

Destiny 1671

Chapter 1671: Second Match: Beastmaster vs Peerless Summoner (Part 5)

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Boom!

The huge explosion did not just destroy everything within its range but even affected the surrounding areas with the powerful shockwave produced by it. The entire Forest Swamp was shaken, almost wiping out the majority of the trees and other forms of vegetation.

The area where the epicenter of the explosion occurred seemed to have turned into a completely different place. The entire radius of the explosion had no signs of the previous swamp.

What was left behind was a piece of destroyed land filled with ashes, coals, and scorched marks.

The almost circular radius of the explosion range looked like a nuclear site where a bomb exploded.

After being shocked by the current scene before them, everyone started looking for the traces of the two combatants, who were supposedly fighting just earlier. With such a massive and devastating explosion, they doubt that either of them would be able to survive.

Vendetta, being the initiator of the explosion, should have the means to save himself from such a 'sacrificial' move.

Not long after, when the cloud of smoke, dust, ashes, and dirt started to settle and dissipate, there was a spot where everyone could see a blurry silhouette standing in the middle of settling clouds.

It did not take that long for everyone to realize that this person was Akailu, who took on the full brunt of the explosion.

He was currently losing a limb while his other arm was completely black due to being scorched by the flames of the earlier explosion. His legs also had similar marks, so thus his upper body.

Half of his face was even revealing a horrifying scorched wound, showing his teeth and a portion of his skull. The wound was so hideous that it even made the player watching the battle feel their hair stand erected.

Goosebumps washed over everyone's body the moment they saw this scene.

Akailu looked like he was barely holding on with a sliver of health left. Regardless, this still signified how powerful he was, especially his body, for withstanding that massive explosion and survived.

Even if he had suffered such serious injuries, he was still able to cling to the sliver of health that he had and even remained standing on his feet.

Not long after, the people started to notice the rapid healing of his body. It was so fast that the cells of his body could be seen moving and healing themselves by the naked eye.

"What the f*ck!?"

"How high is his regeneration rate?"

"Is he still on the same plane as us? That kind of rapid healing is comparable to a Boss Monster already!"

"What the hell is wrong with his constitution? It's more of a monster's physique rather than a player's body!"

"Well, he is from the Beastman Race, so it is still within reason?"

The live audience immediately went crazy while those watching from the live broadcast swiftly flooded the live chat with their reactions, filling it with emoticons and exaggerated memes.

This continued for quite a while. It was only when everyone realized that the match had yet to end that they started focusing on the battle area, which now underwent a lot of 'transformations.'

A moment later, a gust of wind suddenly gathered on a spot not too far from where Akailu stood before a translucent image of a Spirit Warrior was manifested.

This Spirit Warrior slowly took a physical form before it morphed into Vendetta, who seemed to be in his peak state despite being at the center of the earlier explosion. He neither suffered any serious injuries nor signs of exhaustion.

It seemed like he still had the full capabilities to fight at his best state.

But as he was taking his physical form, Akailu had also finished healing his injuries, returning him to his healthy state.

The two stared at one another, seemingly acknowledging each other's strength.

"I must admit that you are indeed strong. You may even be much stronger than my current state," started Vendetta with a sigh before continuing. "The young sure is to be feared. Our time has already passed so you, young talents, are now starting to take over."

"It is a pity that I can't use 'that' power right now, or else we will be in deep trouble," he added in a meaningful tone while shaking his head.

Akailu was confused at first, but he later realized what the other party meant after a brief thinking. Shin had already warned them about the mysterious evil pill that the forces under the Seven Seas Group were using for their immoral experiments, so everyone in the Emphyrean Talons was wary of those pills.

Surprisingly, the first representative of the Seven Seas Alliance had never used it in the first battle despite being stuck in an ugly situation.

They did not know whether the opposing side was planning to hide it until the most crucial moment, or this batch of enemies was forbidden from using that hidden card in such a public event.

Regardless, Shin repeatedly warned everyone to be careful when fighting the members of the Seven Seas Alliance and suggested ending the match as soon as possible if the other party decided to use those pills.

Given the words that Vendetta had just casually mentioned, Akailu could tell that it was most likely the latter case. 'So, are they forbidden to use those pills in public, or is it because those pills are still in the research stage and unsuitable for their main combatants to use.'

While Akailu was somewhat lost in his thoughts, Vendetta suddenly adjusted his stance and got ready to continue the battle.

Seeing that, Akailu responded and casually waved his hand. The familiar summoning circles then appeared one after another before the three beast monsters were summoned to the battlefield once again.

Roar!

Grr!

Awoo!

The three beast pets then took their respective positions, guarding Akailu from three different directions once again.

Even after being stuck in such a difficult predicament, Akailu was still able to unsummon the three beast pets before the explosion could even occur.

He was fast enough to save the three just in time, but it also cost him his earlier injuries. Fortunately, his special constitution and the corresponding combat state perfectly matched one another and helped him offset most of the damage.

His 'Superior Rapid Healing' and 'Core Beast Heart' were strong enough to keep his life. The rapid regeneration and the destruction of his cells fiercely 'fought' during the explosion, resulting in his previous appearance.

Moreover, his previous Beast Form also possessed strong self-healing, which made him survive such a destructive explosion.

But in exchange for all of these, he had sacrificed quite a lot of mana, stamina, and concentration, which made his current situation a little trickier.

Even if he looked like having an absolute advantage, he still could not afford to lower his guard, especially when his current opponent was someone with a solid reputation.

He could tell that this was not the best of Vendetta's capabilities, especially when he had yet to see those powerful Spirit Avatars that made him well-known in the virtual world once again.

But as he was getting ready for another round, the other party suddenly raised his hand and said. "I concede!"

"Eh!?" Akailu was taken aback by those words and could not help but ask. "Why!? You should have more cards under your sleeves!"

Hearing those words, Vendetta chuckled. "Kid, as I said, you are still too green. Winning a round is not everything in competition. There is also the matter of gathering information and such."

"Strategizing is not just about winning a battle, but also about the war as a whole," he continued to chuckle as his body turned illusory, signifying that he was about to be sent out of the battlefield.

"I am supposedly losing this round anyway, so it is not a big deal. I am sure that our leader will not be that disappointed, especially when I have gathered enough data from you," he smiled mysteriously before disappearing completely.

Swoosh!

Before Akailu could even ask for more, Vendetta had already been transported out of the battle arena, leaving him alone.

Akailu was staring blankly in the air as he felt an uncomfortable feeling after hearing the last words of his opponent before leaving. It was giving an ominous feeling that seemed to be warning him about some disaster that was about to happen.

"Forget it. I'll just discuss it with the Vice Commander later," he said before turning his head to the sky, where huge letters were hanging in the air and telling the result of the match.

"Victory – Akailu!"

Swoosh!

Immediately after, he was also sent out of the battlefield along with his recently resummoned beast pets.

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In the meantime, the outside was currently in complete chaos as they could not believe that this supposedly intense battle would just end in such an anticlimactic manner.

This was supposed to be more brutal compared to the previous match, especially when both sides were widely known Peak Titled Rankers. The gap between their strength shouldn't be that big, so the battle was supposed to be very even and close.

But the two sides were barely able to showcase their real capabilities in this match despite the intense battle that occurred just now.

The real climax should be those final few exchanges that the two had, where they showcased their meticulous planning and cunning minds as well as their quiet responses in front of unexpected developments during the battle.

However, aside from that, the live audience and online viewers were still thirsty for real action.

This was inside most people's heads, which was somewhat different from those experts with sharp eyes and keen senses.

Even if there were only a few instances where the two combatants showcased their real capabilities, these experts could see much deeper than the rest of them.

Among them were David and Miss Bunny, who somewhat had an odd look on their faces.

The two exchanged glances with one another, seemingly communicating telepathically. – "Even if Akailu had won this round, it doesn't feel like he has won a lot." –

– "Between the two of them, he is the one who has revealed more of his strength, while the other side has only shown what is necessary not to lose." –

– "That final explosion may be a 'hidden' card. But compared to what Akailu's Perfect Demonification has showcased, the value of the two pieces of information is a little too noticeable from the perspective of those with enough experience." –

Chapter 1672: Group Round (Part 1)

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There was a ten-minute break between rounds to give the live audience and online viewers enough time to adjust their mood and prepare for the next round.

It was also to let the competing sides adjust their plans and approach to battle. The lineup could no longer be changed as the lists were already sent before the match could even start, but making some modifications to their original plans would still give the combatants of both sides to prepare for the most unexpected development during the battle.

This was what the Seven Seas Alliance needed as their original plan of 'giving up' the first two matches with one point each had 'failed'.

Seeing the Empyrean Talons had sent their 'less powerful' members for the first two matches and still won regardless, the Seven Seas Alliance understood that they were currently in deep trouble, especially when the opposing side now had more Godlike Players or Maverick Gods to dispatch on the next two rounds.

Losing two points was not important. It was the fact that they failed to 'waste' the 'strength' of their opponents in the previous two matches that put them in such a predicament.

"Unexpectedly, they have sent those two to be their first combatants, so I understand that you guys have been caught off guard."

"But I must say, I am very disappointed with your performances, especially you – Himura. You are only facing such a rookie, yet you have lost in such an ugly manner. I am starting to doubt if you are still worth nurturing."

