

## Destiny 1641

### Chapter 1641: Chaotic Battlefield (Part 2)

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Atlas World, Awakened Continent, Divine Empire.

Divinity City Regional Territory, Plagued Lands.

The tension was gradually growing as more and more players gathered at the cave where the chieftain-rank Plagued Monster was 'resting', especially when powerful figures and famous groups appeared one after another.

Friction was about to happen when old rivals appeared before each other, so the situation was getting more serious as time went by.

The tension filling the air was already so high that it became suffocating, making the players to be wary.

Such a gathering was quite surprising, especially when there was only a single monster they were competing for. It was somewhat unimaginable for regular occasions, but the top forces gathered here knew the significance of this single monster for this event.

Even though, they all knew that another one could appear in the later stages of the event, they could not give up the chance of getting ahead of their competitors, especially after knowing that the leading figures of this event could build a decent status in the Divinity City.

They did not care about the equipment that they could get once the event ended, but the potential social status that they could get in the end would without a doubt be their greatest advantage over the others.

Just looked at the Empyrean Talons who managed to settle in the Divinity City much earlier than the rest. They not only gained a lot of benefits from being the pioneers of the Awakened Continent, but they also built a lot of relationships with the NPCs of Divinity City due to their special statuses.

Even though one of the reasons for that was their pioneering rights, possessing a high social status or even a military status within the city could give them a lot of benefits.

The higher-ups of the top guilds were very clear about this, especially when this was one of the regular strategies used by top experts whenever they explored a new map or region.

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As the tension between different groups grew higher, the spark that initiated the chaos finally appeared.

Boom!

"I don't care about the event points or anything anymore. Just like I have said, I will kill you every time I see you!" said a Lionkin after sending a Blood Elf flying.

The surrounding players were caught off-guard by the sudden commotion and started distancing themselves from the center of the explosions.

Then they saw those two started clashing against each other.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

"Crap! Isn't that Reylen from the Bloodthirsty Kings? I heard that their mercenary group has been taken over by the Seven Seas Group."

"Eh!? That Blood Elf, that's the Wondering Noman Exheart! I heard that they have had multiple conflicts with the forces under the Seven Seas Group recently. And the latter repeatedly suffered some losses before he ran away."

"He heard to appear in front of them!? He sure has balls of steel!"

"Damn! They are starting! Look! Those are forces from the Seven Seas Group!"

"Eh!? Saber Demon Bryan and Hand of the Dead HellBan are also helping now! This is going to be a big fight."

"Fight? With that number of enemies, I doubt those three will survive!"

"What do you know!? Those three also have quite a lot of friends in the circle. Look! It seems like the Supreme Contenders Adventurer Team and White Star Mercenary Group are rushing to help!"

Boom! Boom! Boom!

With this 'spark', a chain reaction quickly erupted and caused those who were holding back to finally explode as well.

Bang! Bang!

The ones that started the largest battle were the long-time rivals, the Dragon Pavilion and Hydra Guild. They had been itching to clash against each other, so they quickly took this opportunity to fight as well.

The Blood Carnival was originally thinking about how they would cause a conflict that would start the chaos. But since someone had beaten them into it, they welcomed it with open arms as they no longer had to sacrifice their people.

But before they could even start fishing in troubled waters, the Titan Guild also made their move and started attacking the dark guilds. Their main target was the Blood Carnival as they were the most troublesome in the bunch.

Liya, who was leading the people of Death Knell, was originally having a hard time thinking how they would deal with their situation. After all, they should be the main target of everyone as they were the ones who found the chieftain-rank Plagued Monster, especially when they formed a blockade that blocked the rest of the forces from reaching the cave.

But who would have thought that something like this would happen?

"This is good too. We can just let them fight among themselves while we deal with the Plagued Monster!" mumbled Liya as she prepared to give an order to her people.

But before she could even issue her commands, he saw someone walk toward them. It was Lambert, who just arrived because he was delayed fighting some assassins sent by the Assassin Union to deal with him.

Liya frowned when she saw that Lambert was alone. "What happened to the others? Why are you alone? Is it the Assassin Union?"

Lambert was silent for a moment before sighing. "I indeed encounter some assassins from those guys, but the ones who sweep my group are someone else."

Liya further deepened her frown after hearing that. She was familiar with the power of Lambert and his group, particularly this guy, who was purposely hiding his real strength due to the orders of their Guild Leader.

Even if the strength of their group was quite average when compared to the standards of top-notch teams, Lambert shouldn't have been that powerless to not be able to protect his teammates to the point where he was the only one who survived.

Given her understanding of them, Liya could tell that this 'someone', who annihilated the team right in front of Lambert was not simple.

"Who-...!?" she tried to ask who it was, but Lambert already answered her before she could complete her words. "Battle God Sickarius."

Liya and the rest of the Death Knell could not help but pause after hearing the name before a sudden shiver ran down their spine. They could only imagine how powerful this Godlike Player, who was rapidly gaining a lot of fame since the time he made his first appearance.

"I do hear that he has some relationship with the Guild Leader of Hand of Midas, which happens to be quite close with the Assassin Union," said Liya, seemingly trying to connect things.

After all, they shouldn't have any conflict with Shin or the Empyrean Talons, so she was quite confused as to why he would suddenly attack them without any reason.

Hearing her trying to deduce Shin's purpose, Lambert could not help but grit his teeth. He knew better than anyone that Shin had only done it for 'fun'. Or if he tried making it a little 'pleasing' to the ears, Shin had used them as a grinding stone to polish his style and further improve himself.

As if it was not enough, Shin even killed his members one after another, purposely provoking Lambert. "I'll kill that bastard every time I see him."

Sensing the sudden change of mood from Lambert, Liya immediately realized there was something more to it than she thought.

She helped him calm down before turning her attention to the current chaos before them.

Due to them being a little further away from the gathering of the top forces of the Divinity City and independent and scattered players, they were not swept by the chaotic battle that was currently taking place.

But that did not mean that they would be safe to head to the cave and start attacking the chieftain-rank Plagued Monster.

Even if these people were busy fighting, that did not mean that they would let the members of the Death Knell take advantage of the situation.

The individual players were also swept in the chaos, making the situation even more chaotic. Some troublemakers even joined the 'fun' and started attacking random people just for the sake of it.

Shin, who was seeing all of this from his spot, could not help but click his tongue. "Tsk! Look at this liveliness. What a good place to relieve some stress."

But despite watching for quite a while, he did not make his move as he was quite wary of those people hiding in the distance and observing everything.

One of these groups was hiding on the cliff directly opposite Shin. He could not see them figure that well due to the distance. Adding that they were also wearing black cloaks to hide their bodies, trying to identify them was impossible.

But given the auras Shin was getting from them, he was sure that their group was filled with top-notch experts who were not weaker than the apex experts of the game's powerhouses.

The other group hid in a faraway place, but Shin could sense the foul aura they were emitting even from such a great distance. The dense 'plague' that their bodies were emitting was something that Shin could 'see' through his True Sight after it was enhanced by his strengthened elemental powers, especially when they were together.

With his current understanding of this higher form of mana, he became more sensitive to sensing the elements.

After training his breathing techniques in the region, he could sense the density of the plague in the environment.

Based on the plague aura coming from the direction where those people were hiding, he could tell that someone was hiding there even if he could not see them, especially when the imbalance of the energy they were emitting was much denser from their surroundings.

"Hmm... it seems like those guys are observing us. Are they the main perpetrators?"

## Chapter 1642: Chaotic Battlefield (Part 3): A Trap

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As the chaotic battle continued, everyone suddenly sensed that something was not right. They felt that it was strange that the chieftain-rank Plagued Monster never made a move despite all the commotion happening outside.

If this monster was following its usual routine before it turned into a Plagued Monster, then it was supposed to defend its territory. After all, such powerful monsters were territorial, especially when it was lone monsters refusing to lead a pack.

Given that everyone here was a top expert in the game, they should have already experienced almost everything. With all of this, it was indeed strange that this monster was making any move up despite how chaotic the battle was going on right inside its territory.

These players could not help but slow down their pace. They purposely lessen the intensity of their attacks while cautiously observing the cave. They were also paying extra attention to the members of the Death Knell, trying to see if these guys had already plotted something.

Since these people from Death Knell were the ones who had found the monster first, these powerhouses felt that they had already done something while they were distracted.

But after closely observing the group for quite a while, the top guilds and large organizations concluded that it was not the case after seeing that the ones leading the Death Knell were also showing a confused look on their faces.

Seeing this, Shin, who was watching everything from the distance, smirked. "It looks like they have finally realized it."

Not long after he said those words, he raised his head and turned toward a certain direction. From his position, he could see a cloud of tide-like dust growing larger from a distance, indicating that something or a lot of 'things' were rushing toward this place.

Shin licked his lips after seeing this as he felt that this was going to be even more interesting.

He then turned toward the cliff across from him and observed the hooded group for another time before looking at the cluster of plague energy coming from those hiding in the distance. "Let's see what these guys are planning."

