddroth's demise.

The defenders didn't believe, at first. But Linda also had someone outside the mountain to record Uddroth's final moment using a recording stone. The stone was then carried by a soldier, going from one choke point to another, showing the image of Uddroth's demise to the defenders.

This lowered the Palgrost army's morale. At the same time, Suzaki's victory increased Liguritudum's army morale.

It was the players instead who tried to rally the native army's morale back. Jeanny continued to shout motivating cries while she valiantly defended the choke points.

The choke points at the second layer were fewer. This allowed them to spare more powerful players or natives at every choke point, which let them mount a better defense. They were doing rather well despite Master again focusing his attack on one choke point. That was until the image of Uddroth's demise started being circulated.

The native soldiers became sluggish due to their reduced morale. This slowly caused the defenses to be overwhelmed.

At the end of the second day, the second layer was breached. The defenders had to retreat again to the third layer. This was the last layer. If this layer was breached, then all that was left was the palace itself.

In the middle of the third day, what they feared the most happened. Only half a day passed, but they lost this last layer already. Everyone retreated into the palace's courtyard. Their only defense left was

the massive diamond gate on a gold wall which separated the palace's complex from the rest of the capital.

Fortunately, the rune diagrams of the palace were separate from the ones that protected Mount Sedgebare. When Master used the Greater Dispel to strip the mountain of its protective rune diagrams, it didn't affect the rune diagrams that functioned in the palace.

Both the diamond gate and the gold wall were sturdy. They resisted attacks and they had HP recovery ability, similar to a city's defensive wall.

A dragon-head battering ram was in the process of battering the diamond gate, but the damage it inflicted was not enough. It would take them days to break the gate at this rate. The soldiers also sent their attacks on both the gate and the wall, their attacks were largely diminished.

"Bring the siege weapons here," Master sent Linda a message.

"On the way," Linda informed. "I need to inform you about one other thing. Our scouts had sighted the Themisphere army. They should arrive in a few more hours."

"So soon...?" Master clenched his fist.

He had heard about what happened at Vacharest from Motherboard. After receiving the news that Horatio had ascended to become the new emperor of the Sangrod Empire, he knew then that their ploy to halt the Themisphere army had been foiled. Still, he expected them to conquer Balgadur before that reinforcement arrived. The defenders put on a stronger resistance than he anticipated.

"Prepare our forces to deal with them," Master commanded.

"I already did, but I need more troops to deal with them effectively. I have to pull many soldiers out of the capital," Linda said.

"Take as many as you need," Master replied. "Boron's force will be here to break the gate down. With the siege weapons, they should be able to destroy the gate."

After two and a half days of fighting, both sides suffered casualties. Thelgrun's force which had retreated into the palace courtyard was down to around 1,700,000 troops.

Ligiritudum also lost troops due to their aggressive offense to break through the choke points. They lost 200,000 troops and 700,000 zombie units. Additionally, Master also left behind a total of 400,000 troops in Num Maldur Pass and the Palgrost settlements he had defeated. This was to ensure the supply line kept going.

This put the number of Ligiritudum troops that were still fighting in Balgadur at 1,600,000 soldiers and 600,000 zombie units.

Boron's force only lost 100,000 troops because he took a reserved approach. He wasn't that forceful in breaking through the choke points. He waited for the Ligiritudum army to do the job for him.

Even though it appeared the loss on both sides was almost the same, Master had the Necronomicon. As his force advanced, he went around the battlefield resurrecting both his soldiers and the enemies that had fallen.

He gained fresh troops from this act. His army was bolstered by another 1,100,000 zombie units.

He left these fresh zombie units with Boron to take care of Thelgrun's force once they destroyed the diamond gate. He then brought the remaining of his force outside the mountain. A force that totaled 2,200,000 troops, which consisted of native and zombie soldiers. He prepared himself to battle Jack's incoming 1,500,000 troops.

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Inside the palace courtyard, Jeanny received a message from Jack informing her that they were approaching. He asked her to endure a little longer.

"How about we go out once the boss arrives? This way, we pin the enemies from two sides," The Man suggested. He wasn't keen on hunkering down here and waited for the gate to break. He preferred they continued fighting until the end.