"Am I only wasting my resources on you? Should I just invest in our rookies instead? At least they are still promising despite lacking in experience."

Everyone in the waiting lounge of the Seven Seas Alliance was currently keeping their heads low as the person projected by the huge virtual screen before them continued his sermon. None of them dared to talk back as they were aware of their current development.

After complaining about Himura, that person turned his attention to Vendetta and nodded. "An old veteran is still a veteran after all. Even if you have lost, you still manage to gather enough information about the combat state of that guy."

"I just saw the data, and it is quite intriguing. Such a piece of clue is worth researching for," he added before continuing with a solemn. "But I seem to have remembered that I forbid you to do anything that I don't permit on the battlefield, so why did you just concede right now?"

"I know that you have gotten your main objective already, but isn't continuing and winning that round is not impossible?"

He narrowed his eyes as he sharply said. "If I am not convinced by your reason, then don't blame me for not being polite."

Despite the pressure, Vendetta remained unfazed and looked at the screen with firm eyes. "President, I must remind you that my contract is different from these guys. I am only asked to do my task and complete the necessary instructions, but I can't be forced to do anything against my morals."

There was a silent staredown between the two for quite a while before that person started laughing. "Look at my memory! I must have forgotten about that. I see, I see! It seems like I am overreacting a little bit. I hope you understand."

Vendetta was about to nod his head when the other side continued. "But I must remind you as well about what I have."

"I only like you because of your competence and talent in training those youngsters in our camp. But don't push my patience and kindness a little too hard as I will get very-... very disappointed."

"If that happens, then you may lose that 'thing' completely and never see 'it' ever again," he continued before turning to the three people lined up in the corner of the room.

"I hope that you three will give me a good performance. I don't want to waste any more resources on useless projects."

He then swept his gaze at everyone within the room as he sharply continued. "All of you are supposed to have decent talent, so you better not show me a poor performance, or else I may as well disband this Club Project altogether and focus my investments on the more promising ones."

"I may not be lacking in terms of wealth, but I dislike wasting them on useless things."

Beep~!

After saying those words, he immediately ended the call, not caring about the feelings of the members of the team. In his eyes, this project was only meant to gather more information for their more important project.

So long as this 'team' had met all the conditions that he had set before building it, he did not care about anything as his secretary would deal with the rest.

But if they had lost their purpose, then he would not think twice to throw them away like a piece of useless junk.

Seeing that the mood within the room, the secretary of the president, who kept silent up until now, suddenly injected. "Don't put too much thought into it. All of you are familiar with our president's temper. He never like suffering a loss, much less facing a disappointment, so I hope you guys understand."

She paused for a moment before proceeding to re-discuss their plan for the next round. She looked at the Wild Brothers as she began to explain. "Our information remains accurate. Dragon God Siegfried remains missing up until now."

"We may have not access to looking at the lineup of the other side, but it is positive that Siegfried is not included in it."

She nodded her head as she continued. "We may have been caught off guard by the earlier changes, but the same can't happen for this round."

"A main tank remains to be the most important in team battle, especially in the highest level of competition. I refuse to believe that they will be sending Owen in this round when they only have a single experienced tank in their team at the moment."

"On the other hand, our side has more than enough tanks, so this is not a problem for our team. This is where our advantage lies, so I hope that the three of you utilize it to the fullest."

"Even if they send more than one Godlike Player from their ranks, you still have a decent chance of winning, especially when you are quite experienced in this area."

She stopped here for a moment as her gaze turned sharp. "I hope that you will bring victory for this round!"

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In the meantime, on the side of the Empyrean Talons, Shin and the others were currently gathered, but not having a serious meeting unlike those from the Seven Seas Alliance.

They were more relaxed not because they were underestimating their opponent. It was because of their confidence in their training – as a team and individual.

Even if they knew that the representatives of the opposing side for the next round were quite powerful and had a more solid reputation than veterans of Himura and Vendetta's level, they were confident that their lineup shouldn't lose against them.

The Wild Brothers might be powerful and quite well-known within the virtual world, even including their achievements in defeating multiple groups of powerful individuals in every game that they had participated in.

They were even famous for fighting multiple Godlike Players and won. However, those Godlike Players did not rank that high in the ranking lists issued by the Mystery Pavillion, much less getting involved in the 'official' and 'private' Godly Ranking List.

They even got pursued by the forces of a Powerhouse Guild from a certain game, escaping their formation unscratched and not losing a member during their escape.

What made them very famous was their battle formations that they honed both inside the game and in the real world. They were battle formations famous for combining their strength into one and fighting against the 'current'.

Due to their powerful battle formations, many thought that they were from a prestigious Martial Arts Family.

But even until today, no one was able to uncover their real background. It was until everyone learned that the Seven Seas Group had reached their arms into them and taken the brothers under their wings that the people came into a sudden 'realization'.

But regardless of the rumors, no one was able to prove those 'theories' and such, especially when the Wild Brothers and the Seven Seas Group had never revealed anything to the public.

Regardless of their strength, reputation, or background, the Empyrean Talons were completely unbothered.

Setting aside everything else, their representative for the next round could be considered as an overkill.

Leonard looked at the three people getting ready for the next round before shaking his head. "Are you sure about this, Shin Bro? I think this is a little overboard even until now."

Shin chuckled as he heard those words and refuted them. "Even if we want to change it now, it will be impossible. We have already submitted their names earlier at the lineup before the entire match starts. There is no backing down now."

Leonard turned his eyes back to those three for another time before shaking his head once again. "I know that we have been friends for a long time now, but I still can't bring myself to believe that I have such a devious brother."

Shin grinned as he heard that 'compliment'. "Isn't it more than enough to have a friend like me rather than being enemies?"

Leonard paused for a moment as he heard those words before started laughing. "You are right! I rather be your friend than an enemy."

At the same time, Cloe looked at the three people standing before her and seriously instructed. "I will not say anything more as you are experienced enough to handle such a battle. But I just want to say one thing-..."

"Ahem! Ahem!" she cleared her throat for a moment before continuing. "You can end the battle as soon as you can, but never show too much of your cards. Akailu was a little impulsive, so we understand him. But you guys are different, so I hope you guys will be mindful of your moves."

Owen smiled smugly as he tapped his chest with full confidence. "Don't worry, Commander. This is just a piece of cake. I have met those three multiple times from other games before, so am quite familiar with them."

Bang!

His head was then smacked by Ithilien's bow as she nagged. "And you almost lost your life against them as well!"

"I still survive in the end, right? That is what counts!" he refuted while rubbing the back of his head.

In the meantime, Alucard, who was the third representative for this round, shook his head. "You two can deal with the younger brothers and leave the big brother to me."

Cloe nodded as she agreed. "Just like what Shin has said, their battle formations are quite powerful and tricky to deal with when the three of them are together, but it will easily crumble once one of them leaves the formation or even get separated within a certain distance."

Not long after, the sound of the system notifying them about the start of the next match rang within the room, signifying that the three representatives were about to be sent to the battle arena.

– "Second Round: Group Competition (Three vs Three) – Empyrean Talons vs Seven Seas Alliance!" –

Chapter 1673: Group Battle (Part 2)

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For this round, the Seven Seas Alliance, or the Wild Brothers specifically, had chosen a river with shallow water but had a lot of rock formations in the surroundings.

The river was quite wide, dividing the two banks right beside the forest trees that were forming a natural wall that prevented any from crossing them.

This area was much smaller than the one that the previous round had, which was why the two sides were able to find each other almost instantly right after they were summoned by the system.

The representatives of the two teams were standing on each bank respectively, staring at each other.

"What!?"

"Such absurdness! Are those guys out of their minds!?"

"Sending their sole tank in Group Battle? Are they serious? Are they mocking us?"

The Wild Brothers could not help but stare blankly at the opposing team, especially after seeing Owen standing in front of Ithilien and Alucard.

They had already expected that the Emyrean Talons would send at least one of their top combatants for this group battle, so they were not surprised when they saw Alucard. But it never crossed their minds that the other side would be bold enough to send Owen as well.

Owen might still be a distance away from becoming a Godlike Player or Maverick God, but he was among the top when compared to the peak Titled Rankers and Maverick Rankers. He could even be a cut above those, rivaling some of the weaker gods of the game that were not in the ranking lists.

As for Ithilien, she was a true Peak Titled Ranker with abilities slightly inferior to Owen's. She was often overshadowed by him before, but this did not mean that she was weak. She could be ranked as one of the greatest Ranker Archers of the game given her skills.

Adding to the fact that these two were long-time partners, their coordination had already reached the perfect stage where they no longer needed to communicate with one another to understand what each other was thinking.

Among the well-known duos within the virtual world, these two were quite known to be one of the best.

They might not have that much fame as a Duo when it came to the public's eyes, but they were quite famous within the expert's circle.

The moment the experts watching the match saw these two, they could not help but become even more interested. "This is going to be quite entertaining. I wonder which side is better."

As they had similar thoughts in mind, they also could not help but turn their attention to Alucard, who seemed to be one of the most mysterious members of the Empyrean Talons.

This guy did not have any fame whatsoever before, but he became quite known after just a couple of battles along with the Empyrean Talons.

Aside from that, the people only had very limited information about him.

A lot of people began to speculate about his real identity. Even compared him with some quite well-known gods of different games, who suddenly disappeared from the game. But despite all the results that they had gotten, none of them were proven right.

