

Destiny 1651

Chapter 1651: Appearance of the Plague Race

.....

In the end, Shin decided not to join the battle, especially when he was curious about the background of the mysterious group that set an ambush just now. He was also quite interested in the special method of finding the other possessors of the Fallen God's Fragment.

He just glanced at the battlefield and sent a message to Exheart, informing the latter about the bits of information that Shin had 'gotten' from Asesino and others earlier. Then he left immediately after.

He did not care whether Exheart would listen to his advice and inform the rest of his friends. He just left and went deep in the Plagued Lands to farm some points 'peacefully'.

...

Exheart, on the other hand, put a lot of weight on the information that Shin had given him, particularly when he learned that everything was a multilayered plot schemed by one of the main perpetrators of this event.

He could now help but feel an intense shiver down his spine when he realized all of this, especially about making this place a core source of the Plagued Energy once enough Plagued Monsters were killed.

There was also the matter of the fallen players turning into Plagued Creatures once they died here while being exposed to too much plague energy.

Regardless of all these, they had more than one reason for them to leave this place as soon as possible.

Exheart immediately informed his friends, roughly explaining everything, before saying that it was better for them to leave. Some trusted him and showed their support while others were quite skeptical of his words.

Exheart could not blame those guys either. After all, this place was indeed a good place to farm more event points. If only he had trusted Shin, then he would most likely not have left as well.

But since it was a huge plot, he would rather look for another place to farm rather than stay here.

...

A couple of hours after Exheart and those who believe his words left, something strange happened on the battlefield.

Zombified people started crawling out of the ground, taking the form of fallen players, and started slaughtering everyone.

Plagued Monsters also started appearing one after another, signifying that this place had already transformed into a plague nest.

The combined numbers of the plague zombies and monsters started to surpass the killing rate of the experts fighting here, turning the tides of the battle.

It did not take that long until all the remaining players were annihilated, transforming the majority of them into plague zombies as well.

The major turning point was not the number of monsters. But it was the highly skilled plagued zombies, who had inherited the skills and abilities of the fallen players. Their battle A was so high, rivaling those elite NPCs.

Some of the players with keen senses were able to notice the strangeness when Exheart and those who believed him pulled out from the battlefield.

Most of them were from the top forces, who were still holding their grounds strongly despite losing their leading figures.

Losing their leaders was just one of the reasons why left retreated. The other reason was they had suspected something the moment they realized the changes in the atmosphere, particularly the level of the plague energy gathering in the battlefield the more Plagued Monsters were killed.

They were not that dumb to not realize what was going on, so they also slowly retreated from the battlefield as soon as they could.

Some of the lone wolves with sharp noses also followed, leaving those greedy ones who refused to let go of the benefits.

...

At first these 'zombies' were like mindless beasts, who knew nothing but killing anyone near them. But later when the fallen players started logging in their accounts after the ban was lifted, they realized that they had taken over the bodies of these plagued zombies.

They immediately realized that they had been converted into a Plagued Race and sided with the force behind the plague.

They had realized that they were infected by the plague and were unable to revert to their original state unless the event ended.

They had unwillingly converted to the opposing camp of the event, not giving them the choice.

What was even more depressing about this was that they had lost all the event points that they had farmed up until now.

What they had gotten instead was something called plague points, which would increase the contaminated land with their plague energy or infect more people by killing them.

But these plagued points were not something they could exchange for physical items or tools like what the side of the Righteous Churches was offering. Instead, they could convert it into physical stats that could last for as long as they wanted so long as they were not purified by the Holy Blessings or Sacred Powers of the church.

They could also increase their ranks through this, which had the limit of Plague Chieftain. Anything beyond that was out of their authority.

They could even keep it to themselves even after the event was ended, but they would be forced to side with the Evil Faction in exchange. After all, they would be no different from the Corrupted Creatures or Demonic Races at that point.

They would become another branch of the Evil Faction within the Awakened Continent if they did not get themselves purified at the end of the event, which would mean they were converting into the Plague Race permanently.

Regardless, this Plagued Land Event now had two camps that would be fighting each other.

In the end, the plot that Asesino had designed worked. Even though they had 'exchanged' Ken's 'life' in the end, everything could be said had worked out.

The sad part was they became the 'condition' of this 'war'.

Since they were the main initiator of this event and got infected by the original plague, they were unable to be purified. They had also become the mini 'bosses' of this event that needed to be taken down during the course of the event.

But if their side had won by some sort of miracle, then there was also the chance that they would survive all of this.

However, they were not confident about it after seeing the battle powers of the pinnacle god of the game.

...

What had happened in the Plagued Lands quickly spread in the gaming circle as a lot of people posted it on different online platforms.

It did not take that long before it became a hot trend in the forums. After all, this was another big development in the two huge ongoing events with the game aside from the group stages of the United Cup.

After the recent appearance of the Bug Tribe scouts at the Dark Cloud Kingdom, which somewhat turned the tides of the ongoing war, this Plagued Land Event at the Awakened Continent had also progressed to another level.

What interested the players more was this new major race that could be available to the public – this Plagued Race.

Some 'experts' online started calculating the pros and cons of this new race and the process that one needed to convert into one.

For now, there was only a single way to become one, which was to voluntarily let themselves get infected by the plague at the Awakened Continent.

This was going to be hard since only the elites of the elites could reach the second continent. This alone discouraged a lot of people. But that did not mean that they would stop backseating those who had already been infected.

Arguments broke out between these people, although most of them only joined the fun.

...

Almost an entire week (real-world time) had passed since Shin had defeated Ken.

He had spent most of his time hunting in the Plagued Lands, grinding more event points while training his breathing techniques and polishing his fighting style.

His name was firmly seated at the top of the leaderboards as he had hunted quite a lot after killing Ken and earning himself a huge gap from the others.

During his time in the Plagued Lands, a lot of things happened. Aside from hunting some regular plague monsters, he had also encountered quite a lot of players from the Plague Race.

At first, many people wanted to take him down, even planning to infect him. After all, he was a very powerful person in the game, so their side would gain a powerful combatant once they were successful.

Unfortunately, none of them succeed even after working together and attempting to trap him with a monster horde.

They had only presented themselves as bonus points for Shin along with the plagued monsters that they had brought.

Any form of plot was ineffective against him due to his overwhelming power. He could also freely escape if he had encountered a troublesome situation.

Given his insane speed and several means to escape under his arsenal, it was impossible to catch someone like him. That was unless they found someone equally strong to hold him down.

In the end, those people stopped bothering him. They even started avoiding him completely, not wanting to give him extra points.

His efficiency dropped sharply because of this, making him somewhat upset. He could not do anything about it aside from actively hunting in the depths of the Plagued Lands.

During this time, more and more people also started to appear in the region as the other experts joined the event, especially when the chieftain-rank Plagued Monsters were appearing more frequently.

The competition became much more intense, especially when some of these experts had other motives, such as joining the other side.

Plots also became more common as some people started scheming to earn more points. Some sold their 'companions' to the Plague Race Players in exchange for some regular Plagued Monsters that the other party controlled.

These 'transactions' became more common as more people arrived and joined the event.

It did not take long until everything got out of hand, forcing the Righteous Churches to act.

Chapter 1652: The Round 32 Draw Show (Part 1)

.....

One more week (real-world time) had passed since the first appearance of the Plague Race at the Awakened Continent.

Even if the situation in the Plague Lands was much more intense than it used to be and attracted more attention, not many people were paying attention to it right now.

One of the reasons was due to the sudden move that the Righteous Churches had made due to the schemes of betrayals the players had done during that time.

Those who had been caught by the Paladin Knights and Bishops that the churches had sent were either eliminated on the spot before purifying their bodies or got captured and thrown straight to the city dungeon as a lifetime prisoner.

Due to this, the tricks that the players used to take advantage of the 'loopholes' that the event had when earning more points started to drop. Even if there were some bold ones, who still dared to do such things, the situation became less frequent, especially when the players could not capture either side once they had discovered such 'transactions' were taking place.

Those who had captured the perpetrators could also exchange the captured players for more event points so long as they handed enough evidence to the Templars and Archbishops stationed at the barracks set up at the border of the Plague Lands.

Of course, this was only meant for the players, who were working with the ones that had converted to Plague Race.

It was a part of the system returning the balance and setting order as the players were destroying them due to these 'exchanges' that they were doing.

At the same time, it was also giving the players on the side of the Righteous Churches an extra channel where they could farm event points as hunting Plagued Monsters was starting to get trickier, especially when the players of the Plague Race started to launch a series of ambushes from time to time.

Regardless the clashes between the two camps were still getting more intense every time the two sides met.

But this was just one of the reasons why there were a smaller number of people were paying attention to this place because of what was happening to another place.

...

This was not only happening in the Plague Lands. Even the ongoing war between the Righteous Churches and the Evil Faction at the Dark Cloud Kingdom was becoming less intense due to the smaller number of active players participating in the war on both sides.

Even the top forces were starting to become less active, affecting the progress of the war.

But this was the only place where such a 'phenomenon' was happening. Even in different places within the game, such occasions were happening.

It was not because a smaller number of people were going online. On the contrary, there were more players online than usual right now. But instead of actively exploring the contents of the game, they were sitting in a silent corner, watching a live broadcast projected by their virtual screens.

They were all watching the final rounds of the group stages of the United Cup, especially when today was also the time when the other sixteen teams would be promoted to the round-32 knockout rounds and fight the 16-seeded teams.

After more than a month of intense competition, the early rounds of the United Cup were finally ending. The preliminary rounds were quite intense, but the group rounds of the top 128 and 64 teams that was just ending.

After the intense rounds, the other 16 teams facing the seeded teams finally emerged.

This was the reason why most of the players were becoming less active these last few days. They were too immersed in watching the final matches of the group rounds, checking on the teams that would emerge victorious and advance to the next stage of the tournament.

...

Right at this moment, all the members of the Emyrean Talon were also gathered within their virtual space.

Most of them were farming experience points at the Forgotten Sea, which was where the Forgotten Temple was located.

