

World 681

Chapter 681: Time's Up

Jet jumped past Jack after delivering his Seven Injuries Fists. Jack was still stunned by the amount of damage, hence Jet was able to take a head start. Peniel cast Heal on Jack to bring his HP back up.

Jack used Shooting Dash to chase after Jet, quickly blocking Jet's path again. Jack sent a Flame Strike by the end of the Shooting Dash. Jet wasn't careless enough to take the strike directly. He had experienced for himself Jack's unreasonable damage and strength. He stopped his advance and dodged to the side.

"Let's finish this then!" Jet uttered as his short body grew. He grew to even larger than Jack, a big fluffy bear with white and black fur.

"A panda?" Jack exclaimed. This uncle of him was indeed surprising. Most other beastmasters were still using the standard wolf form. With a small portion having bear or cat form which were the two most common forms after the wolf. Jack was sure a form was nowhere near common. Yet, this old geezer who never played games before had gotten his hands on this unusual form.

Jet's form, despite looking heavy, was even faster than before. The made a jump as he released a series of kicks before landing and followed up with a series of punches.

"Shit! A Kung-fu panda!" Jack uttered.

The panda's two hands broke into after images, seven after images! Jet was using the Seven Injuries Fists again.

Jack was immediately alarmed. The damage was already so powerful when Jet was in normal form. With his current form, his strength and speed were further enhanced.

Jack didn't slack, he activated Gold Scale Armor. But this skill was just a precaution, in case he failed to block the fists. He didn't rely on this skill to tank. His two swords turned into a blur as he executed the burst attack of his Formless Flowing Sword Style. However, instead of the forty-eight slashes directed towards the enemy, he concentrated them in front of him. The sword lights were so tight that they scraped each other, creating sparks.

"That's..." The orc team leader, Four Winds, who was watching the scene from outside, was taken aback. It was very similar to his martial art technique. The difference was, his art caused the sparks all around him, creating a bubble that protect himself from all sides. The one Jack exhibited now was squarely in front of him, displaying the illusion of a wall made of sword lights in front of him.

Jet's illusionist punches, no matter they were near or far, would still need to pass through this sword wall to reach Jack, hence their illusion aspect was rendered useless. The seven fists clashed with the sword wall.

Eruptive energy exploded out, throwing the two combatants away. Jet's fists were powered by mana manipulation, so even if they were blocked, the impacts were still powerful, rivaling Jack's overpowered stats.

Hideout's name was greyed out in the sky. Jet noticed it. Red Death ambush had given high burst damage to the bard. Now she was focusing on Sierra, while Jack's ten wolves stopped Longstick and Outdoor from escaping. These two players had slow movement classes, they couldn't outrun the fast wolves.

Jet looked over to his wolf pack, thinking about sending his wolves to disrupt Jack's. But after a glance, he understood he couldn't divert his wolves away. Jack's Therras visibly overpowered his bear. Without the help from his six wolves, his bear would be defeated in a short time.

While he was uncertain as to how to proceed, Pallas' voice boomed from the sky. Time remaining, one minute.

Jack was astounded by the announcement. So little time was left? Why didn't announce it when it was ten or five minutes before? Why announce it when it's only one minute left? But there was no use complaining. It was already good there was an announcement. If there was not, he might still take his time fighting carefully and the match might be over without him realizing it.

"Defend! We will win!" Jet encouraged his teammates who were currently busy dealing with Red Death and Jack's wolves.

Jet activated Strength of the Wild to increase his survivability. A level 45 Beastmaster skill. The skill bestowed the beastmaster with multiple buffs. It added 80% increase to attributes, 10% increase to damage, 100% increase to defense and resistances, 50% to movement and attack speed. The beastmaster was immune to movement restriction during the skill and recovered 10 HP every second.

Since there was no more time to lose, Jack decided to throw precaution to the wind. He transformed into his wolf form. His Gold Scale Armor armor was still active so he was currently a golden fur werewolf.

He also activated Adrenaline Rush before lunging at Jet, claws slashing wildly using Formless Flowing Sword Style. Jet didn't meet Jack head-on. Now that he knew he only need to last for one minute, he avoided clashing with Jack directly. He dodged and threw an attack to deflect when he couldn't dodge. Even though Jack was faster, Jet's finesse allowed him to limit his damage to a minimum.

The spectators outside were fascinated looking at a werewolf and a werepanda danced around as if they were displaying a martial art performance. It was truly weird seeing wild animals doing it.

"Thirty seconds!" Pallas' voice was heard.

Soon, they also heard Sierra's voice, "Aarghh..! Brother Hung! I can't hold on! I am..."

Her voice stopped. Jack and Jet didn't have to see, both of them knew that Red Death had taken out Sierra.

"We still have three people, we will win!" Jet uttered.

"You know, there was no need for me to take you out," Jack said as a spell formation formed in his left claw.

Jet realized something after Jack's words. He was only playing defense and evasion, but now he realized Jack's assaults had been leading him back to near the buildings where Longstick and Outdoor were.

Jack's spell was completed and a wide magic wall appeared before Jet.

At this time, Pallas' voice was heard doing a countdown, "Ten... Nine... Eight..."

Jack's magic wall was not meant for defense. The magic wall was untraversable as long as it was not broken. Jack jumped back after the magic wall was formed, leaving Jet on the other side. Behind him where he jumped to was the broken wall where Longstick and Outdoor were still in.

Outdoor had cast Wall of Vines near the broken wall when the wolves rushed in, trapping three out of the ten wolves. The remaining seven were inside harassing them. She cast Healing Wind to keep their HP up, while Longstick had activated his Divine Armor as well as his knight's skills, Endure. They were currently trying to tank this through. Longstick used his weapon which was covered by Sacred Flame to protect Outdoor by driving the wolves back, trying to minimize the damage they received as little as possible.

The Wall of Vines was still blocking the entrance, if Jack rushed in, he would get entangled by the vines as well. But he didn't plan to. He activated his Storm Breaker's Overlimit to maximize his damage. The sword animation where it broke apart during the Overlimit state was not shown since Jack was shown using bare claws during transformation, but the energy light and the black lightning accompanying the Overlimit state were seen coating his right claw.

Jack executed Wind Slash. Three green energies rushed forward in high speed, cutting through the vines and continuing forth. The three energies traveled in an arc. All three slashed past both Longstick and Outdoor.

As a druid, Outdoor's HP and defense were not enough to survive the three wind slashes with boosted damage. Her HP was depleted instantly.

Longstick was stunned. His HP had also gone down significantly, to the point that one more single standard attack could take him out. He hurriedly used Soothing Light to heal a bit of his HP before the wolves came biting again.

Seeing Longstick survive, Jack immediately sent a follow-up attack using Sword of Light. The crescent light rushed forward. Longstick, seeing the attack, executed Heaven's Shield while ignoring the wolves that bit him.

The gigantic shield appeared before him just as Jack's Sword of Light arrived. The crescent light smashed into the illusory shield with a loud impact and broke it to pieces. However, the Sword of Light was also stopped with the destruction of the shield.

"Time is up!" Pallas' voice was heard.

Everyone stopped fighting after. They looked at each other. Red Death was just about to jump into the broken wall to aid in killing Longstick.

Both teams had two members surviving, so who won? Everyone wondered.

Pallas' voice was then heard again. "Dwarf team, two surviving members. Longstick, twenty-six percents HP. Jet Hung, sixty-two percents HP. Human team, two surviving members. Storm Wind, eighty-three percents HP. Red Death, Seven-one percents HP. Winner, human team!"

Jack heaved a relief sigh after hearing that. 'Yes!' He exclaimed inwardly. He never thought they would have such a narrow win.

Their surroundings then vanished. Both teams were brought back into the arena in front of the spectators, the ones who died had been revived. Everyone had full HP. They heard clappings from the spectators. Both sides had done their best to win.

Jack turned to Jet. "You almost had us," he said.

"We did," Jet replied. He then looked at his teammates. "Ah... Too bad. Well, we have tried our best. Ain't we, lad?"

The four had downcast expressions.

"Hey, what are you all wearing sour faces? Win or lose in matches are common. What we can do is to train better so we can beat those a*sholes the next time. Do you all get me?" Jet exclaimed.

Jack rolled his eyes hearing Jet's words. 'Can't you do that kind of talk somewhere else when we didn't hear you?' Jack thought.

After giving his team a pep talk, Jet came over to congratulate Jack. This old dude was used to participating in martial arts tournaments in the past, without ever becoming the champion since he always joined together with Domon. So, he wasn't truly bothered with a loss in a match.

Pallas announced the end of the tournament today.

Chapter 682: Find One's Own Way

"Jack boy, since my team is no longer proceeding, I want to advise you about that orc team, just in case you meet them in the final," Jet said to Jack. "They are all martial experts. Do you know the formation they used in their match?"

"I have a feeling that you are about to tell me," Jack said.

"Smartass. The martial formation they used during the group fight is called Interdependent Poles Formation, this formation can be performed using four to six people. While the move that their leader used is called Starlight Field."

"Any tips against them?"

"Nope."

"You only tell me the names without any hints to defeat them, that's not really advice now, is it? That is just info."

Jet shrugged. "Your grandfather like to say one has to find their own way to beat an enemy. Oh, yes, here's some advice. You better do something about that team of yours. They are all easy pickings with how they are now."

"Yeah, like how you pick on them," Jack said.

Jet chuckled. "Well, good luck with the final, Jack boy. I will be rooting for you."

Prince Alonzo came by with Duchess Isabelle and Gruff when Jet left. He said, "Congratulations, Mister Storm Wind. You have again brought great glory to our kingdom."

"My pleasure, Your Highness," Jack replied politely.