However, there were also some 'old' gods, who had their respective thoughts, especially after comparing Alucard's fighting style to certain people. But they did not dare to confirm it yet, or more specifically, they were too scared to make that assumption as it was too unbelievable even for experts of their level.

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"I don't know what they are thinking, but our goal remains the same. We will still win this!" said Moyong Qi, the eldest among the three.

He had a variety of guns on him, signifying that his class was related to Gunslingers, an expert in firearms.

He had a pair of pistols holstered on each of his thighs, a desperado behind his waist, and belts of high caliber bullets around his body as he held a machine gun rifle and rested it on his shoulder.

His appearance was quite intimidating, especially when he was quite tall and bulky.

Moyong Gui, the second eldest of the three, was the tank of the group. His class was a special branch of the Knight Class that had some abilities of the Paladin Class.

He looked at Owen while saying. "We have met Owen a few times in the previous games, so we are quite familiar with his style. It shouldn't be a problem dealing with him."

Moyong Han, the youngest of the three, was a Battle Mage. It was a quite famous class among the players due to its versatile style that covered both range and close combat.

It was a rare class, but converting into this path was quite well known due to certain people disclosing the special method to unlock the class online.

It was in a similar case with the Paladin Class, a somewhat hybrid class of Knight and Cleric Classes, or the Monk Class, which was a combination of Fighter and Priest Classes.

In the case of the Battle Mages, they were a class that was formed after combining the Mage and Warrior Class. Based on its name, it possessed the strong firepower of mages along with the destructive strength of the warriors.

The team composition of the group was quite balanced given that they only had three members yet covered quite a lot of area.

Even if they did not have a healer in their team, the sustainability of their main tank was strong enough to keep his life in battle, especially when he had some healing spells under his arsenal.

The only problem that he had to think of was his mana pool since healing spells were quite demanding for him given that INT and WIS were not his main stats.

But that would not be much of a problem as well as the youngest could take care of it given the nature of his class. He could provide some mana for his second brother with his 'Mana Sharing' and 'Mana Generation' skills and spells.

"We can't underestimate Owen. He has grown quite a lot since the last time we met him," said the youngest seriously before adding. "Moreover, we have never succeeded in killing even once in any games that we have played. He has always survived every time we attempted to kill him."

"Now that you have put it that way, I am starting to have the urge to solely target him right now and forget about the competition," said Moyong Gui, the second eldest.

Moyong Qi, the eldest brother, shook his head as he said. "Don't forget our priority. You can deal with him later as well anyway, so just focus on our job and avoid risking our investment funds from disappearing."

The warning of their big boss was still vivid in their minds, so they could not afford to lower their guard and forget about anything else. After all, they could not afford to lose the investment of the Seven Seas Group at this point when they were too invested in the project.

They did not want to be lab rats like those weaklings back in the main base of the corporation and undergoing such torturous experiments.

As the three were discussing with each other, the representatives of the Empyrean Talons were also preparing their plans.

"It looks like they are taking a different approach this time," commented Owen after seeing the team composition of the opposing side.

They had already watched the battle videos of the Wild Brothers and quite understood their style and battle tactics. But those videos did not reveal everyone, especially when it came to special circumstances where the brothers did not have to show their real capabilities.

But at this moment, it seemed like the Wild Brothers were taking this match very seriously, especially when they had taken out most of their hidden weapons – just like how the eldest brother had brought all his guns for this match.

Alucard glanced at the guns that Moyong Qi had taken out before saying. "Nothing has changed. Just leave him to me and deal with the other two."

"No matter how many guns he brings in this match, his fatal flaw remains the same," he added as he took out his sniper rifle and rested it on his shoulders.

He gestured at the eldest brother of the trio from the other side, seemingly inviting the guy for a duel before walking away from Owen and Ithilien.

The two stared at his back for a couple of moments before shaking their heads and smiling bitterly. They had become familiar with this guy after playing with him for quite a while, yet they were still far from fully understanding him.

They exchanged glances with each other before shrugging their shoulders.

"Let's leave him be. He may look like that and sound a little rude, but he is competent and reliable when the situation calls for it," said Owen as he fixed his grip over his shield and took out his battle hammer from his back.

Seeing him walking toward the opposing trio, Ithilien also took her long bow and prepared for the battle. She knew that Owen had some grudge to settle with these three, so he was quite eager for the payback.

She knew that he would go all out without aside from those Divine Tattoos and the unique skills of his Ascended Class and Race.

Chapter 1674: Group Battle (Part 3)

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Seeing that Owen was walking toward them, the Wild Brothers quickly assumed their battle formation and got ready for the battle.

But before they could even adjust their positions to where they were supposed to be, Moyong Qi, the eldest of the three, suddenly noticed Alucard staring at them like a hunting beast stalking its prey.

A single look at this guy with a Vampire Race was more than enough for Moyong Qi to realize that he could not afford to leave the guy unchecked. He knew that they would be in trouble if he let Owen and Ithilien work together with Alucard.

After a quick calculation inside his head, he immediately came up with a conclusion. He had to face Alucard alone and keep the guy in check if they wanted to have a chance for this battle.

Ironically, he was supposed to be confident that they would win this battle if the three of them worked together like they usually did. But Alucard's presence in the field changed everything.

He was not sure what exactly was bothering him, but he could tell that he must keep Alucard in check to make sure that they would be able to avoid any accidents.

Thinking about this, he turned to his brothers and instructed. "You two keep Owen and the girl busy. I have to face Alucard first and confirm something."

The two looked at their big brother for a while before the second eldest asked. "Are you sure about this, Big Brother? That guy may not be that well-known as those top gods, but he is still a Maverick God that could be put on the same level as those highly ranked Godlike Players."

Hearing those words, Moyong Qi could not help but give the two a sneering glance before saying. "Do you think I don't know about it? I am not foolish enough to challenge someone on that level without a plan."

These words gave the two younger brothers an idea that their eldest brother was planning to reveal his real capabilities in this match, which he had been hiding for quite a while now.

"Are you sure about this? I am not sure that it will be worth it for this round," said the youngest with a frown.

"I agree with the youngest, Big Brother. I think you don't have to reveal all our cards right now. We know that this is an important battle for us, but I don't think it is the right time for that yet," said Moyong Gui, the second eldest, before quickly adding. "Look at Vendetta. He can show his real capabilities in the previous rounds, yet he has only shown what needed to be shown to everyone."

"Moreover, unlike the others, we have more paths that we can take even if the project got disbanded by the Big Boss. It is not like we will not have anywhere else to go once the club project fails," he added as he tried to convince his big brother.

Moyong Qi shook his head when he heard those words and refuted them. "Vendetta is different from us. No one knows how the corporation has 'convinced' him to join the club project, but we can tell from his earlier 'conversation' with the president that something is going on between him and the corporation."

"We may be in a different case since we have volunteered to join the team for the benefits that they have offered us. But the same can't be said once we lose our worth to them."

"We may be a worthy piece on the board right now, but it can change at any given time. They can throw us away once we lose that 'worth' they see from us."

He then paused as he went back to another topic that his second brother had mentioned. "You said that we have other places to go after this project failed, but have you ever thought there is still getting out of that place once you have entered it?"

Hearing that, the two younger brothers could not help but pause as they tried to digest his words. Then they later looked at Moyong Qi with wide eyes as they seemed to have realized something.

Moyong Qi shook his head repeatedly along with a bitter smile, lowering his voice. "We have already been involved in the organization for quite a while now and stumble upon some secrets within."

"What we know may not be that deep into their secrets yet, but it was enough to hold us in place and prevent anyone from leaving."

"There are only two outcomes for pieces that have lost their purpose. One is to be completely disregarded while the other is used for other 'purposes' just like those lab rats from the headquarters," as he said this, he lowered his voice and made sure to cover his mouth so that any camera angle would not be able to see the movements of his lips, preventing other people from reading them.

"The president that already warned us earlier when talking with Vendetta," he added as he clarified for his somewhat slow brothers. "He is warning us to act the same as Vendetta and see what will happen next."

"He may not have anything against us for now, but the same can't be said later once we have messed up their plans," he continued before turning ahead of them where Owen was already halfway through the swallow river and preparing for the battle.

"Just do your job and perform well. Even if we lose this round, I will make sure that nothing will happen to you later," he said as he started walking away from the two while locking his gaze on Alucard, who seemed to be patiently waiting for him.

Moyong Gui and Moyong Han looked at the back of their elder brother before sighing. They then turned their attention to Owen and Ithilien, who were already prepared to fight them.

"We will go with our usual tactics against a knight and a marksman," said Gui as he stepped forward, planning to face Owen head-on.

"And the main target?" Han asked.

"Neither!" responded Gui with a smirk.

Hearing that, Moyong Han could not help pausing for a moment as he knew what it meant. The expression on his face then became a little serious as he tried to confirm the words of his second brother. "Are you sure about it? It is going to be a little troublesome given our current composition."

Moyong Gui glanced at his youngest brother before saying. "Have you heard what Big Brother has said? Just perform like how we usually do, and he will deal with the rest."

The youngest went silent for a moment, fully understanding what it meant. "Then are we going all-out as well?"

"Need to ask for more?" asked Gui with a sneering expression on his face.