The surroundings of the Forgotten Temple were very safe due to the Protection of the God of Primordial Waters covering dozens of miles around it. But the areas beyond that border were filled with dangerous and powerful sea creatures and ocean monsters.

Those near the border were quite on the range that the group could handle. Aside from the trouble they encountered when fighting due to them being underwater, everything else was quite worthwhile.

The experience points that they were getting were quite rewarding while the rest of the materials that they had harvested from the corpses of the monsters that they had hunted were always in high quality.

Moreover, they could also monopolize the entire sea due to them being the ones exploring it. There were also quite a lot of rare herbs and minerals that could only be found underwater, which were collected by them.

Due to this, their progress was not slower than anyone, who was exploring in the Awakened Continent. They might even be much faster since they had quite a lot of access to different resources.

Right at this moment, their advantages over the other players at the Awakened Continent were not only their levels but the quality of equipment as well, especially when they had earned quite a lot of high-quality and rare materials.

Of course, the ones who had upgraded their equipment were not the top combatants of the team, but those who had a less impressive set of equipment such as Daulla, Archimedes, Chaotic Luck, and Huahua.

The skills of the others were also getting more refined and powerful, particularly those who were not that experienced in fighting underwater such as Huahua and Samael, who were still somewhat inexperienced in the game.

Daulla and Archimedes were quite skilled as well, especially when they were winners of the variation of the Shadow Ranking Cup in the Kingdom they belonged to. But they were not that skilled at fighting underwater.

But with their talents, they were able to quickly adjust to the battle techniques when their underwater.

Archimedes, who was part of the Winged Race, had some difficulty underwater since he was having some difficulty maneuvering their wings once they were soaked in water. But he was also able to quickly adjust when he started treating the water like the air as if he was flying in the sky.

(Changing the Wingman Race to Winged Race)

Of course, he had also used some tricks to protect his wings from being too soaked underwater, which was also expending quite a lot of his concentration.

He had created a special mana manipulation just for this as he felt that it would be useful in the future if he was put in similar situations. Through this method, he was able to 'fly' underwater as if he were in the sky, albeit much slower and less mobile. Regardless, it was still effective.

Daulla, on the other hand, learned all the tricks from the others, who were much more experienced than her. Alice (Charlotte), the Elemental Goddess, had guided her in this area.

Even if Alice was busy helping Shin study the ancient sealing formation that sealed the vessel of the God of Primordial Waters, she still gave quite a lot of tips to Daulla whenever the team returned to the underwater temple.

Daulla's class was a Mage who majored in controlling lightning, so she would have some advantages when fighting underwater. But she also had to put quite a lot of effort into controlling her elemental powers as it was easy to hit her teammates with her spell due to the conductivity of water.

She had to follow quite a lot of steps just to cast her spell; starting from gathering her mana when preparing to cast the spell to create a designated path that the spell would follow when it was released up to setting a sealing formation, which would prevent the lightning from going to other places, let them miss their target, and cause an accident.

The entire process was quite taxing in the mind, exhausting her and draining a large amount of her concentration.

Regardless, all these were quite helpful in training her control over her spell and mana, greatly enhancing her battle capabilities.

As for Chaotic Luck – this 'mistress' of the Goddess of Luck – he had finally found his bane.

His spells were pretty much useless when it came to underwater battles. Even his Legion of Chaotic Sun was greatly restricted underwater, further limiting his fighting capabilities.

But his reputation as the 'mistress' of the Goddess of Luck would be greatly affected if he could not find any way to overcome this challenge.

This guy had found a way to fight underwater, which was creating an undead from the corpses of the monsters that they had hunted. These monsters would not have any difficulty when fighting underwater. After all, it was their nature when they used to be 'alive'.

What was even absurd was Chaotic Luck having the water current become his 'ally'. Not only it was naturally dragging him to places he wanted, but it also created some natural disasters such as whirlpools whenever he found any danger.

These underwater twisters would either drag him away from danger or crush those who would try to harm him.

This guy's 'passive' skill was indeed the scariest among the group.

...

After sweeping his gaze at the group, checking on their progress, Shin could not help but give them an approving nod after seeing how much they had grown.

Leonard's leadership might differ from when Shin and Cloe commanded the team, but it was equally effective. After all, he was also one of the top gods in the game.

Seeing that everyone was present except Arthur, who was currently in the Ancestral Land of the Springfield Family, Shin found a spot to sit on before looking at the projected screen before the group.

"Let's see who our first opponent will be," he mumbled, feeling a little excited as this was his first time participating in such a huge event.

He really wanted to see how good the top teams supported by the most powerful forces within the virtual world.

Chapter 1653 The Round 32 Draw Show (Part 2)

...

As the draw show for Round 32 of the United Cup was one of the most important parts of the entire tournament, the event organizers had to look for the perfect group or individual to host the show.

Even after spending quite a lot of time and effort to look for the perfect entertainment company to partner with, they were still unable to find anyone who could fit all their requirements.

In the end, they had to choose from the most influential individuals, who were covering their game for the main concept of their content online.

In the end, the person that they found was Miss Bunny, who had the biggest following as well as the most positive ratings and feedback. Her reputation within the gaming circle mostly featured sensational content that became famous through her skills in editing. But aside from that, she was also a quite well-known host as well as a critic who majored in analyzing the battles of top experts of the virtual world.

She was chosen to host the draw show due to this, giving the show positive feedback even before it started.

This was one of the reasons why there were a lot of people, watching the draw show. Given the number of her fans alone, the number of viewers watching the live broadcast was currently spiking high.

...

After the long wait, the stage set up by the event organizers within their independent virtual space was finally revealed before everyone's eyes.

The live chat immediately exploded with the comments of the viewers. They flooded the chat panel with strings of messages. Some were showing their impatience while others were excited.

There were even some people who were just trolling and kept spitting out nonsense, but there was also a group of people who were trying to predict the possible matchups. Another group was also messing around with others, debunking their predictions and such.

Different people mixed in the live chat, 'getting' along with one another.

Tok! Tok!

Not long after, the sounds of heels hitting the floor started ringing in the ears of everyone, somewhat calming them.

It did not take long before Miss Bunny in her white dress elegantly appeared in front of everyone. She looked so gorgeous that she captivated the attention of everyone, particularly the male viewers.

She clearly showed the allure of a mature and professional woman.

She smiled beautifully as she looked at the camera and greeted everyone. "Good day to everyone! On behalf of the World Gaming Organization, I welcome everyone to the United Cup's Draw Show!"

The views immediately went crazy for different reasons, flooding the live chat with emoticons and texts, which were moving so fast that made it almost impossible to read.

Miss Bunny stopped talking and continued smiling, giving everyone enough to go 'wild'. She was very much experienced with this kind of thing as she had already hosted quite a lot of shows before, so she knew when to professionally stop to give the viewers time to enjoy before continuing.

"As everyone knows, we are currently here for the draw show of the Round 32 of the United Cup," she resumed along with a bright smile. "Quite a lot of things have happened this last month and a half, starting from the preliminaries up to the group stage."

"There are also some unexpected and shocking results like upsets and appearances of black horses in the tournament. The majority of the favorite and famous teams have also proven themselves, but quite a lot of unknown teams and individuals started showcasing their talents as well."

"Just earlier, we have finally gotten the 16 teams, who have emerged victorious after the grueling battles. Some of them were filled with familiar people that we looked up to and have a solid reputation

while some were new faces that we had never heard of until they had defeated everyone blocking their path to victory in the previous rounds."

"A lot of exciting battles have taken place in the previous rounds, particularly the last few matches that we have just watched just earlier."

As she was talking, the big virtual screen behind her suddenly lit up and started showing the most memorable highlights of the previous rounds, seemingly reminiscing those events as she narrated them.

Not long after, she started mentioning the names of the teams that would be proceeding to the next round one after another.

Behind her, the emblem of each team appeared one after another as the virtual screen split into different sections along with the brightest highlights that they had.

"These are the 16 teams that will be fighting our 16 seed teams of the tournament for the next round," she said while waving her hand.

The virtual screen was further split, dividing it into two major sections – one to the left and the other to the right. Those at the left were the seeded teams along with their respective logs while the other was for the 16 teams that had advanced.

Swoosh!

A moment later, the emblems representing each team gathered and aligned themselves at the topmost part of the virtual screen while a group of 32 boxes lined up on the left side of the screen.

At the same time, someone appeared while pushing a pair of transparent bowls, containing 16 sphere containers each.

"The make it more engaging, we will be doing the draws in a traditional way," said Miss Bunny as she presented the huge glass bowl by gesturing with her hand.

She paused for a moment, waiting for the person who had pushed the floating glass bowls to leave, before continuing. "And to help us with this, I want to invite someone, who will be my partner with this."

She did not immediately call that person to come up to the stage as she introduced their achievements first to everyone. "I am sure that all of you are familiar with him as he was a very famous personality before his 2-year hiatus."

"He is not only a very skilled and powerful expert in the gaming circle. He is even dubbed as the number one virtual gaming of the new age."

She wanted to continue and lay out all the previous achievements of that person, but they had already appeared beside her like ghosts.

"I know I am such an expert, but if you continue telling them my achievements, then we will not reach the segment where we have to draw the matchups for Round 32," said David, who was currently in a white suit, which had golden linings on one arm.

His attire matched that of Miss Bunny. It was quite fitted and somewhat highlighted his figure. He looked dashing and handsome in this best coat, especially in how he carried himself.

His appearance was scripted to make the show more entertaining, but the viewers did not care as it was quite funny and made the atmosphere more at ease. The two of them had already worked with one another before, so their chemistry was quite amazing.

The two exchange a couple of friendly bunters before proceeding to the real business.

"Alright, I guess that is enough. Should we proceed to the draw show now?" asked David as he pointed at the floating glass bowls before him.

Miss Bunny smiled as she nodded. "I am sure that our views are also getting a little impatient."

"As per the tournament rules, we will be drawing from these two bowls, which represented 16 seeded teams and the other 16, who were facing them."