"You have an interesting pet there," Duchess Isabelle said. "Do you know that pet of yours is considered a sacred beast in Themisphere? No one had found a single Therras Beast since the founder of Themisphere Kingdom passed away. It is surprising that you have one."

"That's right," Prince Alonzo said. "With your match being broadcasted everywhere. All the nobilities in Themisphere had seen you and your pet, and since they know you support me, this will justify my position even further."

"I'm just lucky to find one," Jack replied. "I didn't know it's such a big deal. Otherwise, I might have shown it sooner."

"It's just symbolic, but it is still a big deal nevertheless," Duchess Isabelle said. "Showing it in this match is probably the better outcome since it was broadcasted to the whole world. Once we get back, we will work on spreading rumors that the appearance of this beast under Prince Alonzo's banner is a clear sign that the third prince is supported by the founder himself."

"Uh, okay," Jack commented. He never thought this graceful Duchess to be so crafty.

"We will leave you then. Thank you again for your effort," Prince Alonzo said. After he and Duchess Isabelle left, Gruff bellowed, "Lad, you almost gave me a heart attack! I thought you are going to lose for a moment there."

"Same here," Jack answered truthfully.

"You should deal with that team problem of yours. Now that everyone knows how to deal with you. Whoever wins between the Orc and the Vampire teams, they will use the same tactic in the final again if you lots still don't work out your shit."

Jack looked over. Most of everyone had dispersed already. He only saw Giant Steve, his other three troublesome teammates were nowhere to be seen.

"I will talk to them...," Jack said.

"Deal with it! I won't be happy if you lose," Gruff said.

"Yes, yes. I know you are worried about your damn bet! Just remember my share," Jack said.

"Naturally," Gruff replied and went away.

"What's that about share?" This time it was Paytowin who came.

"We made a bet that if I win the tournament, both he and I will get lots of faction points," Jack answered.

"Well, then you better do something about that messy team of yours."

"So everyone keeps on saying. Now, let's go to the ancient battleground again."

"Come."

As the two headed to the Temple of Courage, they didn't notice Grace who was staring at them.

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At the garden where Domon and Leavemealone were training, Jet came by and watched the two. When Domon noticed his martial brother, he asked, "How is your match?"

"I lost. Your grandson's team won," Jet answered.

"I see. I am sorry for your loss."

"But you are happy for Jack's win."

"I am."

"Heh. Too bad. I thought I can win that match. It would have been good for Jack as well, losing. He is too cocky sometimes."

"There is no need for that. He already knows what losing is like. He might seem reckless at times, but that is mostly to unnerve his opponents. He still knows when to take a step back if needed. One thing I know about him is that he won't feel down or give up just because of a loss."

"You are really confident in him, aren't you?"

"Naturally," Domon said. "Are you here just to chat or do you want to help me train this one by being his sparring partner?"

"I don't mind helping," Jet said as he flexed his arms. "But I am here to tell you something about Jack in case you haven't aware."

"What about Jack?"

"Do you remember what our master said about chi sensing? About a story that he had heard from his master and the master before him, a story about the state of enlightenment where one's sense becomes so acute, one can send his consciousness to view things some distances away? Sort of an out-of-body experience?"

"The incorporeal state? That is just a tale. Why are you talking about this?"

"There is a possibility that Jack had achieved that state."

Domon's eyes turned wide when he heard. "Really?"

"If what that boy tells me is the truth, but I don't see a reason for him to lie to me," Jet replied.

Domon was silent for a while before bursting into a laugh, "hahaha. If that is true, then this is truly surprising news. Perhaps he will truly reach better height than us, old-timers."

"Glad to see you happy again. You have always been brooding since that thing with your disciple. Hm... I see this new disciple of yours is not bad as well."

"So, are you going to lend a hand or what?" Domon asked.

"Sure thing. Hey, kid! Care to play a few rounds with me?" Jet exclaimed as he walked towards Leavemealone.

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Inside the ancient battleground, Jack did his mana manipulation training as yesterday, fighting using bare fists. He was getting more used to the feeling. His control over mana was improving. Most of the time, four out of five hits were successful.

He didn't let himself be satisfied, though. This meant he still had a twenty percent chance of failing. That would be fatal in a real fight. He needed to make sure that all his attacks had a one hundred percent certainty of being accompanied by mana manipulation before he could incorporate this technique in a real fight.

Although Jack was most proficient in using swords to fight due to his gaming experience, he knew about fist fighting as well, courtesy of his childhood training with his grandfather. It was like what people said about riding a bicycle, it's all coming back to him.

His punches and kicks alternated fluently as he dealt with any attackers that came.

"Damn! I never know you are such a good martial artist. You should teach me those moves," Paytowin said.

"Come to our guild, my grandfather will teach you. He is an excellent teacher when it comes to martial arts," Jack replied, his punches never stopped.

"You know I can't leave this place as I like."

"Take a vacation."

"What do you think I am doing here? A corporate job?"

"It isn't?"

"Well... I guess in some way you can say that."

The two failed to reach the one-thousand kill marks again in this run, and the next run. It was not surprising considering that Jack fought without a weapon. The kill counts were mostly gained from Paytowin, Brave King, and Therras' efforts.

Near the end of the second run, Jack only failed in dealing unarmed damages one out of ten times. He took his swords out for the last few minutes, trying to practice using mana manipulation with weapons. He copied how he had seen the golden knight's leader move his mana around his weapon. The act of guiding the mana and transferring them into his swords took more effort.

He tried slashing while using mana manipulation, all resulted in failures. Only standard damage was produced. Until at the last moment, when almost everyone around him was down. When he was about to be swarmed. He cleared his mind and focused on imagining his sword as an extension of his arms. He guided the mana to his sword as he had done with his bare hand, then he slashed.

Double damage appeared. He was not sure if that was due to mana manipulation or due to a lucky critical hit. He was swarmed soon after.

He came back out into the hall. "Guess that's it for today," Jack said. Although the exp points gained from this ancient battleground were low, it still helped one of his classes to level up after this last run. His Archmage class was now level 42.

"Is the ancient battleground truly that good to learn mana manipulation?" Paytowin asked.

"Yeah. The mana inside is truly dense. It is easier for me to get used to controlling mana in that environment. Once my body and mind learned the gists, I can do it easier outside here. Probably the whole point of this ancient battleground is for people to learn mana manipulation. The rewards are too shitty and too impossible to get."

"I don't think so. We might be unable to get it, but I've heard from Myson that the elite squads of this faction use this ancient battleground to get their best equipment or items to strengthen themselves."

"Really? How many members of this elite squad are entering to get good rewards? One thousand?" Jack asked.

"This ancient battleground can only allow a team of ten people to enter at a time," Paytowin answered. "If there is more than ten, the excess will be sent to a different battleground."

"Only ten people and they can get good rewards? How can ten people do anything in that battle? They will still get swarmed once the army inside is losing. Those elite squad's members must have a very high level then."

"There is a level restriction, remember? If you are higher than level 50, you will be sent to a different version of ancient battleground that has a higher difficulty."

"Hm...? So, how did they perform better?" Jack asked in puzzlement.

Paytowin shrugged. "I don't know. I have tried asking Myson. He only replied that I have to find my own way inside."

"Sounds like what my grandfather will say," Jack commented.

Chapter 683: Foiling an Assassination

After leaving the Temple of Courage, Jack went to where Domon and Leavemealone were at. He was surprised to find Jet was also there. He was sparring with Leavemealone.

Jack greeted them before looking for a corner and did his own training. He was applying what he had learned inside the Ancient Battleground to control the mana in each of his fist strikes and kicks.

"You are training unarmed style? Jack boy?" Jet came to ask. He had finished a sparring session and let Leavemealone train by himself for now.

"He is not, can't you feel his control over his mana?" Domon said, he also came by when he saw Jack practicing.

"Now that you mentioned it, you are right. You are starting to get it," Jet said.

"He still fails one out of ten, though," Peniel informed the two.

"It was a big improvement already," Domon said. "He only started to seriously learn mana sensing several months ago. Now he is already starting mana manipulation."

"Yeah, remember how long it used to take us?" Jet said.

"The condition of this world is also a big factor. With the right teachings, the youths here can learn this technique faster."

"Gramps, got any tips for me?" Jack asked as he practiced his punches.

"I can only say that you are on the right path. Everyone has their own way of communicating with mana. You have to find your way. Remember that there is no shortcut in martial arts, just relax and keep repeating your training until the executions become as natural as you are in lifting your arms."

Jack nodded, he had expected that.

He practiced until late at night, while Peniel and Carnelia went somewhere together again. Jack wanted to continue but after seeing his grandfather and Leavemealone were still there as well, he decided to quit and told them, "the two of you have a match tomorrow morning. Let's go back to rest."

Leavemealone acted like he didn't hear. Only when Domon told him to stop did he obey and left. Leavemealone went to the building for the vampire guests while Jack and Domon left for the building for the human guests.

On their way, they saw Princess Purple hanging out in one of the gardens, enjoying the view. She had always spent the nighttime at this place, Selena was sitting close by. There was an open garden as well in the building they stayed in, but she probably didn't like being there because others were using that garden as well. It was pretty clear that she disliked being around other people. She only went back to the building when it was time to sleep.

Domon greeted the two ladies, Jack only greeted Selena. He greeted Princess Purple before, but the girl acted as if she didn't hear, so Jack didn't bother to do it the second time. Domon was also given the cold shoulder every night, but he carried on greeting her every time he passed by.

After they passed the two, Domon said to Jack, "Do you sense that?"

"Yes, what do you think its intention?" Jack replied.

"I can't think of anything good considering it concealed itself like that."

"Let's sneak back."

Domon agreed. The two then took a roundabout way back to where the two women were at.

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Princess Purple was gazing at the full moon above.

"It's so pretty here," she said.

"It is," Selena replied.

"I hope the life here is permanent. I have no interest in going back to that old and disgusting world from before."