Under the camouflage skill attached to his cape, he would remain in the invisible state so long as he remained stationary or separated himself from any trees or bushes once it was activated.

He then turned his attention back to the chaotic battlefield and fell into deep thought. After a while, he sent a message to Exheart, Bryan, and HellBan, informing them about the incoming horde of monsters.

It was up to them whether they would retreat, inform the others, or anything else.

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Rumble! Rumble! Rumble!

Not long after, the players fighting on the chaotic battlefield sensed the trembling ground and heard the rumbling sounds from the distance.

They were forced to stop what they were doing and distance themselves from their respective opponents. Then they turned toward the direction where the rumbling sounds were coming from.

These experts did not need to guess what was coming as they could already tell what it was.

"A monster horde!"

"What the heck!? Why-...!?"

"The heck!? Look at their numbers!"

Some of the players were somewhat panicked after seeing the running cloud of dust from the distance alongside the numerous silhouettes of monsters charging in their direction. Given the 'dots' filling the horizon, these players could tell that the number of monsters alone was more than enough to overwhelm them even if those were just a bunch of regular monsters.

On the other hand, the leading figures from the top guilds and large organizations of the game, were somewhat calmer as they quickly organized their people.

"Get in formation! It is already too late to retreat now. We are facing them head-on and break through if possible!"

"Gather around! Knights, set up the defensive line! Warriors, on the second line of defense! Healers, buffs and keep an eye on the frontline! Marksmen and Mages, ready your skills and spells!"

"Thieves and Assassins! Go scout the number of the enemies and what species they belong to!"

The experienced adventurer teams and mercenary groups also prepared for the incoming battle and coordinated with the top forces, setting up their defensive line.

As for the scattered independent and solo players, they coordinated with the teams they were familiar with, planning cooperation. They could also tell that it was already too late to escape, especially with the terrain that they were in.

The tension was quite high as these players wore serious expressions after seeing how large the incoming horde was. They could tell that this was going to be a bitter battle, especially when each of these monsters was powerful enough to pose a serious threat to them despite being 'regular-rank' monsters.

Fortunately, the players gathered here were top talents and highly skilled experts, so they were not that worried.

The only problem was the fact that some of these groups were plotting something against one another, taking advantage of the chaos. Especially those arch-rivals and enemies with each other, which was why they remained cautious with one another.

Rumble! Rumble! Rumble!

As the horde of the Plagued Monster approached them, the players were able to see the appearance of the monsters charging at them.

Most of the monsters were from beast species while the minority were from insect families. There were also some strange-looking monsters that they could not explain, especially when most parts of their bodies were in the state of decaying process, making it hard to fully distinguish their original appearance before they turned this way.

Regardless, each of these Plagued Monsters was carrying an immense power that could make even these experts somewhat wary, especially when the combined auras were combined.

While everyone was bracing themselves for the incoming horde, something unexpected happened behind them.

Roar!

The Chieftain-Rank Plagued Monster, which was not showing any kind of reaction since earlier despite all the commotion they were doing earlier.

The expression of everyone immediately distorted when they heard the deafening roar from behind along with the rumbling movements coming from the cave.

Tremble!

They also could not help but tremble after sensing the overwhelming power that the monster passively emitting.

Everyone could feel that this chieftain-rank Plagued Monster was different from the ones that they had faced before, even when compared to those with special bloodlines.

At the same time, the leaders of the top guilds and large organizations immediately realized something.

"Damn it!"

"Tsk! We have fallen into a trap!"

"There is someone orchestrating everything of the events!?"

The commanders of the adventurer teams and captains of the mercenary groups were not that slow either as they also came up with the same conclusion after seeing the situation that they were in.

"Tsk! What devious plan."

"Such a devious scheme."

"I will slaughter whoever they were once I saw them!"

Regardless of their thoughts and anger, they still moved and adjusted their formation accordingly.

To prevent any conflict, these top forces tacitly 'agreed' to send an elite group to face the chieftain-rank Plagued Monster. They each picked a representative of their group and sent them to deal with it.

Of course, there were also some solo and independent players, who 'volunteered' to 'lend' a hand in dealing with this threat. But only those with the strongest powers and who were not afraid of the top forces dared to do that.

Most of these lone wolves were widely known names with a solid gaming community reputation. They were either very famous Maverick Gods or renowned Godlike Players who loved to play the game by themselves.

The leaders and commanders of these top forces only glanced at these lone wolves and did not bother any of them.

This was a fair competition. Whoever killed the plagued monster, the event points would be theirs.

This might be the best situation that anyone could think of. After all, they could prevent a huge conflict between everyone and avoid weakening their forces in a huge battle.

It was not much of a concern whether they would play tricks or try to harm anyone during the battle.

This was not the first time that such a thing happened. It was a somewhat common occurrence even in the previous games.

As these top elites, representing each group, alongside the lone wolves walked toward the cave to form a 'team', the monster that was supposed to be their 'prize' finally revealed itself.

Its size alone was intimidating enough to make the players wary of it. But the main problem that these elites felt from it was the dense plague energy that its body was emitting.

It was so dense that a black miasma was forming a veil to shroud the monster's body behind it.

These elites felt that even if this monster did not attack them, just getting near it would be threatening enough for them.

With such a thick plague energy, getting infected wouldn't be impossible. They would most likely suffer severe debuffs at the very least just by standing near it.

Shin did not make any move as he watched everything from the same spot. An evil grin appeared behind his mask as he thought of something. "Let's see how much fish I can get from this troubled water."

Chapter 1643: Troublemaking Specialist

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Shin watched everything unfold, but he somewhat lost interest in dealing with these top experts for the time being as he became more interested in the agenda of these suspicious people as well as those perpetrators hiding in the distance.

"Which one should I choose first?" he mumbled as he switched his gaze between the two directions.

Even if he wanted to cause trouble and join the fun below, he could not just recklessly go rampant in there when there were still some people plotting in the darkness.

A moment later, his eyes suddenly twinkled as an idea flashed in his mind. "Why do I have to choose when I can create a conflict with all of them."

With that, he suddenly sent a message to Exheart, who survived an earlier battle due to the sudden appearance of the horde. He was telling the latter that some people were hiding in the cliff on their eastern side.

After that, Shin gave the hooded individuals another glance before retreating deep into the woods to further hide himself and his tracks. Then he started sprinting toward the source of the dense plague energy that he was sensing.

Swoosh!

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Down on the battlefield, Exheart, who was working with the adventurer teams that had a friendly relationship with him, suddenly paused.

He had just gotten the message from Shin and could not help but complain a little. "Where the heck is this guy?? It feels like he has been watching everything from a safe place and taking this as some sort of entertainment."

He pushed the Plagued Monster he was fighting back before signaling the nearby warrior to cover his place for a moment as he wanted to see what Shin wanted to say this time.

Right after reading the contents of the message, he could not help but frown deeply before turning his head toward the cliffs on the eastern side of the battlefield.

This place was quite like a basin as there were a few mountain cliffs surrounding it. Even though there was quite a distance away from those cliffs and the battlefield, it was still short enough to cover given the current stats of the players.

He looked at the direction that Shin had indicated, trying to find the people that the latter was talking about. But he immediately frowned deeper after failing to find anyone despite using his ocular skills.

"No one?" his already deep frown became even deeper as he found this. He did not doubt Shin even for a second as he somewhat knew the latter.

Moreover, Shin had never sent any misinformation up until now. He also did not have any reason to do that, which meant that the other party was using a very high level of concealment ability or tool to hide themselves.

Seeing that Exheart suddenly stopped fighting and was somewhat lost in thought, the leader of the adventurer team that he was working with immediately noticed this.

He knitted his brow after seeing the frown of his friend. "This guy rarely shows any seriousness like this. Did he find something again?"

It was Exheart who had informed them about the incoming beast horde earlier, which was a great help for everyone. They were able to quickly disengage from the battle and swiftly set up their formation.

Seeing that, Exheart was 'distracted' once again and staring at the empty space, this team leader knew that he had gotten another piece of information from his mysterious informant.

Thinking about this, this team leader walked over and joked. "Yoh! Why are you slacking off when everyone is working hard?"

Exheart finally took his eyes off that cliff and turned his head. "Perfect timing, Cade!"

He paused for a moment before pointing at the cliff while saying. "Use your strongest ocular skill to observe that cliff. See if you can find anything."

"What is it this time?" asked Cade in a complaining tone while casting his gaze in the pointed direction.

As an archer, his eyes were sharper than most of the players from different classes. Even if he did not use any kind of ocular skill to enhance his eyesight, his eyes could still see everything miles away from his position in a clear detail.

The cliff that Exheart was pointing at was not that far from the battlefield, only a couple of hundreds of meters away, so it was not that far for him.

"There is nothing in there though," said Cade confusedly, curious why Exheart wanted him to look in there.