"The seeded teams are treated as equals, which meant that their levels are all the same. No number 1, 2, 3, or any higher seeds as they are all on equal standing."

"We will first draw a seeded team followed by their opponent. Then we will proceed until the final matchups," she added before pointing behind her, particularly the empty boxes on the left side of the

virtual screen. "We will also not make any special arrangements as the sequence of the matchups will also follow just like this."

"I know a lot of people are worried about when the top teams, who are favored to win the tournament, face against each other early."

"Well, that is truly unformat. But since we will be following a double-elimination formation formant, there will always be a second chance."

She paused for a moment as another window popped out right beside the virtual screen before she continued. "Moreover, the matches will follow a point system where the teams will have to face twice to decide the winner and who will be advancing."

"We will be following the home-and-away system, where each team will have to choose a certain map that will be their 'home ground' for the entire match in all three rounds. Then they will switch places as the other team will be gaining the home advantage next for the rematch."

"They will have to accumulate as many points as they can as these points will carry over to the rematch a couple of days later, where they will decide the winner. However, these points will be reset to zero on the next match after advancing."

She took another pause as she smiled at the camera once again. "This means that the 'second chances' that each team has is more than one."

"And we are also up for a treat as these matches will, without a doubt, be very intense given the format that we have, especially when we will be getting more matches to watch," commented David from the aside, coordinating well with her.

Miss Bunny giggled as she nodded. "I agree with that."

David then rubbed his hands excitedly while asking. "So-... should I start drawing our first match?"

Miss Bunny smiled as she gestured. "Please, do the honor."

Chapter 1654 The Round 32 Draw Show (Part 3)

...

"Our first team is-..." started David as he dug his hand into the glass bowl and stirred its contents before grabbing one of the spherical containers.

He played with it for a moment before pressing on it and shattering the container altogether. What was left was a little piece of paper, which he unrolled slowly while showing it to the camera.

Then the emblem of the team was revealed to everyone, which was the head of a serpent that was formed by multiple smaller serpent heads.

"Hydra Guild!" said David before proceeding to walk to the other bowl, which contained the teams that advanced from the previous round.

As he was taking a couple of steps, the virtual screen behind him showed some of the highlighted battles of the members representing the Hydra Guild in the tournament.

He repeated the process before picking another spherical container and showing its contents to everyone.

This time, the emblem was a knight's helmet with a beetle-like horn.

Seeing the emblem, Miss Bunny smiled as she told everyone the name of the team. "Knight's Order!"

Right after she said the name of the team, the virtual screen behind her also showed the highlights of the team.

Then the names of the teams appeared in the topmost boxes on the bracket along with their emblems, representing the first match-up.

Miss Bunny and David waited for a couple of moments, letting the information sink into the minds of the players before continuing.

The two repeated the process as they continued to name more matchups.

"Mythical Guild-... versus Overdrive Team!"

"Titan Guild-... against Slayers Adventurer Team!"

...

...

...

"Our defending Champion, the God's Paradise will be facing off against one of the dark horses of the tournament, the Red Falcons!"

"Next is the Purple Crows matching up against the Highlanders!"

"The Shadow Raves of the Assassin Union will be fighting the Young Mercenaries of Sky King Army!"

...

...

...

"Dragon Pavilion-... and Black Market!"

"Hand of Midas-... will be fighting the Cavaliers of Light!"

"Golden Feathers of the Wing's Alliance versus the Bloodthirsty Kings!"

"Earners Mercenary Group, a scary team, against the other dark horse of the United Cup, the Sacramento Giants!"

"The Radiant Guild-... will be fighting the mysterious Pandemonium Troupe!"

...

...

...

David paused for a moment as he looked at the next container in his hands. He then slowly opened it, taking a sneak peek inside before smiling.

He then showed it to everyone while shouting. "Empyrean Talons!"

...

Finally hearing the name of their team, Shin and the others could not help but feel a little excited.

"Let's see who will be our first opponent," mumbled Shin as fixated his eyes on the virtual screen before them.

"I don't know if I want to face a strong team early or just an average one," whispered Chaotic Luck, feeling a little conflicted. He was somewhat excited, but also a little nervous at the same time. After all, this was his first time participating in such a huge event.

"Of course, facing a strong opponent is the best! How else can we showcase our progress if we face a mediocre team?" said Owen, who was sitting beside him, with full confidence.

"Don't worry, even if you mess up somehow, we will take care of the rest for you," said Akailu with a chuckle.

"Regardless of our opponents, we will emerge victorious!" said Owen, boosting the confidence of their nervous members such as Samael and Huahua, who were a complete amateur for a professional tournament.

Shin thought for a moment, trying to recall the remaining teams that were not chosen yet, and looking for the strongest opponent that they could ask for.

...

Going back to the other side, David finally picked up the spherical container containing the opponent of the Emyrean Talons.

He skillfully played with the feeling of the views as he built up the suspense quite well. Even Miss Bunny, who was his partner could not help herself from urging him.

"Can you stop messing up with our feelings? Just show us their opponent already!"

Hearing that, David could not help but smile as he finally showed the emblem drawn on the piece of paper he was holding.

It was an emblem of a majestic Trident filled with glowing droplets on its surroundings. This was the emblem of one of the top guilds of the virtual world, which was previously a Powerhouse Guild in all the games that they had joined.

The reason why they were not included in the Powerhouse Guilds of this game was because of their late entry. They were unable to build a solid foundation as fast as the current Powerhouse Guilds due to this, making them lag a little behind.

But that did not mean that were a weaker guild. The number of their experts was quite huge, rivaling the top forces of the game.

They were not chosen as a seeded team in this season of the United Cup because of the limited fame that they had accumulated these couple of months of joining the game.

What was more worth noting was the new backer that this guild had gotten recently, which was financing all the operations of the guild.

This was also the reason why had to rebrand the team that was representing the guild in this tournament.

"Seven Seas Alliance!"

It was no longer just the representative of the guild as the other experts that were nurtured by the Seven Seas Group from the other guilds that they sponsored were also included in the team.

As David's voice reverberated in the air, the viewers also gave their respective reactions. After all, this team was one of the favorites in this tournament due to their background.

...

"I guess enemies do face each other in the end," Shin sighed as he smiled bitterly.

He had been clashing with the guilds sponsored by the Seven Seas Group in the game recently, so there was quite a grudge between them. Especially when the other side tried to use him for their little experiment concerning the artificial seed of hatred.

He also did not have a good impression of this group, especially with such an immoral experiment.

He then looked at the others as he said. "I guess we will spend some of our time studying these guys and their gameplay for the next couple of days."

Cloe, who was the most responsible of the group suddenly pulled out a virtual screen, tapping on it a few times before sending a file to everyone.

"Here is the collection of their battle clips as a team and individually. You can watch them later when you have time. Then we can have a team meeting later," she said, earning her admiring looks from the rest of the team.

"As expected of our Team Commander, you are always ready. Very reliable!" said Shin as he opened the file and skimmed through its contents.

Hearing that, Cloe could not help but roll her eyes at him before complaining. "I am quite busy as well. How about you help me with these jobs."

Shin dodged her gaze, acting as if he was seriously studying the battle videos. "Let me study these guys thoroughly and find their weaknesses."

Cloe burst out laughing after seeing him trying his best to act serious. She then paused as she remembered something. "If you have time, then come back to the Forgotten Temple. We are unable to break the seal of that Elemental Spirit, but we do have found a way to let you communicate with it."

"If it is successful, then we no longer have to break the seal for you to form a contract with it. So long as you have contracted it, that Ancient Sealing Formation will no longer be effective no matter how powerful it was."

Hearing that, Shin could not help but feel excited as he would be able to finally complete his Myriad Transformation Swordsmanship with the addition of this particular Elemental Spirit.

He could also perfect the cycle of five elements of his Four Symbol Scripture if he added this 'reincarnated' God of Primordial Waters in his contracted Reaper's Retainer.

"I'll return as soon as we log back in the game," he replied, completely ignoring the rest of the draw show.

Seeing Shin's reaction, Cloe could not help but smile bitterly, especially when this guy was acting as if he was a little kid who had found a new toy in the mall.

Well, she could not blame him either. After all, the sealed Elementals in that Forgotten Temple were not only powerful but also fitted what he was missing at the moment.

...

While the Empyrean Talons were talking with one another and voicing out their thoughts about their opponents, the draw show continued.

As David told everyone about the final matchup, the entire bracket was finally filled. It also displayed the schedule of the matches for the next couple of days.

Since the current age was in the stage of virtual reality, it was normal for a few matches to be held at the same time, especially given the number of teams.

But there would always be some featured matches, which would be broadcast on the official site of the game and the gaming company's partnered channels.

At this moment, the fan's favorite, voted to be broadcast live was the matchup between the Empyrean Talons and the Seven Seas Alliance.

Given the current fame of the Empyrean Talons, especially their top combatants, the number of people who wanted to watch their match in the official broadcast was quite high.

Moreover, their opponent was among the strongest of those who had advanced from the previous round, which made it even more perfect.

According to the tournament schedule, this match will be held the day after tomorrow in real-world time.

Chapter 1655 A New Reaper's Retainer (Part 1)

...

When the draw show ended, the rest of the Emyrean Talons quickly dispersed and logged in to the gaming, planning to continue their respective business. But before that, they scheduled to have a meeting tomorrow morning for them to prepare and discuss their strategy against their opponents the day after.

They could do it right now. However, since they still needed to study the battle videos of the Seven Seas Alliance and have their thoughts, they still had to watch the videos by themselves.

They could also watch it though, but they still have to finish some things in the game before proceeding to the meeting. This was the reason why Shin and the others decided to deal with what they needed to finish first before meeting again later.

...

Right after the draw show had ended, the players at the Awakened Continent quickly resumed their respective businesses.

The moment they logged back in the game, they were quickly greeted by the shocking progress of the plague. After waiting for quite a while, the Righteous Churches had finally made huge movements.

The Paladin Knights and Bishops stationed on the barracks surrounding the borders of the Plague Lands had finally advanced. They voluntarily stepped into the filthy lands filled with plague and started their crusade.

