

Destiny 1631

Chapter 1631 A Powerful Technique

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"Tsk! Tsk!" Shin was resting at the depths of the Plagued Lands after hunting quite many Plagued Monsters within it. Given his strength, common-rank monsters were nothing to his eyes while those elites were somewhat of a good appetizer for his warmup.

As for the Special Elites, they were rarely spotted. It might be because the event had just started, so the slightly stronger monsters were not revealing themselves yet.

He had just gotten a report from his connections at the Hand of Midas that the guild was not only earning gold but also growing stronger as time went by.

Not only their foundation at the Awakened Continent was growing more solid due to the constant flow of funds that they were getting from the competing organizations, but they were also building up their influence by following Shin and the other's footsteps.

They were also not the ones, who were improving rapidly as even the guild that Shin and Shiella had recently created, the 'Deicide', was also slowly growing their influence.

Given that all their members had passed through the special test meant for the members of the God Slaying Army, their reputation and status within the Divine Empire was not something that could be ignored.

Individually, it might not be much. However, since all their members were 'selected' by the Mysterious Instructors, particularly due to Shin and the other's recommendation, their combined influence was not small.

They could be considered the most influential organization within the Divine Empire at the moment, particularly at the Divinity City.

But despite that being the case, they were ordered to keep a low profile and hid their movements in the dark to prevent the prying eyes of the top guilds and large organizations stationed at the Divinity City.

They were too secretive with their movements, making it hard for the parties to notice them. Especially when all their members focused more on doing the quests from the Divinity and avoiding any conflicts from any other parties.

He nodded as he felt that the report was quite good, even though he was not paying much attention to it since he had full confidence in Shiella – aside from him being too lazy to concern himself about it.

Even his dukedom along with the Golden City and Calderock Port were still being managed by Shiella and her people.

Ribbit must have been complaining as well since it had been a while since Shin had visited him.

Fortunately, the mysterious NPC group that Ribbit was running away from had never dared to target him within the Gold Mountain due to the forces stationed in that place.

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After reading through all the messages that he had gotten and replying to those who needed him to, Shin glanced at the digital clock in the corner of his eyes and saw that it was now time to log out.

He then turned his eyes to the leaderboard of the ongoing event and saw his 'name' at the top of the rankings.

Given that he had been hunting at the depths of the Plagued Lands, it was not that strange for him to gain the advantage over the others, especially when top contenders were busy dealing with their old-time rivals and constantly fighting.

This made the top contenders to be somewhat behind due to the 'hindrances' that were blocking their advancement.

Shin was currently the first in the ranking, but his name was hidden from everyone else as he did not want to get that much attention for the time being since there were too many people targeting him.

The names of Exheart, Bryan, and HellBan were also right behind him since they had been hunting together since they set foot in the region.

"It is time for me to log out," he said as he stood up. He looked at the three as he asked. "What's your plan? Are you going to continue hunting?"

Bryan thought for a moment before turning to Exheart. Even if he did not want to admit it, he knew that this guy was the core of their little group.

HellBan was also the same as he remained silent and waited for their 'leader' to make a decision.

Exheart also briefly considered it before answering. "I think we are going to continue to explore the region. We have nothing better to do in the real world anyway."

"It is better to stay and be a little more productive here in the game," he added in a joking tone before continuing. "I guess this is where we part again."

Shin nodded his head. "Well, it is fun hunting with you."

"Let's play again in the future when the opportunity presents itself," he added as he turned around to look for a safe place to log out.

"Just don't ignore us when we meet again," said Exheart to which Shin waved his hand without looking back.

"Hey! We still have to spar in the future!" shouted Bryan after hesitating for quite a while. He had been planning to duel Shin earlier, but after the latter repeatedly showcased his powers, he had no choice but to admit that he was still far from being able to challenge this Battle God.

But at the very least, he could still see Shin's back, which somewhat gave him some hope of catching up.

Now that he had personally seen how Shin battled, he had gotten an idea of how he would develop himself. He could at least try going through intense training after they were done with this event.

HellBan, on the other hand, remained quiet as he observed Shin, who was now slowly disappearing from their line of sight.

He had the same thought as Bryan, but he had a clear view of the differences between him and that monster. He knew that it would be hard for them to catch up if they stuck to normal means.

He was planning to undergo special training once he logged out of the game later and asked his uncle to teach him a few more techniques in mentalism.

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Psh!

Shin quickly got out of the gaming cabin and went straight to take a shower before going through his daily training.

He was planning to re-create the five-cycle breathing technique and base it according to what he had experienced inside the game.

He did not do any physical and foundation training this time as he went straight to meditation training right away.

He wanted to test all the gains that he had harvested inside the game and consolidate his strength here in the real world.

It took him quite a while before he digested all the knowledge and experience that he had gotten from the game before re-establishing his foundation according to it.

It did not take that long before his Five Cycle Embryo showed some reaction and matched the changes in his techniques.

The five elemental breathing techniques also formed a unique cycle that smoothly transitioned between each breathing technique. He could now shift his breathing according to the five elemental breathings much smoother compared to how they used to be.

There was no flaw or delay whenever he changed his breathing technique. At the same time, it was also being matched by the Four Symbol Scripture as it was also actively shifting according to the breathing technique that he was using.

There was also the Jade Kirin Scripture, which was able to balance and reinforce everything while also suppressing the discomfort inside his chest when the seed attempted to act when he was training earlier.

After stabilizing his current state, Shin then proceeded to enter the special state that he was in when he was planning the game.

It was the state where his five elemental breathing techniques and the Four Symbol Scripture became one while activating their full potential.

He even added the special Mentalism Rune Technique to match the chances of his body and used the special Mentalism Enhancement unique to rune mentalism.

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

The Grand Gather Array of his room automatically activated, and it matched Shin's current energy consumption.

It did not take long for Shin to start floating in the air while he remained seated in a cross-legged fashion.

The familiar Mentalism Runes appeared on different parts of his body one after another, giving him different boosts and buffs while the apparition of the five divine beasts was manifested behind him.

Roar! Shierk! Howl! Wail! Growl!

The five cries of the divine beasts sounded simultaneously as they transformed into a streak of lights that circled behind him and formed a majestic diagram with their respective images.

Shin's aura also changed due to this, making him look like a holy being filled with sacred energy.

His Divinity Grade Mental Energy also appeared while dividing itself to reinforce the five elemental energies revolving around his body.

Boom!

His aura spiked to a higher level making the atmosphere tremble tremendously.

Shin felt an overwhelming power flowing through his body. It felt like he could do anything with this current state, but he quickly exited it after sensing the intense draining of his Mental Energy and Willpower while maintaining it.

Hu~!

He exhaled softly as he tried to regulate his breathing and calm the circulation of his energy within his mind and body.

He then slowly opened his eyes before deeply frowning. "Tsk! It is a pity that I can't maintain this state for long here in the real world."

"But it is more than enough to be my main trump card," he added after recalling that David had a similar technique.

But instead of having a diagram of the five divine beasts, the one behind David looked like a majestic magic circle filled with ancient and mysterious runes.

"Maybe I can understand more about this technique if I consult him," mumbled Shin before standing up and proceeding to his foundation training.

Chapter 1632 A Powerful Technique (Part 2)

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"You want to learn my Spiritual Avatar?" asked David while looking at Shin with a strange expression.

Shin found him early in the morning and suddenly asked something about the special technique that he had created after combining all the knowledge of his ancestral land, the fallen Solomon Kingdom.

All types of Mentalism Knowledge of the Solomon Kingdom were passed down to him by his master and the old men from the village that he had set up. This also included the inheritance of the fallen royal family.

His accumulated experience and knowledge created the Spiritual Avatar technique, which he further perfected after traveling through different countries and learning the unique disciplines available in those places, particularly the ones that were almost lost over time.

Yet here his junior brother told him that he had created something similar to it.

While suppressing the twitching of his mouth, David could not help but ask. "Can you show it to me?"

Shin nodded as he took a couple of steps back to create a decent distance between them before closing his eyes. He regulated his breathing and controlled the circulation of energy within his body before activating the five elemental breathing techniques all at the same time.

Swoosh!

Not long after, Shin entered the special state once again, using his Natural State to keep his mind clear and be in a constant state of enlightenment to maintain his very taxing technique.

"What the f-...!" David could not help but curse after seeing the changes from Shin.

Not only the aura was different, but even the mental energy itself became much different compared to a regular Divinity Grade Mental Energy.

Moreover, it was divided into five different elements of the same level. Each of them could also match an ordinary Spiritual Force of any other Mentalist, making Shin look like he was able to wield five different Spiritual Forces.

Aside from this, he could also feel some threat coming from this junior brother of Shin after seeing that huge diagram behind him, which was formed by images of the five divine beasts.

There was also the Rune Enhancements that David was very familiar with as he had watched over Shin and learned it from Grandmaster Benn during their special training.

David had also included the Rune Mentalism Techniques in his Spiritual Avatar Technique as well, but Shin seemed to have perfected it to a certain degree.

With his still-twitching mouth, David could not help but curse. "Monster!"

Then he waved his hand saying that Shin could finally stop. "Alright, alright. I get it already."

He watched Shin exist in that state as he gave his assessment. "It seems like a very powerful technique, but it is draining too much of your mental energy and willpower. From what I can see, you can only maintain it for two to three minutes at most."

"But that is only because you are lacking practice. I believe you can maintain it for much longer so long as you train properly in that state," he added.

He paused for a moment as he tried to think how he could help Shin improve this technique and lessen the burden on his mind and body before continuing. "I can help you in your training. I can also give you some meditation techniques that will help train your mind and willpower."

"I can also share with you my experiences when I created my Spiritual Avatar technique and the process that it takes when I am perfecting it," David did not know why, but he felt like he was losing something right now.

He then took another pause before wearing a serious expression. "Actually, you can also ask Master for help. I am sure that she will be more helpful than me."

Hearing those words, Shin could not help but fall into silence unable to reply.

Seeing that reaction, David could not help but sigh. "Are you still angry with her? You should know that they don't have a choice at that time."

"Now that you become aware of the connection between demonic practitioners and the seed of hatred in their hearts, you should understand why they have chosen to let you leave their side."

"It shouldn't be that much of a problem if it is your seed of hatred is a regular one, but you have inherited it from your father, so the connection between the two of you is much stronger than anyone else."