"The past world was ugly because of us humans. From the looks of it, we all come here. Sooner or later, we will bring that ugliness here as well."

"Do you want to go back?" Princess Purple asked Selena. "If you can."

Selena gave the matter some thought before answering, "If we are allowed the choice. No, I don't want to."

"Me too," Princess Purple said.

Suddenly a thick beam of energy shot past right next to Princess Purple. It gave the girl a terrible scare that she yelped.

A figure jumped out from a nearby bush and made a strong downward kick. The kick hit the ground with a loud impact sound. Princess Purple turned at this person and saw it was Domon. His back was to her at the moment. Selena had run over to Princess Purple's side.

"What is the meaning of this?" She uttered to Domon, demanding an explanation.

Domon's back was still to them. "There is an assassin here. He almost stabbed Purple just now."

"What?" Selena uttered.

"What nonsense! There is nobody here except us. What is your angle, you disgusting old man? Don't assume us to be gullible little girls!" Princess Purple proclaimed.

Domon didn't reply. He still had his back on them.

The ground before him suddenly brightened and crimson chains shot out. The chains swerved around as if trying to grab something. One of them made a clanging sound and was deflected as if hitting a hard object. At the same time that happened, a man in a black cloak materialized. This man had deflected the crimson chain using his dagger.

Both Selena and Princess Purple gasped. Domon had told the truth. Domon didn't move from his position, he stayed with the two women at his back. It was clear that his stance was to protect the two.

The cloaked assassin jumped back away from the reach of Myriad Ensnaring Chains.

"Tsk!" The cloaked assassin uttered.

"It's you!" A voice was heard from the side. The cloaked assassin looked to his side and saw a person come out from behind a tree. The person was Jack.

"You?!" The assassin also uttered, clearly recognizing Jack.

"It's good that you are here. It's time for me to get you back for what you did, Oswald!" Jack uttered as he lunged forward.

"Hmph! I have failed the second I showed myself. Goodbye!" Oswald replied as thick white smoke exploded from where he was standing.

"Don't think that you can hide from..." Jack's words stopped because Oswald's presence had disappeared inside the smoke.

"Vanish?" Jack thought out loud, but he didn't sense Oswald nearby. Vanish only brought the user ten meters away. He should still be able to sense him if he was within that distance.

"He could be using a ten-stars grade Vanish. That max-grade Vanish sent the user twenty meters away," Peniel explained.

"Twenty meters. If he is that far then I can't sense him," Jack said.

"What's going on here?!" They turned and saw two golden armored knights approaching.

"A battle has occurred here, explain yourselves!" The two knights said to the four players.

Selena came forward and explained everything.

"An intruder? The lead knight frowned. Wait here!" One of the knights left and the other one stayed. Not long after, that knight came back with Callan and Pallas.

When the two arrived, Callan said with a gentle voice, "I've heard the report from my knight, but do you mind iterating what had happened here again?"

Selena did the explanation again.

After hearing the story, Callan told his knights, "Gather the others and performed a sweep! I want this intruder found!"

"Yes, Your Holiness!" The knights uttered and left. As they left, Myson came by.

He said to Callan once arrived, "Your Holiness, I want to report. Our border barrier just detected a forced exit."

Callan frowned hearing it. "It must be the intruders, he has escaped."

"I know who that assassin is," Jack said.

"Tell us!" Pallas commanded.

"His name is Oswald. He is a member of the Assassins Guild."

"Assassins Guild? How dare they! I will go and raze their place!" Pallas boomed.

Callan calmed the divine champion down. "It is possible this assassin is doing a side job not sanctioned by the guild. They should know not to cross us. Anyway, I will contact their leader and demand an explanation."

"I am more worried how this assassin can slip into our territory undetected. Our border barrier should have warned us if someone tries to enter forcefully," Myson said.

Callan looked at the players and said, "I'm sorry this has happened under our roof. We have truly failed as a host. Please accept my deepest apology. Please return to your quarter now. I will place sentries there. I guarantee no one will be able to get near you again without being noticed. You have my words."

The four players nodded and walked back. Two knights with golden armor were escorting them.

After Jack and Domon entered their room, Jack said, "I think I know how that assassin entered this place."

"Oh? Then why don't you say anything just now?" Domon asked.

"If I do that, there is a chance they might postpone the matches, or disqualify our opponents."

"How so?"

"I think that Oswald came together with the group that participated in this tournament. He entered together with one of the native's entourage, using a disguise or something. He must have been commissioned to take out the healer of the team that goes into the final, which is us. None of us wears Amulet of Rebirth since we feel safe. If Purple was taken out, then she was out for good. I doubt this council will let us bring another healer from the outside. They might let one of the human participants from the individual match replace the missing member, but a healer is the most crucial piece in team composition. A team without a healer has a much lower chance of winning against a team with one."

"So, you are saying the assassin is sent by the orc or the vampire sides to jack up their team match's winning chance?"

"That is my guess."

"Only one of them should be the perpetrator, right? Why go after us when their own team is not yet certain to go to the final? Why not target their direct competitor first?"

"Now, that is something I am not clear about as well. Perhaps they know for sure that they will win against their current opponent? The one they have no confidence in is against the human team? But this move is pretty smart also. This way, we don't know whether it is the orc or the vampire who has hired that assassin. Probably that's why they hired a human race assassin as well, to prevent us from knowing which race is responsible."

"Hm... Now, I understand why you didn't tell Callan about this. Good! A man should not take the easy way."

"I actually don't mind the easy way, but I just feel like kicking their butts after seeing their dirty tricks."

Chapter 684: The Last Day Before the Finals

The next morning, everyone gathered at the roman theatre again. This was the last day before the finals. Whoever won today would go up against the winners from yesterday's matches to decide the final champions.

Pallas didn't bother giving any speech before these last matches prior to the finals. As before, he just went directly to calling the first match participants.

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Knight Section Match 5

Arthur Bagrat, level 46 Avenger (draconian) Vs Drunkteeth, level 46 Dragoon (vampire)

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Today's matches were also the first fight for those who had received the lucky free wins. Drunkteeth had never fought in the previous matches, so no one knew his ability.

Arthur as before, assumed his iaido stance once Pallas announced the start of the match. He stayed his ground with his hand on his katana's hilt as he waited for Drunkteeth to come.

Drunkteeth brandished his spear as he approached slowly. Normally, a spear's reach which was longer than a sword would put him at an advantage. However, he had seen from the previous match how fast and precise Arthur's sword was. Arthur's previous opponent carried a very long greatsword which was only slightly shorter than a spear. So, this reach advantage had been proven to be ineffective against Arthur.

But a Dragoon had long-range skills as well. He used Radiant Javelins. Seven javelins made of light hovered above him. This showed that Drunkteeth had upgraded his skill to at least level 8, as every four levels added one extra javelin.

Without wasting time, he threw all seven javelins at the same time. He positioned it so four out of the seven javelins flew at Arthur's left and right sides, cutting his escape, while the remaining three targeted three vital points in his body; head, chest, and belly.

Once the javelins shot out, he followed by using Piercing Spear. The spear energy followed after behind the javelins.

As the javelins came into range, Arthur's katana came out of its sheath. Seven sword lights followed the swing.

"Shadowless Slash!" Jack recognized the move. Arthur's Shadowless Slash was even more powerful than Warpath's. When Warpath used this art, he could only produce five sword lights. Furthermore, Jack didn't think this was the limit of Arthur's ability. He generated seven sword lights to deal with the incoming seven javelins. Jack had a feeling this swordmaster could generate even more sword lights if he wanted to.

The seven javelins were cut at almost the same time before they came into contact with Arthur. The swordmaster then shifted his position by moving his two feet slightly and turning his body. The Piercing Spear energy shot by beside Arthur, just an inch from touching his shoulder.

Drunkteeth was no longer in his position. After shooting his Piercing spear, He had executed Jump Attack. He teleported directly above Arthur and was now diving towards him.

He didn't perform a normal stab. He intended to finish this fight fast. He used Hundred Spears. Numerous spear afterimages formed before him as he fell. The countless stabs covered a large area, there was no place for Arthur to escape.

Yet, Arthur didn't show any intention of fleeing. He looked up as he had known his opponent's position from his mana sense. His katana made a large simple swing at the incoming stabs.

It was a simple slash, but it created a wide sword light that formed something that looked like a large crescent moon. All the spear stabs that came near this crescent moon vanished as if morning dew evaporated by sunlight. Drunkteeth's falling body dropped directly onto this crescent moonlight.

Damage number over damage number appeared rapidly as Drunkteeth touched this crescent moonlight. He felt as if he had fallen onto a giant chainsaw. Before his body fell to the floor, his HP had fallen to zero.

"Winner, Arthur Bagrat of the Draconian race!" Pallas declared.

"That was an incredible amount of mana used in that attack," Jack remarked.

Domon nodded. "It is. It seemed that old sword maniac has improved again since the last time I met him."

"This mana manipulation skill is crazy. It is even more powerful than a skill," Paytowin uttered.

"Mana manipulation is supposed to be the highest attainment possible, it is normal that it is powerful," Peniel said. "but you people made this technique look so easy."

"Trust me, lady. It is not easy. Have you not seen me going through all the troubles to learn it?" Jack said.

"Next match!" Pallas announced.

*

Warrior Section Match 5

Surewin, level 46 Blade Dancer (orc) Vs Domon Fei, level 46 Weapon Master (human)

*

"Oh, it's finally my turn!" Domon exclaimed. He stood from his seat and went down to the arena.

He passed by Arthur who was coming out of the arena. Arthur stopped and greeted him, "Master Domon, it's a pity that we are not in the same section. I would love to test my skills against yours again."

"You are welcome to do that some other time. Let us add each other as friends. We can arrange a place to spar or just hang out if you want," Domon said.