"That is why I asked you to use your strongest ocular skill," said Exheart, refusing to accept that answer.

"What's so special about that place that you want me to use my 'Sky Eagle Eyes' just for it? Do you think it is an ordinary skill?" Cade snarled back.

"It is not that of a big deal for you. You don't have the chance to use it on this battlefield, so it is better to contribute it for other purposes. And its cooldown is not that long either, so just do it, will you?" said Exheart, unbothered.

"Tsk! If only you are not my friend," said Cade before using his skill.

He gathered his mana toward his eyes, making it shine brightly. His pupils also took an appearance similar to those of an eagle, greatly enhancing his eyesight.

Not only he could see in clearer detail, but the flow of mana and other forms of energies could be reflected in his eyes. Through this, he could also uncover any kind of concealment skill even at a great distance.

However, its duration was quite short as well, lasting only for five to ten seconds depending on the amount of mana he infused into his eyes.

Right after using this skill, everything was uncovered to his eyes. He did not put too much mana into his eyes since he already had the major direction where he needed to look.

But not long after, his eyes suddenly turned wide as found something – or to be more precise, he found a bunch of silhouettes from that place. He could not help but infuse more mana into his eyes due to this.

His eyes immediately turned even wider when the details of those silhouettes became even clearer to his eyes. "There are people over there!"

"They are watching us?" mumbled Exheart as he fell in deep thought and could not help but have a couple of assumptions as well. "We have fallen into a trap given our current situation. Are they the ones behind it?"

Shin had only informed him about the hidden group and their location but did not specify if they were the perpetrators of this incident, so he had no idea about it.

Cade stared at those figures for quite a while until the duration of his ocular skill ended. From his eyes, it felt like the mysterious group was veiled by the surrounding energies, making them blend with the environment naturally.

He then turned to Exheart and asked. "How did you know?"

Exheart shook his head as he said. "That is not important right now."

He paused for a moment as he picked up his spear once again, planning to resume the battle. "You should inform your commander right now. Let them deal with it."

Cade opened his mouth, wanting to say something, but no words came out from him. He then clicked his tongue before running toward his commander to report their discovery.

If those people were indeed the perpetrators of this incident, then they had to pay the price for messing with all these forces.

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At the same time, on the cliff where the mysterious group was located, one of the members felt something strange and turned in the direction where Shin was previously located.

Noticing his strange actions, the person standing beside him could not help but ask. "What's wrong?"

That member did not immediately respond, as he focused all his attention on the opposite cliff. After trying many methods and failing multiple times, he shook his head and said, "It is nothing. It must be my imagination."

He kept on having a strange feeling that someone had been watching them from that cliff since earlier, but no matter what method or skill he used, he failed to uncover anything.

Even if his senses were telling him that someone was observing them from that place, he had no choice but to forget about it since he did not find anything. After all, he was the one with the strongest ocular skill and eye techniques in their group, so he had full confidence in his scouting abilities.

Since he had not found anything, his imagination must be playing a trick on him.

"This operation must be putting a lot of stress on you. After all, we are tasked to get those items from those gods," said the other person. "We are facing the top gods of the game, so it shouldn't be that easy."

"Fortunately, someone is 'helping' us right now. This is a perfect opportunity to assassinate them," he added.

The member, who was staring at the opposite cliff earlier, nodded his head. "Those items have a guaranteed drop rate, so all we have to do is kill our targets as fast as we can and steal the items once they drop. We will retreat immediately after that."

"Get ready, we will make our move once that chieftain-rank monster goes berserk," said the person standing at the forefront of the group.

Chapter 1644: Troublemaking Specialist (Part 2)

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Far from the battlefield, there was a group of players watching everything unfold. They observed the ongoing battle as a ray of hope flashed in their eyes.

This was Axion's group, who managed to survive the disaster and turned into Plague Race, which was also the one that triggered the event.

Axion was currently not with the group as he could not leave the tomb. He was forbidden from leaving that place until the final stages of the event or until the revival of the king.

The four were currently gathered as they had planned all of this without the consent of their leader.

"It looks like it has somewhat worked," said the zombified samurai, Ken.

Magia, the sole female member of the group right now, shook her head. "This may work now, but it is just a trick that will only work once. After this, it will be hard to gather another batch of players into a trap."

"They will realize that there is someone orchestrating everything from the shadows. It will not be good for a long-term process," she sighed.

"What do you want to do then? The progress of the event is quite slow. If we wait until the final stages, then we will most likely watch our captain turn into the vessel of the king," said Asesino, the Ghost Assassin.

"Moreover, our main goal is not to wipe them out anyway. We just want to harvest as many nutrients as possible to slightly hasten the process of plague corruption, which will then increase the spawn rate of the Plagued Monsters."

"It does not matter if they realize that we are behind all of this, so long as the plague spreads faster and wider, everything will be worth it since the king will get more energy and lessen the burden for Captain," he added.

"But I do have some uncomfortable feelings about this," said Berdugo. The others could tell that he was frowning deeply despite the black sack covering his head as he continued. "The captain will be furious once he learns that we have moved without any of his orders."

"We are assigned to guard different areas anyway. Our job is not only to hunt the players but also to control the Plagued Monster to eliminate as many players as we can, so why not gather all of them in a single place and kill them in one fell swoop?" refuted Asesino.

"But the combined forces of the players will also be stronger since they are together," said Ken with a frown.

As they could see, the horde of monsters was not doing that much against the blockade of players. Even if the Plagued Monsters were able to kill a few in the process, the players were still able to kill more.

"That's fine as well. You should know what will happen if there are too many Plagued Monsters die in a single place," replied Asesino as he started at the ongoing battle. "The accumulated plague energy will be deadly enough to influence them."

"Even if they have the protection of the talismans, they will still be affected by it due to the accumulated plague energy becoming more concentrated."

"At that time, we will be able to convert more of them into our side. Their transformation will be unavoidable, turning them into Plague Race just like us. As for the corpses of the players who died in that place, they will turn into Plague Puppets, which is another batch of strong soldiers."

"Regardless of the outcome of this battle, it will be beneficial to us," he added with full confidence.

He had plotted this scheme thoroughly, making it into a multi-layer trap that would be impossible to avoid so long as there were enough players who took the bait.

Everything had started since the time the chieftain-rank Plague Monster was discovered, which then solidified after the players gathered due to their greed.

"They want to hunt more Plagued Monsters for event points, right? Then we will give them to them!" said Asesino excitedly as he felt more confident in his plot after seeing the ongoing battle in the distance. "More chieftain-rank Plagued Monsters will be born once the density of the plague energy becomes dense enough! The more they kill, the more impossible for them to escape!"

Even if the other three had some doubts earlier when they first heard his plans, the result was still presented before them, so they could not say anything.

Seeing that the Plagued Monsters were slowly getting stronger without the player's notice, as well as the gradually increasing density of the plague energy in that place, the three of them could not help but acknowledge that this plan was successful.

It was at this moment when an unfamiliar voice sounded beside them.

"I see. So, that it is. It is a well-thought-out plan. It seems like you have put quite an effort into constructing it."

"Hmm. Hmm," the three subconsciously nodded after hearing the compliment.

Asesino, on the other hand, could not help but feel a little proud. He also nodded his head as he explained. "It is not that much. It's just-..."

But he suddenly paused when he realized that something was wrong. The unfamiliar voice did not belong to their group!

The others realized this as well, making their bodies tremble.

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

They quickly jumped into action the moment it sank into them. They swiftly jumped away from their current position and coordinately surrounded the unfamiliar person, who appeared out of nowhere.

When they looked in that direction, they saw a cloaked individual standing soundlessly in their previous location.

They also started sweating profusely after realizing that they could not sense the presence of the other party, no matter how hard they tried.

It was as if this person had merged with the surroundings, making him a part of it.

If not for them seeing him standing still in that position, then they would most likely mistake him as a shadow or an illusion.

If this person did not talk, then they would never discover his presence at all. They would even be killed in the process if he wanted to.

"Strong!" through the group as they warily looked at the other party.

They quickly assumed their battle stances and got ready for the battle while warily staring at the hooded person.

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Shin, who remained standing on the same spot, clicked his tongue as he 'complained'. "What's with the tenseness? We are just here to chat. Tell me more about the plan and this so-called king or something – I am quite interested in him."

Seeing Shin acting nonchalant despite the current situation, the four could not help but become even warier as they could tell that this person was among those who were standing at the pinnacle of the game.

Even if they were quite strong themselves, along with the Molding Skills that boosted their stats and made them comparable to a boss monster, they still felt an immense threat coming from the other party.

Molding Skills were a special set of skills meant for Named NPCs and Boss Monsters, which made them very strong. Most of these skills increased the ratio scaling between the stats of the monsters and NPCs just like how they had more HP Bar compared to the players.

Some of these skills even gave them special talents that made them immune to certain types of damage or boosted their damage by a larger margin.

But from their perspective, Shin looked more like a boss monster than themselves.