Jeanny shook her head. "We don't know how many troops that are behind that gate. Even if Jack draws a majority of the enemies away, it is still not a good idea to rush out."

"Why?" The Man asked.

"Look at them," Jeanny said, indicating Palgrost soldiers. They all sat on the ground with defeated expressions. Their morale was very low. "Do you expect them to be able to fight properly?"

Chapter 1488: A Hidden Force

Jeanny informed Thelgrun about Jack's approach. The president expressed his delight in hearing the news, but Jeanny could see from his eyes that he didn't put much hope on this reinforcement.

She couldn't blame him. Thelgrun had lost his country guardian, his capital, a portion of his army, and was now forced to hide inside his palace. He even lost one of the two admirals who were still loyal to him.

Thorack Groundbreaker, a level 85 mythical dwarf who was also the strongest admiral in the Palgrost military, fell when he was covering for the army's retreat when the third layer of choke point defense was breached. Thorack was brave, but he was also overconfident. He fought against Liguritutum's high marshall, Oberon, and Master himself.

In the end, he was unable to retreat with the rest of the army and fell.

After all these losses, Thelgrun had the right to be depressed. These several days of fighting had thinned out whatever flame that was left inside him. No one could blame him, including Jeanny. She was disappointed, though. She believed a leader should be more optimistic. Yes, his losses had been great, but the news of an allied reinforcement arriving should be something Thelgrun could use to rally his people's morale. Yet, his pessimism rendered him unable to inspire hope in his failing army.

Even the only admiral left, Helga Flameforge, a level 80 mythical dwarf, sat by the side with her head hung low. All the native dwarves seemed to have lost their will to fight.

Jeanny could only rely on the players at this time. When the gate broke, the players would be the main defending force. She called the guild leaders to meet so they could discuss their defensive plan.

When the guild leaders assembled, she noticed that neither David nor Serpent Boss was present.

"Where are the representatives from the Dogs of War?" She asked.

Everyone looked around. Bluedaze, who now replaced Silverwing as acting leader of White Scarfs after he was killed, said, "Actually, I haven't seen any members of the Dogs of War around here."

The others nodded. They also hadn't seen Dogs of War's members after they barricaded themselves behind the diamond gate.

Jeanny looked at his friend list. David's name indicated he was still alive. He was also nearby, not in Themisphere, meaning he hadn't been killed. She sent him a message, "Where are you?"

"Outside," David answered.

"Outside where?" Jeanny asked. She was peeved with David's vague answer.

"Outside the palace. In Balgudur."

"You are trapped outside? How did you fail to retreat? Why don't I see any of your members here? You can't be all trapped outside, can you?"

"We are not trapped. We stay here out of our own choice."

"Why?"

"So we can hit the enemies where it hurts," David answered. "Don't worry about us. We are used to urban warfare. This capital is huge. Lots of buildings for us to hide in. They won't find us easily. In the meantime, we will do guerilla warfare to slow the enemies. Just for your information, they are transporting siege weapons through the capital as we speak. We are planning to ambush these siege weapons. Wish us luck."

"Be careful," Jeanny said.

"I'm happy for your concern," David replied teasingly.

Jeanny shook her head. She hoped those guys out there were okay. In the meantime, she had to organize the defenses here to prepare when the gate was taken down.

This gate could be said as the final choke point. There was only one, so they could focus all their firepower here. They had the ex-members of the Council of Charites who were now their companions. Even when their number was very little compared to the army they would be facing, they should be able to defend this one choke point for some time.

Still, Jeanny hoped Jack's force outside could drive the enemies away before it came to that.

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Outside, Linda arranged the 1,600,000 Liguritutum troops and the 600,000 zombie units. She organized them to cover the capital's entrances and placed them in a pattern that gave their army the most

advantage. The enemies had to come to them. They didn't need to move. This gave them an advantage. If the enemies decided to stay back, that was even better. They just needed to wait until the troops inside stormed into the palace and took control of the throne room.

Master also came outside to join the army facing Themisphere. Beside him was the newest addition to his zombie unit, Thorack Groundbreaker, the level 85 mythical-grade admiral he had slain earlier. Oberon was also with him.