"There is also Uno's existence, which becomes the bridge that connects your seeds of hatred, making it harder for the two of you to be together. At least until you are strong enough to conquer yours," he added with sighing.

Shin clenched his fists as he replied. "I know that. And I fully understand it as well. I am also not angry with Mom. It just-... I don't know-... I just feel that I can't see her yet."

"What are you afraid of?" David laughed bitterly as he could not stand this side of Shin. It was getting frustrating.

He stared at Shin for a while before sighing.

'I should beat him up at the very least.'

"Since you are already here, let's have a quick spar. I want to see how much you have improved after all this time," he said as he led Shin toward the empty space within the backyard of the Springfield Household.

Not long after, Shin went back to his room with a beaten-up face and aching body. "Tsk! He can at least hold back a little. Why does he have to go all-out when it is just a simple sparring."

He paused and recalled what had happened. David quickly unlocked the third level of his Limit Break right after the start of the sparring match, not giving Shin any time to react.

Shin was able to fight back for the time being, but he was immediately overwhelmed due to the difference in power and maturity of their techniques.

Moreover, David had also used some strange techniques from different disciplines, not giving Shin any time to adjust.

Whenever he was able to adjust to one style, David would always change the rhythm of his strikes and even swap with another discipline, making it impossible to respond.

"I am sure that he is holding a grudge about something," he mumbled before sitting at the center of his room and focusing his mental energy on the fire-elemental innate attribute.

Then he used the healing techniques of the Celestial Vermillion Bird Method to heal himself before going for a quick shower.

After that, he fell into deep thought, thinking about what to do next. He was originally planning to research how he would transform his five-elemental innate attributes and Divinity Grade Mental Energy into a true Spiritual Force. After all, he had already gotten the idea from the virtual world when the five elements merged and turned into a five-elemental lighting version of the Primordial Lightning.

But he knew that he was still lacking quite a few things for it, so he had to take it slow and let his innate attributes merge naturally.

David had told him that he could not force it if it were not time for his innate attributes to fuse, especially when they still hadn't fully matured. He would only be wasting his time and harming his

foundation if he tried to force it, so it was better to wait for the five innate attributes to mature before proceeding to the next step.

Shin's other choice was to research his new technique, but David had also told him that he could not rush it as well since his control over this new power was still not firm enough, he would only be hurting himself if he forcefully used it while researching.

The right way to proceed was to wait until his body and mind were strong enough to withstand the pressure and consumption of this special technique before he could continue.

"Now that I think about it-... Senior Brother named his technique the Spiritual Avatar. Should I give mine a good name as well?" he mumbled after reaching this thought.

"Should I call it Four Symbol Avatar?"

"Nah-... it sounds a little off."

"Divine Beasts Avatar?"

"Tsk! It feels like I am trying hard for a cool name."

"King's Power?"

"Bleh! I sound like Arthur along with his conceitedness."

As Shin was trying hard to think of a good name for this technique, an old voice suddenly chimed in.

"Just call it God's Constellations. It is created with my Four Symbol Scripture as the main base, so give this old man a face."

"Eh!?" Shin suddenly straightened his back and swiftly turned around after hearing the familiar voice.

It was then he saw Grandmaster Benn silently standing on the balcony adjacent to his room, enjoying tea.

"Ah! The old fatty is back," mumbled Shin unconsciously.

Bang!

Not long after, he was hit by an invisible force that smacked him to the floor of his room.

"This brat! Your Mentalism Teacher just returned from a dangerous mission, yet this is how you will greet me? This ungrateful punk!"

Chapter 1633 Competition at the Center of the Plagued Lands

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Shin rubbed the back of his head to relieve the pain from being smacked by an invisible stick as he sat up on the floor.

He then looked at Old Benn as he asked. "Teacher, if you are back, then is Master also here?"

Grandmaster Benn paused for a moment before shaking his head. "That geezer is still in the middle of the mission. I just come back here because I can seal the place assigned to me with the help of an old friend."

"But don't worry. That friend is heading toward your master's location, so it will not take that long before he can come back as well," he added before turning to Shin as he said. "Show me the progress of your mentalism. Let me see how much you have improved."

Shin thought that Grandmaster Benn had seen him sparring with David earlier, which was why he was aware of the special technique that he had created. But from the look of it, the old fatty seemed to have only gotten the idea after overhearing his mumblings just now.

"Sigh~!" he then stood up and walked to the balcony before starting to showcase his Mentalism Method.

He first focused on the perfected Four Symbol Scripture, showcasing the techniques that he had already mastered from each method, before proceeding with the rest of the techniques like the Rune Mentalism Techniques.

After that, he proceeded with the sword principle that he had learned from Old Ryong as well as the Mentalism Swordsmanship that was just recently polished alongside its application with Jade Kirin Scripture.

Grandmaster Benn did not say anything and just watched Shin perform everything until the very end before finally nodding his head in satisfaction. "I guess you did not slack off when we were absent. I must say that you have become powerful enough. You even make the Four Symbol Scripture on your own, especially with those breathing techniques."

"I guess entrusting you to Old Henry is the right choice," he continued to nod as he thought about this.

He had already received the perfected version of the Four Symbol Scripture from Shin previously and he had studied it as well, making his 'incomplete' version to become perfected as well.

He also had his personal inspirations and own enlightenment as well, which was more mature than Shin's given his old age. He had a lot of experience, which was why he understood more depth compared to what Shin had discovered on his own.

He was silent for a moment before saying. "Not bad, not bad. I will only be here for the night before I go to the council and report my findings and the progress of my mission. But before any of that, I will be guiding you and let you know what I know and my inspirations."

Shin then became overjoyed as he was somewhat in a bottleneck after digesting all his gains these last few days. He might have solidified his foundation and even approached the Peak of the Grandmaster Realm, but he was quite lost at what to do next, especially when he did not know how he would create his Spiritual Force based on what he had experienced inside the game.

He wanted to copy the five-elemental lightning that he recently acquired within the game and thoroughly understood more of it before proceeding with the final step.

Old Benn's timing right now could not be even more perfect as Shin was lacking the right direction.

He originally wanted to ask Professor Henry, but the old professor was currently busy dealing with matters at the World Research Center after the sudden attack that the Black Serpent Mafia had launched.

Grandmaster Benn had guided Shin about Spiritual Forces and other things until it was quite late at night before leaving.

Shin, on the other hand, remained seated on the floor of his room and meditated. He was digesting all the knowledge and experience that Old Benn had shared with him, particularly on how the Spiritual Forces were formed.

Shin's case was a little special due to his Divinity Grade Mental Energy and the five elemental innate attributes that he possessed.

The combination of these was already quite powerful, which was already equivalent to most of the Spiritual Forces of other Mentalists. But it was also because of this that it was quite hard to merge everything and create his version of Spiritual Force.

But after hearing Grandmaster Benn, Shin also realized that he was looking at everything from a slightly wrong perspective.

Instead of forcefully trying to fuse the five elemental attributes, it would be better to let them naturally merge as he focused more on his Mentalism Method, which already had a way to combine the five elements.

Shin stayed in a meditation state for quite a while before slowly opening his eyes when it was already late at night.

There was a pale and gentle glow leaking out from his eyes the moment when he opened them. He then started to smile, which signified that he had gained quite a lot from it.

He then looked at the clock and saw that it was already quite late, making him smile bitterly. "No wonder I am very hungry."

He then stood up and walked out of his room, planning to head to the kitchen to cook some 'midnight snack'.

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Shin only managed to log back into the game a little over midnight. A lot of things could happen in such a long time inside the game, especially with the time difference between the game and the real world.

When he logged in, he quickly checked the progress of the currently ongoing event and saw that there were quite a lot of people who got ahead of him.

The trio of Exheart, Bryan, and HellBan was able to maintain their rankings with the huge advantage that they had at the start of the event. Shin could tell that the three continued to hunt in the depths of the Plagued Lands.

What surprised Shin was that most of the names at the top of the rankings were those who were constantly competing with one another.

"It seems like these guys still find a way to still be able to become productive despite their constant fighting with each other," he commented before raising his head.

His current spot was relatively safe despite being in the depths of the Plagued Lands. There were not much Plagued Monsters here, which was why he chose this place to log out. But in exchange for it, he was unable to find any monster for points that easily when he re-logged back into the game.

Checking his surroundings and confirming his location, Shin chose a direction and went toward it, going to the even deeper parts of the Plagued Lands.

Not long after, he started encountering common-rank Plagued Monsters one after another, which he was able to dispose of quite easily and quickly. Given his current strength and achievements, dealing with such a level of monsters was as easy as walking in the park.

Due to this, he was able to steadily accumulate more points and started his rapid rise in the rankings once again.

As he was hunting, he was also constantly utilizing the new version of Primordial Lighting, which now had the properties of the five elements.

He was not only familiarizing himself with using them but also trying to study them more deeply, trying to find out how they were formed.

Every time he tried utilizing this Primordial Lighting, he did not only focus on summing them, but he was also constantly switching between it and the five elements that formed it.

He was also closely paying attention to overall process when transforming between the lightning form and the five elements, trying to figure out its depths and profoundness.

The more he fought and the more plagued monsters, the more familiar he became with the process and the more he realized what he was missing in the puzzle.

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As he was getting closer to the deeper parts of the region, Shin started to notice that the number of monsters started to become a little too restricted. It was quite contrary to what it was supposed to be, especially when he was already getting closer to the core area of the map.

The monsters here were supposed to be greater than what he could find in the outer layer of the region, especially when it was supposed to be closer to the center of the event map, yet he was barely able to find any monster he could hunt.

At the very least, the monsters should be slightly stronger than in the previous areas he went through, which was supposed to indicate that this layer was much harder to break through.

But contrary to what he was thinking, the number of monsters he was finding could barely satisfy his needs, which also slowed his hunting efficiency.

Finding this weird, Shin could not help but pause his hunting for the time being before turning his head and sweeping his gaze at the surroundings.

He focused his senses a little more, making him realize what was wrong. "I see. It seems like I have walked into a 'net' formation. I wonder whose formation this is."

Chapter 1634 Competition at the Center of the Plagued Lands (Part 2)

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Within the Plagued Lands, a five-man group was currently surveying the area that was assigned to them by their superior. They were currently in a net formation that covered at least a 2-kilometer radius.

They were meant to trap any people who would enter the formation and eliminate them while also hunting as many Plagued Monsters as possible.