Getting confirmation from his second brother, he started cracking his neck as he twirled the weapon he was holding, which seemed to be a hybrid between a spear and a magic scepter.

"Then I guess I have to show what I am capable of," said Han as he suddenly waved the spear scepter and summoned a huge group of mana spears pointing forward.

With a casual wave of his hand, those spears swiftly flew forward, targeting Owen and Ithilien at the same time.

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

Seeing the incoming attack, Ithilien raised her longbow as she aimed forward along with the magic arrow nocked on the bowstring.

She infused her mana into the arrow as she pulled the string in a full arc, curving the bow perfectly before suddenly releasing it.

Whoosh!

The arrow flew at extreme speed, dragging a strong gust of wind along with it that turned into a spiral storm that spun rapidly as it flew over Owen's head.

Shriek!

Not long after, a huge bird made of wind element was formed, charging straight to the hail of mana spears while opening its beak wide.

Boom!

The cry of this wind creature created a storm that blocked the incoming attacks, obliterating them.

The Moyong Brothers were already expecting this to happen, which was why they were already preparing for the next move before that bird made of wind element destroyed all the mana spears.

Boom!

But before they could even complete their preparations, the bed of the swallow river shook a little, making them somewhat lose their footing.

While they were trying to regain their footing, a flash of light suddenly flickered ahead of them, forcing the two to raise their heads.

When they raised their heads, they saw a huge golden figure standing in the middle of the storm, holding a shield and a hammer in each hand.

Not waiting for that golden figure to make its move first, Moyong Gui quickly picked up his shield and used one of his transformation skills, turning himself into a half-giant warrior rivaling the opposing party's height and body structure.

Roar!

Not long after, the two figures clashed against one another, seemingly resembling a collision between real titans.

Boom!

Chapter 1675: Group Battle (Part 4)

...

Boom!

Right after the first collision, the two giants quickly clashed a few more times, producing a series of shockwaves in every exchange.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

The two showcased the powerful strength of their respective form along with their decent mobility despite having such a huge size. They were able to perform quite a few complicated maneuvers despite having a heavy body and execute some of their most difficult combat techniques and skills on top of everything.

The start of the battle immediately ignited the passion of everyone watching the battle.

Right after seeing their intense clashes, the people watching in the live audience and the online viewers quickly went crazy, shouting in the live stand and flooding the live chat with different reactions.

At the same time, while Owen and Moyong Gui were fighting, Ithilien and Moyong Han were also doing their respective jobs. They were either assisting their respective frontline or sending some attacks to one another.

Bang! Bang!

Right after Owen was forced to take a couple of steps back, Moyong Han suddenly appeared on his second brother's shoulders while holding a huge spear that he had conjured with his Mana.

Holding it tightly, Han took a step forward while assuming a stance used to throw a javelin. He did not wait that long to achieve a perfect aim against the opposing party.

Then the Mana surrounding the spear blazed violently, dancing along the air along with its scorching energy flow.

Swoosh!

A moment later, he threw the spear forward, sending it straight to Owen's head, which was currently exposed due to his guard being blasted open by the earlier exchange.

Swoosh!

Tap!

But while it was still traversing the air, Ithilien suddenly stepped on Owen's shoulder to propel herself to a higher altitude and gain a better vantage point.

Nocking a mana arrow into her longbow, she pulled at full arc while aiming downwards.

Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh!

A group of green-colored Magic Circles appeared behind her as the wind elemental mana from the surroundings was pulled toward them.

Pointed tips then emerged from the center of those magic circles, resembling the tips of huge arrows used to load war ballistas for siege battles.

These arrows contained the dense powers of the wind element from the surroundings, which then spun rapidly and made them look like small tornados as she took her aim.

Twang!

Right after she released the nocked arrow from her longbow, the huge arrows sticking out from the magic circles were also released from their 'restraints' and flew downwards.

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

This hail of arrows poured down from the sky as they descended toward the incoming spear made of mana flame as well as the pair of brothers a couple of distance behind it.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

The mana spear had the stronger force behind it, but the hail of wind arrows had a larger number, which was why it gradually lost its momentum when it crashed at it multiple times.

It did not take that long before the mana spear gradually dissipated in the air while the rest of the wind arrows poured down to the Moyong Brothers.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

Moyong Gui raised his shield to protect himself and his younger brother from the hail of wind arrows. The youngest of the three, on the other hand, was busy casting a couple more spells to get ready for another attack.

But before they could do anything more, Owen suddenly stepped forward, producing a brief earthquake that spread in every direction.

Bang!

Swoosh!

At the same time, he suddenly appeared behind Moyong Gui, who was still in a defensive position against the hail of arrows.

"Tsk!" Gui clicked his tongue as he saw the incoming attack from Owen. The battle hammer was already about to approach him when he gritted his teeth and shifted the angle of his shield to block the incoming hammer strike instead of the remaining wind arrows.

Lowering his center gravity, he squatted his hips and strengthened his legs as he braced himself for the incoming impact.

Boom!

Right after the hammer hit his shield, he was sent skidding back, indirectly saving him from the remaining hail of wind arrows.

But that was not the end as Owen quickly sprinted and resumed his attacks with a relentless advance and stronger momentum.

He was banging his battle hammer and shield against the opposing party with all his strength, seemingly trying to force the latter out of his transformation skill.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

But as he was doing that, Han suddenly appeared before the face of the golden giant while holding his battle spear.

Moyong Han twirled his spear left and right, summoning a huge apparition of a giant spirit with a similar-looking spear in its hands.

He then started swinging the spear, forcing the golden giant and Owen, who was situated within its chest, to protect themselves.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

Owen skillfully maneuvered his body, raising his shield and swinging his battle hammer to exchange blows against Han, who just unleashed a series of powerful strikes.

The exchanges might be brief, but they were strong and intense enough to produce loud sounds for every collision. Aside from showcasing Owen's quick response, this exchange also showed how powerful Han was as he had stopped such a giant with his small body.

Even if he had relied on the Spiritual Apparition behind him for the exchanges, it still proved that his skill was strong enough to withstand the burst of powerful beings much larger and stronger than him despite the form.

The brief exchange gave Moyong Gui enough time to regain his footing and prepare for another exchange.

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

But before he could even resume attacking Owen and coordinating with his younger brother, Ithilien had already prepared her next series of attacks. She instantly fired at Gui without pause, sending powerful arrows that could threaten to injure him in his current form.

Raising his brows, Gui suddenly changed his plan and faced the arrows coming from a different angle with his shield while planning to charge straight at Ithilien with one burst of his explosive charge.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

He was about to charge toward her direction right after blocking the powerful arrows. But just as he sent himself propelling forward with a powerful stride, Owen, in his still golden giant form, suddenly appeared before him and blocked his path once again.

Moyong Gui almost cursed as he was forced to halt his advance for another. He had to face Owen once again and resumed their earlier battle.

But he was not that disappointed as Moyong Han took this opportunity to bypass Owen and charged at Ithilien instead.

Swoosh!

This was a group battle, so the one with the better coordination and understanding of their partner would surely have the advantage.

The Wild Brothers were known for their team coordination, so they were the strongest when the three of them were working together. But that did not mean that their individual strength and skills were not up to par.

The team coordination of any of the three as a pair was not that much inferior to when the three of them were together. They were just always working together, which was why no other people thought that their duo skills were on the inferior side.

But the truth was they remained a strong contender for this category when the situation called for it.

Seeing that Moyong Han was charging toward her aggressively, Ithilien suddenly shifted her aim. The expression on her face told everyone that she was planning to face this guy alone.

A Battle Mage was a unique class with a lot of tricks under their sleeves, so facing them was quite a problem even for those with strong kiting skills. After all, this class both had advantages when it came to melee and range battles.

They had buffs to boost their speed and strength that could help them in shifting between their combat forms meant for melee and range battles.

Han left a series of afterimages as he changed straight to Ithilien after boosting his speed with buffs. He did not take that long to shorten the gap between them.

But as he was about to further approach her, the expression on his face suddenly turned serious as his mana sense was able to perceive the huge number of traps laid on the riverbed, hiding underneath the shallow water.

He was forced to pause momentarily, giving Ithilien the time to aim at him.

Twang!

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

A volley of arrows was quickly fired in his direction, forcing him to retreat a little, especially after seeing the meticulous arrangement of the attack that covered all his possible retreat routes.

He knew that he would be trapped in that place, so he was forced to charge through the traps and reach her.

Temporarily giving up the idea of catching her, he swiftly turned and faced Owen's back, planning to change his target.

As he dodged the arrows pouring at him, he conjured yet another destructive spell that could threaten Owen.

Naturally, Ithilien knew what the opponent was thinking, so she increased the pace of her attack to interrupt them. At the same time, she poured a couple more of mana into her attacks, further increasing their destructive power to force Han to face them rather than dodge them.

After all, these attacks could not only destroy the surrounding areas but could also threaten him enough to abandon his initial plan.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

These four continued to exchange moves and strategies, basic or complicated, further igniting the passion of all the players watching the match.

But little did they know that this was just the start, as the other two protagonists of this match were still waiting to make their moves.

Chapter 1676: Alucard, the Vampire Slayer

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Boom!

Bang! Bang! Bang!

As the battle in the special arena was already in its heated state, Moyong Qi stood across Alucard, who seemed to be quite nonchalant about the ongoing battle. He observed the latter closely, seemingly trying to uncover the secrets that this mysterious vampire marksman was hiding.