Boron's admiral, Odir Goldhoarder, who was a level 82 mythical dwarf, stayed inside to help Boron defeat Thelgrun's force when the diamond gate was destroyed.

Long, Spring Crown, and Ronald were out there with Master. Linda stayed inside the capital's lobby cave hall to operate the war table. Beside her was the Liguritutum guilds who had submitted to them. These guild players were preparing to use their guild army.

They didn't use the guild armies when fighting against Palgrost because Palgrost was of no menace. The problem they had when fighting Palgrost wasn't the number of troops. It was the time it took to breach the choke points. Even if Palgrost's guilds who supported Thelgrun summoned their guild armies to bolster the force defending the choke points, those guild armies didn't make much of a difference.

But against Themisphere, against Everlasting Heavenly Legends, it was different. They had fought Everlasting Heavenly Legends' guild army during the Hydrurond war. As much as Master hated to admit it, Jack's guild army was a notch stronger. That guild army was able to hold its own even when the two guild armies of World Maker and World Ruler were working together.

Once they heard their Sangrod ploy failed, they had been saving the guild armies in case Themisphere arrived. Today would be that day.

As the army was organizing, Master received a message from Linda, "Enemy players are hiding inside Balgadur. They have just attacked the siege weapons on transport."

Master frowned upon the news. "Use the zombie army I leave behind with Boron and deal with them," he said.

"I already did. They fled before our army arrived. They destroyed several siege weapons. These players are experts. From the coordination, I say they are ex-military. My guess is they are the Dogs of War's players. They must have chosen to not retreat into the palace with the others."

"Hmph," Master harrumphed. "I will send Ronald inside to track them."

He called Ronald. He gave the gunslinger a regiment of Liguritutum troops and sent him back into the capital. Ronald was happy with the assignment. Hunting down soldiers was his favorite sport.

Chapter 1489: The Forgotten Disaster Item

The Themisphere army stopped a distance away from Mount Sedgebare. The soldiers could see the tattered condition of the mountain even from a distance. One-half of its peak was gone. They could only imagine the fierce battle that had happened there before they arrived. A battle that had not yet ended.

The large sea of soldiers that was the Liguritutum army was seen at the base of the mountain, waiting for them to come.

There was a small mountain nearby, John climbed that mountain and used it as his command base. The place gave him a good view. He preferred that he could see the entire battlefield instead of just looking at the situation from the projection map.

Before he went up the mountain, he had divided the Themisphere army into three smaller armies, each numbered 500,000.

The left-wing army was led by Meryl. Duchess Isabelle, Robin, and Polom were with her. Robin and Polom were the officers who used to follow Crown Prince Therribus.

The right wing had Arther leading it. He was accompanied by Claudius, Ahab, and Uvira.

Jack commanded the center army. He had Armstrong, Salem, and Bailey by his side.

Kramer, who had joined the Themisphere army, and Ana, the mythical recruit from two months ago, were with the center army. They served under Salem's unit. Stewart, the newest mythical recruit, was not yet at a sufficient level to join a military campaign. Jack took these two so they could have their first experience in a war.

With the help of the multiple boosts on training speed, the two gained leveling speed that almost rivaled the players. Kramer only increased by one level since it hadn't been that long since he arrived in Themisphere. He was now level 54. He had also consumed a Pill of Growth from Jeanny and was now a rare elite. As for Ana, she reached level 52 recently.

"How should we approach them?" Jack asked John. He was up here with John on the small mountain while Armstrong took temporary command of the center army down there.

A battalion of elite soldiers was up here with them to protect John and the war table. Half of these elite soldiers were those who had wing tools or fly spells, in case the enemy sent flying units here.

Tip and six other guild representatives were also up here. These guilds were Themisphere guilds which had headquarters. They were the Dogs of War, Corporate United, White Scarfs, Black Cloak, Crowd of Sins, and Offline Beasts.

Offline Beasts was the guild Jeanny helped to get a headquarters when Themonium upgraded to a metropolis. After the battle to defend Wicked Witches' headquarters at Aurebor, Jeanny developed a good relationship with this guild. Hence, she invited them to move to Themisphere and develop their guild there.

These guild representatives were ready to use their Guild Army Summoning Crystal upon John's command.