The strategy was quite effective as they were able to gather quite a lot of points in just a couple of hours while also cutting off the number of their competitors, who mistakenly or voluntarily stepped into the formation.

"Why do I feel that the number of Plagued Monsters decreased by quite a lot recently?" said the Human Artillery of the group, one of the special paths meant for the Sniper Class of the Human Race.

It was one of the rare class paths that the players of the Human Race could take when they were doing their Tier 3 Class. It might not be as powerful as those upgraded classes and could turn an ordinary Human into a Conqueror, but it could be still considered a special class, which could be ranked right behind the Ascended Class.

He furrowed his brows deeply as he activated his ocular skill to survey the surroundings. He further frowned after failing to find any signs of a monster.

The Human Knight Lord, another variation of a Tier 3 Class for Knight Classes, which was neither an Ascended Class nor belonged to the regular upgraded class of the knight path. But just like the Artillery Class, it was a real Tier 3 Class slightly behind the Ascended Classes.

"Isn't it normal for us to see a limited number of Plagued Monsters given that we are regularly clearing them within the net formation?" said this Knight Lord.

The person next to him, who seemed to be a real Conqueror and was comparable to Neanderthals of Ascended Race, also nodded his head. "Don't be too paranoid, Hun. I know we have been clashing with the Assassin Union a little too much recently and have suffered quite a lot in the process, but that did not mean that we are weaker than them."

"We are just a little unlucky because of the interference of the Goddess of the Everlasting Night, Cold Moon. If our Guild Leader is in the scene at that time, then we will not lose that much in our most recent battle," he added.

This person was Lambert, a respectable expert in the virtual world. He was quite well-known in the circle for being one of the strongest Titled Rankers right beneath the Godlike Players.

His skills and abilities were also top-notch. He could even be qualified to gain his own Godlike Title if he wanted to join any official Godly Events of the virtual world. But he refused to join any of them due to his special position with their guild.

He was one of the trump cards of the Death Knell, which was one of the scariest assassination groups in the virtual world.

Unlike the Assassin Union, which was a private organization that was built to nurture true assassins in the real world, the Death Knell was a dark organization within the game, which was no different from the dark guilds of the game.

If Assassin Union only accepts players related to the family that was running it in the real world and only instructed their players to get an assassin- and thief-related class or something similar, then the Death Knell accepts players of different classes so long as they were talented enough at killing people.

Moreover, the Assassin Union focused their jobs on accepting assassination commissions and gathering information within the game while the Death Knell was more like a mercenary group that accepted any kind of job so long as they were paid enough. Regardless, their main preference for the job was still an assassination job, which made them the main rival of the Assassin Union.

As one of the trump cards of the guild, Lambert was playing a little low-key by maintaining his 'Titled Ranker' identity despite being fully capable of fighting any Godlike Player. He could also be considered a Maverick God in a sense, but since he was already a Titled Ranker, it was inappropriate to categorize him as such.

Lambert's main class belonged to the Warrior Class, and he specialized in wielding a pair of war axes. His class belonged to Berserker Class, which then became a 'Warlord' with the specialization of war axes.

He was a little different from Bryan, who was also a Warlord. His stats focused on strength and raw power while the latter was a Wolfkin, who specialized at saber and majored in speed and flashy techniques.

As he also took the traditional path when doing his Tier 3 Promotion Quest, he became a Conqueror, which was the orthodox path for Humans during the ascension.

His stats were also slightly stronger than other players who relied on their special races and classes. He was like Bryan and Exheart in this sense as they were also the same.

Lambert turned to the Knight Lord and said. "Did Liya and her team say anything about their area?"

Hearing that, Ricky, the Knight Lord, could not help but shake his head. "Boss, you are always thinking about your girlfriend all the time. Can you at least have some consideration for us, single dogs?"

Lambert shrugged a shoulder as he replied nonchalantly. "Then just look for a girlfriend yourselves. If not for the Guild Leader asking me to lead the teams at the outer perimeter of the formation, then I would be hunting at the center of our controlled area and grind for more points."

He then urged Ricky. "Come on, contact them through the communication sphere. The entire area is sealed and blocks all kinds of communication methods to ensure that anyone who steps into the formation will not be able to contact anyone outside. Only through our means can do it."

Ricky complained. "Boss, how about you hold onto the communication sphere instead? You don't have to keep on torturing me with your sweetness by making me your middleman."

Hearing that, the silent Dark Elf walking alongside them quickly shook his head. "That will be the worst. We will only keep on talking with Commander Liya if you hand him that communication sphere and bother here every minute. It is also the reason why the commander has given it to you instead of him."

He seemed to have an Ascended Race related to Elves while his class belonged to the thieves or assassin category. His presence seemed to be a little too faint, making other people unable to notice him.

Adding the dark set of equipment that he was wearing alongside the black cloak covering his entire body, his presence was further erased from his surroundings, particularly when the shadows seemed to be able to merge with him.

Agreeing with his words, the female player situated at the center of the group nodded her head. "Boss, can you not bother Sister Liya a little too much? She is already busy dealing with the assassins and thieves sent by the Assassin Union."

"Her hands are also full of the preparations for the upcoming raid against that Chieftain Rank Plagued Monster that we have recently discovered. She was already busy enough," she added with a sigh.

She was a Holy Mage of the group, who acted as both the main magic dealer and the healer of their small team.

Her class and race seemed to be a little special as it belonged to the special ascended path for Holy Mages, surpassing most of the players. Given that she was also a peak Maverick Ranker, her skills shouldn't lose too much compared to the three peak Titled Rankers of their group and only slightly behind their leader, Lambert.

Hearing their complaints, Lambert could only click his tongue and purse his lips in disappointment. His only option right now was to look for a Plagued Monster to vent his frustrations, but they hadn't found anything for quite a while now.

Not long after, Lambert suddenly halted his steps while squinting his eyes. He sharply scanned the surroundings while using his ocular skill but was unable to find anything, making him frown deeply. "Is it just my imagination?"

Seeing his action, the other four also went on high alert while simultaneously using their ocular and detection skills to scan their surroundings.

Hun, the Knight Lord, positioned himself right in front of their sole healer while raising his shield and preparing for the battle.

Magnolia, the healer and mage of the group, quickly clasped her magic staff as she started chanting out a series of prayers in response.

Hun of Artillery Class quickly raised his sniper rifle as he kept on turning around while using the enhanced version of his ocular skill to scan the surroundings. As the marksman of the group and the person with the greatest number of methods to uncover any assassins or thieves hiding in the shadows, it was his job to look for the hidden enemies.

Meanwhile, Night Hound, the elven thief, quickly entered stealth to hide himself while also looking for the traces of their enemy.

Their actions were executed in a very short time, signifying how skilled they were and how good their coordination was. This could also tell the opposing side that they were not someone to be trifled with.

Lambert's expression was solemn. From a glance, he could feel that the atmosphere of the place they had stepped into was filled with the air of death.

"This is no ordinary opponent."

Chapter 1635 Competition at the Center of the Plagued Lands (Part 3)

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Shin was currently sitting on his feet on a tree branch as he watched the five-man group silently. He had been observing this group for quite a while now and even listened to their conversation as they were talking quite loudly.

Despite being a little ordinary, Shin could tell that this group was very special. With four peak titled and maverick rankers and one player releasing an aura of an apex expert on par with a top godlike player.

Given the composition of this team, Shin could instantly tell that they were one of the core points of the net formation covering the entire 2-kilometer region.

Shin could just ignore them and sneak past them to head to the center of the formation. After all, he overheard them talking about a chieftain-rank Plagued Monster that was discovered by the group at the center of the formation, which could give the one who would kill it a lot of points.

Not only Shin was planning to steal this monster from the Death Knell, but he was also thinking of assassinating a couple of key figures of the guild to lessen the number of competitors in the Plagued Lands.

Once Death Knell was eliminated from the competition, then the Assassin Union would have a lot of free time to deal with the rest of the competitors that did not have any good relationship with them.

But after seeing a good opponent, Shin could not help but want to test this guy and check on his progress. Not just his swordsmanship, but also his control over his mana. At the same time, he also wanted to see how much the coordination of his body had progressed after his willpower had improved.

The moment this thought crossed his mind, he subconsciously emitted his fighting spirit, which quickly affected the surroundings.

Lambert and his group quickly went into battle formation while cautiously sweeping their gazes at the surroundings.

"Well, they seem to be quite fast to respond," mumbled Shin as he jumped off from the branch he was sitting on.

He was not planning to hide and ambush the group as he found them quite worthy of this experiment, especially Lambert, who was hiding his real capabilities.

Ta-ta!

The moment he landed on the group, he silently walked toward the group without bothering to hide his presence. He revealed himself to them as he slowly and calmly approached them.

"There!"

The group immediately noticed Shin as they saw him casually walking toward them.

They quickly adjusted their formation to face Shin, getting ready for the fight.

But Lambert, the captain of this team, suddenly wore a solemn expression as he looked at Shin. A single glance was more than enough for him to realize that the other party was not someone they could easily provoke.

But since Shin had no intention of stopping and clearly showing that he was heading for them, Lambert could tell that this person was targeting them.

There was no need for question, he quickly signaled for the start of the battle. "Go!"

Swoosh!

Night Hound, the thief of the group, was already behind Shin and appeared like a ghost. He stabbed his dagger forward, targeting the exposed back of the latter, while executing the 'Backstab' Skill of his class.

But despite how fast and accurate his actions were, Shin just casually took a step to the side and slightly turned his body sideways, easily dodging the ambush.

Swoosh!

He then continued the momentum of his action and spun while whipping his leg with a kick, targeting the waist of the thief.

"Fast!" commented Night Hound as he quickly retracted his arm and lowered beside his waist to block the incoming kick. He even supported it with his other arm, crossing them.

Bang!

He was prepared for impact, but he was not expecting such a simple kick to be so heavy that it sent him flying in the opposite direction. "What the!?"

Bang! Bang! Bang!

As he was sent flying, Hun, the marksman of the group, finally pulled the trigger of his magic rifle and swiftly fired a series of shots at Shin.

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

The magic bullets, which were reinforced with his mana through a skill, flew through the air and headed toward their target almost reaching Shin in an instant.

The timing was perfect as they were already before him as he just sent Night Hound flying.

But before they could even reach him, Shin flipped his cloak and revealed his sheathed katana, twirling it. His mana flowed through his meridians as he channeled them toward the [Yamato] before swinging the sheathed sword around and deflecting each bullet heading his way.