As they made their way toward the center of the region, the Paladin Knights killed all the Plagued Monsters that they encountered while the Bishops purified the land with their holy powers.

In response, there were also some responses from the center of the Plague Lands. The scattered plagued monsters in different parts of the region gathered in the plague nest that had been built in the previous weeks (in-game time) by the Plague Race Players or were naturally formed through the natural cycle of the region.

Due to all of this, a war broke out between the two sides, igniting another chaos. But contrary to the gravity of the situation, which was affecting both the Evil Faction and the Righteous Churches somewhat indirectly, the players were quite excited as this could be a very good opportunity for them.

The top forces were somewhat restrained as they were preparing for the Round 32 of the United Cup. They were planning to be a little less active in this event and only leave the important positions to their veteran members, who were not participating in the professional competitions and just wanted to play the game.

Unless it was the 'Guild Wars Tournament', they would not actively step up and patiently wait until the right opportunity presented itself.

But despite all of that, the top guilds and huge organizations within the game were plotting something in the dark. Most of their forces were not participating in both wars taking place at the Aurora and Awakened Continent as they were afraid that their main combatants would be assassinated and affect their battle process at the upcoming competition.

They wanted to preserve their strength and hide as much as they could so that they could have more trump cards when the most crucial stages of the competition arrived.

Plotting and scheming to weaken their rivals was a common occurrence for these top forces. They even committed more hideous tricks just to earn that so-called honor that they would gain by winning the huge and official competition of the virtual.

But not all the forces relied on such tricks as there were also some guilds and organizations that looked down on such things just as the Titan Guild, Dragon Pavilion, Hand of Midas, and such. They relied on their strength to win fair and square.

But that did not mean that these righteous forces were not experienced in dealing with such underhanded methods. After all, they were mostly the target of such tricks, so they were quite familiar with the methods to fight against them.

Regardless, despite these top guilds and organizations pulling out most of their forces, the tides of the war were still in full swing, especially when the rewards that they could exchange with their hard-earned event points became much better compared to the previous ones offered by both factions.

...

Meanwhile, Shin, who was quite excited about the thing that Cloe had told him, immediately crushed his return scroll right after going back online. He also used the teleportation hall of the Divinity City to head to the underwater temple, not caring about the events that were currently taking place at the Plagued Lands.

He was too excited to form a contract with the new Elemental Spirit to complete his fighting style and combat methods. This would not only make him stronger, but it could also help improve his understanding of his overall abilities both in the real world and inside the game.

Swoosh!

Not long after, he arrived at the underwater temple. Shin quickly sprinted toward the hall where the spirit of the reincarnated Fallen God of the Sea was currently sealed.

Right after he stepped inside the hall, Shin quickly saw Cloe and Alice standing near the sealing formation, seemingly immersed in discussion.

Shin felt rather weird when he saw this scene, but he could not explain what it was. He first adjusted his mood before walking to them. "How is it?"

Sensing his arrival and hearing his words, the two turned at him almost at the same time. They first frowned a little as they could sense some changes from Shin that they failed to notice earlier due to them being too focused on the draw show.

But they quickly threw it at the back of their head and started explaining the plan to Shin.

"We have failed to decipher the enter sealing formation completely due to some of the Ancient Rune Combination and Sequences being a little too profound to our understanding. But we are still able to figure out their main purpose," started Cloe.

"This Sealing Formation is composed of multiple profound knowledge of the prehistoric era, so it is too much of a waste if we destroy it completely," she paused for a moment as she pointed to some parts of the hall before continuing. "So, we think that it is best to preserve the formation altogether as a study material and for research purposes."

Alice then injected. "From the knowledge stored in my grimoire, there is a certain technique that we can use to let you communicate with that Elemental and have it voluntarily leave the formation."

"This Sealing Formation may look very complicated and profound, making it hard to crack. Unsealing it from the outside is impossible with our current abilities, but it is different from the inside."

"So long as this Elemental is willing to step out of the formation of its own volition, then we can retain the formation altogether without damaging it. It can also maintain its form as it can passively absorb the energy of the ocean to maintain its form, making it last forever."

This time, Cloe suddenly added. "But this is also where another problem appears."

She pointed at the floating Elemental Spirit in the form of the Devouring Whale Tribe and continued. "Since the formation relies on the energy of the ocean, it is also providing enough nutrients for that Elemental."

"It is filtering the oceanic energy and feeding it to that poor child to keep him alive. This is also the reason why he manages to stay alive despite being sealed in this place for a very long time."

"So, once it steps out of this seal, its life can be put at risk due to lack of nutrients. It is unless you find a suitable place where he can settle and turn it into his new home," she paused for a moment, trying to recall something. "What do you call it again? Re-..."

Hearing her words, Shin understood. "Rebirthing Place. It is a special place where each elemental spirits have to be their home and respawn after being killed."

"Ah! That's right!" nodded Cloe.

She then fell silent as she thought of something. "But according to what Alice has said, finding such a place is very hard. Aside from having enough elemental energy, the said place also needs to be perfectly suitable for the said elemental. I heard that is very hard to find."

"This temple and the surrounding vicinity are a perfect place for it. But due to our limited knowledge about this temple, binding this Elemental Child will be very hard," injected Alice with a sigh.

Even if they knew that Shin was partially the owner of this temple due to his passing that so-called trial, he was still far from completely controlling the entire place. Most of its features were also locked, signifying his limited authority over the place.

But this problem of theirs was not even worth being called a problem for someone like Shin. He looked at them as he said. "If that is only the problem, then I have the perfect place for it to settle."

He then paused for a moment as he added. "But I also need some time to prepare for it. Give me a couple of hours (in-game time) to prepare a new home for him."

He spoke with full confidence, making the girls look at him strangely, unable to accept his words. But he just ignored the expression that they were making as he quickly instructed. "You two can prepare for that technique that you have mentioned while I make my preparations."

"Let's meet again once I finish everything," he said before leaving and running toward the teleportation hall of the temple.

Chapter 1656 A New Reaper's Retainer (Part 2)

.....

Shin went to his dimension, which was the Reaper's Realm that he had 'gotten' after defeating Vladimir and forming the contract with that elemental spirit.

This place had completely transformed into an independent world as it was now filled with 'life' compared to the first time he had arrived here.

The dimension was still divided into different regions, which signified the respective territories of his Elemental Spirits. These places were also their rebirthing place, which was now connected to the physical realm of the Atlas World through Shin.

As Shin became stronger, his connection with his Elemental Spirits also grew, which also indirectly affected his connection with this realm.

At this moment, he no longer had to 'bring' all his Elemental Spirits around in the form of specks of lights revolving around him while traveling in the Atlas World as their connection became strong enough to traverse dimensions.

Of course, there were also some limitations. Such effect could only be possible when the Elemental Spirits were in this realm, which was now one of his territories.

This was also only possible because of the dimension token that Berlin, the Saint Draven Blacksmith had forged for him. It was not only the key to enter this place 'freely', but also another form of bridge that connected Shin and this realm.

Shin swept his gaze at his surroundings and could not help but feel a little strange. This realm was slowly becoming a true world instead of a small fragment of the plane that it previously belonged to.

The realm itself was an independent dimension, which was associated with the spatial and void element, so Hanzo did not need to build his 'house' to make it his rebirthing place.

The 'sun' in the sky was where Solus resided, which also became a real 'sun' compared to the last time he had previously visited. It was illuminating the whole world with his brilliance.

There was also the majestic castle, which was where Vladimir lived. It was his palace during the time of prosperity of his kingdom before it fell and became cursed. This castle was shrouded in a bloody mist, which represented the element of Vladimir.

Among his contracted Elemental Spirits, Grimrace was the only one who did not need a rebirthing place as he was originally an abomination. He relied on Shin's natural energy, which was coming from the contract that they had.

But despite all of that, he still liked to 'hang out' in Vladimir's Blood Palace just for fun. Even if these two hated each other always fighting, there was still some 'bond' that was formed between them.

They could still be considered as 'best of friends' aside from being companions under their contract with Shin.

In the distance, there was a glowing mountain that seemed to be connected to the sky. It was releasing a pillar of light from its peak, piercing through the sky. Beneath this mountain was a land filled with darkness as it was a shadow blanket hiding the entire region.

This mysterious place was where Blackie and Whitie resided. The mountain was Whitie's home, while the dark region was Blackie's forest.

On the other side of the Blood Palace was a barren land filled with dried land and stone forest. At a glance, this place seemed to be a dead land due to the lack of vegetation around it. But upon closer inspection, one could see the dense elemental mana filling the air, which represented the elements of earth and metal.

Similar to the glowing mountain, there was also a unique mountain in this region. It was a mountain filled with sharp metallic pillars and tall stone formations. It was the place where Astaroth lived, which was also where he trained.

Additionally, aside from this region that he was already familiar with, there was an additional region that represented the new elemental spirit that he acquired not too long ago. It was a region filled with a vast forest, rivaling the expanse of the other region.

At the center of this forest was a tall altar, which was where the little dragon girl first hatched. This entire forest was Silvana's home, which was also her playground.

Shin did not dare to bring this little dragon girl into the Atlas World yet even though she was strong enough to hold herself even in the Awakened Continent. After all, she was from the Elemental Dragon Race, which was gifted when it came to understanding magic and natural law.

On top of that, she was trained under Solus and Hanzo, these two veterans. She couldn't be underestimated even if she looked like a little toddler, who was supposed to just learn how to walk.

Moreover, given the vast experience and knowledge that these two ancient beings had, it was not hard for them to awaken the inheritance of her race through her bloodline.

The real reason why he did not dare to bring out this little dragon girl outside was-...

"Dad!"

Swoosh!

A figure suddenly flew at Shin, coming from a random corner of the vast forest, and arrived before Shin in an instant.

Bang!

"Argh!"

Silvana banged her head on Shin's stomach, making him groan in pain, before clinging to him with her little arms and legs.