Seeing their reactions, Shin shook his head repeatedly. "I guess you don't want to."

He then paused for a moment as he raised his head slightly, somewhat revealing the half of his mask hiding behind the shade of his hood.

When he swept his eyes at the surroundings, a cold glint seemed to flash from his eyes, sending an intense shiver down their spine.

"I wonder how many event points I can get from you and if the later stages of the event will immediately bring forward once I wipe you out," he said in a tone similar to talking to himself.

It was at this moment when Asesino and others realized the identity of this person.

"Run!" shouted Asesino to Magia as he could tell that even if they worked together, they would still lose against this person, especially when they did not have the assistance of the Plagued Monster under their command.

If they insisted on fighting such a scary person by themselves, even with their insanely huge Health Points, they would only be stalling until the other people noticed the commotion.

When that happened, the other top-notch gods fighting on the battlefield might be able to realize what was happening and pinpoint their location through the sounds of the battle.

The best choice was to let Magia, who had the least HP Bar and weakest defense among them, run back to the tomb while the rest held Shin down.

They could not risk getting annihilated here when they had already plotted a perfect scheme for the players.

So long as one of them survived, then everything would be worth it.

They had to leave at least one of them to oversee the Plagued Monsters later.

Asesino was the ideal person for this, but he chose to send Magia since he could leave by himself later anyway.

Shin was able to see through their plan, but he did nothing against it as he had a better plan in his mind.  
"Let's play for a moment."

Chapter 1645: Humanoid Monsters Versus True Monster

...

Bang! Bang!

Swoosh! Swoosh!

As Magia ran away from the battle, Berdugo and Ken quickly kicked the ground and launched themselves toward Shin while Asesino entered stealth.

Shin swept his gaze at them for a moment, activating his True Sight Skill to see their details. He then suddenly raised his brows after seeing that their Health Bars were absurdly high. Their HP Bars were comparable to boss monsters, which could also mean that their overall stats should be on the same scale as well.

"If that is the case, then does it mean that I have found the perfect training dummies for damage testing?" he silently mumbled as his body suddenly swayed left and right.

Swoosh!

As he moved to the left, a gust of wind suddenly blew past him before revealing Asesino, who had lost his stealth due to the ambush. He then ducked diagonally to the right, dodging the kick that the latter had sent after the failed ambush.

After that, Shin spun while keeping his ducking position.

Shing! Shing!

It was at that moment when Ken arrived and slashed his katana at the previous location where Shin was standing multiple times, cutting through the air.

Shin did not pause his movements as he quickly raised his head and suddenly leaned backward before kicking the ground in front of him and sending himself skidding in the opposite direction.

Bang!

Berdugo's weapon, which looked like a combination of a war axe and a giant hammer, landed on the previous spot he was in.

Shin then found himself positioned in the middle of the three, flanking him in a triangular formation.

But despite looking like he was trapped in the middle of their formation, Shin remained unbothered and kept his calm. He unhurriedly placed his right hand on the hilt of his sword as regulated his breathing.

Hu~!

A hot steam came out from the gaps of his mask as he adjusted his breathing according to the Solar Breathing Technique.

The moment when his grip over the [Yamato] tightened a little, the three suddenly sensed immense danger and quickly retreated without any hint of hesitation.

Click!

Swoosh! Swoosh!

Ken and Asesino were the only ones who managed to escape cleanly as their AGI Stats were high enough to move away from the range of the skill.

Shing!

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

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

(-100,323), (-114,661), (-120, 021), ...

A string of glaring red numbers appeared above Berdugo's head as he was forced to endure the series of blazing sword flashes created by Shin's skill.

The string of six-digit values almost scared the trio after seeing them. If not for their HP Bars being comparable to a Boss Monster, then a single skill from Shin was more than enough to kill them.

Realizing this, the three further increased their wariness and decided to use one of their buffs to further boost their already absurd stats.

Being overly cautious was way better than being killed by an 'accident'.

Boom! Boom! Boom!

The pressure that their bodies were emitting suddenly spiked higher, somewhat putting some pressure on Shin.

Shin could not help but whistle after sensing the explosive power that the three had from their bodies.

He then suddenly twirled the [Yamato], letting its tip leave a beautiful blazing trail in the air before he suddenly swung it to the side.

Bang!

Ken, who was trying to launch a sneak attack, suddenly halted his advance as his katana clashed against Shin, who did not even move an inch despite the powerful collision.

"What a monster!" commented Ken as he swiftly retreated, giving an opening for Berdugo, who was now able to regain his composure.

Swoosh!

The muscles on Berdugo's arms suddenly bulged and tightened as he held his weapon tightly with both of his hands before slamming it down with all his strength.

The air seemed to have been ripped by this strike while creating a heavy pressure that was pressing on Shin as the hammerhead of the Berdugo's weapon slammed down.

Shin slightly raised his brows when he sensed the heavy pressure pressing and trying to crush him. But he quickly adjusted his position while flipping the sheath he was holding in his left hand.

Holding the sheath in a forehand grip, he then transformed it into a greatsword, activating the 'Judgement Form' of 'Mondi's Style' Legacy Skill along with the 'Summit Shaper Possession' of Astaroth.

Raising the greatsword over his head and taking a firm stance, Shin switched his breathing technique to the Great Dominator Technique, enhancing his strength by a great margin alongside his strong connection with the earth element.

Boom!

When the spiked hammer head of Berdugo's weapon landed against the great sword, a powerful shockwave was spread in every direction, sensing a violent ripple in the air.

Crack! Crack!

The ground underheat Shin's feet also cracked due to the powerful impact, which then spread in every direction like a spider's web.

Supporting the greatsword with the [Yamato] in his left hand, Shin pushed hard and sent hammer head pressing on him upwards.

After that, he suddenly spun while swinging both swords around, cutting through the shadow tentacles that suddenly appeared underneath his feet and trying to wrap themselves around him.

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

Berdugo only took a step back after his weapon bounced back from the previous collision. He then inhaled deeply as he tightened his grip over it once again before slamming it down with an even stronger strength.

Swoosh!

Shin felt the pressure locked on his body once again, preventing him from going anywhere. Without a choice, he raised the greatsword and placed it behind him, pressing on his back.

He then planted his feet firmly on the ground as he absorbed the energy of earth toward his body through the connection of his feet and the ground before circulating it according to the Great Dominator Technique.

His suddenly hardened due to it, making him resemble an immovable mountain.

'Four Symbol Scripture: Yellow Divine Dragon – Immovable Mountain'

Boom!

The moment when the hammerhead of Berdugo's weapon landed on the surface of the great sword once again, a massive explosion erupted and sent a successive ripple in the air.

Shin's feet suddenly sank to the ground as the already huge cracks grew even larger, creating a crater immediately later.

As Shin was pinned by Berdugo in place, Ken and Asesino quickly moved and appeared on each of Shin's sides, flanking him with a coordinated attack.

Swoosh! Swoosh!

Ken unsheathed his katana and swung it forward, sending a quick-draw attack, while Asesino swung his daggers forward, executing a deadly cross attack.

Shing! Shing!

But before their attacks could even catch Shin, the latter's body suddenly transformed into black smoke, which slowly dissipated in the air right after their weapons cut through it.

Puff!

'Phantom Swordsman Skill: Phantom Step'

Sensing the danger, the two retreat once again.

But before Ken could even move his body, Shin suddenly came out from his shadow and appeared behind him while stabbing the [Yamato] forward.

Swoosh!

'Extra Skill: Heart Seeker'

Puchi!

(-220,232)

Huge numbers appeared on Ken's head as the sword stabbed his back and pierced through his heart before coming out of his chest.

But he was still alive due to his insane VIT Stats, which was reflected in his absurdly high Health Bar.

This probing attack confirmed Shin's suspicion that he could not kill these three with simple attacks. Even if their hearts were shattered and their heads were crushed, they would most likely survive due to their insane stats.

"They most likely have been transformed into undying monsters due to the plague," he mumbled as he quickly pulled the sword back before retreating to dodge yet another ambush from Asesino.

He then pointed the [Yamato] to the ground before turning his wrist 360 degrees, drawing a circle with the tip of the sword.

'Special Ability: Sword Heart – (Domain) Graveyard of Swords'

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

Right after he activated the domain, the space within a radius of hundreds of meters seemed to have been sealed before a series of illusionary swords fell from the sky and stabbed the ground, scattering in every direction.

At the same time, the trio sensed that the domain seemed to affect their connection with the Plagued Land. It was as if an unknown power that merged with the domain restricted their powers.

Shin used the powers of the five elements to restrict the plague energy filling the air. He utilized the five-elemental breathing and his connection with the environment, which was greatly heightened by the domain.

It was not specifically meant for this domain as any of his domain skills were more than enough to achieve a similar feat given his current ability. But given that the 'Graveyard of Swords' would greatly enhance his swordsmanship and sword affinity, he felt that it would be the perfect supplement to use in the current situation.