Cling! Cling! Cling! Cling!

The corner of Hun's mouth suddenly twitched when he saw that, making him curse under his breath.
"The f*ck!?"

But he did not have the time to dwell on it as he knew that they had encountered a real monster this time.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

He continued to fire at Shin as Lambert and Ricky charged toward Shin with full aggressiveness.

Cling! Cling! Cling! Cling!

Shin continued to swing his sheathed sword to deflect the incoming bullets as he swiftly spread his senses in every direction, reading the entire state of the surroundings.

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

When Lambert and Ricky reached a dozen meters away from him, Shin saw beams of light arching beautifully in the air and skillfully avoiding the two while heading straight to him.

Magnolia, who was both the mage and the healer of the group, made her move

Slightly raising his brows, Shin suddenly flipped the sheathed [Yamato] multiple times while adjusting his breathing, utilizing the Great Dominator Technique to reinforce his strength and defense through the enchantments of the Earth Element.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

He accurately struck each of the beams of light and thoroughly destroyed them with just the sheathed sword.

It was at this moment when Lambert strongly stomped his foot on the ground while swinging one of his war axes, which he was dragging behind him, upwards.

The war axe dug into the ground as he swung it upwards, shoveling the dirt and fragmented rocks and sending it toward Shin.

His action produced a chain reaction as the ground flipped over and formed a small landslide while heading toward their opponent.

After destroying the beams of light, Shin flipped the sheathed sword once again before slamming it into the ground.

Bang!

When the tip of the sheath landed on the ground, it sent a shockwave that swept forward. It formed a transparent semi-circle barrier that prevented the landslide from moving further ahead and reaching him.

Boom!

Swoosh!

As the cloud of dust and dirt formed by the collision blocked Shin's line of sight, Ricky, the Knight Lord, broke through it and charged straight at Shin with his shield raised in front of him.

"Ha!"

Seeing the incoming opponent, Shin suddenly kicked the sheathed [Yamato] as he slid his foot forward while performing a forward stab.

Bang!

The tip of the sheathed sword accurately hit the center of the shield, killing all the momentum that Ricky had and forcing him to halt his advance. "Huh!?"

The Knight Lord was confused at first, but he did not dwell too much on it as he quickly took a step back to create a distance between them to prepare for the next move.

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

Right at the same time, Night Hound and Lambert appeared on each side of Shin, flanking him with their respective attacks.

Ricky also coordinated with them and took a step forward while slamming his shield, activating the most basic and most effective skill in this situation, the 'Shield Bash.'

Shin's eyes did not even move as he read their movements through his Spiritual Sense. He then leaped into the air, spinning and flipping while swinging his sheathed sword.

Clang! Clang!

Through his actions, he dodged the shield and let it land on the ground while his sheathed sword deflected the dagger directed at his back. At the same time, he kicked Lambert's arm to redirect its course, letting it hit the ground as well.

Bang! Bang!

But the trio did not stop in there as they quickly adjusted themselves and started attacking Shin coordinately with their combined techniques.

But no matter how good their teamwork was and how flawless their coordination with their skills and techniques, Shin repeatedly deflected and dodged their attacks with simple movements.

In a moment, Lambert retreated to create more space for Hun to assist them from a distance, clearing his line of sight for a better aim.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

But no matter how good he was at taking his shots, which helped the three and covered the flaws of his teammates, Shin was still able to dodge or deflect his magic bullets as if he had his eyes locked on them.

"Tsk!" realizing their situation, Lambert prepared for a big move that could force Shin into a corner, letting Night Hound and Ricky lock Shin in place while Hun was taking shot after shot.

Shin also noticed this, so he quickly adjusted his plan.

His breathing rhythm changed once again, switching to Boundless Ocean Technique. In response, the energy circulation within his body also changed its flow, which then made his movements more fluid and much smoother.

Swoosh! Swoosh!

Dodging yet another batch of bullets, Shin slightly hopped and lay in the air as he spun like a screw.

He then split his legs flexibly as he whipped a kick at Night Hound and Ricky, hitting their legs and waist respectively.

The kick did not deal that much damage, but they were stunned for a moment before forcing to take a step back due to the impact.

Bang!

Taking this opportunity, Hun charged a powerful shot from the distance and pulled the trigger right after Shin paused midair.

The bullet drew a beautiful line in the air as it headed straight to Shin.

Shin sensed the incoming danger, forcing him to make a seal with his left hand in midair. During his spin, he suddenly extended his left hand forward, facing the incoming magic bullet.

'Elemental Skill (Shadow): Demonic Telekinesis'

An invisible hand was suddenly formed in the air as it mimicked Shin's actions of closing his hand and grabbing the incoming bullet.

Puff!

The magic bullet disappeared as it was caught by the invisible hand.

Night Hound and Ricky, who were forced to step back earlier, took advantage of the distraction of the bullet to spin around and throw a decisive attack toward Shin.

Night Hound flipped his daggers and switched his grip before slashing them toward Shin. His daggers left a deadly flash in the air as they headed straight to the neck of their target.

Ricky, on the other hand, swung his heavy sword diagonally, planning to cleave Shin with it in a single strike. It also left a shining trail in the air as they cleaved down with great momentum.

Yet, despite their perfect timing and coordination, Shin casually flipped midair. His body twisted in the air as the blades of his opponent's weapons flew past him with the slightest margin.

The daggers brushed past his mask while the heavy sword almost grazed his flipping cloak.

Swoosh!

Bang!

Shin kicked the air, activating the 'Mondi's Jump', to do another flipped.

His foot flew straight to Night Hound, kicking with great momentum, while the bottom hilt of his sheathed sword headed toward the exposed waist of Ricky, who had his sword somewhat stuck on the ground.

Bang!

"Argh!" Ricky could not help but groan in pain as the hilt of the sword hit him. It did not deal any damage, but the impact sent intense tremors throughout his body, paralyzing his movements.

Night Hound, as an agility class, was able to tilt his head to the side to avoid the incoming kick before spinning and sending another attack.

But before he could do anything, Shin suddenly forced his body to land back on the ground before sweeping his leg.

"Ah!"

Night Hound suddenly found himself thrown in the air as Shin's action swept his legs. He was suspended upside down in midair as the latter continued his movement and spun rapidly.

Bang!

Then, in the next instant, Night Hound felt a sudden pain coming from his ribcage as Shin struck him hard with the tip of the sheathed [Yamato].

"Urgh!" then he found himself flying once again before colliding with the nearby threw.

Shin did not stay in that position as he swiftly stepped to the side, dodging the incoming bullets from behind with impeccable timing.

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

"Argh!"

Instead of hitting him, the bullets drilled a hole in Ricky's body, which was currently paralyzed by Shin's previous strike.

"Ha!"

It was at this moment when Lambert finished channeling his mana into his war axes before appearing before Shin and swinging them down.

With the sudden appearance of this opponent, Shin flipped his wrist and held the sheathed horizontally in front of him.

His left hand grabbed the hilt of the sword unhurriedly as the blazing war axes descended from above.

Shing!

Then, with a sudden pull, the [Yamato] was finally pulled out from its sheath for the first time since the start of the battle, revealing its cold blade, although it was only half of it.

Swoosh!

Not long after, an intense coldness was sent in every direction as a chilling fog leaked out from the gaps left by the half-drawn sword and the sheath.

Everything within the five-meter radius around Shin turned into ice, including Lambert, who had his body turned into an ice sculpture while maintaining his previous posture.

Even if he was not dead yet, Lambert knew that he had to reveal all his cards if he wanted to fight this monster in human skin before them.

The opposing party seemed to be telling them to give everything they had if they did not want to die without putting up a real fight.

Silence enveloped the entire battlefield as the five-man group felt a sudden dread covering their entire body.

It finally sank into their minds that this humanoid monster had only been playing with them since the very beginning.

Chapter 1636 Competition at the Center of the Plagued Lands (Part 4)

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Lambert started at Shin as he tried to forcefully move his body from being frozen. However, after a couple of failures, he was forced to use one of his strengthening skills instead.

'Warlord Skill (Tier 3): Hex Enchantment'

"Ahh!"

With a powerful roar, bright tattoos appeared on Lambert's body one after another, shining with crimson light and enhancing his overall stats.

Crack! Crack!

It took him an instant before he freed his body from the ice covering his body. Cracks appeared one after another before he finally regained his movement.

Coordinating with him, the others resumed attacking Shin, covering their captain.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

A series of shots came from Hun, aiming at Shin and preventing him from attacking Lambert. He had already learned his lesson earlier, so he moved from his previous location to fire his magic rifle from a different angle.

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

As the rain of bullets was flying in his direction, Shin calmly sheathed the [Yamato] once again and executed a series of movements, leaving a series of afterimages as he dodged these reinforced bullets.

At the same time, Magnolia moved alongside Hun, afraid that Shin would target her if she was alone.

Given what Shin had shown them earlier, it was impossible for her to survive even a couple of his strikes once she got caught by him.

She moved closely with Hun, who was adjusting his speed and matching hers. She also cast a series of spells while moving, sending a couple of holy spheres and providing some buffs to every member of the group.

As the light shone on their bodies, Ricky and Night Hound quickly moved and charged at Shin once again.

They moved strategically this time as they were matching the movements of Hun and Magnolia, making sure that they were covering them properly so that they could block Shin if he tried to attack their backline.

Even if the most basic strategy in such situations was to take down the healer as soon as possible, Shin chose to take a different approach as he wanted to use this group as a grinding stone to polish his techniques.

He was digesting his most recent gains and polishing them through battle. Since he found a decent 'grinding stone', he refused to let them get away that easily, especially when he currently had a lot of inspirations right now.

"It's just a pity that I can't properly use any rune techniques inside the game to fully utilize my true Mentalism Techniques," mumbled Shin as he fought.

Even though he could perform some most basic rune techniques by combining 'Regan's Method' and 'Demonic Telekinesis' to mimic his Ruen Mentalism Techniques, it was still not enough to fully showcase their real power.

He lacked the right knowledge to utilize the Mentalism Runes to the fullest within the game as their principles were somewhat different from one another despite sharing a couple of similarities.

The rules of this world were different from what he knew in the real world, so there were some failures if he wanted to utilize those techniques.

"I guess I have to learn some rune techniques from Cloe and Alice. Or I can also take the lifestyle profession of Runemasters to further study them," he continued to mumble to himself as he dodged another rail of bullets while blocking the planking attacks from Ricky and Night Hound.