"Dad, you are such a meanie! How can you leave me here and not bring me? You even let Big Sister Solus and Uncle Hanzo regularly come outside. Even Big Sister Blackie and Big Brother Whitie also come out to play around."

"Even that blockhead, Uncle Astaroth can come outside. You only leave me here to place with those two ugly and mean uncles in the castle."

This little dragon girl quickly bombarded Shin with a lot of complaints that could make his ears bleed.

He liked that Silvana was growing quite quickly and steadily, but there were still some areas that needed to be fixed. If she indeed came outside and started calling him 'Dad', especially in front of Cloe and the others, he did not know how he would deal with the situation.

Aside from being smart and clever, this little dragon girl was quite mischievous as well. He did not dare to think about the consequences once she was let loose in the Atlas World.

'It will be best if she is as good and behaves as Laura,' thought Shin as he recalled how this little sister of Leonard, was somewhat mature compared to the rest of the kids her age.

With a sigh, Shin gently patted Silvana's head as he patiently said. "Don't worry. I will be bringing you out soon."

Silvana pouted as she did not believe his words unconditionally. "Dad says it all the time, but never fulfilled his promise."

Shin signed helplessly before suddenly adding. "Don't worry. I will also bring a new playmate for you. He should be 'around' your 'age', so I am sure that you will get along well."

Silvana looked at Shin with full suspicion before asking. "Really?"

She liked to play with the Big Sisters, Big Brothers, and Uncles in this realm and she was not as bored as it seemed to be. But having a playmate around her age should be interesting as well.

"You promise this time, right?" she asked.

Shin smiled as he patted her head. "I promise."

He then let her go and pointed to the other regions. "Go play for now. Let me and Big Sister Solus and Uncle Hanzo prepare a home for your new friend."

"Alright!" said Silvana before letting go of Shin and running to the forest to look for something to do.

Shin watched her back for a moment before suddenly recalling something. He then shook his head as he prayed with full seriousness. "I just hope that they get along well and not end up like Laura and Christian when they first met."

Christian was Cloe's little brother, who was around Laura's age and currently staying with their mother's side of the family.

Not long after, Solus and Hanzo appeared beside Shin while looking at Silvana's little figure.

Shin glanced at them before saying. "I think we should look for some creature to inhabit this place for a better and healthier ecosystem."

He had already thought about this after seeing that this realm was evolving into a real independent world, but never got the chance to due to a lot of things that kept on happening to him.

Solus, as a god in her 'previous' life, agreed with this suggestion completely. Maintaining the balance of nature was always necessary, so letting some creatures live in this realm was also a necessity at some point.

Hanzo, as an Ancient Elemental Spirit, also nodded his head. "A Rebirthing Place of an Elemental was not necessarily something meant only for the Elemental Spirits themselves. Other creatures are also required to make those places grow naturally through the ecosystem that they built."

"I guess I have to look for a time to capture some creatures and transport them here," nodded Shin before going back to the real purpose why he was hear. "Have you prepared the place?"

They had been preparing for the arrival of the new elemental spirit that Shin would be contracting since the time Shin had gotten the quest to free the 'reincarnated' Hydros.

These two veterans had already been preparing the region where the new elemental spirit would be living.

Not long after Shin and the two arrived at the edge of the realm, which looked like a dimension filled with nothing but darkness and void.

As Shin and the Elemental Spirits under him grew stronger, their territory also grew and expanded, which meant that this independent dimension was also constantly evolving alongside them while it was approaching the level of a true world.

This region was also a part of the dimension, which was formed after everyone's growth.

"Have you already prepared everything?" asked Shin.

"I have already sealed all the boundaries of this dimension, which can expand alongside the dimension itself," replied Hanzo lazily.

He paused for a moment before continuing. "The case for this newcomer is a little different from the rest. But we can combine the method that we have used for little Silvana's territory and how we have transferred Astaroth's reverting place to this dimension."

"This will not be a problem if we can transfer the entire underwater temple altogether, but it is currently impossible for your current level and authority."

"So, our only choice right now is to build a similar altar that we have used to hatch that dragon egg while changing the materials needed. This shouldn't be that complicated but will still cost you quite a fortune," he added while turning to Shin.

Shin thought for a moment before sighing. Even if he was quite wealthy in the game, he still knew that he had to spend quite a lot of money whenever something like this happened. Moreover, they were always quite costly every time he had such 'projects.'

Shin nodded his head helplessly. "Give me the needed materials, and I will deal with it. You two can just focus on nurturing this region into something perfect for our new friend later."

Given his connections in the Awakened Continent, Shin was confident that he could buy even some of the rarest materials that could be found in the continent, especially with his identity as the Envoy of the Church of the Sun and Moon.

He could also use the channel that the Hand of Midas currently had, which was constantly growing as time went by.

The only problem was whether he was willing to pay enough for every transaction, which would surely cost him a huge fortune each time.

Chapter 1657 A New Reaper's Retainer (Part 3)

.....

Shin spent quite a lot of gold gathering all the materials that he needed. He even paid some extra just to hasten the process of finding them, utilizing almost all the sources and channels of the Hand of Midas.

The ones that they had gotten from using the connection of the Church of the Sun and Moon were also from separate channels, requiring him to spend more money.

With how much he was spending, utilizing even a small portion of the funds coming from the Gold Mountain and Calderock Port, Sheilla was able to get wind of it. She quickly contacted him and started

scolding him, asking him if he thought that the money that the dukedom had made came from growing some cabbages.

If not for his calming her down with another proposal mentioning the underwater temple that he controlled and the surrounding region that it had, which was reached with a lot of resources, then he would most likely get beaten up in the real world.

So long as he connected the Forgotten Temple to the Aurora Continent by activating the teleportation formation and headed to the coordinates recorded in it, then he would be able to turn the temple into a bridge that was connecting the Aurora Continent and the Awakened Continent.

The problem was the huge energy that would be required in every usage. The travel between the Forgotten Sea and the Awakened Continent was quite huge, but the Forgotten Temple could at least support it through the magic formations that the underwater temple had.

But if he tried to connect the Teleportation Hall of the underwater temple to another continent, then the temple would no longer be able to support the energy consumption of the two spatial channels bridging the two places.

This was one of the reasons why he could not connect the underwater temple to the Aurora Continent yet.

...

After running around everywhere in the Divinity City, having dealt with different shops and merchant groups left and right, Shin barely managed to find all the materials that were listed on the list that Hanzo and Solus had given him.

Since he could not find some of the materials due to their rarity, he had to settle with the inferior materials but with a greater quantity. He used a huge amount of such materials with similar features, characteristics, and factions as a substitute for the major materials that he was looking for.

But due to the large amount of orders that he wanted, he still had to wait for quite a while before they were fully prepared and completely delivered to him.

Without anything to do during this time, he could only run around the vicinity of the city regions, capturing some wild animals and weak monsters and putting them inside the prison prisms that he had brought.

He had also segregated them according to their types, species, and elements that they had as he was planning to scatter them around the Reaper's Realm and let them fill its ecosystem accordingly.

Finding the most regular creatures and monsters was not much of a problem as he could find them anywhere. But there were some issues when it came to rare creatures that he was looking for, particularly those with rare or hybrid elements.

Dark creatures were quite challenging to find in the vicinity of the Divinity City. Most of them could only be found at the Forsaken Islets or Shadow Lands, so they could only be imported. It was a similar case for the Light-Elemental Creatures, so Shin could only order and wait for them to be delivered in the next couple of days up to a whole week.

Sea Creatures, on the other hand, was not a problem. The regions around the underwater temple were filled with life, so he could just capture them directly when he was pouring some seawater into the Reaper's realm to create a sea there.

...

Shin was quite impressed with the efficiency of the NPC Merchants of the Awakened Continent as they were able to gather all the materials that he had ordered from them.

Taking advantage of it, he also issued another order, asking for some materials that he needed for some of his quests, particularly regarding the formation of the 'True Phantom'. Uno had been urging him to create one, so he also had to put some effort into this.

But since all the materials that were needed were the rarest among all and could not be swapped with anything, Shin had to wait until the merchant association found them.

After everything, Shin was now fully ready for the new region, the oceanic region of the Reaper's Realm. It was a necessary preparation to welcome the new Reaper's Retainer and a member of their family.

When Shin arrived at the independent dimension once again, he immediately headed to the oceanic region, which Solus and Hanzo had just finished.

Looking at the boundless horizon of this body of water, Shin could not help but feel a little move as they had poured quite a lot of effort into it. Of course, a huge amount was also spent just to 'transfer' the portion of the Forgotten Sea to this place.

He had already planted and scattered all the sea pants, corals, and sea creatures in this region, making a healthy ecosystem.

He had also freed the other monsters and creatures that he had captured at the different parts of the Reaper's Realm according to their ideal habitat and elemental properties. Aside from the region where Blackie and Whitie resided, almost every region was filled with life.

Vladimir also refused Shin's idea as he wanted his palace and city to remain as it was. This overly conceited and narcissistic elemental spirit seemed to be quite sentimental and melodramatic at times, which was quite interesting.

But Shin also understood Vladimir's line of thoughts. After all, even if he turned into what he was now, he was still a ruler of the kingdom despite its fall. It was impossible not to be nostalgic and feel some regret, especially when he was staying in the same castle where he used to live.

Setting that aside, the one who was the happiest with these changes was Silvana, who now had a lot of friends that she could 'bully'... I mean to play with.

Seeing how lively and happy she was, Shin could not help but feel that all the gold and effort that he had poured and invested into this 'project' was worth it.

"Is this how it felt to raise a child?" mumbled Shin as he noticed Silvana playing at the beach, which was the boundary between her forest region and the newly formed sea.

He then started thinking about his mother, who he had yet to meet up until now. His mood immediately changed before suddenly sighing.

He then set that thought aside before turning to Hanzo and Solus, who were standing on each of his sides. "Is everything ready now?"

Solus nodded her head as she answered. "There shouldn't be any problem, my liege! So long as we follow all the procedures and you form a contract with that elemental, everything will go according to the plan."