"That will be a splendid idea," Arthur replied.

The two then exchanged friends requests. Considering both of them were old traditionalists, it took them quite some time to work out the system. The two just stood there doing their things while Pallas and Surewin stared at them from the arena.

Also because they were old traditionalists, after finishing accepting each other's friend requests, they exchanged pleasantries again instead of just going their own ways immediately. They gave each other a martial palm-fist salute before separating. All the while, people were waiting for them.

When Domon noticed Pallas' glare, he realized his oversight. He chuckled while saying, "Please forgive me. It's not every day you meet an old friend. All right, I'm ready now."

Paytowin turned to Jack and said, "I admire your grandfather. He is not intimidated at all even under Pallas' glare."

"I doubt he can be intimidated by anything," Jack replied.

"Begin!" Pallas' voice boomed. Almost everyone's ears hurt from the voice. It was clear that the divine champion was annoyed.

Surewin brandished his two swords.

"Honey! You can do it! Beat that old foggy down. Show him that this battle is for the young, the energetic, and the attractive...!"

"What the f*ck," Jack uttered as he turned to where the weird cheer came from.

"Ho... Honey...?" Paytowin also turned.

In fact, almost everyone looked over. The person responsible for attracting everyone's attention was still cheering passionately. That person was Boastful, the berserker who had lost to Surewin in his previous match.

"Go, go, honey! You can do it...!" Boastful continued.

Surewin responded to Boastful's cheer by making a gesture of blowing a kiss to him.

"F*ck!! I can't take this! Gramps, finish her in one hit...!!" Jack shouted.

Boastful, who heard it, was immediately agitated. He turned to Jack and shouted, "What are you saying, kid? Do you want a piece of me...?! Don't make me go there and teach you some manners!"

Jack was not backing down. "Manners? You are yelling weird things like nobody's business and giving us all goosebumps and you still dare to talk manners with me?! Don't make me go there and shut your mouth for you!"

"How dare you! You come here and face me if you dare!"

"Why should I be the one who goes there? You come here and face me!"

The two continued throwing insults like nobody's business. The spectators' attentions were now on the two instead of the contestants below. Due to the commotion, Domon and Surewin didn't fight yet because they were unsure if they should start, even when Pallas had already announced for them to start.

"QUUIIEETTTT...!!!" Pallas yelled as he stomped and caused a tremor again. The resulting crack this time was even larger than the previous.

Both Jack and Boastful abruptly shut their mouths.

"I will throw the two of you out of this mountain if you still dare to utter a sound!" Pallas warned.

Absolutely no voice was heard afterward.

After a few seconds of silence, Pallas turned back to the two contestants and again said, "begin!"

Surewin again brandished her swords. Domon remained standing straight. His glaive was behind him as his left hand extended outward with his palm making a 'come here' sign.

"Old man, don't think I will go easy on you because of your age!" Surewin yelled as she ran forward and activated Phantom Blade. Dark phantom swords followed after her two swords as if the swords were casting shadows in the air.

"I don't like fighting women, so I will make this match short," Domon uttered.

"Big talk!" Surewin yelled as she executed Penta Slash.

Two swords slashed five times in rapid succession. Yet, none of the slashes hit. Domon took a step back each slash, keeping himself out of reach of Surewin's swords. When the fifth slash ended, his body shot forward abruptly. His two legs opened sideways in a low stance as his left hand extended forward with a fist strike.

The fist struck Surewin on her chest which was covered by armor. A loud bang was heard. Too loud for an impact caused by a fist.

WHAM

A shockwave radiated out from the impact as Surewin was thrown far away. She hit the protective shield, rebounded, and fell back to the arena floor. She didn't get up.

"Winner, Domon Fei of the human race!"

Only when Pallas' voice was heard did the spectators notice that Surewin's HP was already zero.

Chapter 685: Dagger Vs Fis

"Shit, he truly finished it with one hit...," Jack uttered.

Most of the outworlder spectators were more surprised to see a Weapon Master class deal damage to the opponent than the fact that he did it in one hit. They were wondering if the guy had somehow cheated. But since Pallas didn't say anything, they didn't bring up the subject.

Surewin was revived, Boastful jumped down to the arena and ran towards her, all the while throwing insults to Domon. The audience watched the guy in fascination.

Domon watched Boastful as he walked back to the spectators' seats, the guy was still rapping incessantly. Everyone expected Domon to give the guy a slap when he passed him by, but the old grandmaster kept his cool.

Surewin assured Boastful that she was fine. Boastful asked her if she was sure as he checked her to see if she had any visible wound. All the while the two traded flowery words. Jack had the urge to jump down there and gave them a piece of his mind, or a piece of his sword preferably.

The two weird lovebirds then left the arena together and went somewhere else. Jack thanked God for that.

"What art was that just now? I never see you use that move before," Jack asked Domon when he came back and sat by his side.

"It's a move that I never used on any opponent since I first learned it," Domon answered. "It's called Heart Exploding Punch. As its name implies, this is a killing art. For one who has less proficiency, this punch can stop the opponent's heartbeat upon successful strike. While one with a good mastery, the punch will do as its name implies, explodes the heart. It's a sure-kill deadly art."

"I see. Well, you must be happy to finally be able to use this move."

"I am. I can only use it since I know my opponent won't die for real."

"Can you teach me?" Leavemealone asked.

"If this is the old world, I won't teach this move to anyone unless I'm completely sure of their morality, but this world is a different matter. However, you are not ready yet. The mastery in mana manipulation required to execute this technique is very high," Domon replied. "When you are ready, I don't mind teaching you. However, you should know although this art is deadly, it is not exactly practical. You need extreme precision to hit the exact spot on your opponent's chest. Miss the spot, it will become just a normal punch. It will be difficult to execute it against a high-speed opponent."

Leavemealone nodded his understanding. He stood up. "It's my turn now. I will return soon," he said.

"Damn it! Can you please don't try being cool all the time?" Jack said to him.

*

Rogue Section Match 5

Darkradiant, level 46 Assassin (ethereal) Vs Leavemealone, level 46 Battle Monk (vampire)

*

The last time Jack was cheering for Darkradiant because she was from Wilted's camp. This time, he was cheering for Leavemealone. However, Jack had a feeling that guy didn't need any cheering at all.

"Begin!" Pallas declared.

Darkradiant got into a ready pose with her twin black daggers as she prepared to receive an attack, but Leavemealone just stood at his position with a relaxed stance.

Darkradiant frowned, did this battle monk underestimate her? Did he not see her finish her previous opponent in a short time?

Darkradiant wasn't aware that Leavemealone was indeed not here watching her last match. But Leavemealone assuming a relaxed pose was not because he underestimated her. The untrained minds might think so, but those with decent martial experience knew that Leavemealone was ready even in his relaxed pose. He was completely focused and on full alert. There were no weak spots available for his opponent to take advantage of.

Seeing that her opponent was not moving, Darkradiant decided to just quickly end this match as well. She vanished from sight.

"She is trying her previous tactic," Paytowin said.

"She is not someone who knows about mana sense," Jack said. "I'm glad that Leavemealone decided to join this tournament. If that woman goes against Wong, she will be crushed badly."

Leavemealone stayed still. Most of the audience was wondering why the guy still pretended to be cool when his opponent had become invisible. Any other person would have moved around frantically so they didn't get backstabbed.

While they were still wondering, Leavemealone's hands suddenly went to his back. Darkradiant came into view soon, her right hand was being grabbed by Leavemealone's. Her dagger was just a few inches from touching Leavemealone's waist.

She was extremely surprised, but she didn't stop her movement. She stabbed with her other free hand. Using Ranger's Swift Stab to increase her stabbing speed.

Leavemealone swayed his head, dodging the lightning-fast stab. His free fist punched out. Combining his non-standard skill, Iron Punch, that boosted damage with his fast and accurate control, his fist struck Darkradiant's elbow.

She screamed from the pain. In their past world, that punch would have shattered her elbow's bone, and she did feel as if that was happening.

Leavemealone made another punch to her head, attempting to finish the match fast. Darkradiant, although was in extreme pain, still had control over herself. She backflipped to dodge the punch while her leg kicked up. Leavemealone released the grip on Darkradiant's one hand to dodge the kick.

Once landed back, Darkradiant used Combat Clone, turning into two. The clone rushed at Leavemealone from the front while the real one used Phase Strike and disappeared again.

With his mana sense, Leavemealone easily located Darkradiant who had again come up behind him. Darkradiant used Unblockable Stab once she appeared while lunging forward to deliver a physical stab as well. Leavemealone was besieged from three sides.

Leavemealone could sense that he couldn't do anything to the Unblockable Stab, so he had stepped away once the phantom dagger thrust out. Unblockable Stab was a melee attack, it couldn't reach far. While it was impressive that the attack couldn't be blocked, someone with a fast reflex could easily avoid this assault by stepping away from its reach. The phantom dagger faded once it completed its short range.

The assault of the clone and the real Darkradiant, however, was still ongoing. Leavemealone spread his two arms to his two sides when the two assaults arrived. He then made a swivel. Darkradiant felt as if she had suddenly entered a vortex. She was swept forward, passing by beside Leavemealone without hitting him. Her clone also experienced the same thing, getting swept to where she was before. She and her clone had somehow exchanged places.

While she was still shocked by this sudden repositioning, she felt a hard impact from her back.

At the same time Leavemealone was punching Darkradiant's back, he gave the clone a back kick, throwing the clone away. He actually couldn't tell which one was the real Darkradiant, same as Wong when fighting against Kill Order. He just randomly sent one away so he could focus on one first.

Leavemealone then executed Infinite Lightning Punches. The fast-firing punches all landed on Darkradiant's back. She tried to move forward to distance herself but Leavemealone stepped forward maintaining distance, all the while his punches never stopped.