The three, on the other hand, felt like beasts trapped in a cage, along with a true monster.

Chapter 1646: Humanoid Monsters Versus True Monster (Part 2)

.....

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh

Berdugo, Ken, and Asesino quickly moved after realizing that this was not going to be an easy battle, especially when they saw the domain skill that Shin had used.

Shin remained standing on his spot even after seeing the three of them move. His eyes closely watched their movements while his other senses monitored the changes in the environment.

He watched Berdugo charge straight at him with great momentum while dragging his hammer-axe weapon behind him and leaving a deep trail on the ground behind.

Ken also turned into a flickering silhouette that left a series of afterimages behind. He circled behind Shin, seemingly planning to do another coordinated attack along with the other two.

Asesino entered stealth for another time while hiding his presence as much as he could, trying to avoid being discovered. He had already gotten a rough understanding of Shin's sharp senses, so he was making sure that he was controlling his aura and restraining it to the best of his abilities.

Whoosh! Whoosh!

Seeing the incoming attacks, Shin calmly stepped side to side, dodging the invisible sword flashes that Ken had thrown with his Sword Qi.

Clang!

Before raising the sheathed [Yamato] in front of him, blocking something that could not be seen by the naked eye.

Ken then suddenly materialized before Shin while trying his best to press his katana forward, which was now being blocked by the sheathed sword.

His previous actions were just to confuse Shin and trick the latter about his ambush from behind. But given the current situation, it seemed like such a trick would not work against someone of this level.

Shin then turned his wrist, letting the sheathed sword move upwards. His actions were so fast that it did not give Ken any time to respond when the tip of the sheathed sword hit his chin and sent him flying in the air.

It did not deal that much damage, but the impact was strong enough to send him hovering in the air for a couple of seconds. It was as if he was hit by a powerful uppercut, which shook his head and made him dizzy.

Swoosh! Swoosh!

After that, Shin spun to the right and ducked, dodging another ambush from Asesino, who tried to take advantage of the situation.

He then leaped in the air to avoid the follow-up attack from Asesino, letting it miss with the slightest margin.

Shin leaped over Asesino, who was ducking forward, and borrowed the momentum of his spinning motion to send out a roundhouse kick, which then landed on Ken's waist.

Bang!

"Ugh!"

As that kick sent Ken flying in the opposite direction, Shin twisted his body in the air. He adjusted the movements of his body midair to gain additional movement for his next course of action.

Swoosh!

He did a spinning roll in the air before sending a downward kick that landed on Asesino's back, slamming the latter flat on the ground.

Bang!

"Argh!"

The series of actions was so fast and smooth, which made it impossible for the two to properly respond.

They might not suffer any serious damage from those attacks physically, but the damage in their mind and morale was quite huge.

"Haaa!" It was at this moment when Berdugo finally arrived and swung his weapon with all his might.

Bang!

Dirt and rock fragments flew in the air as he dragged his heavy weapon and swung it diagonally, targeting Shin, who was still suspended in the air after throwing his kicks.

Whoosh!

The air was split apart by his weapon, leaving a powerful sonic wave in its path.

Seeing the incoming attack, Shin adjusted his posture in the air once again, assuming his signature sword-drawing stance.

He waited for a second as the serrated blade of the axe head of Berdugo's weapon approached him before suddenly kicking the air behind him and swiftly propelling himself forward.

Pa!

'Legacy Skill: Mondi's Jump'

Swoosh!

At the same time, his body turned illusionary as he moved forward. His breathing followed the Boundless Ocean Technique, making him breathe out a cold vapor, while his body transformed into a cold streak of light that flew straight to his opponent.

Click!

'Jade Kirin Scripture: Quick Draw – (Chilling) Moonlight Splitter'

Shing!

When his body was about to reach Berdugo, he suddenly unsheathed the [Yamato] and swung it forward, leaving a chilling trail in the air, which then cut through the body of the opposing side.

(-1,236, 881)

Huge crimson numbers appeared above Berdugo's head, which signified the damage that Shin had just dealt.

If not for the insane Health Bar he had due to the series of HP-related Molding Skills, then he would have most likely been killed by this very strike from Shin.

There was a huge cut on his waist, which signified the region where Shin's sword had slashed him. There were also some signs of frostbite from this wound while the cold energy slowly spread through his body.

Fortunately, his vitality was strong enough to endure the chilling force that was trying to invade his organs, letting him suppress the foreign powers spreading within his body.

...

As Berdugo was trying to free himself from the chilling force that was trying to freeze his body, Asesino, and Ken picked themselves up and started attacking Shin once again.

Bang! Bang!

Clang! Clang! Clang!

A series of explosions erupted as their weapons repeatedly clashed against each other, signifying that the force behind each of their attack was strong enough to crush some huge boulders and turn them into dust.

Blazing sparks also flew in the air every time their weapons clashed, leaving a series of trails.

Their figures repeatedly appeared and disappeared as they ran rampant on the battlefield. A few seconds had only passed, but Shin had already exchanged multiple blows against the two.

Roar!

When Berdugo finally freed himself from the chilling force, he quickly rejoined the battle. He coordinated with the two, trying to suppress Shin. But they were never able to pin him in a single place, much less trap him in their formation.

He was so slippery that he always managed to slip through their battle formation. The slightest gap was more than enough for him to escape, making the trio feel a little helpless.

Even with the advantage they had in terms of overall stats, which were comparable to Boss Monsters of the game, they were still unable to suppress him.

They had never touched even the tip of his cloak in the entire battle while they had suffered huge damage every time Shin landed a clean attack.

If not for their insane regeneration skill, and their working together, then the accumulated damage was more than enough to kill either Ken or Asesino.

If it was a one-on-one battle, then any of them would have been killed already.

This signified the huge gap in their strength, which reminded them of their team commander.

The commander of their Adventurer Team might not be as powerful as those top-rank gods of the virtual world, but his current strength was more than enough to hold himself against any of them.

Even if he had been converted into a Plague Race, the strength that he had gotten from the incident was something that they could not disregard.

Even someone like them, who were only at the average level when compared to the apex experts of the game, became so powerful after their transformation, much less their team commander who was the most powerful and skilled player in their adventurer team.

Axion had grown a lot after accepting a portion of the inheritance of the fallen king during their transformation, which also enlightened him by a great margin.

When the three realized this, they knew that it was impossible to defeat this monster even if the three of them worked together.

It was unless they gathered more Plague Energy and further strengthened themselves, which would enhance their stats and boost other areas such as their senses, speed, and raw power.

Thinking about this, the three knew it was pointless to stay here longer. If they insisted on holding Shin down and trying to defeat them, those top gods fighting the chieftain-rank Plagued Monster would most likely notice the commotion and realize something.

The problem was they could not run away from Shin as he could burst down their insanely high HP Bars with just a clean cycle of skills, no matter how high they were, if he focused on attacking alone.

This could only mean that one of them had to stay and prevent Shin from going anywhere while the other two escaped.

"Leave it to me. I am the slowest anyway, so I can't outrun him," said Berdugo through their team channel.

"That is more than the reason why you can't be left behind. He can just try to stick to either Asesino or me while dragging you behind," refuted Ken as he added. "Asesino can't be left behind either as he is the only one who can construct such a meticulous plot among us. It is too risky for him to stay."

"It is better if it is me, so you two should escape," he said with full resolution.

...

Shin noticed that the three of them were secretly discussing something while fighting him, but he did not do anything about it.

It was because of the sudden appearance of an overwhelming presence not too far away.

Whoever it was, they were confident in themselves as they did not bother to hide their aura. It was as if they were purposely announcing their arrival, albeit only directed to him.

He did not know who they were, but one thing was for sure. That person was with these people as they were emitting a similar foul aura of the plague that the three had.

Chapter 1647: Humanoid Monsters Versus True Monster (Part 3)

...

Shin continued to exchange blows against the three humanoid monsters while waiting for them to come up with the decision. But from the look of it, they seemed to disagree with some things and could not make the right conclusion.

In the meantime, Shin was keeping an eye on his surroundings, somewhat wary of the presence hiding in the shadows since earlier. But for some reason, that person remained hidden and unwilling to show themselves.

"Or it can also be because they are unable to fully reveal themselves," he mumbled to himself while continuing to fight the trio.

Due to the overwhelming difference in terms of stats, Shin was somewhat holding himself back to avoid any mistakes and prevent showing any openings.

But at the same time, he also was showcasing the full capabilities of his 'Myriad Manifestation Swordsmanship' as well as his 'Four Symbol Scripture', which were supported by his 'Elemental Spirit Possession' and 'Five-Elemental Breathing'.

The three were somewhat familiar with this unique fighting style of Shin since it became his signature. It even became his identity, which also made him famous in the gaming community.

The sword-drawing stance was a unique style that made a lot of experts feel scared due to how fast and unexpected they were. The damage of each sword technique alone was already a headache for everyone. But the damage they dealt was also on a whole other level, which could threaten anyone for being one-shotted.