"Even if we encounter some issues during the process, it shouldn't be that huge given that you have our support and those two ladies, especially when one of them was an Elven Sage and had the Storm Brothers and Spirit Queen Gaia," added Hanzo after considering all the possible situations during the ceremony later.

"Then, there is no need to wait any longer," said Shin as he activated the token and returned to the underwater temple.

He had sacrificed quite a lot of time just for all of these and even missed the team's first meeting for their upcoming match. But everything would be worth it so long as he had successfully contracted with the 'reincarnated' Hydros, which was why Cloe and the rest of the team had not said anything about his absence.

Moreover, there was also quite a lot of time before the match, so they should still have enough time to prepare after Shin was done with everything.

...

Right after returning to the Forgotten Temple, Shin could not help but glance at the quest panel once again, checking on the details of the quest for another time.

[Quest Name]: The Fallen God of the Sea

[Quest Type]: Hidden Historical Quest

[Quest Difficulty]: Special (Default)

[Quest Background]:

After losing the Great Oceanic War, the God of Primordial Waters – Hydros lost his Divine Authority to the Ruler of the Sea Monsters and the Lord of the Ocean Depths.

The Oceanic Tribes, on the other, had been forced to go in hiding, trying to survive the hunt of the Hydra Tribes and the Ancient Demons.

The Great Ocean and the Seven Seas were lost and fell into the hands of the Demons and three Absolute Rulers of the Seas.

Unbeknownst to everyone's knowledge, Hydros was barely able to survive during the ambush of the two Great Demon Kings and managed to separate a fragment of his dying Divine Soul and put it into the corpse of a poor child of the Devouring Whale Tribe before sealing it on his sole surviving temple.

He hopes to be revived by a faithful individual who will help him with his revenge and protect his descendants.

But a very long had passed during that time, and the consciousness of his weakened Divine Soul had already lost its personality after a long slumber.

After countless Eons and the fall of different eras, this soul has become a new soul waiting to be awakened into a new form.

[Quest Condition]:

Find a way to free the new entity and let it be born into this new Era.

[Quest Rewards]:

- Acquisition of a new Elemental Spirit

[Quest Penalty]: Upon failing to release the seal with the right method.

- Birth of a God of Destruction

He then nodded after making sure that they had not missed anything. Turning his head forward, he saw Cloe and Alice, who had been waiting for him for quite a while now.

They nodded at him before leading the way. They led him to a certain formation within the room where the little elemental spirit was sealed before gesturing that he had to stand on it.

"This is where you will be standing during the entirety of the ceremony. All you have to do is pour your unique mana into it right after we have activated it," explained Cloe.

Alice, on the other hand, was already standing on another formation, which was connected to the one that Shin was standing on. She was already preparing her spells while waiting for Cloe to take her position.

"Everything has already been prepared, so you don't have to do that much. But your role is the most important in this plan, so you must pay full attention to the entire process while waiting for our signal."

"Once everything is ready, you can communicate with that little elemental spirit. Then the rest is all on you. Whether we fail or succeed is all reliant on you, so make sure to take it seriously," warned Cloe while giving Shin a fierce glare.

Shin chuckled as she saw her reaction before nodding. "Don't worry. No one wants this to work better than me. My future is also all in this, so how can I slack off?"

Cloe nodded after hearing his reply before walking toward her spot. The formation that she was assigned to form a full triangle when it was connected to the ones that Alice and Shin were standing on.

The three adjusted their mind for a moment before finally starting.

Everything went according to their plan, making it a smooth sail. They did not encounter any problems as they followed all the procedures that Cloe and Alice had planned.

Everything was executed solely by those two, as Shin needed only to constantly pour his mana into the magic formation that they had set up while waiting for their signal.

But when it was finally his turn, a little 'accident' occurred. Shin was caught a little off-guard, unable to explain what just happened. "Eh!? What the heck!?"

Chapter 1658 A New Reaper's Retainer (Part 4)

Ding

System: You have successfully contracted a new Elemental Spirit!

System: Please give a unique code for this new Reaper's Retainer!

...

"Eh!? It has worked already!? Isn't this a little too easy? What the heck happened?" Shin stared blankly at the notification before his eyes, unable to believe what was happening.

He had just built a connection with the sleeping elemental spirit and was about to communicate with him according to the plan, but he did not expect that the latter would take the initiative to form a contract with him, which he had instinctively accepted.

It then resulted in the current situation.

Shin was unable to believe what just happened as he was expecting something more. It felt that the situation was a little anti-climatic given all the preparations and efforts that they had poured into this.

He knew that this was a good thing, but he still could not shake off this somewhat uncomfortable feeling. It felt like they had wasted a little too much in exchange for such an 'easy' result.

It took him quite a while to snap back to reality and respond to the system with his subconscious mind. "Ocean Reaper."

Ding

System: Congratulations! You have acquired a new Reaper's Retainer.

Ding

System: Due to this Elemental being in deep slumber for a very long time, its mind and thoughts will be a little fuzzy. It will be in deep confusion, so it is suggested that you keep it on your side almost all the time until it adjusts to its new environment.

...

As he was reading through the string of messages, Cloe and Alice looked at Shin with confusion as they tried their best to maintain their states.

But they later sensed something strange, attracting their gazes. The moment when they turned their eyes at the source of this sensation, they saw the little humanoid whale, which was as big as a little toddler, disappearing from the sealing formation and reappearing before Shin.

This little whale kid stared at Shin with his little observant eyes, seemingly trying to size him up. The eyes of this little whale kid were filled with curiosity as he watched Shin.

The two stared at one another for quite a while before the little whale kid finally opened his mouth and took a bowing gesture before Shin. "You must be my master. This servant humbly greeted the Lord."

The corner of Shin's mouth suddenly twitched when he saw the familiar gesture that he only saw from those stubborn elementals within the Reaper's Realm.

Solus, who was observing everything from Shin's side in her speck of light form, repeatedly nodded her head in satisfaction.

Hanzo, who was also in the same form, smiled bitterly as he gave Shin a pitying gaze. "It seems like another one is added to the list."

Shin was unable to respond as this was not what he was expecting from this little whale kid. This was not how it was supposed to be. "Aren't you supposed to act like a kid in your age?"

As Shin subconsciously voiced out his inner thoughts, the little whale kid responded while maintaining a respectful tone. "While this humble servant lost all his memories and is currently in this form, the thoughts and the final orders of his previous self are deeply engraved in his soul."

"One of the orders is to treat my master with utmost respect," he added with the same respectful tone.

The corner of Shin's mouth twitched while watching this little whale kid act this way. Based on his experience, he knew that it was pointless to force this kid to change his attitude as it would be impossible. He knew it by experience as nothing worked for Astaroth, Solus, Blackie, and Whitie.

With a helpless sigh, Shin waved his hand as he instructed. "Alright, I understand."

He then pointed at Hanzo and Solus, who were currently in their speck of lights form, before adding. "Can you take this form? We can talk again later once I reorganize my thoughts."

Shin felt a little helpless with the current situation, especially when he was expecting that this little whale kid was supposed to be Silvana's playmate. But given the current situation, he felt that it would be a total disaster if he proceeded with that place.

He did not want that little dragon girl to be corrupted by this kid and become like the others. Just thinking about it gave Shin an intense headache.

"This servant understands," responded the little whale kid. He was about to transform himself when he suddenly recalled something. "But, Master, you have yet to bestow a new name for this humble servant."

Shin raised his brows as he looked at the little whale kid and asked confusedly. "Isn't Hydros your name? Is it not enough?"

The little whale kid shook his head as he explained. "This should be inappropriate. This servant's previous self has already died for a very long time. In order for this humble servant to start over again, a new name is necessary."

Shin felt like having another headache when heard those words. But before he could organize himself, Cloe and Alice stopped channeling their mana to the magic formations that they were standing on and walked over.

"Shin, what is happening?" asked Cloe as she arrived while curiously staring at the little whale kid.

The corner of Shin's mouth started twitching once again when she heard those words before proceeding to explain everything.

It did not take that long for Shin to explain the entire situation as it was not that complicated. But the main issue was the current personality that this little whale kid had.

But contrary to what Shin was feeling, Cloe took the fancy of the little whale kid. She kneeled before the young elemental spirit and hugged him as if she found a stuffed toy. "What do you mean? He looked so cute~!"

"If you don't want me, then this Big Sister will be taking him," she said with a pout.

Hearing her words, the little whale kid suddenly said. "I don't think it is appropriate, Madam. Master is this humble servant's master, so Madam is supposed to be the Madam given your relationship with Master."

Cloe's face darkened first when she heard him address her as 'Madam'. She was not that old! She was very young and full of youth! But after hearing the latter part of his words, all her negative thoughts disappeared completely, and hugged the young elemental a little tighter.

"Right, you're right. From now on, you are my adopted son!" she declared proudly, ignoring Shin's contorted expression.

Alice, on the other hand, remained quiet and watched everything with strange eyes. She did not know how would feel with the current situation.

The little whale kid saw this and quickly bowed at her and was about to repeat how he addressed Cloe. "Ma-..."

Bang!

But before he could even open his mouth, Cloe quickly reacted and patted his little head. She even whispered with a deep smile. "You can call her Miss Charlotte."

The little whale kid tried to open his mouth and was about to say something, but was unable to bring out the words stuck in his throat after seeing that beautiful smile from Cloe. From his perspective, that smile was like a terrifying God of Death that could take his life in an instant.

But at the same time, he also could not defy the final order of his previous self. He could not show any disrespect to the other lady who had helped his master freeing him.

After an intense internal struggle, the little whale kid finally forced out some words from his mouth.
"Mm-... Mistress."

Cough! Cough! Cough!

Shin, who was watching everything from the side, could not help but cough hard after hearing that word. He felt like he was choked by something as he was unable to properly process everything.

Alice was also stunned and unable to respond to the situation. She could only stand frozen in her place while staring blankly at the young elemental.

Cloe stared at the little whale kid, completely stunned. But she later started smiling brightly as she patted the latter's head. "You are quite clever, huh?"