He somewhat had learned quite a few techniques about forging after watching a few Blacksmiths do their work, particularly NPCs like Berlin and a famous player such as Black Hammer. But he did not study enough to make himself a true blacksmith.

He had also learned a couple of techniques about alchemy and tailoring from others, but he also did not take their path to properly call himself an alchemist or a tailor.

All of these were because of the special abilities of one of his legacy skills, the 'Duplicator's Eyes'.

Since he already had a secondary combat class, Shin did not dwell too much on lifestyle professions as believed that he only needed to learn the most basic skills that he should need for repairing his equipment previously.

But now that most of his equipment was indestructible, he lacked the opportunity to practice those techniques and somewhat found them useless aside from Alchemy which could help him concoct some potions.

"I guess it is now the perfect time to properly take a lifestyle profession and seriously learn them," he continued to talk to himself as he started to consider his next plans. "I should choose the runemaster profession once I perfected my current style and further polish it."

"That way, I can finally showcase my true mentalism techniques and combine them with my unique swordsmanship," he added while nodding inwardly. "After all, the rune mentalism is the true nature of the Four Symbol Scripture."

He then paused and looked at Lambert, who seemed to be getting stronger the more they fought.

It was not like his Battle Genius Combat Talent. Lambert was physically getting stronger as the battle progressed as if he was gaining bonus stats the longer the battle dragged on.

"I guess those tattoos are similar to Owen's Divine Tattoos," he commented as he closely observed the opposing side. "Tier 3 Classes sure know how to make surprises, especially those who have upgraded their regular class through the orthodox path and not rely on Ascended Classes."

Seeing that Lambert was charging straight at him for another time while Ricky was sprinting at the same speed from another side, Shin took a stance while regulating his breathing.

Swoosh!

As he was preparing for another move, Night Hound appeared behind him like a ghost, forming a perfect triangle attack along with the other two.

Hong!

As his breathing followed the method of the Great Dominator Technique, the 'Pulse of Earth' elemental skill was passively triggered and made him sense the vibrations coming from the ground.

Each step that the three took was perfectly reflected inside his head, which he had drawn after sensing the surroundings.

He then shifted the way he breathed, changing toward the Solar Breathing Technique. A hot steam came out from his mask's gaps as he exhaled slowly and steadily.

Click!

As the three approached from different directions, Shin unhurriedly and calmly unsheathed his sword. His actions were clearly reflected in their eyes, as if they were seeing Shin move in slow motion.

The three quickly sense a deadly threat right after seeing those actions. Their experience in battle was telling them that they would be killed in a single strike if they tried to continue their advance.

Bang! Bang!

With powerful stomps, Lambert and Ricky forcefully halted their steps as they activated their respective skills.

Lambert took a more offensive stance as he swung his war axes multiple times before him, creating a series of crimson flashes that intertwined with one another as they headed toward Shin.

Ricky, on the other hand, chose to take a defensive stance as he raised his shield in front of him and activated an advanced version of 'Shield Wall' to protect himself while acting as a buff to reinforce his defense.

Night Hound's instincts also kicked in. He decisively used one of his lifesaving skills, the 'Gale Steps', to retreat. He did not even show any hesitation as he swiftly distanced himself away from Shin.

Swoosh!

It was at that moment when Shin's right arm flicked as he swung the [Yamato] multiple times, leaving a series of trails in the air, which also formed a dome-like barrier created by the blazing and crisscrossing flashes in the air.

'Jade Kirin Scripture: Quickly Draw – (Blazing) Flash Firmament'

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

Bang! Bang! Bang!

Clang! Clang! Clang!

The collisions produced a series of small explosions.

Ricky repeatedly retreated each time the blazing sword flashes collided with his 'Shield Wall' until it was shattered while Lambert was forced to take a series of steps back after his war axes clashed with the sword of their opponent.

The two were somewhat exposed right now, Ricky had his arm holding the shield to bounce back due to the explosion of the 'Shield Wall' while Lambert had both of his arms in the air as he tried to forcefully nullify the force from the previous exchange.

Shin could now take this opportunity to kill either of them with a single strike reinforced with a powerful skill.

But the opposing side also knew it, so the rest of the team quickly responded.

Night Hound took advantage of the speed boost provided by his 'Gale Steps' to sprint at Shin once again, appearing behind the latter while executing 'Reinforced Backstab' at the now exposed back of Shin.

Swoosh!

Hun fired a series of shots that were not aimed at Shin directly but covered the space between Shin and the other two. It was to prevent Shin from going either of them as he would have to face the hail of bullets aimed in those directions.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

Magnolia, on the other hand, raised her staff and cast a series of buffs that would boost the defense of the two and help them survive even if Shin successfully injured them critically.

"What an amazing teamwork," mumbled Shin as he saw how everyone moved as one to save their companions.

Between the two targets, Shin knew that he could not kill the Warlord as the guy was purposely hiding his real strength for some unknown reason while the Knight Lord was more challenging to kill due to the nature of his class.

Either way, he still had his method to kill them as fast as he could in this situation. But it would require some effort.

Moreover, he preferred to fight the group altogether as it was more challenging and quite satisfying for him. It was also somewhat beneficial for him while he was 'preparing' until Lambert was ready to show him his real capabilities.

"A peak Titled Ranker who has the power to fight against top-notch Godlike Player. This guy is interesting," he commented as he slightly turned his body while tightening his grip over the sheath on his left hand.

Clang!

He used the sheath to block incoming stab from behind before suddenly hacking with the sword in his right hand.

Shing!

The sharp sound of metal cutting through the wind reverberated in the air, scaring Night Hound, especially when he saw the blazing flame covering the sword.

It was no ordinary strike, without a doubt.

Without any hint of hesitation, Night Hound used another lifesaving skill, the 'Shadow Escape', to retreat one more time.

Puff!

Shin cut an illusory figure, which turned into black smoke immediately after.

"Nice reflexes," he commented before disappearing from his spot, which was drilled with a rain of bullets in the next instant.

The intense battle continued as Shin purposely dragged it for quite a while until he had gotten his fill.

What would come next was a nightmare for this party of five to deal with.

Chapter 1637 Competition at the Center of the Plagued Lands (Part 5)

...

After exchanging a couple more blows with the group, Shin felt that he seemed to have gotten his fill. He felt that it was now time to settle this and wrap it up.

He glanced at Lambert, who remained calm despite the 'mad' state on the surface, before mumbling to himself. "Do I need to push him a little more before he is willing to show his true colors?"

He had been fighting with the group for quite some time now, but he still had not seen any kind of reinforcements coming to cover them. It felt like they were forcefully holding him down in this place and stubbornly trying to take him down on their own.

Their team was supposed to be one of the core points of this net formation covering the entire 2-kilometer region, so their roles should be one of the most crucial ones.

But despite all of that, no one had noticed that they had not moved from their location up until now.

The other 'points' should have noticed that the core link was out of formation up until now, yet no one had come to assist this group even after quite a lot of time.

Shin could only think of two reasons.

The first case was this group being an independent 'point' which could move wherever and whenever they wanted. It was more likely the case given the 'true' strength that this group possessed.

The other case was because of some accidents that happened that affected the entire formation, which was why their absence was not noticed by the other 'points' of the formation.

Shin quickly linked this with one of the pieces of information that he had overheard from them earlier. It was about the communication network being sealed within the entire region, and the only means to contact anyone was with the help of that special sphere that Lambert and others had mentioned earlier.

Regardless of these cases, Shin knew that the lack of communication was one of the main reasons why no one had appeared to assist this group up until now.

He then concluded. "Something must have happened at the core areas of the plagued lands where these guys have found a chieftain-rank Plagued Monster."

Having these thoughts, Shin finally came to a decision. "I wanted to play with them a for a little bit more, but I think joining the chaos at the core areas is more interesting."

He then suddenly halted his tracks and swung the [Yamato] to block the ambush of Night Hound from behind.

Clang! Clang!

After that, he kicked the ground and leaped in the air while twisting his body for a spinning roll to dodge the incoming strikes from Night Hound and Ricky, which targeted the back of his neck and legs respectively.

Swoosh! Swoosh!

The heavy sword and daggers flew past his body with the slightest margin before Shin suddenly kicked the two and pushed them back.

When he landed on the ground once again, Lambert suddenly fell from the sky and slammed his war axes at him along with his meteor-like momentum.

Shin quickly raised the sheathed [Yamato] in the air as his breathing shifted back to the Great Dominator Technique. Through this breathing technique, he utilized his connection with the Earth Element to connect himself to the ground.

The Earth-Elemental Mana seemed to have been sucked into his body as a transparent barrier appeared around Shin.

He used another version of the 'Eclipse Pulse' Skill, but he matched it with the elemental power of earth, which was reflected with the yellow glow that the barrier had alongside the earthen features that it possessed.

'Four Symbol Scripture: Divine Yellow Dragon – Guardian of the Earth'

Swoosh!

Boom!

Not long after, Lambert slammed his war axes on the earthen barrier, causing a powerful impact.

The barrier shook and cracked but did not collapse, which showed how sturdy its defensive capabilities were.

But Lambert did not stop there as he started hitting the barrier again and again with his war axes, even using a series of skills to thoroughly destroy it.

But before the barrier could collapse, he suddenly sensed an immense threat, forcing him to stop and retreat.

Snap!

Not long after, he heard a snap coming from beyond the barrier, which reverberated in the air and was followed by the explosion of the earthen barrier.

Shin activated the follow-up skill of 'Eclipse Pulse', the 'Eclipse Counter', to detonate the barrier with the accumulated damage that it had endured.

'Four Symbol Scripture: Divine Yellow Dragon – Revenge of the Earth'

Bang!

The fragments of the barrier were sent in every direction along with the explosion that the barrier caused, which then spread a violent ripple in the surroundings.

"That was close," mumbled Hun as saw Lambert barely able to escape from the explosion.

At the same time, Lambert closely locked his gaze at the center of the explosion with a grim expression. He could feel that Shin was planning to do something, especially when the latter decided to wrap this up.

He could not exactly tell what Shin was thinking at that time. But the shiver that ran down his spine earlier when he saw the dangerous glint from Shin's eyes told him that the latter was planning to do something.

He could not shake off this feeling and planning to use his true strength due to this. When this thought crossed his mind, he finally decided. "Third Formation!"

"Eh!?"