Unfortunately, he would not be able to uncover anything with just his gaze. The same could be said even if he possessed a pair of special eyes that could see through things as the veil enveloping Alucard was too thick to be lifted.

"Everyone is too curious about your real identity," he started as he watched the latter closely before continuing. "A lot have said that you are someone from the military forces of a powerful nation – a highly trained soldier meant for special task forces. Trained from a very young age to become the perfect soldier."

"Unfortunately, the techniques that you are using are all widely used in any military forces around the world. It was the most basic technique, yet also hard to be perfected."

"There are a few guesses that you are from a prestigious military family, who have inherited some teachings from a strong veteran, who have retired from their position."

"Unlike most of the forces around the world, the military is the only force that puts a lot of importance on their fundamentals. After all, they have the say that 'the more sweat they make in their training, the less blood they shed in battle.'"

He then paused for a moment as his eyes suddenly turned sharp. "Based on these clues, there were only a very limited number of people, who have become famous with military techniques within the virtual world."

"Most of them have already stepped away from the gaming circle and focus on their lives in the real world. They either joined the military forces of their countries or went to missions and never returned."

"As for the remaining ones who are quite known by everyone, there are very few of them, so it should be quite easy to guess your background. After all, the information network of those huge organizations is not something that can be ignored."

"Even if it is impossible to uncover your real identity, trying to understand your military background shouldn't be hard."

"But due to your techniques being a little too common, pinpointing your true background has become very hard."

He took another pause as he stared intently at Alucard, who still not showing any signs of taking action, before continuing. "But this in itself is also quite a clue."

"Among the famous young people within the gaming community, there is a pair of people, who are in a quite similar chase. One of them is famous for all kinds of firearms and has a decent mastery over them while the other is an expert of sword and rapier and highly proficient at using the Silent Sword."

"They may have different styles, but the root of their core techniques is quite the same – the Gun-Fu and the Silent Steps. Both are quite famous within the military circle, particularly those highly trained cadets."

"That pair is called the Gun and Sword Kings of a particular game called «Guns and Swords» Online. They are quite the brightest stars of that game and unable to be outshone by anyone. Even KHING, who is crowned to be the King of Virtual Games, finds it troublesome to fight either of them."

"But one day, the two have suddenly disappeared from the virtual world, particularly at professional competitions, without a word."

"They are supposed to have a showdown before it happens, but there is no news of them since then."

"There are a lot of people, who want to challenge them and prove that they are not inferior to either of those so-called kings, especially in that particular game. Unfortunately, there has never been a chance as those two never appeared again."

As he was saying those words, Moyong Qi could not help but look at his assault rifle as a hint of regret flashed in his eyes. He seemed to reminisce the past for a moment before turning back at Alucard once again.

"But things suddenly changed after that particular 'Shadow Ranking Cup', where those two appeared once again and fought one another."

His eyes turned even fiercer as he continued. "Other people may be able to believe that they are indeed the said missing gods, but those who have fought against those two can easily tell that neither of those two is real."

"They are nothing but a pair of impostors, who are trying to build up a hype or something," he then started raising his rifle and pointed it toward the other party as he added. "But what is even funnier is that there is someone who somehow possesses those techniques meant for those two."

"If it is just the signature style and core technique of either of those, then it is still fine. But somehow, for some reason, this person seems to have perfectly wielded all their techniques and combined them into one perfect style."

"Quite intriguing, isn't it?" he grinned as he asked. "Now, as an old rival of those two, who is very familiar with them, I like to ask you – Just who the hell are you and how are you related to those 'kings!'"

"You can't be either of them as you are too young compared to their age," he added, seemingly confident with his assessment. "I have been very curious about your real identity and connection with them for quite a while now, so I want to confirm it myself."

It was only at this moment when he stopped talking, seemingly waiting for Alucard to respond. Unfortunately, he seemed to be completely ignored by the latter, throwing him into a very awkward situation.

Moreover, Alucard continued to keep his silence as if he had never heard anything from the other party. He looked like he was purposely doing this to humiliate Moyong Qi.

But before the opposing party could even explode in anger, Alucard finally stopped leaning on the tree behind him and started talking. "I have no idea of what you are trying to say, so I'm afraid that I don't know how to respond to it."

He insisted on denying such accusations before adding. "But if I do have some connection with those so-called kings whatsoever, I don't think that I have the obligation to respond to your words either."

He then gestured to the latter as he said. "And if you don't have any plans on fighting, then you better surrender or commit suicide so that we can end this match. I don't have the hobby of wasting my time on useless chatter."

Snap!

The veins on Moyong Qi's temple suddenly popped out as he tried his best to suppress his anger. He glared at Alucard as he suddenly aimed the muzzle of his assault rifle forward. "It does not matter! All I have to do is confirm it myself!"

Brrrt!

Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang!

A series of gunfire could be heard as he pressed the trigger of his rifle, firing at Alucard without any hesitation.

A rain of bullets swiftly flew toward Alucard, threatening him.

But despite that being the case, Alucard remained calm as he looked ahead of him. His crimson pupils contracted a little as he watched every move of his opponent as well as the paths of the incoming bullets.

From his perspective, the world seemed to have been dyed red as he heightened his senses, particularly his eyesight. At the same time, his perception of time seemed to have slowed down, making the surroundings move in a very slow manner.

During this time, he suddenly pulled out the pair of magic pistols holstered on each of his waists and aimed forward.

His pupils constantly moved, reading the trajectory of the incoming rain of bullets, before starting to fire his guns without a pause.

Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang!

His actions were so fast that those who had seen the scene were unable to perceive his movements completely.

All they saw were a series of flickering blurs before a series of metallic sounds of colliding bullets rang in the air.

Clang! Clang! Clang! Clang!

Alucard was unable to block all the bullets due to the difference in firing rate. No matter how fast he pulled the triggers of his magic pistols and fired his shots, they were incomparable to the rapid firing rate of an assault rifle.

But he did not have to match the number of those bullets as he only had to hit those that had a high chance of hitting him.

Then, with a little trick used in firearm techniques, he twisted the rotation of the bullets right after he had fired, making them ricochet in different directions right after colliding with the opposing bullets.

Clang! Clang! Clang! Clang!

This then produced a chain reaction, causing the bullets to 'riot' and collide against one another, changing their trajectory completely.

During the entire process, not a single bullet managed to touch Alucard.

He twirled, spun, and played with his magic pistols briefly before holstering them back. He was acting as if what he had done was not a big deal.

On the other hand, Moyong Qi, who had seen everything from a closer distance, could not help but wear a solemn expression on his face. This 'simple' exchange was more than enough to tell him that the person before him was not someone he could afford to underestimate.

Chapter 1677: Alucard, the Vampire Slayer (Part 2)

...

Alucard was supposed to be a Dhampir, a half-human and half-vampire race. He had acquired this race through a series of special quests that rewarded him the blood of a noble vampire, which could turn him into such a race.

As for his class after the race conversion, it was called a Vampire Hunter. It was a special profession that originated from a famed tale.

But after he had accepted the inheritance of Dracula as well as the Vampire Primogenitor's Blessings, his race began to change. His Vampire's Blood became thicker and more potent, influencing his current race at that time.

He then became a special type of Dhampir, which possessed the abilities of a True Vampire Noble while being immune to the power of the Sun, specifically the sunlight, which could greatly weaken them.

As he had the Blessings of Dracula, the Vampire Primogenitor, his vampire abilities went beyond the understanding of common players.

He became a special existence within the game. In a sense, his current race was slightly beyond the category of Ascended Races and on the same scale as the Transcendent Races.

However, in exchange for this, he did not have a specific class with special features. He could only retain his original class along with the skill set under it but with slightly enhanced features.

Since it was from the Vampire Hunter Class and majored in both guns and swords, Alucard called it the Vampire Slayer.

He had the adaptability of a human when it came to handling a variety of weapons and the special abilities of a noble vampire, particularly when it came to Blood Arts. He found it a very fitting class and race for his current style.

On the other hand, Moyong Qi, his current opponent, was someone who solely majored in different kinds of firearms and mastered quite several gunfighting techniques. He was a 'Conqueror', which was an Ascended Human that had evolved through the orthodox class of Gunslinger.

His class was called the Gun Master, a Tier 3 Gunslinger Class, which majored in multiple types of guns. They always carried a variety of firearms in them, which could help them in different situations.

His style was somewhat different from Alucard, who could do well in both melee or range battles just like those hybrid and special classes such as Battle Mages. But he was a specialist when it came to gunfighting techniques, which was not only his strong point but also the area where only a limited number of people could rival him.

Now that there was someone with such a skill standing before him, Moyong Qi refused to let such an opportunity slip away from his grasp.

"Then, let's see what you've got!" he said with ignited fighting spirit.

He then raised his assault rifle and aimed forward, firing a series of shots without a pause. He had also planted his feet firmly on the ground to make sure that he would be able to withstand the string recoil of his gun while sending a rain of bullets to Alucard.

Brrt!

A series of gunshots rang in the air, repeating the earlier exchange. But this time, Moyong Qi executed some complicated gun techniques to create some tricky trajectories for the bullets he had fired to confuse the opposing party.