Aside from this deadly sword style, there was also the ever-changing sword style of Shin, which was equally deadly.

The complexity of this style covered almost all the possible weaknesses that an individual had, making it very hard to counter. Moreover, the constant switching of swords in the middle of the battle could always catch his opponents off guard, making it hard to fight back.

The trio had already seen Shin's unique style quite a lot of times through the battle videos he had on different online platforms, so they were quite familiar with it.

But only now do they realize how scary it was. Experiencing it themselves made them realize the hellish experience of dealing with it.

They were also dealing with it together, making it much scarier. They could not imagine how terrifying it was to deal with it alone. They would have most likely been defeated if any of them had dealt with him by themselves.

Their insane HP Bar would be nothing but a huge block to be destroyed in front of such a scary monster.

Now, they were in an even bigger headache as they realized that it was pointless to leave someone behind to hold Shin down to try buying the other two to escape.

This was the reason why they started hesitating with their earlier plan. But at the same time, insisting on staying here would be equally dangerous.

In the end, they were forced to choose between the two choices, considering which choice would give them the least losses.

Gritting their teeth, the three finally came up with a decision.

The most ideal decision was for two of their group to hold Shin down while the other one would retreat to the tomb, which was their main base here in the Plague Lands.

When a decisive look flashed on their faces, Shin knew that these three finally came up with a decision.

He licked his lips behind the [Nephilim's Gemini Mask] while waiting for the three to make their moves. He knew that the next round would be the final one as they would most likely use their trump cards this time.

Swoosh!

But to his surprise, the one who had disengaged from the battle and retreated was Berdugo, who was the slowest among them.

At the same time, Ken held his katana firmly before charging straight to Shin while Asesino disappeared, entering stealth once again.

Swoosh! Swoosh!

Shin somewhat had the idea of what they were planning earlier. He was sure that either Ken or Asesino would retreat while Berdugo would be among those who would stay behind and fight him.

After all, those two could at least somewhat create enough distance from here given their respective speed. But contrary to his expectation, it seemed like the three had chosen to go in the opposite direction.

But at the same time, he also somewhat understood the idea behind their choice.

He specifically stated at Asesino, who was fading into the shadows with his stealth skill and mumbled. "Interesting!"

He could see that this guy was planning to run away later once Berdugo had created enough distance for himself. After all, this guy had a thief-related class, which was perfect for escaping.

He was now starting to get interested in these guys, particularly with this crafty assassin, who had a decent skill when it came to scheming.

"It was just a pity that they are standing on the opposing side," he shook his head repeatedly and smiled bitterly when he thought about this.

Swoosh!

He leaned back as he dodged another ambush from Asesino. His body then flicked while moving side to side, dodging a series of slashes from the latter, who was slowly gaining speed the more he attacked.

Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh!

At the same time, Ken suddenly appeared behind Shin, holding his katana with both of his hands and raising it horizontally in front of his chest.

Swoosh!

A dense black miasma was suddenly released from his body, which then gathered toward the blade of his katana and formed a transparent layer covering it.

Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh!

A moment later, he suddenly swung the katana multiple times before him and sent a series of black sword waves toward Shin.

Asesino also timed his movements quite well as he only forced Shin long enough until the sword waves were almost upon the latter before suddenly disappearing.

Puff!

He transformed into a black smoke that slowly dissipated in the air, leaving Shin in the middle of the net formation that the sword waves had formed to trap Shin.

Shin kept his calm as he suddenly turned around while adjusting his breathing. His energy circulated according to the Boundless Ocean Technique.

Click!

A moment later, he suddenly unsheathed his sword and swung it to the side while targeting the ground in front of him.

Shing!

'Four Symbol Scripture: Heavenly Black Tortoise – Great Wall of the Northern Heaven'

Swoosh!

At the same time, a chilling sword wave was released from his sword and dug deep into the ground before summoning a thick wall of ice that was erected in front of him, blocking the incoming storm of sword waves.

Boom!

Bang! Bang! Bang!

Despite the powerful defenses that the ice wall had, it still collapsed from the barrage of sword waves, particularly after suffering serious corrosion from the plague energy that it possessed.

But at the same time, the momentum of the storm of sword waves had greatly weakened due to the ice wall, making them unable to pose any threat to Shin.

However, they had already served their purpose as they had created an opening for Ken, who was now charging at Shin with full aggressiveness.

Roar!

Ken had gathered the plague energy from the environment to surround his body, which then transformed into a monster fog immediately after.

This huge monster made of plague energy opened its mouth wide while charging at Shin, who was standing in the middle of raining shards from his broken ice wall.

Shin adjusted his posture as he held the [Yamato] with both of his hands, raising it over his head and pointing its tip toward the sky.

Swoosh!

The cold aura surrounding him seemed to have solidified they spread in every direction, freezing everything in their path. Even the plague energy filling the air seemed to have solidified as well when the cold energy surrounding Shin touched them.

Hu~!

As he created out, cold vapor came out of his mouth as he slashed down the sword and released all the accumulated powers in the process.

'Four Symbol Scripture: Heavenly Black Tortoise – Fangs of the Ocean Serpent'

Swoosh!

The cold sword energy that Shin had released transformed into a giant serpent that danced in the air while charging toward the incoming fog monster of the plague.

Boom!

As the two forces clashed, a massive explosion erupted, creating a chaotic storm of violent energy that swept through all directions.

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

In the middle of this storm, Shin was sent flying in the opposite direction while Ken stayed in place at the point of impact due to being frozen by the chilling energy of the opposing side. Even the fog monster surrounding Ken turned into a huge ice sculpture before slowly being shredded by the energy storm.

Bang!

Right after colliding against a huge stone boulder, Shin quickly pulled himself out of the hole created by the impact.

Swoosh!

Bang! Bang! Bang!

A hail of plague daggers landed on the spot where Shin previously located, drilling a series of deep holes in the already broken boulder.

Shin did not pause his movements even after escaping as Ken had already freed himself from being frozen and resumed attacking.

The two worked together as they started attacking Shin with great coordination, exchanging intense blows with him that even changed the structure of the surrounding terrain.

Boom! Boom! Boom!

Shin could also tell that they were gradually draining the surrounding energies, both the plague and regular elemental mana. The absorption rate was so fast and strong that it was starting to affect even Shin.

He was not sure what they were planning, but he could tell that it was something big.

He then glanced at the timer of his domain skill out of the corner of his eye and saw that it had been running for only three minutes before it disappeared.

As he was preparing to confront the two with an even more intense exchange, the hidden presence that Shin had been watching had finally made its move.

Chapter 1648: Armageddon

...

Shin exchanged a few more blows against Ken Asesino, who was giving their best to fight him. Unfortunately, despite the overwhelming difference between their stats, they were still unable to pose any threat to Shin.

Instead, they were the ones who were repeatedly suffering. Their Health Points were steadily dropping as they were unable to withstand most of the sword techniques that Shin was showcasing.

They were repeatedly getting hit, which chunk a massive portion of their HP Bars. If not for their having insane Health Points, then they would have most likely gotten killed earlier, especially when they did not have the same level of toughness and tenacity as Berdugo, who was the main tank of their group.

In just a couple of minutes, both Ken and Asesino were almost reaching their limits. Seeing that they could no longer withstand any more exchanges, the two looked at each other and tacitly agreed with their previous arrangements.

They felt that Berdugo had created enough distance by now, especially when that guy exhausted all his speed-boosting skills and positions he had in his arsenal.

Asesino did not hesitate for a second as he unleashed all his speed-boosting skills to escape.

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

He transformed into a dark shadow that dashed toward the depths of the Plague Lands without looking back.

Ken, on the other hand, gathered all the plague energy from the surroundings and channeled them toward his katana.

Whoosh!

He then pointed the katana toward the sky while chanting a series of eerie mantras, summoning an image of a hideous monster above him.

His HP Bar also dropped at a visible rate, which signified that he was sacrificing his Health Points in exchange for this powerful skill.

Meanwhile, Shin ignored Asesino as there was only under a minute before his 'Graveyard of Sword' Domain Skill ended. He did not have the time to chase after that guy, especially when Ken before him was the immediate threat that he had to take care of first.

Moreover, that power presence was also starting to affect his senses to a certain degree. Given that this person did not appear up until now, Shin knew that his initial guess was right – the other party had mostly likely been unable to interfere with the current situation due to a certain reason.

Huu~!

Taking a deep breath, Shin adjusted his breathing rhythm and summoned the twin tigers, Blackie and Whitie for their respective Elemental Spirit Possession.

"Dark and Light Reapers!"

At the same time, he also changed the form of the [Yamato], swapping it with its twin sword form – the Dusk and Dawn Blades.

Swoosh! Swoosh!

'Elemental Spirit Possession (Dark): Abysmal Conqueror'

'Elemental Spirit Possession (Light): Sacred Vanquisher'

The two elementals possessed the twin swords respectively, changing their forms.