"Huh!?"

The others were somewhat caught off guard when they heard his command. They looked at Lambert with confused gazes, but still executed his orders regardless.

Ricky and Night Hound, who were supposed to resume attacking Shin, quickly halted their steps and changed their respective direction.

Ricky headed to where Hun and Magnolia were located to protect them while Night Hound entered stealth and hid in the darkness.

Meanwhile, Hun and Magnolia adjusted their positions, matching the movements of their teammates.

As the marksman, Hun retreated a little to create more distance. After all, his class was under the Sniper Class, which relied on distance and powerful shots to suppress his opponents. Now that he no longer needed to protect Magnolia, he could now focus on his main job.

Magnolia, on the other hand, quickly adjusted her position and ran behind Ricky to hide under his protection. With him defending her, she no longer needed to be too cautious about her surroundings.

She then quickly raised her magic staff and cast a series of spells and prayers to buff everyone on the team, especially Lambert, who would be the sole frontline for this formation.

"Tsk! What a sharp instinct," commented Shin as he walked out from the settling cloud of dust and dirt. "Unfortunately, I have lost my interest to the rest."

Right after he said those words, his figure suddenly flickered and sprinted toward the direction where Ricky and Magnolia were located.

He was thinking of getting rid of the rest of the members of the group and provoking Lambert in the process. If the latter finally revealed his true powers, then Shin might stay here a little longer as it was quite rare to find a decent 'sparring partner'.

But if Lambert refused to do so, then he would leave and head to the center of the net formation and look for the location of the chieftain-rank Plagued Monster.

Swoosh!

"You're not going anywhere," said Lambert as he charged toward a certain direction to intercept Shin.

"Can you catch up to be, though?" said Shin provokingly as he transformed into a streak of light that cut through the air.

'Slayer Skill: (Modified) Moonlight Steps'

Shin used the skill twice to further increase his speed, leaving Lambert in dust and almost reaching where his target was.

Whoosh!

Ricky quickly positioned himself in front of the incoming light and activated a special skill that could counter spiritual or ghost-type beings in incorporeal form. The skill might not have any damage, but its effects were quite special.

Shin was hit by the skill, forcing him to exit his untouchable form.

Whoosh!

At the same time, Night Hound suddenly appeared behind Shin while activating one of his ambushing skills, the 'Flickering Stab'.

But despite the perfect timing of Shin getting hit by Ricky's special skill and Night Hound's unexpected ambush, they still failed to catch their target.

Instead, Shin countered immediately after.

Shin ducked forward and low, dodging the 'Flickering Stab' directed at his back and letting the daggers fly past over his head.

He then suddenly extended his legs outwards before unexpectedly spinning. His legs swept on Night Hound's legs, who was caught off guard and got tripped in the process.

Night Hound found himself rolling in the air, giving him the familiar unpleasant feeling.

That was when he found Shin suddenly facing him sideways with his signature sword-drawing stance.

Night Hound got a bad feeling about this and used all his defensive skills to reinforce his defense and boost his reaction speed. He knew that it was impossible to dodge the incoming attack given his awkward position in the air, so he could only rely on his ability to block whatever was coming with his daggers while trusting Magnolia to keep up with the burst of damage that he would be facing.

Click!

Right after Shin pushed the [Yamato] with his thumb and slightly revealed the blazing blade through the gap between the sword guard and the sheath, a sudden dread enveloped Night Hound's body.

"F*ck!" he could only curse as Shin shifted with the 'Solar Breathing Technique' and entered the 'Divine Constellation Possession' almost at the same time.

Then while applying the principles of Sharp Sword, Swift Sword, Killing Sword, Illusionary Sword, and Slaughtering Sword, Shin pulled the [Yamato] out of its sheath and swung the sword multiple times.

Shing!

'Jade Kirin Scripture: Quick Draw – (Blazing) Flash Requiem'

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

Despite Night Hound's enhanced senses and boosted reflexes, he was unable to respond to the series of slashes that cut through his body within an instant.

He could only watch his Health Bar drop sharply as his body was set ablaze by the gorgeous flame surrounding Shin's sword.

Even Magnolia along with her timely healing, could not save him as his Health Bar was emptied within an instant.

Realizing that it was useless to continue healing Night Hound, Magnolia shifted with another spell and started praying. She was planning to use the sacred skill 'Resurrection' to revive Night Hound.

"Hah!"

At the same time, Ricky stepped forward slammed his shield on the ground, and summoned a thick barrier that protected him and Magnolia.

He wanted to attack Shin, who was only a couple of meters away from him. But he knew that his priority was to protect Magnolia, and she could deal with the rest.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

At the same time, a series of gunshots rang from the distance, planning to suppress Shin and preventing him from going anywhere.

Shin twirled the sword to deflect the magic bullets and melted them with the Eternal Flame surrounding it.

Clang! Clang! Clang! Clang!

The Solar Breathing and Boundless Ocean Techniques intertwined as Shin utilized them simultaneously to control the powers of Eternal Flame and Primordial Waters. In the process, he also released the Divine Constellation Possession, maintaining the balance between the two elemental powers.

Instead, he used the fusion possession of Blackie and Whitie, the 'Chaos Slasher', to the [Yamato] to match the opposing elements and followed the principle of duality.

After gathering enough elemental powers with the sword, Shin suddenly swung it forward, releasing all the accumulated energy without restraint.

He used one of his in-game skills as a model to create this powerful sword technique.

'Myriad Transformation Swordsmanship: Eclipse Slash'

Swoosh!

As the sword wave was released at almost point-blank range, the barrier protecting Ricky and Magnolia shook violently before multiple cracks appeared on its surface.

Due to the intertwining hot and cold temperatures caused by the 'Eclipse Slash', the barrier became somewhat brittle and easier to destroy.

Even if the barrier still managed to survive in the end, Shin just needed to strike it hard to make it collapse completely.

But to make sure that he could destroy it with a single strike, Shin used the 'Judgement Form' and 'Summit Shaper Possession' along with the Great Dominator Technique to thoroughly crush it.

Bang!

Not waiting for the others to respond, Shin quickly disappeared and appeared behind Magnolia, who was in the middle of praying.

'Phantom Swordsman Skill: Phantom Steps'

Shin was 'spat out' by Magnolia's shadow, getting ready to strike her.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

Swoosh!

But a series of gunshots rang once again as they surrounded him from tricky angles. They moved as if they were alive, avoiding Magnolia as they flew in the air.

Ricky also moved as he circled Magnolia and appeared between Shin and the Holy Mage, intercepting once again.

But before anything could happen, Shin's figure suddenly turned illusionary and swiftly dashed forward like a ghost.

'Slayer Skill: (Modified) Moonlight Steps'

Using the last charge of the skill, Shin passed through Ricky and Magnolia's bodies while also dodging the incoming bullets.

He then appeared before Magnolia, who was in the middle of casting the 'Resurrection' Skill.

With a swift turn, Shin suddenly struck with the [Yamato], throwing a series of blazing stabs that drilled holes in Magnolia's body.

'Four Symbol Scripture: Celestial Vermillion Bird – Pheonix Feathers'

Shu! Shu! Shu!

Then, using the combined forces of 'Heart Seeker' and 'Flash of Life' Skills and converting them with the help of Reality Manifestation, he ended everything with a final stab that struck accurately at Magnolia's heart.

'Four Symbol Scripture: Celestial Vermillion Bird – Pheonix Talon'

In such a short time, he had killed two members of the opposing party.

Chapter 1638: Competition at the Center of the Plagued Lands (Part 6)

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"Bastard!" Lambert, who was currently sprinting to assist Ricky and the others, could not help but curse out loud after seeing Shin kill two of his teammates, including their sole healer.

In terms of speed, he was inferior to Shin, without a doubt. This was the reason why Night Hound had reached Shin even before Lambert could close the distance between them.

Shin had shaken Lambert within an instant with the help of his 'Moonlight Steps', which covered 10 meters distance each time he used them. Adding the insane speed that he had in his incorporeal form, a strength-based class such as a Warlord couldn't catch up to him that easily.

Even if Lambert's burst speed was not bad, it was still quite slow compared to a real speed-type mobility skill.

Moreover, Shin had used the said skill twice, so Lambert was further left behind.

Before he could even reach the scene, Shin had already eliminated two of their members, which frustrated Lambert. He could not help but wear an ugly look as he charged even more crazily toward the opposing party.

Shin, on the other hand, ignored Lambert and dashed toward Hun, who was currently aiming at him from the distance. Even Ricky, who had his back facing Shin, was completely ignored.

Shin knew that it would take quite a while before he could take down such a tanky class, so it was better to eliminate the one, who would not be able to survive a couple of strikes from him.

Hun was somewhat panicked after seeing that he was Shin's next target. But he did not just run away blindly. He rapidly fired a series of shots with his magic rifle while swiftly retreating, showcasing his solid kiting abilities.

At the same time, he was constantly moving toward the direction of Lambert, planning to take a little detour while running away and letting Shin get intercepted by his enraged team leader.

Even if Lambert looked like he had lost his mind, Hun was confident that his team leader would be able to handle the situation well as he always did.

Unfortunately, their current opponent was not a simple person.

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

Crackle!

Shin shifted his breathing technique once again.

But this time, he utilized all five elements and combined them with the methods of the Jade Kirin Scripture for further polishing, creating the five-elemental lighting that surrounded his body.

In the concept of the five elements, wind was associated with the element of wood as one of its sub-elements, which also projects that wind was also associated with the element of lightning.

But in some cases, the lightning was wind and water due to the principles of storms, particularly rainstorms.

At times, it could also be reflected between the wind and earth since it reached both the sky and the ground.

Often, it was also put as a fire element due to the manifestation of heat and energy.

Meanwhile, metal was included as well due to its conductivity.

This was where the main concept of the five elemental lighting, which was stabilized by the Jade Kirin Scripture that Shin had learned, especially when all its thirteen movements were associated with the element of lightning itself.

Thus, he decided to put its category under this Mentalism Method.

'Jade Kirin Scripture: Special Technique – Lighting Steps'

Crackle! Crackle!

Shin left trails of electricity on his path as he moved. He seemed to have transformed into streaks of electric current that danced in the air while flying toward Hun.

Swoosh!

"That's how far you can go!" shouted Lambert as he appeared before the path of the streak of lightning.

His body was currently emitting an intense blazing light as he wielded his war axes firmly. He did not even wait for a second as he swung those war axes with all his might at the incoming lightning.