But Alucard was still able to respond accordingly, firing his magic pistols and repeating the earlier event where the bullets ricocheted and collided against one another.

But instead of staying still on his spot, he suddenly moved while continuously firing his gun. Unlike his pair of pistols, which could give him more mobility while moving and firing at the same time due to their lighter weight, Moyong Qi's assault rifle was much harder to carry, especially with the powerful recoil that it had.

Continuous firing required Moyong Qi to stay in place due to the consecutive recoils every time he fired his assault rifle. It might not be as strong as any type of machine gun. But due to the reinforced magic cast in every bullet that left its barrel, the recoil that they produced far exceeded those of regular guns.

Moreover, he added some complicated gun techniques when firing, making it harder to move with such a gun.

Alucard understood this, so he was planning to take advantage of the obvious flaw of his opponent to suppress them.

Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang!

Naturally, Moyong Qi was also aware of his shortcomings as well as the weakness of his style, so he would not let himself be a sitting duck that could be shot without effort. He had developed a combat technique meant for such situations, covering his weaknesses entirely.

As Alucard was moving in circles while firing at him, Moyong Qi pivoted with both of his feet while continuously firing with his assault rifle. His feet were firmly planted on the ground, so they created a deep mark on it as he rotated his body like a spinning toy of a jewelry box.

His body remained firm as he constantly marked Alucard and continuously fired at the latter.

Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang!

Clang! Clang! Clang! Clang!

The bullets repeatedly collided midair and ricocheted in different directions, creating a stunning scene for everyone.

Given the flashes of light and bright sparks that were being created every time the bullets clashed midair, the people watching the scene could not help but feel amazed. After all, what these two were doing was not an easy feat.

Just marking the moving opponent and firing at them with such a high accuracy was something that most of the players could not achieve.

Hitting those bullets with their own, on the other hand, was also on a whole different level, especially when they had to constantly move to make sure to avoid the other 'stray' bullets.

But what these average players did not notice was something that made even most of the apex experts tremble.

"Doesn't that circle look like the famous 'Death Shooting Gallery' of the Gun King?"

"He may be using it in a 'semicircle' of that formation, but it is indeed that Shooting Technique!"

"Is he related to the Gun King?"

"But I also heard that he also has some techniques of the Sword King. His mastery over 'Silent Steps' and 'Sleepwalk' is said to be quite high as well."

"Not only that, but his rapier techniques also greatly resembled the techniques of the Sword King."

...

As those experts were discussing with their friends, Moyong Qi, who was on the receiving end of the firing technique, was also able to realize what he was currently experiencing.

But instead of panicking, the grin on his face grew even larger as he finally stopped insisting on using his assault rifle to match his opponent. He took that rifle away and took out a gatling gun in exchange.

He waved his other hand, throwing some spheres on the ground, which then summoned a spherical barrier that blocked the rain of bullets coming at him while he was fixing his stance.

He held the gatling gun with both his hands, fixing the position of his arms, and tightening his muscles.

Right after adjusting his stance and strengthening his center of gravity, he immediately pressed the trigger, making the barrels of his gun rotate before starting to fire a storm of heavy bullets.

Du! Du! Du! Du! Du! Du! Du!

He also drew an arc in the air along with his gatling gun while trying to catch Alucard, who was still trying to match him with his 'Death Shooting Gallery'.

Unfortunately, the firepower of the opposing side was much stronger than his, so he was forced to stop firing with his pistols and focus more on dodging the hail of bullets.

But as more time passed, he realized that the space he could use to maneuver his body started to shrink, as Moyong Qi had also used his gunfighting techniques to limit his opponent's choices when dodging.

Gunfighting Techniques were meant to hit your target and apply some trick shots to confuse or catch your opponents off guard. They were also meant to restrict the movements of the opposing side through rapid firing or fire suppression.

Seeing that he would be at a disadvantage even if he tried to fire back with his magic pistols, Alucard knew that he would not be able to escape this predicament with regular means. After all, his pistols

were inferior to a gatling gun in terms of firepower, so he would lose in such a confrontation if he tried to rely on his previous techniques.

Left 'without' a choice, Alucard quickly holstered back his magic pistols before swiftly pulling out the rapier sheathed right behind his waist.

Then a dark aura of crimson color shrouded his body, seemingly enhancing his physique. His arms seemed to have flickered for a moment as swung the rapier at the incoming rain of bullets.

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

Flashes of light appeared around him, cutting through the bullets and leaving only their fragment that barely missed his body.

A moment later, his entire figure turned into a blur, which suddenly charged forward and headed straight to Moyong Qi.

The expression of Moyong Qi's face changed a little when he suddenly saw the shadow that was rapidly moving toward his direction. Based on the speed alone, he knew that he would be in deep trouble once it reached him.

He might have been rivals with the Gun and Sword Kings of that said game, but he had never faced anyone who possessed both of their techniques and fighting styles.

Chapter 1678: Alucard, the Vampire Slayer (Part 3)

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Seeing that Alucard was charging at him with such an insane speed, Moyong Qi understood that it was impossible to lock in his aim, especially when such a heavy gun also had a very strong recoil.

What he needed for this kind of situation was something that could attack even the surrounding, carrying a destructive power with a huge range.

He did not even hesitate to keep the gatling gun away while pulling the huge gun hanging on his back – or more specifically, the cannon that he had prepared earlier.

As a Gun Master, he had to be prepared for all kinds of scenarios, so he had a variety of guns meant to deal with different kinds of situations.

He then quickly took position, kneeling on a knee while putting the cannon over his shoulder and aiming forward.

It only took him a second to lock on the target as what he wanted to attack was not Alucard, who was sprinting straight to him, but the spot that he was about to approach to reach him.

Boom!

The recoil that the cannon produced was so strong that it forced him to slide back right after firing it. It also produced a thunderous sound that reverberated in the entire place, almost turning those who had heard it deaf.

Whoosh!

Boom!

The explosion that it produced also shook the entire river, sending the water and dirt into the air, creating a curtain that somewhat blocked his line of sight.

He had never lowered his guard as he knew that even if he had timed his attack well, it was not enough to stop someone of such a high caliber that easily.

Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang!

As he was sharply staring at the curtain made of dirt, mud, and water before him, a series of gunshots could be heard from the other side.

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

The magic bullets drilled a hole in the curtain as they made their way toward Moyong Qi, who was still keeping his previous position.

Moyong Qi quickly responded as he kicked the ground to slide in a different direction to dodge the bullets while keeping his aim forward. He relied on his sharp hearing to pinpoint the location of his opponent behind the curtain of dirt and water.

Bang!

He did not hesitate to pull the trigger, firing another shot even if his line of sight was being obstructed.

Swoosh!

The grenade missile of his cannon flew straight to the center of the veil, seemingly aware of where his opponent was.

Shing!

But before it could even reach its destination, a flash of light suddenly cut through the veil as well as the grenade missile, making it explode on two sides.

Swoosh!

Alucard then appeared, right in the middle of those two explosions, shrouded with a bloody aura. There seemed to be a pair of imaginary wings behind him from Moyong Qi's perspective.

Then Alucard turned into a demonic blur, which disappeared from his sight and suddenly reappeared before him within an instant.

Swoosh!

The expression on Moyong Qi's face suddenly contorted when he saw the pale grey face of his opponent right before him before swiftly going for a retreat.

He also used the huge barrel of his cannon as a 'shield' that blocked the incoming strike of his opponent which was coming from his blind spot.

Clang!

Sparks flew in the air as their weapons clashed against one another.

Clang! Clang! Clang!

It did not stop with that single collision as Alucard pressed forward and continued with his momentum.

His rapier flashed multiple times as he swung and stabbed it forward while his opponent repeatedly blocked his every advance with his huge cannon.

Alucard was showcasing such skilled swordsmanship, especially when combined with his footwork, which did not produce any sounds. He was like a ghost that kept on attacking from different angles with his signature 'Silent Steps'.

At the same time, he was mixing his rapier attacks along with a magic pistol with his other hand, making it hard to predict his attack patterns due to their complexity.

He was even using a unique combat technique that utilized both his rapier and gun. But he had never shown his Blood Arts yet as he found it too early to use.

Clang! Clang! Clang!

But despite his rapid attacks and intense pressure, Moyong Qi kept his calm and steadily defended himself. He was flipping and twirling his huge cannon to block each attack of his opponent while also meticulously paying attention to his position.

He was constantly hiding himself behind the huge cannon as he skillfully placed it between him and his opponent.

He was also showcasing his skillful footwork during the battle. It might not be as fancy as the others and quite unnoticeable at first glance, which was somewhat similar to 'Sleepwalk' and 'Silent Steps', but they were effective and focused more on efficiency.

The two showcased their skills with the most basic combat techniques with a few advanced ones in the mix. But they had never shown their real capabilities yet as they were still trying to gauge the real strength of the other party.

But as the battle progressed, their moves started to get more complicated while their exchange was starting to become even more intense.

What was even more surprising was the scale of their battle. It was starting to get larger as time went by, almost affecting the ongoing battle between their teammates.

The supposedly isolated battle between them became involved with the rest of the combatants within the battle. Their main reason for facing each other was not to affect the battle between the others, but it seemed like it still ended up like that.

Taking advantage of the situation Alucard and Moyong Qi started providing some fire support to assist and cover their teammates.