Her HP was decisively depleted from the never-ending punches.

"Winner, Leavemealone of the vampire race!" Pallas declared the result of this match.

'So, this is the real one,' Leavemealone thought.

"Did you teach him that spinning move? I never saw that martial art before as well," Jack asked Domon.

"No, that is his father's martial art. Its name is Cycle of Shade and Shadow. He was still having trouble executing it properly when he first showed it to me. I gave him a few pointers that help him perfect the move. I know what he was lacking because I've seen that move in action before, when his father used it on me."

"Didn't you say you don't remember fighting his father?"

"I don't. What I remember is his martial art," Domon replied.

Jack wondered if Leavemealone was feeling happy or sad when he heard that.

The revived Darkradiant went back to her seat, Jack could see the gloominess among the Wilted's camp. They were down to just one participant now. Whatever they are targeting now was out of their reach.

When Leavemealone returned to Domon's side, Jack asked if he would mind forfeiting his champion's reward if he managed to become the champion. Jack explained what Joe and Anotherday had told him about the secret feature of the tournament, about what those Wilted's gang needed to hinder Master's plan.

"I don't care about the rewards. I only care about winning and beating that guy," Leavemealone said as he turned to Wong. Jack assumed that was Leavemealone saying that he didn't mind forfeiting the reward if he won.

Pallas now called out the next contestants.

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Archer Section Match 5

Synapses, level 46 Beastmaster (vampire) Vs David, level 46 Gunner (human)

*

"Well, I'm off. Wish me luck," Jack heard David speak as he stood up. David was sitting close by since he was on the same human team as them.

"Good luck," Jack, Domon, and Jeanny all said.

David turned to them with a smile. Probably didn't truly expect a response.

"What do you think of his chances?" Paytowin asked.

"I'm not sure. In my opinion, Beastmaster class was kinda killer amongst the archer's elite classes in this one-on-one setup with nowhere to run or hide," Jack replied. "Whether it's elite marksman, gunner, or hidden weapon specialist, they will mostly be a goner once they are swarmed by the pet and the wolves. Well, if the beastmaster didn't complete the class trial on the first try, then those range classes still have a decent chance, meaning there is no Call Wolf Pack skill. But the participants here are all top-grades, and Synapses had shown in her previous match that she has the wolves."

Chapter 686: Close Quarter Comba

"So, are you saying this David guy has very little chance to win?" Paytowin asked.

"Don't underestimate him. I can sense his killer instinct. He is an experienced combatant," Domon offered his opinion.

"Yeah. He is a real-world soldier. So I think he should have a trick or two up his sleeves," Jack agreed.

"We are about to find out," Paytowin said.

The two combatants below the arena were facing each other. "Good luck," David said with a smile. Synapses didn't return the greeting.

"Begin!" Pallas announced.

Synapses didn't waste any time. She summoned her azure cat as well as called her seven wolves out, before turning into a human cat. It was clear that she wanted to finish this match fast.

David held a pistol in his right hand and a dagger on his left. He held the dagger with a reverse grip while pressing it close to his pistol as he fired, advancing at the same time.

"Huh?" Everyone was flabbergasted. Wasn't that gunner supposed to keep the distance, instead?

Synapses' wolves were faster, so they came to David faster than the others. As they approached, a shadow leaped out from behind David. The shadow revealed itself to be a large dog with long black fur and red eyes.

"A Barghest, another medium-sized rare elite pet," Peniel exclaimed.

"Rare elite?" Jack was amazed. He was not surprised that Ronald owned a rare elite pet, considering his association with Master who had a deep knowledge of this game world. But David was a normal player, who from the looks of it, never played a game before. So, it was even more amazing for him to be able to get his hands on such a high-grade pet.

When the Barghest almost came into contact with the wolves, flame erupted around its fur. The wolves that tried to bite the Barghest recoiled back as they received fire damage.

"Isn't that Elementalist's Flame Shield?" Jack uttered after seeing the scene.

"That Barghest had several abilities. Its most troublesome power is not that Flame Shield. This pet is actually the best one to go against other classes that have a pet," Peniel said.

"Oh? Why is that," Jack asked.

"You will see. That azure tiger although appears impressive is a special elite grade, one grade lower than the Barghest, so it should have no problem using its ability."

Jack became curious due to Peniel's world. He saw as the wolves retreated, the azure tiger had arrived and was about to clash with the Barghest.

Suddenly, the Barghest's red eyes glowed bright red. The azure tiger stopped.

"It has the mesmerize ability like vampires?" Jack asked.

"No. Better," Peniel replied.

Before Jack could ask for further explanation, the azure tiger moved again. However, instead of pouncing on the smaller Barghest, it whirled around and smacked the wolves behind it.

"Mind control?" Jack asked.

"Charm monster," Peniel answered. "The skill turned a hostile monster or pet into an ally for a short duration. The skill had a failure chance, though. Against same grade and same level monsters, the success possibility is roughly only thirty to fifty percent. Against lower grade monsters of the same level, the success rate is around fifty to seventy percent. Lower level monsters will increase the success chance further."

"How long will the monster be charmed?" Jack asked.

"Thirty seconds," Peniel answered.

Thirty seconds was a short time, but it was also enough time for two experts to decide winning or losing.

The azure tiger took on most of the wolves and the barghest took on the rests, but due to the wolves' large numbers, one still managed to come to David. David had never stopped advancing. When the wolf lunged, David gave it a straight kick and sent the wolf sprawling across the floor.

Synapses in her cat form had also come near. David never stopped shooting as he advanced, and the target was always Synapses. Synapses had been tanking the shots as she advanced. After using Beast Form, her HP had doubled and she also had a small regenerative effect. She could survive a few standard attacks. What puzzled her though, was why her opponent was also running towards her. She didn't let this confusion hinder her. As long as she got the gunner into melee range, she knew she would win.

David was now directly in front of her. She swung her arm forward to claw at David, as her maw prepared to bite. David shot a bullet point-blank at her, accurately hitting her left eye, which resulted in critical damage. Synapses felt extreme pain and also pushback from the shot, but she forced herself forward.

As her claw was about to hit David, David shifted his position to the side so Synapses' claw hit his left arm. David received damage but Synapses felt her clawing arm getting locked, then it was being twisted. She felt herself losing balance. David's pistol fired from close range again. This time, the shot hit Synapses' right eye. Now her two eyes were closed, causing her to lose vision.

David came to Synapses' side while she was blinded and losing balance, her rib-cage was exposed. David made rapid stabs at her side using his dagger. His pistol still aimed at Synapses' head and activated Rapid Shot. All five bullets hit the back of Synapses' head. No miss, it would be difficult to miss from such a close range.

All the headshots were critical hits. Despite Synapses' double HP, she still couldn't tank those many punishments. She fell to the floor without knowing what had happened after losing her sight.

"Winner, David of the human race!" Pallas declared.

The crowd cheered. David made a slight bow to the audience with a smile.

"A gunner who is not afraid of close combat. Now, that's something," Paytowin uttered.

"Yeah. Hopefully, he can do something about that other gunner," Jack said as he glanced at Ronald. The final of the archer section would be between these two unusual gunners.

The next match continued. The last member of Wilted's camp who had come to this tournament, Blackhole, walked down to the arena. His face seemed indifferent. The winner of the third match of the mage section, Flarement, also walked down.

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Mage Section Match 5

Flarement, level 46 Summoner (draconian) Vs Blackhole, level 46 Elementalist (ethereal)

*

The two magic users took their positions opposite each other.

"Begin!" Pallas announced.

Flarement immediately prepared Magic Shield. After seeing what happened during Selena's last match, he didn't dare to initiate the match by immediately throwing basic spells. Strangely, Blackhole didn't react as was expected. He was already casting an advanced or elite spell at the moment, spell formation was forming at the tip of his long staff. His casting was fast, rivaling Selena or even faster.

Flarement was surprised by Blackhole's act but he immediately took action. He fired Mana Bullet and Energy Bolts before started casting a spell as well.

Blackhole acted as if nothing happened. The mana bullet and energy bolts came and battered his body. Amazingly, his spell formation continued, not even slowing down.

"Does he have some sort of talent that can prevent his spell casting from being disrupted," Jack asked Peniel.

"Not every hit is guaranteed to disrupt one's casting. As long as the casters maintain their concentration on the spell then the casting will continue. Still, it is easier said than done. Most spellcasters would lose their concentration from a hit."

"Meaning he is a very focused person," Jack remarked. "Or, he could have a talent that helps him focus his concentration, like my Hundred Synchronous Thoughts."

"Probably," Peniel didn't disagree.

Blackhole's spell formation was completed and the preferred Elementalist's spell to initiate a fight was cast, Ice Field. It had a wide area of effect and also slowed the opponent down. If the opponent was unlucky, he would be frozen instead.

Flarement didn't bother to run when he saw the Ice Field's starting effect appear, it would be futile to do so. He continued his casting while praying that he didn't get frozen status.

He was hit by the ice spell, suffering damage, but thankfully, not frozen. He also managed to keep his casting intact, the casting speed slowed down though when he was hit.

Blackhole was already casting another spell. Flarement's spell took effect, he was only casting a one-rune spell, Barrier. Once Barrier came up, he felt more confident. He started casting the summoning spell that required more runes. Even if his barrier was broken, he still had the Deep Wisdom race skill to help him keep his concentration.

Blackhole's spell was completed and Arcane Turbulence came up with Flarement in the center. Blackhole continued with another spell. Flarement felt that Blackhole's casting was picking up in speed each time he cast a spell. He dismissed it and convinced himself that it was only his misperception.

But when he saw Blackhole complete a four rune spell earlier than him who was also casting a four rune spell despite starting later, he knew then it was not a misperception.