"It's not good for us," John said. "We are the ones who have to go to them while they already set up their formations to deal with us. They also have more troops than us..."

"And...", Jack asked when John didn't continue.

"I've said before, I can beat my mother in field battle considering if we have an even number of troops. For this battle, we don't. They have more numbers."

"So...", Jack asked again when John paused.

"So our first order of business is to take her out to even the playing field. Without her commanding the army, I will have a better time maneuvering our army."

"You did that before, right? You can do it again," Jack encouraged.

"I don't need your pep talk. The situation this time is different. Last time, she was out in the open and she didn't know about our hang gliders. This time, I'm pretty sure she is cooped up inside that mountain. It won't be easy getting to her."

"Hm... You said it won't be easy. So, it's not impossible?" Jack asked.

John smiled. "You told me before that you have a disaster item with you, didn't you?"

"Oh?" Jack looked inside his inventory. The Gate of the Underworld was still there inside his storage bag. He had forgotten he still had this thing.

"Do you want to use this?" Jack asked. He took the disaster item out. "This thing will not only attack the enemy but us as well."

"Store it. You are the one who is going to use it," John replied.

"I am?"

John grinned upon the question. He told Jack what Jack needed to do.

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Not long after, the three divisions of the Themisphere army started advancing. They moved slowly while shifting slightly to the left, where the east gate of Balgadur was located. This side also had the least concentration of the enemy.

The Ligitudum army stood their ground and waited for them to arrive. They had already transported all their siege weapons into the capital to deal with the diamond gate, so they didn't have any with them. They were waiting for the Themisphere army to come into the range of their long-range soldiers.

Themisphere army, however, brought some siege units. Only one type, though. It was a siege unit that had been upgraded from the research of military techs. The unit was Wind Ballista. The upgrade increased the siege unit's movement speed. This movement speed upgrade was also the reason these siege weapons were brought. The other siege weapons were too slow.

The upgrade not only increased the movement speed. It also gave the ballista additional wind damage and strong piercing power. The bolts it shot ignored 50% of defensive stats.

They brought twelve of these ballistae, which were half of what Themisphere had. These ballistae initiated the first strike considering they were the longest-range units on the battlefield.

The Liguritutum army advanced then. They couldn't just let the enemy shoot at them freely without retaliation.

Themisphere's central and left-wing armies advanced to engage them. The right-wing army pulled to the side and formed a long line of defensive formation as the bulk of the Liguritutum army came from the side.

"I don't remember teaching you to be so gullible," John received a message. It was from Linda.

After the Hydrurond war, there were several instances where John went out of Themisphere to join some guild quests. During one of these times, he received a friend request from Linda. His mother must have been somewhere nearby to be able to send this request. He accepted the request and sent his members to search her out, but they couldn't find her. She must have left once she sent the friend request.

"Why do you say so?" John replied to Linda's message.

"You should know I purposefully leave the army on the east side thin for a reason, and yet you still go for it."

As the message ended, an army came out of hiding from behind the rubbles around Balgadur's east gate. These rubbles were pieces of the mountain that fell when the mountain was bombarded by Liguritutum's siege weapons.

This hidden army now charged to Themisphere left-wing army's flank.

Chapter 1490: An Ambush on the Hidden Army

Arther stood at the forefront as the massive Liguritutum army came crashing. They stood their ground and mainly acted as a defensive wall to protect the left wing and the center army while they dealt with the enemies.

Arther activated his Sphere of Aegis and dove right into the enemy's midst. While this skill was active, he was nearly invincible. The white fiery sphere not only protected his body but also damaged all it touched. His speed was also increased when this skill was active. His silvery transparent wings too let him zip around, creating chaos within the enemy's ranks.

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The center and left-wing armies should have originally engaged an army that was fewer than them, but the sudden appearance of the hidden army turned the situation around. Especially for the left-wing army. The hidden army came to their left flank. They were now dealing with a force twice their size.

The commander of the left-wing army, Meryl, didn't appear intimidated. Instead, she uttered a roar that bordered on excitement. The army's morale was roused because of that. She fired her bow with extreme speed. Every arrow left a trail of light as they flew. They were as if small comets.