Moyong Qi had the advantage with firepower due to the high caliber of his guns, particularly that giant cannon. He kept on swapping between different guns as he fought against Alucard while also providing some support to his younger brothers.

He was showcasing his signature style, which had a similar concept to Shin's ever-changing swordsmanship, but with guns instead.

His style was quite flashy, but it was not fancy enough to match what Alucard was showcasing.

Alucard was also switching styles, but his choices were only between his rapier and guns. Moreover, his guns were only limited to a pair of magic pistols, a sniper rifle, and a specialized gun that looked like a shotgun with a slightly longer range.

But the method of how he dealt with the weakness of his style and the limit of his choices was something absurd.

He took out the other two guns from his inventory bag and kept tossing them in the air while switching between either the two or his rapier.

His rate of firing was quite limited compared to Moyong Qi, but he always found the time to switch his guns by forcing his opponent to retreat. He was also timing his long-range attack with what the latter was doing, also choosing to provide support to Owen and Ithilien whenever Moyong Qi was helping his brothers.

His fancy way of doing all of these not only piqued the interest of the others but also shocked those who could understand the difficulty of what he was doing.

In the eyes of ordinary spectators, he looked like performing on the stage rather than fighting in the area. Especially whenever he was tossing his guns in the air to switch with his rapier to attack Moyong Qi or to sheath that rapier to catch the guns to switch with them.

But for the experts who could see finer details compared to the rest, Alucard was showcasing the difference between him and his current opponent.

Not only he was telling everyone that he was way better than Moyong Qi, but he was also showing everyone how huge the gap between them was.

It looked like he was having leisure time while suppressing Moyong Qi, but the latter was having an internal struggle as he felt immense pressure from Alucard.

Not only did he realize the huge gap between them, but he was also overwhelmed by it even if he only had caught its glimpse.

He was quite stubborn and did not want to admit his weakness, but the stakes of this battle, particularly their performance, were something he could not afford to take responsibility for.

If they want to still have the chance to win this battle, then he had to throw away his pride and accept 'defeat'.

Then he had to team up with his younger brothers and do what they were good at. Everything else would follow immediately after.

Little did he know that the Empyrean Talons had partially achieved their goal when his thoughts started leaning toward this direction.

He might be aware of it, but he would have some psychological problems whenever he would be facing Alucard. The pressure that the latter had unknowingly imprinted in his mind would always surface whenever he was fighting on the same stage as Alucard.

This was one of Shin's plots. He wanted to crush the morale of the Wild Brothers by targeting their main pillar.

He had already investigated the background of the group right after learning that their opponents would be the Seven Seas Alliance.

He might have skimmed through most of it, but he had remembered some of the key points that he had to take note of.

He was already planning way ahead of their opponents when he used the arrangement of their representatives for the battle. He was not only planning to win this match against the Seven Seas Alliance, but he was also putting psychological pressure on the opposing side by winning in such an overwhelming manner.

It started with a rookie winning against a veteran player within the professional scene, and it continued with crushing the Wild Brothers in something they were confident in doing.

Moyong Qi's background with the Gun and Sword Kings was just a bonus that he had never thought of, but it still unknowingly helped them.

That scar that Moyong Qi would get after their loss in this round would be much larger than Shin had expected as he had no idea about it.

All Shin knew was that Alucard was confident in the plan and even volunteered to implement it. He knew that the latter had plans of his own, but he trusted this comrade nonetheless.

Alucard understood the rivals of the previous Gun and Sword Kings of that said game, so he knew how to deal with them. He did not mention it to Shin when they were discussing the plans, but the latter should have a rough idea of what was about to come, especially after seeing the expression that Alucard was making during that time.

The moment when Alucard noticed the change in the eyes of his opponent, he knew that it was finally time to show his hand. "I don't usually come up with such a devious plan, but I have 'unfortunately' fallen under the leadership of such a devil on our side."

Chapter 1679: The Mastermind (Part 1)

...

Alucard purposely let Moyong Qi regroup with his brothers not because he could not stop the latter from doing it. But it was because of the plan that he had created after listening to Shin's ideas for this entire match with the Seven Seas Alliance.

Given that he did not have to worry about the next round since they were planning to send all their trump cards in that Team Battle, he also did not have to worry much about how he would deal with his side.

He was still planning to hide his abilities, particularly the ones that came from his unique race just like the Blood Arts that majored in blood energy manipulation, which also became his current signature mana manipulation method.

But that did not mean he could not use the other combat techniques and strategies under his arsenal, which were also quite known to everyone – the techniques that the Gun King and Sword King used to wield in the game that made them famous.

He had already shown quite a few in earlier exchanges, but he was now planning to utilize most of them to the fullest while coordinating with Owen and Ithilien.

He was planning to crush their opponent in something that they were proud of, destroying their confidence completely.

Even if these guys would be able to recover from it somehow in the future, the psychological wound that Alucard was planning to inflict on them would be deep enough to affect their performance for the match scheduled the day after tomorrow.

Swoosh! Swoosh!

Seeing the signal from Alucard, Owen and Ithilien quickly adjusted their formations so that they could work more efficiently with him.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

Boom!

An intense battle quickly broke out the moment the two top combatants got involved in the group battle.

The Wild Brothers also showcased their true bread and butter, showcasing their perfect coordination and a variety of combat tactics.

Their battle formations were also quite solid, covering all the possible weaknesses that their opponents could take advantage of.

Now that Moyong Qi was providing enough fire support from the rear, Moyong Han, who was the youngest of the three, had finally gained a lot of freedom to do anything he wanted. Given the hybrid style of his class, he started showcasing the true capabilities that he could pull off.

Unfortunately, he was also constantly being matched with Alucard due to the similarities of their styles. He always found himself trapped in a predicament where he had to constantly deal with this monster that even his big brother could not defeat.

His movements became more restricted in return, making his performance somewhat lackluster.

The good news was his situation not being that bad. After all, with Moyong Qi covering all his mistakes, he was still able to pick himself up and continue what he was doing best.

Little did he know that this situation was putting a lot of pressure on his big brother, who was keeping up with the insane pace of their opponent.

Alucard and Owen alone were already hard to deal with, so he was having more trouble when Ithilien was added to the mix, especially when she had a perfect synergy with Owen.

Moyong Gui was the one who had noticed this, so he wanted to pick him his pace and become more aggressive so that he could lift some pressure off from his eldest brother's shoulders.

But Alucard was also constantly disrupting his flow whenever he was trying to do this. It was as if this guy had an extra pair of eyes that was constantly monitoring the entire battlefield even if he was constantly marking Moyong Qi and Moyong Han.

In a sense, these brothers felt that Alucard was dealing with all three of them at once just by the pressure that he was giving them during the battle.

Of course, what Owen and Ithilien were doing was something that could not be ignored either. But they were somewhat hidden behind the shadow that Alucard had and even voluntarily stepped back into it.

It was as if they were letting Alucard take on the stage, leaving him to showcase his battle prowess and further prove the huge gap between him and Moyong Qi.

...

There were only a very few people who could understand the true state of the battle despite it being a deadlock on the surface.

One of them was David, who was one of the true apex players of the game.

The spectators could only see the flashy moves and stunning performance of every combatant in the battle area as well as their flawless coordination.

But they were unable to see deeper into it, lacking some insights that would fully make them understand the finest details of the match.

Fortunately for those who had chosen to watch from David and Miss Bunny's channel as their main commentator for the match, they received more details than those listening from the other channel had missed.

Both the audience watching from the live stand and listening to the two as their main commentators and those viewers watching online from their channel enjoyed the privilege of hearing David's analysis.

The other channel was biased toward the representative of the Seven Seas Alliance, so they refused to dive deeper into details about the state of the match. After all, they would be fired from their positions if they started talking badly about their side.

Even if they still comment that the Wild Brothers were slightly on the weaker end, they were unable to explain more details as it was related to the 'result' of the match.

But David did not give a heck about all of these as he was enjoying the match as a true fan of the game and the tournament.

"As you can see, the Wild Brothers are barely holding on to a thin rope that can save them. If they don't find a way to break through Alucard's Death Artillery Boundary, which is further then strengthened by Owen's great defense, then they will be truly screwed."

"Not only they are losing their momentum, but they have also lost almost all the advantages that they previously had during the first formal 3-vs-3 confrontation."

He then paused for a moment as he turned to Miss Bunny. "What are your thoughts, partner?"

Miss Bunny nodded her head as she agreed. "I seconded your assessment. Even if Moyong Qi is starting to showcase his signature 'Infinite Firing Gallery', it is still not enough."

"If the famous battle formation that the Wild Brothers, the 'Inverted Triangle Formation,' has easily been broken by Owen through brute force. Ithilien and Alucard are barely able to lend him a hand."

She then paused and split a small portion of the screen to start dissecting the details of some parts of the ongoing match for further information. "As you can see, all these formations that the Wild Brothers are famous for are being obliterated by their opposition one after another."

"Even with their individual strength and the unique features of their respective classes, they are still in a disadvantageous position."

"If they still have some cards hidden in them and don't show it now, then the result of this match has already been determined," she added with a somewhat exaggerated tone.

Taking advantage of this window to 'lighten up' the mood, David suddenly added a joke. "You have to hit the brakes over there, partner! What will you do if you start caster cursing our side? I am sure you will get a decrease when this month's salary is issued."