Shin's body immediately materialized as he halted his advance. But it was only for an instant as he was suddenly devoured by a spatial rift between him and Lambert before reappearing ten meters behind the latter.

'Elemental Skill (Void): Void Steps'

Shin did not even waste any time as he quickly used another skill, which had the longest distance of travel, immediately after.

'Equipment Skill (Leg Armor: Megumi's Shadow): Death's Travel'

Swoosh!

Hun, who was preparing to support Lambert, suddenly jumped in fear when he saw Shin appear beside him in an instant.

Without further ado, Hun suddenly used one of his movement skills and leaped sideways, distancing himself away from Shin.

He also did a summersault to dodge the swift slash from Shin with the slightest margin. He then twisted his body in the air and adjusted his position, half-crouching and half-leaning forward while holding his sniper rifle.

He aimed his muzzle at the head of the opposing party, who was attempting to catch up to him.

But before he could even pull the trigger, Shin swiftly ducked forward, avoiding the muzzle while assuming his signature sword-drawing stance.

Hun attempted to adjust the position of his magic rifle to point it at Shin once again, but the latter suddenly moved sideways and ducked toward the other direction to avoid him once again.

"F*ck!" Hun could only curse when he realized that it was impossible to fight Shin in melee range with such insane speed and scary reflexes.

Realizing that he would die regardless, Hun decided to commit suicide instead and take Shin down with him, trying to sacrifice himself.

He knew that Shin would target him sooner or later, which was why he had prepared ahead of time.

His sniper rifle suddenly disappeared while a pair of detonation remotes appeared in each of his hands.

He did not even hesitate when he pressed them decisively, detonating the bombs that he had planted ahead of time.

Shin's eyes contracted as he sensed a sudden vibration from the ground, followed by the intense blazing light coming from underneath his feet.

Shin did not even think twice as he activated a couple more movement skills to charge forward.

'Slayer Skill: (Modified) Sunlight Movement'

'Extra Skill: (Modified) Sword Rush – Slicing Dash'

'Extra Skill: (Modified) Sword Rush – Thrusting Dash'

Along with the reinforcement of the five-elemental lighting, his figure dashed forward and covered almost 50 meters within an instant, barely escaping the explosion.

"That was close!" Shin mumbled as he maintained the final posture of the last skill that he had used.

Swoosh!

But he did not have the time to recover himself as Lambert and Ricky appeared on his flanks once again. They had an enraged expression on their faces as they swung their weapons at him.

Shin swiftly sheathed the [Yamato] in a single motion before quickly pulling it out once again and throwing a series of slashes in the air.

Shing!

'Jade Kirin Scripture: Quick Draw – (Lighting) Flash Firmament'

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

Crackle! Crackle!

Lightning currents danced in as the sword flashes crisscrossed in the air, forming a net-like barrier that slashed through everything.

Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang!

Shin's strikes might not be as strong and heavy as Lambert's war axes and Ricky's heavy sword, but the number of slashes that clashed against their weapons was still able to repel their attacks.

Bang! Bang!

Lambert was forced to take a couple of heavy steps back, leaving a series of deep marks on the ground, while Ricky skidded a dozen meters back as the rebound was too strong for him.

The two stomped on the ground almost at the same time right after regaining their footing before launching themselves forward for another.

Now that they did not have anyone to protect, they could get reckless and continue attacking relentlessly.

Shin, on the other hand, maintained his stance. He sheathed the sword for another, channeling the power of five-elemental lightning once again, before pulling the [Yamato] out with familiar movements.

Shing!

But this time, he did not just swing the sword powerfully as the energy itself revolved around him, forming a powerful current visible to the naked eye.

Crackle! Crackle!

Electric currents danced around the violent flow of energy before a huge dragon appeared, coiling around Shin while opening its mouth and trying to devour anyone who tried to approach its master.

'Jade Kirin Scripture: Quick Draw – Eclipse Dragon Draw'

Roar!

Lambert was able to withstand the impact and prevent himself from being thrown in the air by lowering his stance.

(-502,323)

Regardless, he still received such lethal damage after trying to withstand the attack.

Fortunately, the nature of his Warlord Class was quite tenacious. Adding the buffs that he had cast in time, he was able to survive such a ferocious attack.

"Argh!"

But Rickly was not that lucky as he was bitten by the dragon, which then dragged and threw him high up in the air as it moved in spiraling movements.

Lambert was planning to attack Shin, pressuring the latter so that he could not finish off Ricky, who was now vulnerable in the air.

But Shin was much faster than him.

Shin had already gathered the residual mana in the air, left behind by his previous technique, before suddenly swinging the sword twice directed at Lambert.

He drew a cross in the air, filled with intense energy as they moved forward in a spinning motion.

'Myriad Manifestation Swordsmanship: Eclipse Cross'

Swoosh!

Seeing the incoming cross, Lambert spread his feet and planted them firmly on the ground while releasing all his energy reserve.

He held the war axes on each side of his waist, summing a pair of huge axes behind.

When he saw that the Eclipse Cross was about to reach his ideal range, he suddenly raised his war axes before swinging them down.

'Warlord Skill (Tier 3): Doom's Execution'

Swoosh! Swoosh!

The blazing axes behind him also fell before clashing with the opposing power.

Boom!

Shin did not care what happened on that side as he had already sheathed the [Yamato] once again while channeling a large amount of mana on it.

Click!

As Rickly was about to fall from the air, descending above his head, he suddenly unsheathed his sword and swung it upwards, releasing all the accumulated energies.

Shing!

Not long after, the sword wave that had been released turned into a huge tiger that pounced on the descending figure and shredded it into pieces.

'Jade Kirin Scripture: Quick Draw – Eclipse Tiger Draw'

Roar!

When the violent energy receded, Ricky's somewhat bulky figure also disappeared. He turned into specks of lights alongside the settling gust of wind.

Chapter 1639: Competition at the Center of the Plagued Lands (Part 7)

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"I have cleared all the distractions. I guess there is no need to hide anymore, right?" said Shin as he did not immediately attack Lambert. He just sheathed his sword as he looked at the latter, who was currently suppressing his anger with all his might.

Lambert was fiercely glaring at Shin like a hungry beast while tightly gripping his war axes. "Toying with my team is not enough for you-... you are even trying to humiliate me, huh?"

Shin clicked his tongue as he could hear the anger from Lambert's tone. He knew that his strategy of provoking Lambert was successful, but it seemed like he had gone overboard.

But he did not care too much about it as he said nonchalantly. "You are talking as if you are a clean person. Your conscience is not clear either, especially when you are a part of Death Kneel. Don't talk as if you have not done anything wrong in your life as a professional gamer."

"All I care is whether you are willing to fight me while giving your all or not. If it is the latter, then I don't have any time to waste here anymore. I think it is better to join the fun happening at the center of the Plagued Lands," he added.

Lambert gripped the handle of his war axes even tighter as he could tell that something must have happened at the center of their formation, given that no one had noticed their absence yet. Or more specifically, the others had no time to worry about them since an emergency had occurred where their main forces were gathered.

He was caught in a dilemma because of this. He had to decide to stay here and entertain Shin, hoping to avenge his comrades. After all, dying here in the Awakened Continent had quite a lot of harsh penalties.

But, at the same time, he also felt that his presence was needed when Liya and the others were told that no one had contacted them yet. He was sure that something had happened in there, especially when there was a chieftain-rank Plagued Monster discovered by their guild.

The allure of such a monster, particularly with the amount of event points they could get from killing it, was something that not many could endure.

The news must have leaked somehow or one of the spies within their guild most likely informed their superiors.

Taking the bigger picture, he had to choose the latter. But he also could not let his honor as the captain of his team be trampled just like this. It was not his style at all!

Regardless of his thoughts, Lambert wanted to fight Shin given the latter's identity. He did not need to guess who this person was given that the style that Shin was using was so unique that everyone could recognize it.

But as he was about to make his move, something seemed to have shattered in the dimension. It was a sign that the spatial lock that the Death Knell had been destroyed.

It could also mean that the higher-ups had taken the initiative to disable it so that they could contact those they had lost contact with.

Right after it happened, a series of SOS sounds rang in Lambert's ears, signifying that an invention indeed occurred.

Gritting his teeth, Lambert gave everything to suppress his emotion. His eyes became fiercer as he continued to glare at Shin.

"We will meet again," he said as he turned around and sprinted toward the coordinates sent to him.

Shin wanted to force Lambert to fight, but he also had received a series of messages coming from Exheart, Bryan, and HellBan. They were inviting him to join the fun where a lot of superpowers were gathered in the Plagued Lands.

The very first chieftain-rank Plagued Monster was discovered. The competition for it would be very intense.

"Tsk! Boring," he mumbled as he watched Lambert's back disappear in the distance.

Shin thought for a moment before deciding to join the fun. He did not accept the invitation of the trio as he was planning to create trouble on his own.

But he also wanted to 'thank' them as they indeed had given quite a lot of 'help' on stabilizing his gains in the real world and further polishing his style.

"Maybe I should 'repay' them more later when we meet again," he mumbled as he scratched his chin.

A moment later, he turned toward the direction where Lambert was heading before entering stealth and heading there as well.

...

In the central region of the Plagued Lands, more and more superpowers started together due to the discovery of the first chieftain-rank monster.

It might not be that much of a big deal if it was any wild chieftain-rank monster in the wilderness. Even if such a monster was very powerful and hard to deal with, it was still something that a group of top rankers could handle, especially when they were accompanied by Godlike Players or Maverick Gods.

Given that all the players who reached the Awakened Continent were all top experts of the game, challenging such a monster with a group shouldn't be that hard despite how powerful it was.

Of course, the battle shouldn't be that easy since monsters of rank and level far surpassed those Emperor Rank Monsters of the same level from the Aurora Continent.

This was why most of the players were very cautious when encountering a chieftain-rank monster in the wild.

Some had discovered quite a couple of Lord and Overlord Rank Monsters in the vicinity of the Divinity City, but no one dared to provoke those monsters yet since their deterrence level alone was so suffocating that they could kill those foolish enough to get near them.

With the current strength of the players, the strongest monsters that they could take on in a raid were chieftain-rank monsters.

Monsters of such rank and level were also divided into whether they had bloodline lineage or not, which was further divided based on which species they belonged.

These life ratings were one of the main factors that the players needed to consider when facing a chieftain-rank monster in the Awakened Continent.