Shin twirled the sword side to side, leaving beautiful arcs in the air, as he gathered the powers of the Abyssal Moon and Brilliant Sun in them.

It had been a while since he had summoned these powers in battle, which was why there was some awkwardness in his movements when controlling them.

But he did not have the choice as he wanted to try something.

With the help of the 'Graveyard of Swords', which was able to enhance his insights and understanding of the Sword, Shin focused his mind while controlling the two opposing powers.

He moved the swords in opposite directions before stopping when one of them was pointing toward the sky while the other was directed toward the ground.

At the same time, he utilized the five-elemental breathing to the fullest while summoning the five elemental powers that he possessed – the Eternal Flame, Primordial Waters, Natural Wood, Metallic Earth, and Earthen Metal.

These powers took a different form from one another before positioning themselves behind him and forming a unique formation.

Using the Powers of the Abyssal Moon and Brilliant Sun as the center, these five elements moved and rotated with a certain cycle. They gradually gained momentum, spinning rapidly behind Shin while accumulating more energy from Shin.

Roar!

Ken did not know what Shin was planning. But given the scary storm surrounding the latter, he did not hesitate as he swung his katana with all his might and released all the accumulated plague energy that he had gathered.

Roar!

The monstrous image behind, which was made of the densest plague energy, also opened its mouth while charging at Shin with full aggressiveness.

...

Shin stared at the incoming monster made of plague energy with calm eyes before releasing all the accumulated energy that he had collected.

The five elemental powers merged before fusing with the intertwining powers of the Abyssal Moon and Brilliant Sun.

They formed a spiral storm that shot toward the sky.

Swoosh!

The sky seemed to have been affected by this power. Dark clouds gathered as a thunderstorm started to appear alongside it.

The wind blew violently, making the surrounding trees shake intensely, while the ground trembled as if signaling the impending earthquake.

Shin had created another ultimate move with his elemental powers, but slightly different from the 'Ragnarök' as he was using all the accumulated knowledge and insights that he had learned and achieved about the five elements and the principles of duality and unity instead of relying on the powers of his Elemental Spirits.

Thus, he had named it-...

'Ultimate Elemental Skill (Self-Created): Armageddon'

Boom!

The storm of elemental energies shook the entire place. They ripped even the space and annihilated everything that they came in contact with.

Shin, who was standing in the middle of all of these, maintained his posture. The elemental storm became more violent as more time passed.

Even the eerie and hideous fog monster created by the densest plague energy was shredded into pieces before slowly dissipating. It did not even manage to reach its target as it was immediately destroyed by the other layer of the elemental storm.

Ken, who was only hanging by a thread by relying on surrounding plague energy, could not escape as the range of the elemental storm grew larger with every passing second.

The plague energy that was originally filling the air and constantly corrupting the surroundings was also erased by this storm, which somewhat 'purifies' the surroundings.

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

The whole storm lasted for only a whole minute but the destruction that it had left behind was so devastating that it only left a massive crater behind.

Everything was erased, only leaving Shin, who was standing at the center of the giant crater.

With such a powerful storm, it couldn't go unnoticed, especially when this place was only a couple of miles away where the gathered players were resisting the horde of plagued monsters.

But Shin threw all of it at the back of his head as he walked toward Ken, who miraculously survived for some reason. However, the latter was barely hanging on his life as his body was completely shredded by the elemental storm earlier, only leaving some portions of his zombified body that managed to remain intact.

Shin knew that once Ken died, his in-game avatar would be deleted as well given the nature of this event.

He walked at Ken and looked at the stubborn expression that the latter had, unable to help himself from admiring the guy.

He shook his head and asked. "You're admirable. What are your plans after this?"

Ken did not reply as he continued to stare at Shin – or it was also possible that the guy was unable to reply.

"You guys have quite a lot of potential. If you guys decided to create another account and come back in the game after failing in this event... to start over again... go to the Gold Mountain of the Saint Heaven Kingdom and look for me," he said before turning around.

He also looked in a certain direction and mumbled. "So, it is only a spiritual avatar."

"He did everything he could to save his friend, but still failed in the end," he shook his head as he resumed his steps. "Anyway, I have already given them the invitation. I just hope that they don't take this to the heart and accept."

"After all, we just happened to be on the opposite sides of the event, so I don't have the choice."

He was not planning to invite them to the Empyrean Talons as he was too strict about picking their future members, but he could still give them a special potion at Gold Mountain. After all, these guys do have decent potential, especially that assassin with a crafty mind.

He felt that that guy was quite interesting, especially after orchestrating a massive scheme that targeted the experts hunting in the Plagued Lands and schemed something to prepare for the next development of the event even if they failed.

It was also meant to increase the hostility that the top forces had with one another.

It was a multilayered scheme that covered quite a lot of targets.

The more Shin thought about it, the more interested he became.

As Shin was walking away, Ken stared at his back with unknown emotions in his eyes.

Chapter 1649: A Mysterious Group

.....

Shin first thought that such a huge commotion could attract the attention of the other forces, who were fighting in the distance. But he did not expect that they would only bother to send some people to investigate what just happened, but they remained on the chaotic battlefield and did not go anywhere.

Little did he know, the impact that the hooded individuals that he had discovered earlier was much larger than he originally thought.

They not only created more chaos in the already chaotic battlefield, but they also threw everyone in distress after successfully assassinating some of the leaders and the most powerful individuals, who were dealing with the chieftain-rank Plagued Monster, despite being noticed by most of the forces before they could even strike.

Moreover, this mysterious group seemed to have specific targets in mind as they quickly took care of their targets and took something that those fallen people had dropped after dying before swiftly retreating without any hesitation.

Due to most of the leaders of the top forces being taken down, the people from the top forces were forced to be in chaos once again. The formation of the 'allied' forces started to collapse due to being a little disorganized, making them fight among their ranks and only choose to protect those from the same team or people with close relationships with them.

The previous blockade that they had set up earlier to withstand the monster horde started to collapse, making the Plagued Monsters crash most of the players and start wreaking havoc in the middle of their ranks.

The teams and individual players started fighting for themselves, trying to survive the monster horde rather than defeating the Plagued Monsters compared to what they were doing earlier.

Moreover, those players with the highest battle capabilities among them were busy dealing with the chieftain-rank Plagued Monster, which was now free to cause more chaos at the backline due to the death of some of the leading figures of the forces from the top guilds and huge organizations.

Due to all the chaos, these players had no time to care about the huge commotion that Shin had created in the distance.

...

When Shin arrived on a cliff where he could see the battle between the players gathered at the Plagued Lands and the horde of the Plagued Monsters.

The moment he arrived, he immediately saw the ongoing chaos on the battlefield. He also realized that most of the most powerful and skilled people who were supposed to be fighting against the chieftain-rank Plagued Monsters were currently missing.

The chaos was much bigger than what he had seen earlier. Moreover, the formation that the players had created earlier was destroyed completely, letting the plagued monsters run wild within their ranks.

Shin could also see the groups that the players had made, signifying the forces that they came from.

There were also quite a few skilled individuals, who were too prideful to work with other groups, so they kept working solo. But at the same time, this showcased their skills and battle capabilities.

This made them look so good, which also made a distinction between them and the rest of the experts on the battlefield.

Others were quite crafty as they were using the experts gathered in groups as a form of barrier to their advantage. It was to make them an extra layer of protection while they dealt with the scattered Plagued Monsters to farm some event points.

These people were like scavengers or hyenas, who were making use of the others to do the work while they took care of the scraps that were left behind.

As for the remaining forces of the top guilds and other organizations, Shin realized that most of them were able to regain their footing and did quite well at holding their ground.

He had to admit that they were worthy of being considered as a top force within the game.

After watching for quite a while and trying to understand the current situation, Shin sent a message to Exheart, inquiring about what had happened when he was away.

He could see that Exheart was still working with his friends alongside Bryan and HellBan, who had regrouped with him. Their group was among those who were doing quite well despite being besieged by a large number of Plagued Monsters from all directions.

Their formation was quite solid, especially with such a good team composition, which covered all the areas they needed in such situations.

...

Exheart, who was working hard at fighting the Plagued Monsters, was having quite a hard time due to mental exhaustion. If it was only about his physical abilities, then he was quite confident that he would be able to outlast most of the people within their group. But due to the constant tide of the monster horde, which seemed to have no end, the mental fatigue that he was getting was quite serious.

The constant usage of combat state was quite taxing even for someone like him, who could be considered an apex expert, especially after using it for an extended period.

Even after using the combat techniques, he had under his arsenal to lower the burden in his concentration was quite ineffective due to the number of times that he had to use them, almost without a pause.

But despite all of that, he never complained, especially when they were farming quite a lot of event points from this incident. The situation might be dangerous even for someone at their level, but the benefits that they could get were equally huge as well.

Disaster and opportunity always came together, after all.

\*Ding\*

Exheart did not have any complaints. At least until he received the message from Shin. The moment when he saw the message from the corner of his eyes, he could not help but roll his eyes, especially after seeing the sender.