"Oops! Is it too late to take it back now?" said Miss Bunny playfully, playing along with him.

Even if the two were joking on the surface, their internal voices were saying a whole different matter.

After all, they could see much deeper than what they had just discussed with their viewers. They were able to tell who their side was planning for this match.

– "This is not even fishing up some information from their opponents, Shin is too evil to put Alucard into that lineup. If it is either Diablo or Leonard, then the outcome may be a little more direct." –

– "The defeat of the Wild Brothers may be a little more one-sided if that is the case, but it will not be as traumatic as this one as they had to endure such torture watching all their hard work crumble before their eyes." –

– "I bet those guys are already praying for Alucard and Owen to end this as soon as possible, especially Moyong Qi as he was purposely being targeted in the entire battle." –

David was repeatedly shaking his head inwardly as he thought about all of these. He could not help but feel some sympathy for the Wild Brothers as watched how the lights in their eyes slowly dismissed.

He was not sure if Shin was aware of Alucard's history with Moyong Qi or if it was just a mere coincidence, but that unlucky dude sure would suffer a lot even after this match.

Shin might have some idea about it, but he would surely not give a damn as it still aligned with his plans anyway.

"Tsk! Tsk! Devious, he is so devious. I don't know whether he resembles Master or Sir Adam whenever he acts this way, but either of the two is the scariest when it comes to it."

Chapter 1680: The Mastermind (Part 2): Cruel yet Comforting

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It did not take that long for the Wild Brothers to crumble completely under the repeated pressure that Alucard was constantly giving them. They started to lose their confidence after suffering in the battle, especially when they had tried doing everything, yet they still failed to achieve any results.

Moyong Qi was the one who was suffering the most in this battle. Even if he still had a somewhat strong mind, he was still losing himself in front of such adversity, especially when he was constantly being targeted throughout the entire battle.

Losing against someone strong was fine, but being humiliated in such a manner where the opposing party was constantly targeting the weakness of every technique and strategy that he had.

He was not sure if it was the plan of the Empyrean Talons, but he was sure that they were targeting him on purpose.

In the end, even if he had showcased his true abilities, he was still being suppressed repeatedly as his style was completely countered by his opponents.

They were unable to find a way to break through the 'defense' of the opposing side, so they could only 'passively' try looking for another way to win. However, given the current state of the battle. It seemed like an impossible task, their morale could not help but drop sharply.

Moyong Han had also noticed that his reliable big brother was struggling hard just to keep up with the face of their opposing side, which was something he had never seen before, especially when the three of them were working together.

What was even more demoralizing about their situation was even his second brother, Moyong Gui, seemed to have also lost his will to continue the battle.

"What... what went wrong?" he could not help but ask himself this question as he was also starting to become affected by the mood of his two elder brothers.

While he was still struggling to accept the 'outcome' of this battle, which was somewhat disappointing for their side, everything had already ended before he knew it.

Both Moyong Qi and Moyong Gui understood that it was useless to continue with the battle right now as it would only further wound their pride and affect their future mindset during a battle. If it indeed happened, then they would be nothing but a mere 'cripple' in the eyes of their organization and such.

They had to take a step back now before everything was too late. Even though the seed of psychological trauma was already planted in their hearts, it was not to the point that it could turn into a long-lasting poison that would slowly erode their minds.

Their youngest brother was still somewhat 'pure' in this aspect, so he was not much affected by the psychological attack that their opponents had sent them.

"We give up!"

"We concede!"

The two said almost at the same time as if they had already planned this ahead of time.

Moyong Han was still trying to understand their current state, but his elder brothers had already decided that it was not worth continuing with their meaningless struggle.

"Ah!?"

He was still in a state of confusion when the system had already pulled his body and thrown him out of the battle arena alongside his brothers.

All the spectators watching this match were also somewhat caught off guard as they were still too immersed in the current state of the battle.

Regardless, they still broke into an uproar after seeing the huge words displayed right above the battle arena.

The result might be a little lackluster compared to what they had expected, where the Wild Brothers would come up with an amazing strategy for a comeback or use their strongest combination skills. Meanwhile, the opposing side would also try their best to stop the three from doing that or respond with a powerful move of their own.

But unfortunately, their fantasy was utterly shattered by reality.

The ending might be a little disappointing, but everyone enjoyed the process nevertheless. They had even witnessed some of the exchanges that they were expecting from top-notch experts of the game, so they were not that disappointed.

Those few highlights were more than enough to satiate their thirst for action, so they did not raise any complaints.

Aside from that, the next round would be even more interesting than this Team Battles had always been the main course for such events. On top of that, the main players for the next round would be the top combatants of each side, which would surely give everyone a satisfying battle.

With such a thought in mind, everyone had forgotten about the result of the group match, making the next match to be the real highlight of this event.

They were expecting an intense battle that would determine the true result of this match between the Seven Seas Alliance and the Empyrean Talons.

Would the Seven Seas Alliance regain their pride and reputation with such an amazing comeback?

Or...

Would the Empyrean Talons put the final nail in the coffin and show everyone the huge difference between a seeded team and those who had struggled to climb from the previous rounds?

Whatever the result might be, all the live audience and online viewers were expecting an epic battle where everything was at stake!

"This is going to be an absolute banger!"

...

Unfortunately for these people, the main perpetrator of the devious plan had a different thought in mind.

Everyone might be expecting an absolute cinematic battle between hegemons of the game, but Shin was thinking of ending it in an overwhelming manner, where the opposing side would never raise their head in public once again.

His plan might be a little overboard as the foundation of the Seven Seas Group, which was supporting the opposing team from behind, was quite solid.

After all, they were a true hegemon when it came to finance in the real world. They could rival huge corporations such as the Flying Dragon Corporation under the Levana Clan and Springfield Family if it was just in terms of influence and money.

Moreover, they had also some secret dealings with the underworld organizations, making it hard to measure their real depths.

Shin knew that this team that the Seven Seas Group had just put up was nothing but a mere front to hide their true colors.

It was just an insignificant project to support their moves later into the future. But Shin would not spare any effort just to stop them, especially after learning about their shady experiments.

He then turned toward the other players who would be representing them for the next round and asked. "Is everyone ready?"

Cloe, who was sitting right side him, had already finished the preparations. There was no need to arrange as everyone had already been notified of their respective task.

She rolled her eyes at him as she complained a little. "And now you have the time to ask about us? Tsk! I thought all you care is to plot something against those guys."

Diablo looked at them weirdly as he always found their relationship somewhat weird. He knew that they were childhood friends, but he could sense that there was something more to it.

Regardless, he ignored everything else as he responded to Shin. "My only job is to harass that particular target, right? I will not do anything else as per your arrangement."

"That's right. We don't have to show too many of our cards in the first match anyway, so you should reserve your strength as much as you can," nodded Shin and avoided Cloe's fierce glare.

"Yet you are telling me to go all-out aside from some of my hidden cards," complained Leonard from the side.

Shin turned to him as he gave the latter a weird look beneath his mask. "Everyone knows you anyway, so what's the point in hiding your cards? Moreover, you are influenced by Arthur and upload quite a lot of battle clips on your channel regularly."

"There is no point in hiding those cards that everyone has already seen, am I right?" he added with an exaggerated tone.

"Tsk! At least, it pays some extra income for me," refuted Leonard.

Alice, on the other hand, remained silent on the side as she hesitated whether she should say something. She was still in an awkward relationship with Shin and Cloe after what happened earlier.

Even if they had somewhat thrown the issue at the back of their heads, Alice still felt somewhat uncomfortable with the situation. All she could think right now was the face of that cute little dragon girl.

Her mind somewhat wandered in some place and time that she would never dare to imagine before.

But whenever she looked at Shin and Cloe, she could only heave a helpless sigh as an uncomfortable feeling tried to squeeze inside her chest.

Meanwhile, the last member, who was chosen to be the sixth man for this round, stood still in a corner.

Samael, who was supposed to be not an official member of the team up until recently, was unable to calm his mind and heart.

Not only this would be his debut on the professional stage, but he did not know how he would calm his mind. Moreover, the shoes that he needed to fill in this lineup were from Arthur and Owen's position, so the pressure on him was too heavy.

Seeing the pale face that Samael was making, Owen could not help but walk over and pat the latter's back. "What's there to be too nervous about? It is not like you will mess up with those monsters supporting you on the stage."

"But that is also the very reason why I am like this," refuted Samael as he sighed helplessly. "What if I am unable to fulfill my role in the team and mess up everything? What do I have to do?"

Hearing that, Owen could not help but grin as he asked. "Do you want to hear something that will calm your mind?"

Samael did not say anything; he just repeatedly nodded his head.

Owen smirked as he continued. "Just engrave this in your mind-..."

Samael's expression was serious as he waited for advice from a senior in the field. He knew that he had to put it in his heart so that it could help him in the future.

But what he heard next made him stare blankly in the air.

"Do you see those guys? Do you know how much of a monster they are? Even our healer is a witch in her own right."

"With them being on the same field and working together, do you think that you still have the chance to perform on the stage?"

"Kid, don't be too delusional. Your role for this match is nothing but a decoration."

His words might be quite harsh in a sense but indeed helped Samael calm his nerves down.

Sometimes, reality was cruel, but it was also quite comforting in some ways. It just depended on how you looked at the situation.