Chapter 687: Orc Vs vampire

A wall of lightning came up with Flarement right in the middle. His Barrier had burst apart by then but he managed to complete his spell. His armored lizard appeared beside him.

Flarement wanted to move away from the lightning wall but he was paralyzed by the lightning. Before he could recover, a ring of light appeared around him and locked him in place. Blackhole had cast Magic Bind, preventing Flarement from moving away. Flarement was now suffering from continuous damage from both Arcane Turbulence and Lightning Wall.

His armored lizard tried to advance, but it was slowed because it was also within the Arcane Turbulence area.

Blackhole had been casting another spell again. He never stopped casting one spell after another. A large fireball appeared and rushed at the immobilized Flarement. It crashed onto him and caused Burn. His HP went down to a dangerous level.

The Arcane Turbulence had completed its duration and disappeared, but the magic bind and lightning wall were still there. The lightning wall gave him continuous damage as well as non-stop chances of getting paralyzed as long as he stayed within the lightning wall.

He panicked seeing his HP continued to go down but could not do anything to release himself from the magic bind. One could force oneself free from a magic bind if one had sufficient strength. But he was a magic user which had a low stat in strength. He could only watch helplessly as his HP was depleted.

Flarement's armored lizard that was still walking towards Blackhole disappeared. Pallas declared Blackhole as the winner and announced the end of the individual matches for today.

Everyone was amazed. Aside from Arthur Bagrat, all the other individual matches were won by the lucky players who had acquired lucky wins. Nobody expected these lucky players to also be hidden experts.

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After the twenty minutes break, the semifinal team match started.

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Team Section Match 3: Orc Vs vampire

Orc Team

Violent Blizzard, level 46 Avenger

Four Winds, level 46 Berserker

Disco Rain, level 46 Assassin

Water Lily, level 46 Elementalist

Purple Mist, level 46 Priest

Vs

Vampire Team

Loudshield, level 46 Sentinel

Operator, level 46 Technocraft

Jungletrek, level 46 Beastmaster

Susan, level 46 Summoner

Naturecall, level 46 Druid

*

"The vampire team...," Jack mumbled.

"What about it?" Paytowin asked.

"It's going to be quite crowded," Jack replied simply.

"Do you still think one of these teams sent the assassin yesterday?" Domon whispered.

"I think so," Jack answered.

Pallas opened the portals for the two teams and they went inside their respective portals. Everyone turned to the projections up in the sky to see where they ended up at.

It was a region filled with hot lava rivers, hills, and small volcanoes that spewed out lava.

Inside this arena dimension, the two teams came out to a scorching and smearing landscape. Lava geysers shot out at an interval along the routes before them. Sometimes an explosion occurred at one of the volcanoes' craters, this explosion created a rain of fiery meteors that landed on an area randomly.

"Let's head out," Four Winds ordered and they took the most direct route, the central path.

From the projection outside, everyone saw that the vampire team did the same. The two teams showed every indication that they wanted to finish this match with speed. However, when the vampire team was halfway, the beastmaster called out his wolf pack. Seven wolves ran forward in a fan formation.

This wolf pack soon met the orc team who had taken the straight route as well. But instead of engaging, they ran back and warned their master. The vampire team members started casting spells.

Susan summoned her avatar, a giant lizard, a fae, and eight dirt golems. Naturecall summoned two tall treants. Jungletrek called out his pet, a minotaur. Operator threw his techno golem ball which transformed into a large squarely and clunky-looking robot.

"You are right, it is crowded," Paytowin remarked.

The small army then moved forwards, with the summons spearheading the march. The two teams came into view of each other. The orc team could now see the army of summons heading their way.

"If it is me, I will retreat first and wait for the duration of that summons to expire. This way, it will only leave the pet and the techno golem to be dealt with."

"Apparently, the orc team is not you," Jack commented.

The orc team continued marching forward, unfazed by the increased number of their opponents. An explosion took place from one of the nearby volcanoes. The volcanic rocks from that explosion rained down right at the middle where the two teams would have met. So, they halted their advances while it happened.

Once the rain of molten rocks ended, one woman sped forward from the orc team. It was Violent Blizzard. Her other four teammates followed behind.

The vampire team was not to be outdone, their marching summons also rushed forward while they followed closely from behind.

Violent Blizzard showed no fear against the incoming mass of summons. Her speed didn't diminish. When the summons were almost upon her, she jumped with her silver greatsword held high. The giant aura of a blue sword with two large wings appeared. She slashed down. The energy of this Blue Wing

Slash cut towards the summons. The energy spread out and pushed the summons to two sides. The summons were both damaged and faltered from that powerful skill.

Her four teammates separated into two teams, Four Winds and Purple Mist took the left side while Disco Rain and Water Lily went to the right. Water Lily cast her Ice Field. The group of summons on the right was all caught within the spell, suffering damage and were slowed.

Water Lily followed up by casting Arcane Turbulence which was different than normal. There was a fence of chains around the spell's circular edge. The monsters inside couldn't escape the spell due to these chains. Water Lily had used a seed to transform her Arcane Turbulence into Prison Turbulence.

With one portion of the summons locked by Water Lily's Prison Turbulence, Disco Rain dove into the midst of the rest and started stabbing with high speed.

At the left-wing, Four Winds also dove into the summons' midst without care and started slashing. Purple Mist cast Bless on him and he activated his Enhanced Berserk. His two axes slashed wildly, creating starlights all around him. Every incoming opponent was repelled and damaged at the same time. Violent Blizzard came and joined his side soon.

Any other team would have gone to finish off the summoners instead of wasting time with the summons. Yet, this orc team seemed to show the intention of beating the summons first.

The vampire players didn't stay idle. Operator placed traps before them before joining Susan, and Naturecall in dishing out ranged attacks. Operator was using a gun for a weapon. Jungletrek ran forward and turned into a werebear, he joined his summons and clashed with Violent Blizzard. Loudshield stayed to protect the remaining three players just in case any of the orcs charged over.

Despite the overwhelming numbers, it was the summoned creatures that were at a disadvantage. The wolves died one after another, the dirt golems as well. The battle which was at the two fronts started to converge into the middle. The five orcs worked together using the Five Poles Formation, thinning out the herds further.

When the vampires saw the five grouped up again, Susan and Naturecall started casting the big spells. Runes appeared one after another. Susan completed her spell first. The cloud above turned dark. Crackles and thunders were heard. The black cloud parted and a shining ball crackling with electricity fell. When it fell to the height of around twenty meters from the ground, it exploded. Uncountable lightning spears came crashing down. It was Summoner's Elemental Spirit. In this case, it was the lightning spirit.

Because there were too many summons blocking the view, the vampire team didn't notice Purple Mist was also casting a spell. Before the lightning spears came down, Purple Mist had completed her spell and the five orcs disappeared. They appeared soon behind the vampire team. Purple Mist had used Mass Teleportation to get to the enemy's rear while dodging the destructive spell.

But before they could ambush the vampire team, Naturecall turned around. She had not cast her spell. She had purposely slowed down her casting. The vampire team had seen Purple Mist's Mass Teleportation from the last match so they were aware of it. Naturecall completed her spell at this time. It was the spell of Wild Stampede. A crowd of wildebeests appeared and started rampaging towards the orc team.

In the last match, the orc team had used Mass Teleportation to escape this spell. Now they had used it to escape the Elemental Spirit spell, so they couldn't use it again. Additionally, the vampire team didn't just position themselves randomly. They had stood with their backs not far from a flowing lava river. So, when the orc team teleported behind them, it was their backs that were facing the lava river now. With the stampede coming, they would be pushed into this lava river.

Chapter 688: All the Finalists Decided

When the orc team teleported to the back of the vampire team, Water Lily was also in the midst of casting a spell. Once the stampede appeared, her spell was also completed. A huge chunk of ice materialized in the air. It was her Ice Fall spell. But instead of aiming the large ice block on the enemy or the incoming stampede, Water Lily placed her spell behind them.

The ice block fell to the lava river behind. The bottom side of the ice block was small but its top side was wide. The ice block didn't melt from the lava. Its wide topside was floating on the river.

The five orcs jumped to the top of the ice block. It was wide enough for five people to stand on.

The rampaging wildebeests stampeded to the edge of the river before falling into the bubbling lava. Each of them drowned without being able to reach where the ice block was floating.

"F*ck! That spell can also be used that way? Attack with your range attacks!" Loudshield commanded.

Operator, Susan, and Naturecall shot their standard attacks. Operator also summoned his Energy Turret to add to the firepower. Four Winds placed himself at the forefront and used his Starlight Field to repel all the incoming attacks.

Naturecall's stampede lasted for less than ten seconds. Water Lily's ice block lasted longer. When the stampede ended, the five orcs jumped back to the riverside.

The two teams stared at each other. The vampire team's summons had greatly reduced in number. The giant lizard, One treant, all the wolves and dirt golems had died. Only the avatar, the pet minotaur, one remaining treant, and the clunky robot remained, but all of them were also not at full health. The vampire players retreated to behind these remaining summons except for Loudshield and Jungletrek who was still in his werebear form. Naturecall cast Wall of Vines between their front lines and the three ranged players.

"No more big spells. Let's do this old-fashioned way," Four Winds uttered with a grin. He and his teammates rushed forward.

Four Winds uttered a roar after his words ended. It was his Cry of Rage, his four teammates all received buff from the cry. His body then shot forward, jumping over the vine wall using Jump Assault. The vampire team's three ranged players at the back were taken aback. Especially Naturecall, who found Four Winds suddenly was right on top of her.

Naturecall tried to dodge, but her movement was slow. Four Wind's axes came cleaving down. Her wall of vines had instead prevented her frontline teammates from coming to her aid.