"How about we call you 'Ronan' from now on? It means 'little seal', and seals are very smart," she added.

The little whale kid did not reply immediately and just turned to Shin with his desperate gaze. It was as if he was pleading for his master to save him from the clutches of this scary woman.

Moreover, it was a whale and not a seal!

But Shin ignored his pleading eyes and just cleared his throat. It was as if he was saying to the little guy that he couldn't be saved.

"Then it is decided! From now on, your name will be Ronan!" she declared with a tone that seemed to be refusing any objection.

Shin ignored all of this and just focused his gaze on the information displaying Ronan's current stats.

Spirit Name: Roman

Status: Reaper's Retainer – Ocean (Water and Ice)

Race: Reincarnated Elemental God (Hydros)

Bloodline: Devouring Whale Tribe

Purity: Divine

Transformation (Sealed): ???

Ability Status: Still in the Growing Stage (Youngling)

Tier: Current 3 (Potential ???)

Level (Growth Pace): Adjusted to 200 (Max: Unknown)

Shin slightly nodded his head as skimmed through them. It was somewhat similar to what Silvana had. Even if Ronan was a reincarnation of Hydros, the God of Primordial Waters, his full potential was still far from being fully realized as he had just woken up from such a long slumber.

Moreover, he was currently in a different form, which was a little kid from the Devouring Whale Tribe. This affected his status and bloodline, which was somewhat different from its original root.

But after seeing that the purity was at Divine Level, Shin could tell that this little kid possessed an unimaginable potential.

Since Shin was busy checking on the stats of his newly acquired Elemental Spirit Companion, he was unable to hear the complaints of the little dragon girl, who was currently throwing tantrums in the Reaper's Realm.

It seemed like she was aware of what had transpired in this place and quite unsatisfied with something.

Hanzo, who was currently bored, suddenly had an evil thought in his mind. He glanced at Shin, who was still in deep thought, before grinning evilly.

This old elemental spirit had the urge to create some trouble. He secretly created a bridge between the Atlas World and the Reaper's Realm, which Silvana could use.

Given his connection with the independent dimension, such a trick was easy. Adding that Silvana was also a contracted elemental spirit of Shin, she could also freely leave that place so long as she had gotten the 'permission'.

Hanzo smirked as Silvana jumped through the dimensional gate. He then glanced at Solus, who was giving him a fierce glare, but ignored her immediately. He was getting ready for a great show.

Sensing all of this, the other Elemental Spirits also joined the fun. They left their respective regions at the Reaper's Realm and appeared in the Atlas World, surrounding Shin, in their speck of light form.

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

It was only at this moment that Shin sensed that something was wrong. But before he could even respond to the situation, Silvana already materialized before him with her furrowed brows and pouting lips. "Dad! How can you adopt another child when you already have me? I thought you were just looking for a playmate for me!"

Shin stared blankly at her for a moment before glaring at Hanzo as he realized what just happened. He was also cursing the old spirit as the gears of his head started thinking of a way to fix the situation.

Cloe and Alice, on the other hand, were unable to believe what they just heard. They even thought that they were hearing things, especially when the word 'Dad' kept on echoing in their ears.

Cloe was about to ask Shin about the situation when she suddenly froze due to the next words that she heard from Silvana.

The little dragon girl abruptly turned around and faced Alice with a bright smile. "Mom!"

The atmosphere within the hall immediately changed as Shin could only helplessly curse himself. "F*ck me!"

Chapter 1659 Troubles

...

Shin could only glare at Hanzo while the old spirit gave him a gloating look.

At the same time, Cloe and Alice also had their respective responses.

Alice froze all over due to the sudden address of Silvana. She was unable to respond after hearing the little dragon girl call her 'Mom'. Her mind went blank and lost the ability to think straight. She did not know what was happening.

Cloe, on the other hand, underwent a series of emotional rollercoasters. Her feelings went into an uphill and downhill track of emotions as a flood of thoughts flashed through her head. She was unable to think straight for quite a while before the expression on her face was constantly shifting between different emotions.

"SHIN KINGHAD!"

Shin felt a sudden shiver in his spine when he heard the growling that was echoing in the entire hall. He also felt that the surroundings seemed to have turned dark, seemingly telling the impending doom.

"Wait-... Cloe! Let me explain! It is not what you think it is! It is just a misunderstanding!" Shin tried his best to calm her down, especially when he was getting the illusion of a violent typhoon that was about to sweep the entire place.

"What have you done!" shouted Cloe, demanding an explanation.

Shin's Reaper's Retainer were just watching everything unfold with different expressions on their faces. Some of them had a worried look, others were full of amusement, while the rest could not help but sigh helplessly.

The Ronan looked left and right with a confused look on his face, unable to decide what to do. From the thoughts that he had inherited from his previous self, this situation was something that he could not be involved with as it was a quarrel between his Master and the Madam.

Silvana, the source of this disaster, on the other hand, innocently looked at the surroundings. It was as if she was not aware of the trouble that she had created. But she was more curious about her 'Mom', so she kept on looking at Alice with a curious gaze.

Meanwhile, Alice remained frozen on her spot, unable to do anything. She was unable to think as her head was filled with the echoing word – Mom – inside.

...

After a while, Shin was forced to sit on his knees while explaining the entire situation to Cloe and Alice.

Of course, the entire situation did not end up just like that. He was first bombarded by a barrage of spells – both basic and advanced ones – from Cloe before he ended up in this situation.

Naturally, the spells did not kill him as Cloe avoided one-shotting him with her spells, but the pain that he suffered in the entire process was a whole other matter. She even healed him every time to make sure that he was 'fine'.

This was no different from torture, especially when he was unable to fight back the entire time due to a silencing boundary that she had set up. It was a powerful Tier 3 Domain Skill that robbed him from using any kind of skills during the entire duration.

He was beaten up until Cloe had vented out all her frustrations. He also chose not to fight back until she calmed herself down.

Hanzo, Vladimir, and Grimrace were enjoying the entire show the whole time. They even got the perfect spot to watch along with the popcorn and soda that they had gotten from who knew where.

Blackie, Whitie, and Astaroth were unable to join or lend a hand as they knew that this was not a situation that they shouldn't involve themselves. All they could do was to pray for their liege to endure this tribulation well.

Ronan, on the other hand, remained silent and waited for the entire process to end while Solus held firmly on Silvana, preventing this little dragon girl from making the entire situation escalate even further.

...

"So, you are telling me that this little girl is from the green dragon egg that you and Alice have gotten from a certain quest. And when she hatches, she started calling you 'Dad' due to your mana that is infused to her during the hatching process?" asked Cloe, trying to clarify what Shin had explained.

She felt another urge to beat Shin up for another round after learning that Alice and this guy had gone doing a quest together when he still had not kept his word when he promised that he would quest with her first.

She did her best to suppress that urge, barely stopping herself, before continuing. "Then, she remembered Alice's mana signature, which she felt when she was still in the egg, and mistaken Alice as her Mom."

Shin nodded his head repeatedly, not saying anything else. He was too afraid that he would say something wrong and pulled the trigger by accident once again. He was unwilling to commit another suicide attempt.

"Sigh~!" Cloe could only sigh helplessly in the situation. She massaged her temples, trying to calm herself down.

It took her a while before she recovered herself. "I understand. I'm sorry. I guess it is a misunderstanding."

Shin could finally heave a sigh of relief after hearing that. He then tried to change the subject so that he could finally escape this current predicament. "Now that we are done here. How about we have the team meeting next and discuss our strategy against the Seven Seas Alliance?"

Cloe knew what he was planning but chose to overlook it. "Alright. Let's call the others and have our team meeting."

Shin then stood up and planned to leave. But before he could finally relax, he heard Silvana's innocent voice once again. "That's not right, Dad! You haven't played with me yet!"

Shin's face suddenly contorted when he heard her words. The two girls, Cloe and Alice, also could not help but pause after hearing the innocent tone of the little dragon girl as they were still not used to this situation.

In panic, Shin swiftly waved his hand and retracted all his Elemental Spirit Companions, sending them back to the Reaper's Realm, before another disaster befell him.

The temper that Cloe was barely able to suppress almost erupted once again at that time. Fortunately, Shin was fast enough to send everyone back before the situation turned for the worst once again.

Within the virtual space of the Seven Seas Alliance, the top combatants of the team that would be representing them in the upcoming knockout rounds of the United Cup were currently having a very serious meeting.

"And that is everything that we have gathered about all the members of the Emyrean Talons," said a woman, who was wearing a professional attire that is usually used by office workers in certain companies in the real world.

She was a secretary of the young president of the Seven Seas Group, who was assigned to the operations within the game.

She might not be a skilled player, but she was a great analyst and strategist when it came to these kinds of situations.

Just now, she had discussed all the backgrounds of the Emyrean Talons' members as well as their overall strengths and possible weaknesses.

"The competition will be following the same format for this knockout rounds. The entire match will be divided into three rounds."

"The first round is two Single Matches, where we will send a single representative on each match and will earn us a point per match. As we have discussed, it is best to give up this round since it is impossible even for our top combatant to win against their top combatants."

"They have too many people who are skilled at one-on-one matches namely the Battle God Sickarius, War God Simba, and Dragon God Seigfried. There are also that mysterious Shadow Dancer Diablo, the Vampire Alucard, and the Dark Knight Owen."

"The first three are a real problem while the other three are equally troublesome. It is pointless to spend too much effort for this round."

She then paused for a moment to look at everyone before continuing. "Instead, it is more ideal for us to put more of our focus on the next two rounds."

"The second round, the Group Round, can be chosen in different formats depending on the team with the 'home ground' advantage. It can either be a two-vs-two match or a three-vs-three match, depending on what we want."

"It can also be a three-man match with a one-vs-one format. It is round when each team will send three representatives, who will be battling in three consecutive one-on-one matches. A member will replace their teammate after losing or continue to battle the other side until there is no longer a member to represent either side."

"The team with the remaining representative standing on the stage will be the winner."