"Where the heck did this guy have gone? He had informed us about that mysterious group, telling us to be wary of them. But he had never appeared even until the situation had gotten this worse," he could not help but spit out a series of complaints.

He also felt that Shin was a natural magnet of trouble or even disaster. It was as if he was passively attracting the aggro of the 'boss monster' called 'misfortune'.

He had never felt it during the time he was working with Shin as the latter always found a way to deal with it. But now that they were working separately, Exheart could feel the burden of the 'bad luck' that Shin was always carrying with him.

"This guy will be the death of me if I continue to hang out with him," mumbled Exheart as he tried his best to suppress the twitching of his mouth.

Despite all his complaints, Exheart still found the time to read the message while holding his group and fighting against the Plagued Monsters.

After reading through the message, Exheart realized that Shin was not around during the time that the mysterious group had launched their ambush.

Every time Exheart thought about that group of people, he could not help but shiver slightly as he could feel the danger that was naturally being emitted by their bodies.

He also recalled how skilled and powerful those people were. Even after all the preparations that the 'allied' forces had set up after hearing Exheart's warning, they were still unable to stop those guys from assassinating their targets before retreating unscratched immediately after.

It took some time for Exheart to construct his reply as he was busy fending off the attacks of the Plagued Monsters that were trying to break through their formation. But he was still able to finish everything before sending it to Shin.

He described what had happened earlier a little roughly as the course of events was too fast. But he still put some effort into describing everyone in as detailed and informative as possible, not leaving even the tiniest details that he could remember.

"Now that I think about it, wasn't there a huge explosion in that place during the chaos earlier? Is he the one behind it?" mumbled Exheart as if he remembered something before glancing at the place where the massive storm of energy had been present earlier.

...

\*Ding\*

On the other side, Shin had received and skimmed through the message. He then went silent for a moment and fell in deep thought.

"The group seemed to have a specific target in mind as they only took out the leading figures of the top forces along with a couple of skilled individuals. They had also retreated as soon as they had taken one of the loots that those they had killed dropped."

"They have never cared about the high-quality equipment or unique artifacts that those people have and just taken an old-looking and somewhat tattered old book before retreating," he mumbled.  
"Strange-..."

He was in the middle of figuring out their purpose when something suddenly flashed through his mind. His eyes suddenly turned wide as he thought of something. "Could it be...!?"

He then looked at the corner of this inventory bag and stared at a black book in there, which seemed to have been collecting dust since he had gotten it.

Chapter 1650: More of the Troublemaking

...

Shin fell into deep thought as he looked at that black book. It was something else that a player below Tier 4 Class could lay their hands on. It might be a powerful item that could help someone propel to greater heights, but it came with great cause.

On top of being too corrupted, this item, which was said to be a fragment of a fallen god, could also attract the unnecessary attention of the Divine Beings at the upper plane once used.

Solus and Hanzo had seriously warned Shin to not touch that item unless he reached Tier 4 and became an Enlightened Being. It was because only in this realm he could have a clear and uncorrupted mind that could withstand the temptations of wielding the Ancient Powers contained in the fragment of a fallen god.

His power should also be enough to protect himself from any envoy that the Divine Beings would send to snatch the black book from his possession.

Even if he couldn't defeat a Sovereign Being at that stage, which would most likely be the level of those envoys and also the limit of the lower plane, he should be able to run away from them with his strength at that time when necessary.

Based on his assessment, a player had to be at least at level 300 to reach that Tier, which was way too far for the current progress of the game.

If someone started messing with those Fallen God Fragments, Shin could already tell how much of a disaster it could bring to everyone.

The threat of the invading Bug Tribe and the mysterious Abyss Brink was already troublesome, especially when the Corrupted Cult and Demonic Churches were also lurking in the shadows and bidding their time. Inviting another disaster would only make the situation even worse.

Shin could only think that the people behind this incident were related to the Evil Faction, especially when those fragments of the fallen gods could only cause negative results. After all, those people could not wait for the Atlas World to be destroyed and spread more chaos.

"Aside from that, I am also quite curious at how they have found the owners of those fragments," mumbled Shin as he was more concerned about this matter. After all, he also possessed a fragment with his inventory bag, so it was highly possible that he would become their target in the future.

"Is it possible that they have a method to locate the other fragments? Or it can also be because they have inside information from those forces, which told them about the fragment possessors," he tried to figure out their methods as hard as he could but quickly gave up after failing to do so for quite a while.

"Regardless, I will deal with them later if they try to come after me," he said with full confidence, especially when he had already memorized their auras.

But that group of people would still be quite troublesome, especially if they did have a special method to locate the other fragments. After all, even Shin had a hard time looking for clues about them. He had only found 2 clues about them even after such a long time.

Especially when the two other fragments related to the one in his possession were quite troublesome as well. One of them was in Hell, particularly in the territory of the Bug Tribe, while the other was on the other side of the dimensional crack in the depths of the Abyss Brink.

Thinking about this, Shin thought of another possibility. "There is also the chance that the other fragments can sense one another, so long as they are a part of the whole."

"Maybe the reason why those guys are unable to sense mine is because what I have is a different set from theirs. But if that is the case, then how come those guys leading their forces are unable to sense the other party?"

Shin shook his head as he gave up on figuring it out before looking at the ongoing battle below. He slightly frowned his brows before glancing at the leaderboards at the corner of his eyes.

He found his 'name' at the very top of the rankings, which signified that he was way ahead of the others, especially when his points were already at the 4 digits.

Killing Ken had earned himself a lot of points, especially when that guy was one of the main perpetrators of this plague event.

"Should I lend them a hand and steal the last hit for the chieftain-rank Plagued Monster while I'm at it, or should I head into the deeper parts of the Plagued Lands and farm for more points peacefully?" he mumbled as he looked at the chaotic battle.

There was also the choice of looking for the traces of the mysterious group and seeing what they were up to. But he quickly disregarded that thought as he did not have any clue where they ran off.

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Real World.

Headquarters of the World Gaming Organizations.

Carlos headed to the office of the special task force specially monitoring all the Miracle Players as he had received a report regarding one of the players they keeping their eyes on.

It was said that this player and their group were collecting something that they shouldn't be messing with in the current stages of the game.

The Monitoring Department was always having a headache when it came to these bunch of players in the list as none of them could be understood with a normal mind as even the great AI 'Chronos' was unable to figure them out.

None of them were following the 'script' of the game.

The most troublesome of the bunch was Battle God Sickarius, who never did anything normal; Sword God Zero, who was always exploring in-game content that no one had ever found; Pandemonium's Leader, Lucifer, who kept on dealing and contacting the Great Demon Kings; Lich God Immortal, who was messing with the Forbidden; and Martial God Ashura, who was leading the God's Paradise to explore the places that shouldn't be explored.

There were also others on the list, but those guys were not doing something so 'destructive' that could destroy the ongoing progress of the game.

What was even more problematic, the list was getting even longer as those old gods started to get more active.

As for the new guy that was mentioned in the reports, it was someone who had been on the list of the Miracle Players for quite a while now.

But he had never been that active until recently when he had stumbled upon the Ancient Powers and the Fragments of the Fallen Gods.

"How is the situation?" asked Carlos right after entering the monitoring room of the special task force.

"It is quite serious, Sir," answered Lohengrin before reporting. "They have already gotten their hand on seven fragments. Even though only two of them are part of the same set, the number of fragments that they control is not something I think we can overlook."

"And the level of the fragments and their previous owner?" asked Carlos with a frown.

"That is the only good news, Sir. All the Fallen God's Fragment they have are only at the entry-level," Lohengrin said before adding. "Fortunately, none of them are on Calamity Level just like what the 'Number One Problem Child' that we have on the list."

The corner of Carlos' mouth could not help but twitch when he heard about Shin. He did his best to suppress it before nodding his head. "I understand. Monitor this group closely, and report to me as soon as they get their hands on anything at the higher level."

"I will inform the Development Department and ask them to prepare the release of any of the contents related to this as soon as possible."

"It is good that we have found out about this much earlier before things could even get worse," he added before sighing in relief. "I guess it is truly the right thing to build the Special Task Force, allowing us to respond much earlier."

He then paused as he glanced at the virtual screen, which was projecting Shin, before mumbling. "Let's just hope our 'favorite' child will not do anything crazy during this time."

He was worried that Shin would 'come up' with another way to mess with them during this time.

After giving Shin one last look, Carlos turned around and left the monitoring room.

Lohengrin, on the other hand, gulped nervously as he watched his boss leave. "I just hope you didn't jinx it, boss."

He then turned to the virtual screen projecting Shin and mumbled. "Among all the Miracle Players, this guy is the scariest."

Among all the Miracle Players, Shin was someone who had a lot of end-game content in progress, so almost all the members of the special task force were quite scared of him.

They were scared that he would stumble upon another end-game content and increase the load of their work.