Operator changed his weapon to a dagger and tried to draw Four Wind's attention to save Naturecall. Four Winds reacted faster, his body spun at fast speed using Punishing Cyclone and damaged all three of the ranged players there.

When Naturecall's HP fell to critical, Loudshield suddenly appeared in front of her and blocked Four Winds from further attack. As the healer of the team, Loudshield had marked her with his Urgent Save skill.

"Too late," Four Winds uttered.

Loudshield heard Naturecall's scream from behind. He looked back and saw their healer's lifeless body. Disco Rain was standing there. She had used Vanish as her other teammates engaged the summoned creatures and Jungletrek. While being invisible, she sneaked behind the vine wall and backstabbed Naturecall who was already low on health.

With their healer gone, it was a heavy blow to the vampire team.

"Take down their healer as well!" Loudshield shouted. Currently, their frontlines were outnumbering their three opponents. Two out of these three opponents were even ranged players. No sense that they couldn't finish off at least one of the range players if everyone concentrated their attacks.

But they were indeed having difficulty. Violent Blizzard large greatsword had a long reach. She covered a wide area with one swing. She swung ferociously to anyone who tried to come close to Purple Mist. She fought without care for her own wellbeing. She was continuously struck due to her wild movements. Ten avenging orbs swirled around her.

Seeing that they couldn't get to the healer, Jungletrek changed his focus to Violent Blizzard whose HP had gone down a great deal. He executed Combination Assault, both he and his Minotaur crashed at her. She parried the combined attack using her greatsword as well as using Knight's Enhanced block, but her HP still went down a great deal.

Seeing Violent Blizzard was almost down, Jungletrek attempted a finishing blow. But a thick white light encapsulated Violent Blizzard. Her HP which was almost depleted was instantly filled up to full. This was Purple Mist's Full Heal, a level 40 Priest's spell.

Violent Blizzard tanked Jungletrek's blow with her full life and used Raging Strike. She sacrificed all her avenging orbs into this strike, greatly catapulting his damage number.

Jungletrek's own HP was not in good condition anymore. Violent Blizzard's greatsword pierced through his large werebear's body and sucked out all the life.

When Jungletrek fell, his pet minotaur was also forcefully unsummoned. Since Naturecall had also died, her one remaining treant also disappeared. The vampire team's number had been greatly reduced within a short time. There were now only the three players with the avatar and the robot.

It was five against five now. Yet, no one thought it was a balanced fight. Considering how the vampire's starting number was much more than this and they still couldn't take down even one of the orc team members.

However, despite their obvious disadvantage, the vampire team didn't retreat nor surrender. They continued to fight fiercely until the last man.

When the nearby volcano exploded again, they saw incoming rain of fiery rocks above where they were fighting. Everyone started to scatter. The last vampire team member, Loudshield, forcefully caught the orc healer, Purple Mist, and held her in place. Loudshield was determined to take down at least one of their opponents in this manner.

Loudshield could have caught Water Lily as well. She and Purple Mist were the weakest and the slowest amongst the bunch, but he knew of Elementalist's Flame Shield. Water Lily could easily free herself if Loudshield caught her. The priest, on the other hand, had no defensive skill.

However, when Loudshield's hand landed on her, Purple Mist turned around and caught his hand back. She twisted the vampire's hand with one hand as the other hand stored her staff and went to Loudshield's neck. Her strong fingers locked his throat and held him in place instead.

Due to Loudshield's disturbance, it was already too late for Purple Mist to escape. She held Loudshield's body and placed him at her front as her shield. Loudshield was completely shocked to find that he was overpowered by a weaker class player. The thing that confused him was that he felt himself losing strength from Purple Mist's clutches.

The rain of fire came and showered the place where they stood. Loudshield was battered by the molten rocks while Purple Mist hid behind him. Purple Mist received splash damage but was not as severe as Loudshield. When Loudshield's HP was depleted and can't move anymore, Purple Mist let go of him and immediately took out her staff and cast her spell.

Her casting speed was very fast. Probably at the same level as Selena and Blackhole who were the two fastest spellcasters in this tournament. She cast Words of Prayer and the area around her alighted. She then proceeded with another spell with Loudshield's body still shielding her. The splash damage from the fiery rocks bothered her but her concentration was rock solid, her spell casting was not disrupted.

She cast Regenerate and Heal back to back. When the fire rain ended, her HP was critical but she survived.

Pallas declared the orc team's victory.

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"Why did she insist on surviving? They have already won when that Sentinel lost his life," Paytowin remarked.

"That is called determination. You cannot be careless just because victory is right in front of your eyes," Jack admonished. He then turned to his grandfather. "Do you understand why that weaker class girl managed to overpower that stronger class man?"

"She used pressure points," Domon answered.

Jack came to a realization. He was not a stranger to pressure points.

"And she was very good at it. Her accuracy in hitting the right points and the degree of force used all showed that she was a master in that field. When you face her, don't get careless and think you will win just because you manage to get her into melee range."

Jack nodded. This orc team was indeed not simple.

"One thing confuses me, though," Jack said.

"Hm? What?"

"The two teams fight in a very direct manner. Both of them are very determined and confident in themselves. None attempts any cheap trick."

"So, isn't that good? It's a good match if you ask me," Domon said.

"It is. But because of this, there is a possibility that I'm wrong," Jack said.

"About?"

"The assassin from yesterday. Both of these teams didn't act like one who uses a dirty tactic such as weakening their opponents before the match."

Chapter 689: The Old Gang

When the two teams reappeared in the arena, everyone applauded. Not just for the winning orc team, but also for the vampire team who lost. They had both shown a strong fighting spirit. Even Pallas looked pleased.

The tournament ended with this team match, the orc team would be going into the finals facing the human team, which would be held tomorrow. Everyone left with great anticipation for the final matches tomorrow.

The orc team went back to their quarters. They walked together with the orc native representatives. After arriving in their quarter, they parted ways and went to their own rooms. Abasi Raretooth, who was one of the natives, went into his room with another native who was older and appeared to be of higher station.

Once inside the room, Abasi locked the door and said to this other native, "Father, I'm afraid the assassination had failed. That human healer girl is still in the audience today."

"When that human assassin didn't return to report last night, the result is obvious already," Abasi's father, whose name was Abdu Raretooth, said. "Once we returned, organize a team to hunt him down. His failure meant that he had most likely been found out by the Council of Virtus. And since we are not yet disqualified, it meant he has escaped as well. He won't dare to return to the Assassins Guild since he has taken a freelance job unsanctioned by the guild, even offending this divine faction. He won't have a place to go."

"I'm rather surprised he is willing to take this risky job in the first place," Abasi said.

Abdu chuckled. "He owed me a favor. The guy's a fool but he keeps his words. Anyway, now that he is found out, he is useless anymore. He should be eliminated before this faction gets to him and force him to spill everything. We can just deny since he is of the human race, but I still prefer not to get that kind of heat. Now, about the assassination attempt. Since it has failed, how confident are you in that outworlder's team representing our nation?"

"Under normal circumstances, I would say they would have the best chance of winning," Abasi answered. "But that multi-class outworlder from the human team, his power is beyond what normal outworlders have at the same level. His existence throws normal sense to the wind."

"Then our team should just follow what the dwarf's team does. Eliminate all others and evade that multi-class human until the time runs out."

"... I'm afraid our outworlders won't abide by this tactic."

"Hmph! Why do you get such thickheaded outworlders to represent us anyway?"

"... Because they are the best there is in our nation."

"We can't lose to the human team. The team match's outcome is the most prestigious. Any other country as the victor is still fine as long as it is not the human's one. That's why I have taken the risk of bringing that human assassin when we came here. The human prestige will increase if they win this tournament. Our proposal to the Council of Ten to invade Themisphere will get a setback if that happens. The other chiefs who disagree with the invasion will just use this excuse as a sign that we will lose if we invade."

"I understand, I will talk with our outworlder team again," Abasi said.

"Tell them we will give more incentives if they win. That should encourage them to do everything necessary to win," Abdu suggested.

"Yes, father..."

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Jack was heading to the Temple of Courage to do the Ancient Battleground again. Paytowin was nowhere to be seen after the matches ended. Jack had sent him a message asking him for his whereabouts. Paytowin asked Jack to just come to the temple. He would be waiting at the entrance of the temple.

When he was close to the entrance, he was surprised to find another person there waiting with Paytowin.

"Oh... Hi! What are you doing here?" Jack asked that person next to Paytowin.

"I heard you two have been entering this cool dimension called ancient battleground. I am here to join you two," Grace said.

"You do?" Jack looked at Paytowin, who just shrugged and then looked away.

"You know you have to pay coins to enter, right?" Jack asked.

"I have the coins," Grace answered.

"The exp points are meager and the rewards are shitty," Jack said again.

"I will be the judge myself. Why do I have the feeling that you don't want me to join?"

"You are just imagining it. We are glad to have you! What are we waiting for? Let's go!" Jack said and gave Paytowin a questioning glance. Paytowin turned away again.

As they walked towards the hall. Jack asked Grace, "Where do you hear about this ancient battleground anyway?"

"He mentioned it when we talked," Grace was pointing at Paytowin. "When I express my interest to join, he happily invited me."

Paytowin felt like crying. Grace had literally come to him and demanded to be told where he and Jack had gone to every afternoon after the matches. She practically threatened him to be allowed to join. He had been worried when he asked Myson about letting another outsider into the ancient battleground. Surprisingly, Myson allowed it. But his faction points were deducted, though. He felt like being the friend of these two was getting more and more expensive by the day.

While Paytowin was lamenting, he received a silent message from Jack, 'Hey, you are okay bringing extra people? Then can I ask my friends to join as well? We can bring a maximum of ten, right?'

'No, no! Please don't, brother! Just the three of us!' Paytowin hurriedly replied. He would be dead broke if more players are joining.