These arrows exploded upon impact, dealing AOE damage and delivering strong knockback. These knockbacks forced the enemy's charge to stop, disrupting their formation.

A figure suddenly shot out from the disrupted army. Meryl jumped away just before this figure landed with a bang. The ground where it landed was shattered and a shockwave radiated out, causing the Themisphere soldiers nearby to fall to the ground.

The figure was a large dwarf. A dead dwarf to be exact. The skin on his face was pale and cracked. His eyes were hollow. The dwarf was ex-admiral of Palgrost, Thorack Groundbreaker.

Thorack was four levels stronger than Meryl, but the lord marshal didn't back down. She continued firing her arrows at Thorack, who charged forward.

Thorack charged using a skill, Forceful Charge. A protective layer of energy covered his body while he charged, reducing a great deal of damage as well as negating all movement restrictions. Meryl's arrows that hit his body bounced off without dealing much damage. The high-speed charge brought him before Meryl in an instant. His huge hammer was launched at Meryl's face.

A heater shield came between the hammer and the face.

"You think I am powerless in a melee because I use bow and arrow?" Meryl said. Her body spun dexterously and she was already behind Thorack before he could respond.

Her main hand was now holding a one-handed sword. Following her spinning momentum, she used the pommel of her sword and struck the back of Thorack's head, sending him reeling forward.

She was one of the few natives that originally knew martial arts. After the Themisphere implemented the large-scale martial arts drill in the army, she was one of the few who was most enthusiastic about learning it. The drill further refined her movements, giving her expert precision.

With quick movements, she switched the shield in her left hand to an axe that hung beside her waist. She slashed with the axe and stabbed with the sword. The two weapons also emitted energy that was the characteristic of Ki Weapon.

Thorack couldn't cope with Meryl's fast and varied attacks. He received hits on multiple occasions. The damage he received was mitigated, though, because he was protected by Divine Armor. Meryl didn't mind. Any damage dealt to this zombie admiral, however small, was a win. This was because the zombie units couldn't be healed.

Thorack swung his hammer with a power that could level mountains. Every swing generated a force that created a tidal wave. Meryl felt suffocating pressures from those swings. She had difficulty moving every time the hammer passed by her. She had to use all her focus to move with precise timing so she didn't get hit by these powerful blows.

However, war was not a place for a duel. Her focus had instead opened her up to another attack. She was struck by a lightning bolt cast by an enemy. This lightning bolt stunned her just as Thorack's hammer came swinging again.

Luckily, Meryl was not alone. A beam of light came crashing into Thorack from the side. He stumbled from the force of the beam. His swing missed Meryl.

Meryl turned to the source of the light beam and saw Duchess Isabelle floating not far away. Multiple melee weapons made of light were floating around her. In her hand was a long multi-tailed whip that was also made of light.

Meryl flashed her a grateful gaze before returning her attention to Thorack.

The admiral didn't feel pain or humiliation from Isabelle's surprise attack. He didn't feel anything for he was dead. He did growl, but not out of anger. The growl turned to a howl which stunned the soldiers around him. His body then enlarged. His body continued to grow until his body mass was five times his original size.

Meryl was now as if a baby in front of him.

He swung his giant hammer down. Meryl didn't dare to look down on this attack. She jumped away and tried to put as much distance as possible. When the hammer hit the ground. The surrounding soil collapsed. At the same time, a small earthquake radiated out.

Meryl was speechless. Thorack wasn't using any skill just now. That was just a standard attack.

She decided to be prudent and returned to using her bow and arrows. She maintained her distance as she kited Thorack.

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While their commander was fighting the zombie admiral, the left-wing army wasn't having a good time. They were besieged from two sides by an army twice their number. John watched this from the small mountaintop.

"My offer still stands, son. Come to our side. There is no need for this pointless struggle," Linda continued to send John messages.

John smiled. "Hehe. As you said, I shouldn't be that gullible. Do you truly think I march my army into your trap just like that?"

"What do you mean?"

Answering Linda's question, an army of around 100,000 suddenly appeared out of thin air behind Liguritudum's hidden army that flanked Themisphere's left-wing army. This newly emerged army ambushed the unsuspecting hidden army from their rear.