Right now, the monster that had transformed into a Plagued Monster that the Death Knell had first discovered was something that had a very potent bloodline lineage, which made its life rating very high.

Right now, this Plagued Monster was currently resting inside a cave after its hunt earlier. Unlike the other monsters infected by the plague in the region, which continued to look for any prey without rest, this monster seemed to follow its usual routine before it was infected.

It was acting as if it was not infected with the plague at all, continuing its usual routine. It seemed to be unbothered by the changes in the environment and its transformation.

At this moment, a huge number of experts were currently gathered outside the cave where this chieftain-rank Plagued Monster was nesting.

This place was supposed to be monopolized by the Death Knell, but they were somehow discovered by the other powerhouse guilds and huge organizations operating nearby.

These superpowers had tacitly agreed not to invade the territory that each other controlled after the most recent battle that took place in the Plagued Lands, which involved quite a lot of forces.

The competition between the top forces had always been intense, which was why such incidents were unavoidable.

But someone had orchestrated a conflict between the top forces that led to chaos, making them suffer quite a serious loss in the process.

Fortunately, the higher-ups of each guild were able to realize it before it was already too late, preventing themselves from falling into the plot.

They already had an idea who was the person behind it, but they could not put the blame on that person as they did not have any evidence to back up their claims.

All they could do was intensely grit their teeth and silently endure everything.

The Death Knell knew that no one could endure the allure of a chieftain-rank monster, which was they had purposely sent up a net formation in the region and even locked down the entire place with a special magic formation that blocked all kinds of communication even if everyone had silently agreed to control their regions.

"What is the meaning of this? Don't we have already agreed to stay in our controlled regions?" asked Liya, one of the commanding officers of the Death Knell operating at the Divinity City.

"Don't be like that, Liya. It is only right to share your blessings," said Minerva, one of the main liaisons that the Blood Carnival had tasked to stay in the Divinity City as a 'spy'.

Unlike the main branch, which had already sided with the Evil Faction, these 'spies' were tasked to leave the guild and 'scattered' themselves in the city to monitor everything.

After all, those members who had already pledged their allegiance to the Evil Factions were unable to enter any cities under the Righteous Churches. It would be a waste if the Blood Carnival had missed such a big event due to that reason, which was why they left some of their people to participate in the event for the rewards.

"We have never agreed to anything," said Thor, one of the top Godlike Players of the Titan Guild, in a domineering fashion. They did not respect this so-called tacit agreement between the top forces so long as they were their enemies.

Their guild was said to be a righteous guild, so dark and notorious guilds were their enemies. They did not care whether to offend or find guilds like the Blood Carnival or Death Knell.

There were also the Hydra Guild and Dragon Pavilion, who seemed to be unbothered by the situation and continued to glare at each other. They were more interested in fighting the opposing side rather than joining the competition for the chieftain-rank Plagued Monster.

The top adventurer teams and mercenary groups, on the other hand, remained in the distance as they wanted to wait until the real competition started.

Even though they were not afraid of these forces, they did not want to get too close to the others, as they were more concerned with watching their archrivals hiding in the distance.

The atmosphere was getting hotter with every passing second, but little did these forces know that a certain group was watching their actions and quite pleased with the current situation.

"It seems like they had taken the bait. Are we moving now?"

"Don't be impatient. Let them fight each other for now before we make our move."

"Sit back and enjoy. Our time to shine will naturally arrive."

Chapter 1640: Chaotic Battlefield (Part 1)

...

"Tsk! Tsk! Will you look at this? Such a live place," Shin appeared on the cliff, where he could see the huge gathering of the players in front of the cave where Death Knell had discovered the chieftain-rank Plagued Monster.

The crowd of players was divided into multiple groups, which represented the factions they belonged. They were from the top guilds and large organizations within the game, which controlled the largest and strongest forces within the region.

Some of them were also from the famous adventurer teams and powerful mercenary groups filled with top-notch experts.

Some of the groups were funded by huge corporations and financial groups from the real world, who were unwilling to invest in the already existing powers within the game and wanted to form their factions.

There were also some scattered individuals and smaller groups, which were the independent and solo players. Some of them formed a team for a temporary alliance while the rest were lone wolves, who refused to work with anyone.

Shin was able to spot Exheart, Bryan, and HellBan from his current location, but he did not join them as he had other plans. He chose to observe everything in the distance, not planning to reveal his presence right away.

After observing for quite a while, Shin spotted quite a few famous experts, who had a solid reputation within the gaming community. There were even some ranked Godlike Players.

His fighting spirit was immediately ignited after seeing such several strong people. He did his best to suppress his urge to challenge them right away as he needed to wait for the right time to appear.

"Hmm. Tsk! I hope I will not get too bored this time," Shin wanted to be idle for the time being, planning to understand how these apex experts would perform.

He also wanted to understand how far they were in their respective combat state, which was now the standard for their experts at the Tier 3 Classes.

As the events at the Awakened Continent were slowly getting heated, the current state of the Aurora Continent was quite lively as well.

The ongoing war between the Righteous Churches and the Demonic Churches was slowly reaching a much more intense stage.

It was because of the appearance of the Demons in the war.

Even if the true vanguards of the Bug Tribe had yet to arrive, a few demons of the lowest ranking from the other side of the Dimensional Gate started to pour out.

These bug-type demons started to contaminate the surroundings right after they appeared in the Atlas World. Their dense demonic energy immediately spread and started to affect the environment.

They might not have any combat capabilities, but they were able to spread their demonic energy and transform the surroundings into a polluted land that could be inhabited by their kins, the demons from Hell.

These special bugs were also in great numbers, threatening the current balance of the war. The Demonic Church also took advantage of these bug demons to turn the tides in their favor, but the Righteous Churches were much faster than them.

The Church of Light, Church of the Sun and Moon, and Temple of the War God seemed to have been anticipating the arrival of the bug demons, which was why they had already set up a sacred formation that halted the advance of the contamination of the demonic energy.

The collision between the two sides created an odd environment in the Dark Cloud Kingdom.

The regions surrounding the capital of the kingdom had turned into a demonic land while their borders were being locked down by the sacred formations set up by the Righteous Churches.

There were also some high-ranking officials of the churches, who were guarding these formation points and preventing the Demonic Churches from destroying them.

The Demonic Churches tried to take down the outpost set around these formation points, but the Templars and Archbishops guarding each place were quite powerful as well, preventing them from doing anything.

All they could do was hold their ground until the vanguard forces of the Bug Tribe truly descended into this plane.

But at the same time, the Righteous Churches also could not do anything against the bases that the Demonic Churches had sent up in the depths of the Dark Cloud Kingdom due to the bug demons.

Even if these bug demons did not have any combat abilities, their number was quite high. Their reproduction was also quite high, making it hard for the Righteous Churches to thoroughly eradicate them.

The dimensional gate was also constantly spitting out more of these bug demons, making the players on the side of the Righteous Churches speechless.

The state of the war was in a deadlock, but the Righteous Churches that the opposing side was only bidding their time until their 'reinforcement' finally arrived.

...

As the perpetrators of this event, the Pandemonium Descendants were currently enjoying the highest authority in the war, especially with their deep connection with the Demonic Churches.

Their higher-ups were treated as the commanders of the armies, making them the main forces of the Dark Cloud Kingdom.

Even the king of the kingdom had to listen to their orders, especially when there were some high-ranking archbishops from the Church of Gluttony overseeing everything.

At this moment, there was an emergency meeting for the higher-ups of the Pandemonium Descendants.

Paimon and Belial, who were leading the operations in the war, were currently present while waiting for their great leader to appear.

Amon and Baal were also summoned for some unknown reason. They were quite confused about this as their tasks had nothing to do with this war.

Clank!

Not long after, Lucifer entered the room and walked straight to his seat, not bothering with the greetings that the others had offered him.

He sat down and went straight to discuss his purpose in coming here. "The main branches of the Demonic Churches have contacted our elders. They are asking us to send some Otherworldly Individual under our forces to the Awakened Continent."

Hearing that, Paimon could not help but frown. "Isn't that job assigned to the Church of the Demonic Beasts and Hall of Darkness? Why are they asking our faction to join them as well?"

"Our Seven Churches of Sin and the Cult of the Demon Kings on our side seem to have agreed to cooperate with them," replied Lucifer as he added. "I am not sure about the details, but their side seems to require quite a lot of Otherworldly Individuals to participate in a certain event."

"Ah~! They need to fill their numbers as they don't have enough players who are qualified enough to reach the Awakened Continent," said Baal mockingly as he realized what Lucifer meant.

"Event? Is it about the Plagued Lands that suddenly appear near the vicinity of the Divinity City?" asked Belial keenly as he read deeper into the information.

"Does it have anything to do with their factions?" asked Paimon while raising his brows.

Lucifer nodded as he further explained. "The trigger of the event seems to be related to a Fallen King from the Ancient Era. The Hall of Darkness and Cult of Torment seem to be interested in this."

"They are either planning to snatch something from the tomb of the king, most likely the source of the plague itself, or they are thinking of inviting the Fallen to their side once he has successfully resurrected."

"That is the most logical conclusion that I can think of based on the clues that the elders have given us," he added before turning to everyone. "Anyone, who wants to volunteer to lead this operation?"

None of the four replied as they had more important matters to attend to. Even if the Awakened Continent aroused their interest, it was not as alluring as the Realm of Hell, which was about to connect with the Atlas World.

After all, that place was more suitable for Demonic Players like them.

Lucifer thought he had to appoint someone because no one wanted to volunteer. But before he could even say anything, Baal suddenly voiced out a suggestion.

"Such tasks are usually handed to the Seven Sin Devils. But since they could not leave the Dark Cloud Kingdom, I suggest dispatching either of those 'four' and their respective legions."

"After all, they were currently not doing anything," he added.

"Those four? Morax, Barbatos, Zagan, and Malphas?" said Paimon while raising his brows. He then nodded as he agreed. "I think it is a good idea. Just send one of them and the legions that they lead. That will be more than enough to fill the numbers that those factions required."

Lucifer did not immediately respond as he considered it. He repeatedly tapped his fingers on the table as he weighed the pros and cons of sending one of their legions before nodding. "Alright. I will choose one of them."

"We have already revealed ourselves anyway, so it will not hurt to reveal one of our armies to everyone," he added before turning to the four. "Tell me the update on your current tasks. Let me hear your progress."