Paytowin then sent another message, 'I'm excited. It felt like the old gang again.'

'Me too,' Jack replied. 'She doesn't know yet about me, does she?'

'No, she doesn't,' Paytowin lied.

Paytowin explained the general outlines of the ancient battleground to Grace as he prepared the device. Once the portal appeared, the three entered. Once inside, Grace had the same astonished eyes as Jack had when he first laid eyes on the battlefield.

Her attention stayed on the mass of blackness in the distance for a long while. "All of those are our enemies?" She asked.

"There will be more appearing from behind," Jack answered. "Don't expect getting a good result here. It's an impossible mission. Just enjoy the battle."

"If so, then why do you keep on entering this place?" Grace asked.

"I am training my mana manipulation here," Jack replied.

"What's that? First, it's mana sense. Now, it's mana manipulation."

"You will see when the battle started. Let's go to the frontline."

The three ran forward and waited with the other battlefront soldiers.

"Why don't we go to that side? The golden armies there looked much stronger," Grace asked.

"So, you spot them as well," Jack said. He then explained to her the pros and cons of fighting around the golden knights.

"The two of you can focus on getting the one thousand kills. I will practice my mana manipulation," Jack told them.

Paytowin equipped his gun and mechanical dagger then called out his Brave King, which impressed Grace the same way the techno golem impressed Jack the first time he laid eyes on it. Grace readied her mace and shield. Jack called out his Therras and ten wolves but otherwise did nothing else.

When Grace saw Jack didn't ready any weapons, she asked, "Why are you not getting ready?"

"I'm already ready," Jack answered with a grin.

"Don't bother about him. You will see," Paytowin said.

The black armies soon crashed with the soldiers in front of them. The battlefield soon turned chaotic. Some enemies broke through and the three engaged them. Same as yesterday, Jack fought with punches and kicks.

"I thought you said his classes were Blade Dancer, Archmage, and Beastmaster? Did he also have Battle Monk class?" Grace asked Paytowin.

"That is his mana manipulation," Paytowin answered.

"It's that chi thing the martial artists of our world like to sell when they performed things that bordered on superhuman feat. Apparently, this world enhanced that ability. It also allows one without the battle monk class to cause damage even when not using a weapon."

Grace thought about Paytowin's explanation, then said, "Is that how that human Weapon Master from earlier today defeat his opponent despite using a punch? Even one punch for that matter."

"Yes. And for your information, that Weapon Master is that guy's grandfather."

Grace turned to Jack and uttered, "Teach me this mana manipulation method!"

Jack was rather taken aback by her sudden request that he got a slash from the enemy he was facing.

"Uh... My grandfather will gladly teach you if you wish to learn, but you will have to join my guild."

"All right, I will join," Grace said without hesitation.

Chapter 690: Secret Pathway

Jack was taken aback again by her outright willingness but was otherwise glad. He even sent her a guild invitation in the middle of the battle. She accepted the invitation promptly.

Having an elven race member, their guild could now set up the teleportation link to the Aurebor Dynasty, getting access to the elven country. Jack just hoped that Jeanny didn't use this chance to attack Wicked Witches' headquarters. He was not too fond of these guild wars things. He preferred to spend his time continuing to explore the rest of this game world.

With Grace's help, Paytowin managed to collect decent kill counts, but not yet enough for one thousand kills before they were supposed to head over to the golden knight's side. Without Jack focusing on killing enemies, it would be difficult to get the required kill counts again unless they invite more people to join.

Jack gave them the cue when it was time. He didn't want to miss studying the mana manipulation combat. They fought through the masses and were about to reach the golden knight group who was just about to make their suicide charge.

As they approached, Grace asked, "Which golden knight groups should we follow?"

"Which groups? There is only one before us here," Paytowin said.

"There is another one over there," Grace pointed.

The two looked over. It was hard to see with all the chaotic fighting around, but after Grace mentioned it, they did see a glimpse of some golden armored knights heading elsewhere in speed.

"Wow, you can notice that in the middle of all this? If you take the archer class, won't your vision be Godly then?" Jack remarked. He then asked. "Where do that other group of golden knights go?"

Paytowin shrugged. "I don't know. Never realized a group breaking out all the time I spent inside here."

Jack didn't blame him. On the second day when they entered this ancient battleground, they had gone to this golden knight group immediately once the battle started. Even then he didn't notice a group breaking off from the main. It was all thanks to Grace's eyesight that they noticed this small detail.

"We should follow them," Jack said.

"They are too far already. I don't think we can make it," Paytowin said. "That splinter group's speed seems to be faster as well. With all the surrounding enemies, we can't chase them while fighting."

"... All right, we will do that on our next run. Let's stay with this main group for now."

So, the three did as they originally planned. Jack went and use his Dragon Eye skill to study the leader's battle again, while taking out his swords this time and trying to copy the way the leaders channeled their mana to their weapon.

When they were defeated and came back out into the hall, Grace expressed the impossibility of getting any scores. The same sentiment as Jack and Paytowin had on their first run.

Before re-entering, Jack said to them, "All right. This time, I will focus on killing as well. We will get the one thousand kill counts early and then we will head to the golden knights' group early and looked for that splinter group. We will then follow them."

"You think there is something about that splinter group?" Paytowin asked.

"I don't think a game is designed for people to fail. A proper game, anyway. I think there should be some secret way for us to gain the scores needed for a reward. That splinter group can be the answer."

"All right, I am game!" Paytowin raised his fist to the two of them.

Jack and Grace both glanced at each other before bumping their fists as well.

Once they entered the ancient battleground, they headed directly to the frontline and made preparations. Jack brandished his sword and staff now, he would focus on getting kill counts this time. After the last run, his Therras had also increased to level 42. His pet didn't have the problem of multi-class that sucked up exp points. Additionally, he continued feeding it high-grade pet food. He figured as time passed, this pet of his would eventually become higher level than him.

With Jack serious about killing enemies, they raked up kill counts swiftly. Grace was amazed as Jack displayed all the skills of his three classes. The fight between players in the tournament matches was too short for Jack to display all his prowess. In this battleground, there was no end to the enemies, so Jack's skill was unleashed one after another.

Grace was especially shocked when Jack released his Lightning God Barrage. Their kill counts immediately shot up with that move.

"What skill was that?!" Grace asked. If Jack had used that skill in the match against her team, the match would have ended in an instant.

"It's a skill I received from a divine treasure," Jack answered truthfully.

"Divine treasure...? You are truly full of surprises."

Jack and Paytowin fought well together as they had been doing it for days. They had known each other's skills and abilities well. Although Grace had a problem following them at first, she quickly adjusted herself to their rhythm. Even though this was a different game than the ones they used to play with, they had been playing games together for a long time in the past. So, it was easy for her to cooperate with them.

Jack took point as the two supported from behind. Grace and Peniel were in charge of healing so they could fight more recklessly. They ended up completing one thousand kill marks a little faster than Jack and Paytowin's past record. They hurriedly went to where the golden knights were fighting.

"Pay attention when you see the splinter group," Jack uttered.

"They are already separating," Grace said as she pointed in a direction.

"What? Hurry, let's head over!" Jack said.

The three immediately went in that direction.

There were indeed some golden knights moving away from the main group. They numbered around one hundred. The main group of the golden knights seemed to be drawing the enemy's attention to cover this small group's split.

The three players sneaked into amongst this small group rank. This smaller group was led by a female golden knight. She had long golden hair complementing her golden armor. This group moved swiftly as they sneaked into a narrow path by one of the mountainsides that formed the choke point.

There were no enemies in this path, but the terrain was difficult to travel. It had lots of steep elevation and some parts could only be traveled in a single file. The three players followed at their tails. Jack and Paytowin had unsummoned all their minions to allow for easy travel.

"Where are they going?" Paytowin asked.

"They are not escaping, right?" Grace said.

"No way, they are the knights directly under the God of Courage. There is no way any of them will dishonor their God by fleeing the battlefield," Paytowin replied.

"I also don't think so. The main group seemed determined to cover this group. Furthermore, the direction they are traveling to is actually to the other side where the enemy is," Jack said.

"An ambush? What good will an ambush do when the base they are defending is already overrun? They will still lose," Grace asked again.

"At this stage, I don't think this war is about winning or losing anymore. Most likely they are trying to at least cripple the enemy even if they lose. They must be targeting something at the end of this path," Jack said. "But aside from that, why the heck is this so-called choke point has so many secret paths? No wonder the enemy finds some of them and used them to ambush the defending base from the rear."

After a long walk through this secret pathway, they finally came out at a wider path. The golden knights proceeded forward by creeping. On their left was a range of hills. Jack estimated from the sound, the battle was still ongoing behind these hills.

They proceeded forward for a longer time. The three hours mark had already passed. This period was when they were usually getting overrun and killed. The main army should have collapsed at this moment as the attacking army proceeded in hunting and slaughtering all those that were still alive.

Jack saw the group of golden knights gather at the front. The female knight appeared to be making a brief speech before the group suddenly uttered battle cries and rushed over the hill. Jack, Paytowin, and Grace looked at each other before they ran forward and joined these knights.

When Jack went over the hill, he saw that the golden knights were rushing towards a group of black soldiers. Many tents and carts were seen nearby this group. A man in ceremonial black robe surrounded by a group of black knights was seen sitting behind a low table overlooking the battle that was going on in the distance.

It was the enemy's command center and the army's supplies!

The sitting black-robed man, who should be the commander of the black army, turned in direction of the incoming golden knights. His bodyguards around him started shouting. The soldiers that were guarding the supply carts came forward to block these golden knights. These black armies looked to be around five hundred in number.

The golden knights' advance didn't slow. They were not fazed even when facing enemies five times their number.

Jack saw the enemy commander turning his attention back to the battlefield in the distance as if this ambushing army didn't deserve his attention.