"This round will earn us a total of three points," she added before proceeding. "Even if it is still quite challenging, we will have a better chance on this round since the ones who have already participated in the previous round of Single Matches."

She took another pause to let everyone process her words before continuing. "As for the third and final round-... it is a straight up Team Match with 5 members on the field and 1 person as a substitute."

"You can swap one of your members any time you want so long as you have access to the summoning formation within the field. But if one of the five field members died during the battle, then the sixth man will be automatically summoned on the field to join the others."

"This match will earn us a total of five points if we win, which will have a huge impact on the entire match. After all, our accumulated points will be carried over to the 'away' match two days later."

"At the same time, the members who have already joined the previous two rounds will be unable to join the Team Battle, which will further limit the members and team composition available to both teams."

She then looked at everyone as she continued. "As you can see, it is the best for us to give up the first round and solely focus on the next two rounds."

"I know that everyone here is confident in themselves and has their pride, but we must admit that it will be disadvantageous to us if we insist on matching them in the Single Matches when they have those Godlike Monsters in their ranks."

The entire team remained silent as they were unable to refute her words. After all, she was only stating facts, which was something that they would not be able to deny.

The secretary nodded her head as she continued. "But don't worry. Even if we are at a slight disadvantage individually, the same can't be said for our team capabilities. Moreover, they are just a newly built team, so their teamwork shouldn't be that solid yet."

"They are bound to have holes in their team capabilities, which we will be taking advantage of. Moreover, we have the home advantage first as the 'underdogs' in this match. We can catch them off guard with our strategy."

The screen behind her suddenly changed as it projected the familiar oceanic region. "We can use the 'terrain' that we are most familiar with. We are the Seven Seas Alliance, so we will be the kings when it comes to underwater combat!"

"Since we will be giving up the Single Mathes, we will not be using this stage for those matches. The same can be said for the Group Round since it is somewhat of a one-on-one match. But if we will choose the two-vs-two or three-vs-three group battle, then we can just leave the decision for the combatants representing us on the stage."

"But when it comes to the Team Battle, we will be choosing this underwater stage that we are familiar with. This is where we regularly train our forces, so we will be at an absolute advantage."

"I believe that even if they will be having a hard time fighting us under the sea in this round, especially when their top combatants will be banned in the battle once they join the previous two rounds."

"Moreover, their marksmen will be greatly restricted when fighting underwater. It does not matter if they have those top snipers or archers; they are practically useless underwater."

"The Team Battle will be our key to victory!" she shouted, seemingly finishing a great speech that would boost their morale.

Chapter 1660 First Professional Team Competition (Part 1)

.....

Today was the day when the Round 32, Knockout Rounds, of the United Cup would officially start.

Due to the advanced technology and the battles taking place in the virtual world, the contestants would not suffer any serious injuries. Even if the players fought in an intense battle and killed one another in

the virtual world, they could just respawn without any long-lasting injuries that could affect them in their future matches.

With this, the battles could take place at the same time with only the featured matchups being broadcast live on the official website of the game.

Given that the most voted matchup for this round was the battle between the Empyrean Talons and Seven Seas Alliance, the organizers planned to contact Miss Bunny and David to be the main commentators for the live broadcast.

However, since those two were biased toward the Empyrean Talons, they felt that it would be a little too inappropriate to choose them. But at the same time, they could not find anyone more suitable for the role other than these two, especially when the two were very famous among the audience given their perfect synergy and chemistry at hosting and commentating.

While they were having a dilemma, someone suggested that they should just feature both the official partners of the teams on the official website of the game and let the viewers choose which channel they would want to watch.

It was a brilliant idea. Since they were having a hard time, why not let the viewers decide for themselves, saving the organizers from this trouble?

...

"Ladies and gentlemen! Welcome to the live broadcast of the featured matchup of Round 32! This is your friend, Miss Bunny, to make this stream more exciting and engaging!" greeted Miss Bunny with her professional smile as she looked at the camera before her.

She then turned to the side, looking at David, who was her partner for this broadcast once again. "And to help me with this job, here is our friend, a super expert, to explain deeper details of the upcoming match-... Mr. Khing!"

"Hello, hello. It is good to be back again, partner!" said David as he responded to Miss Bunny before turning to the camera. "Here I am once again to join you in another exciting match!"

He then turned back to Miss Bunny as she asked. "Have you prepared our snacks yet? I am sure that this is going to be an absolute banger of a series given that two of the tournament favorites are facing each other this early."

"Of course, I have prepared something for us!" Miss Bunny worked with David very well to enhance the atmosphere and make the viewers relax a little before the match that everyone was about to see.

Not long after, Miss Bunny finally started talking about the two teams. "I know that everyone is excited about this match, especially when it is chosen to be the featured matchup."

"So, Partner, give us some idea why this match is so special," she paused for a moment before adding in a joking tone. "After all, not everyone is familiar with these two teams."

David nodded as he answered in a playful tone. "Of course! Let me help you with this."

"Since there are still 30 minutes in the clock before the match starts, let me be a host of this pre-show before we get on the edge of our seats later."

He then started narrating the brief history of each team along with their achievements as Miss Bunny injected some questions and comments from time to time to make everyone sound a little more entertaining.

They also discussed some of the strengths and weaknesses of each side, which would be the major factors that would decide the outcome of the match.

"Now that we have a better understanding of the teams as well as their top combatants, let's discuss some of the possible strategies that they will use in this series," said Miss Bunny.

She then looked at David. "As an expert in strategy yourself, Mr. Khing, how do you think each side will arrange their lineup as well as their major strategy."

David acted as if he was in deep thought before answering. "Well, this is not that hard given our current understanding of each team."

"It is pretty much obvious that the Emphyrean Talons have the advantage when it comes to the individual prowess of their members, so we can easily expect that the Seven Seas Alliance will avoid a straight-up confrontation."

"I can be bold and say that they will most likely choose to avoid the one-on-one matches and focus on their team fight capabilities, which is a very obvious choice."

Hearing this, Miss Bunny nodded as she agreed. "Giving up on your weakness and just focusing on your strength is good as well. After all, the Seven Seas Alliance have shown great team fighting prowess in their previous matches."

"Moreover, they have never shown their real strength yet. None of their previous opponents have forced them to reveal their trump cards," she added with a little concern.

David nodded as he continued. "Then they will take advantage of the 'limited' experts that the opposing side has after placing them in the Single Mathes. Even if it is not much, this will at least lower the number of threats that they will face in the next two rounds."

"They will most likely choose the three-vs-three in the Group Round. After all, their side has the famous trio that shocked the virtual world in Season 32 of the World Cup five years ago! The famous Wild Brothers of «Rules of Echo» Online, a very famous Survival and Battle Royal Game at that time."

"Even though they are said to be 'old' in professional gaming careers, they are still in their prime! They are just around 25 to 27 years old, still very young in terms of Martial Arts and Mentalism standards."

"They are not some casual groups that can just be ignored that easily. Even the top gods of the virtual world will take them seriously, especially when they are working together."

"Their Martial and Mentalism attainments shouldn't be that low, especially with their good talent."

He then paused a little as he added. "Adding their advantage when it comes to choosing their desired battlefield, their chances of winning the Group Round shouldn't be that low either."

Hearing his analysis, Miss Bunny could not help but nod her head. "You are right about that, partner. Having a Home Advantage sure is a great deal."

"Then what about the Team Battle? If the Seven Seas Alliance is sending out their members with the best teamwork on the Group Round, isn't it weakening their lineup for the next round? After all, Team Battle is all about teamwork."

"Even if the opposing side has better members with stronger individual strength, you can always make it up with better coordination and team fighting capabilities," she added with furrowed brows.

"You are right about that," David nodded his head as he agreed with her. But he later added his assessment. "But I am sure that the Seven Seas Alliance will have a contingency plan if they do send the Wild Brothers. They will not be that foolish to weaken their forces without having a backup plan."

"Moreover, we are not familiar yet with all their members. As you can remember, there are still some other individuals that they have yet to send out to participate in their previous matches. There will always be some surprises."

He then thought for a moment as he mysteriously said. "Aside from that, I also have the feeling that they will choose an unexpected battlefield for the third round. Their real advantage will surely lie in here."

Miss Bunny nodded in full seriousness before asking. "Let's say that the Seven Seas Alliance will follow this plan, how do you think the Empyrean Talons will arrange their lineup?"

"Hoh~! This is where interesting things happen," said David mysteriously before continuing quickly after. "It is also not that hard for them to arrange their lineup."

"They have the absolute advantage in terms of individual strength, so they can just send whoever they and will some easy points for the Single Matches."

"But the next two rounds will be their real challenge," he cleared his throat a little before continuing. "The key battle will be the Group Round, so the Empyrean Talons can just send one of their strongest members to 'facilitate' the three-vs-three battle along with members with pretty good coordination."

"For example, they can just send Diablo along with Owen and Ithilien, or Daulla and Archimedes – the duos of their team can be highly graded when it comes to coordination. Even those two beginners in their team, Samael and Huahua, have promising potential."

He paused for another time before continuing. "But since Owen was their main tank, he had a crucial role in Team Battle. Then we can just narrow it down with Daulla and Archimedes along with a 'facilitator'."

"This will not be that hard for the Seven Seas Alliance to formulate a battle strategy targeting these two," he took another pause as he chuckled. "As for the Team Battle, it depends on Empyrean Talons' mood. They already have a very solid lineup anyway, especially when Arielle, the Gentle Goddess and the Top Healer of the game, is on their side."

"Regardless of what happens or the choices that each side makes, the Team Battle will still be the deciding factor of this match."

"Can Seven Seas Alliance surprise us and find a way to deal with Arielle or suppress the other top combatants of the Emphyrean Talons? This is the main issue that they must deal with if they want to win this match," he ended for the conclusion.

The two chatted a little more and discussed more strategies while waiting for the match to finally start.

As someone who was also quite good at analyzing matches, Miss Bunny also tried to voice out her thoughts and ideas about strategizing if she was on either side.

Not long after, this highly anticipated match was finally starting.