

## **Destiny 1691**

### Chapter 1691: Uninvited Guests

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The battle between the Plague Race and the Righteous Churches was in full swing. The side of the former was slowly losing its grounds due to the numbers advantage of the latter.

Even if some top forces chose to side with the Plague Race, their numbers could not be compared to what the side of the churches had. After all, not everyone wanted to take the gamble of coffee converting their races and fight against the major forces sides with the Righteous Churches, particularly those who had invested quite a lot in their respective faction.

But despite the shrinking territory of the Plague Lands, the quality of their forces was also becoming much stronger, especially when the Plague Energy was slowly getting more concentrated the more they got near the center of the region.

There were even a lot of appearances of Chieftain Rank Plague Monsters, making the competition more engaging.

There was even a single appearance of a Lord Rank Plague Monster, which had slaughtered quite a lot of experts during the battle. This forced the Righteous Churches to send a powerful Templar – a high-ranking Paladin and Holy Knight – on the battlefield.

It was just a pity that the monster was eliminated by the said Templar, causing much regret for everyone as it was supposedly a chance for them to earn such massive event points.

Regardless, the players who had fought and 'assisted' during the raid had earned quite a lot of points after that battle, which still satisfied them.

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During the entire process of this war, a lot of players finally uncovered the mysteries surrounding the Plague Race.

The players, who loved to investigate the different lore of the game they were playing, had discovered that this was not the first time that the Plague Race had emerged into this world.

A Plague Race was a type or a sub-race of a Cursed Creature. It was a race that was cursed due to committing some taboo or provoking a very powerful being that cast a curse on them.

There were quite a lot of Plague Races, but most of them were eradicated by the Righteous Churches or the Hall of Heroes while the rest had hidden underneath the banner of the Undead Race – which also became the reason why the churches were hostile against most of the Undead.

There were also some types of Plague Races, which had overcome their instinct of infecting or contaminating the other races and improved their image. Some of them even became an independent race and became very influential.

Such an example was the Vampire Families, who had seen their kin and formed a circle and their council.

They were an independent group that had a decent relationship with the Hall of Heroes due to their Vampire Lord and the Monarch of the Blood occupying a seat within the circle.

Through this connection, they had even built a good impression with the Righteous Churches, lessening the tension between their forces.

It was just a pity that they were unable to connect with the vampires of the Frozen Kingdom, particularly Dracula, the Vampire Primogenitor of that continent, much earlier due to the tension of that era – the Repelling Era against the invading demons.

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Such backgrounds had been uncovered by the lore scholars of the game, increasing the understanding of the players about the Plague Race, which also increased the interest of the people about them.

But at the same time, the weaknesses of the race were also revealed one after another, making their side start to lose more footing during the war.

It was at this moment when the players and other forces participating in the event realized that the event was closing to its conclusion.

Those siding with the Plague Race started making preparations as they knew that their side was on the losing end.

Fortunately, the side of the Evil Factions had finally made their move, showing their intentions of inviting the Plague Race to side with them.

The Demonic Churches and the Corrupted Cult, which were the main enemies of the Righteous Churches, were actively participating in the war, throwing the situation into another deadlock.

The Evil Faction was still in a disadvantageous position due to the location of the event being near the Divinity City, which was the capital of the Human Race and where the headquarters of most churches were located.

But despite all these, the Evil Faction was quite calm in the situation as their main goal was not to wage an all-out war against the Righteous Churches. Their main purpose of coming here was to buy enough time for the Cursed Fallen King to be resurrected.

So long as they brought enough time for that king, their purpose in coming here would be worth it.

After all, another powerful being would be added to their ranks, fighting alongside them against the Righteous Churches.

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As all these were happening, Axion, who was one of the main targets of the Righteous Churches, was currently forbidden to leave the tomb.

Due to the intensity of the battle and the rapid shrinking of their territory, the situation was gradually getting worse for their side.

Aside from the assassins sent by the churches, who had managed to sneak in their defensive formation, he also had to be wary of those opportunists from the Demonic Churches and Corrupted Cult that were eyeing him – or more specifically, the Plague Core that was planted into his body.

It was a cursed object that the soul of the Fallen King had forcefully injected into his body, which would 'help' him transform into the perfect vessel once the fallen king had successfully resurrected.

At first, he was still hopeful about the secret quest that he currently had. He felt that there was hope for him to survive this predicament, especially when the side of the Righteous Churches was constantly pushing forward.

Unfortunately, the Demonic Churches and Corrupted Cult intervened and made the situation even more complicated.

Right now, he not only had to worry about his safety and survival, but he also had to be fully on guard against the schemes that the 'allies' eyeing him on their side.

Adding to the fact that the accumulated plague energies of the core had gathered during all this time, his only hope of escaping this fate seemed to be slowly slipping away from his grasp.

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

Sitting on the throne situated at the center of the Tomb of the Cursed King, Axion slowly opened his eyes as he looked at the floating cluster of Plague Energy right above the tomb hall.

He could not help but glance at the ticking timer from the corner of his eyes and saw that there was only a whole day (in-game time) before all the accumulated energy reached the desired level for the resurrection of the Fallen King.

With a sigh, Axion could not help but shake his head in bitterness. "I guess I can only accept this fate "

"I wonder how long I have to wait before I can recreate another character and start over again," he mumbled as he lost hope.

As a professional gamer, he could not just give up his gaming career, especially when his family with the gaming workshop he had established were all relying on him to lead them.

"It's just our terrible luck that led us to this situation," he could not help but curse as he recalled how the chance that they thought would make them stronger became a terrible disaster.

At the same time, he also could not help but think of that monstrous guy, who was supposedly steamrolling his way in this event, suddenly stopped his tracks and disappeared altogether.

"How come he is still not making his move when the situation is already like this?"

"I know that they are quite busy with the ongoing tournament, but given their overall strength, it will not be hard for them to rival those top forces that are currently operating and participating in this event."

He was quite confused as to why Shin and his friend were not seen in any parts of the Plague Lands despite how intense the war was. Especially so when Shin was actively participating in the event in its earlier stages.

Shin even occupied the number one position on the event's leaderboards since he had hunted quite a lot of elite monsters and a couple of Plague Race Players on top of killing one of the main generals of their side.

While Axion was waiting patiently for his fate to come, he suddenly heard an unfamiliar voice resounding from the tomb hall.

"Ah! It seems like am quite early. The 'fruit' is yet to ripe."

A shiver ran down Axion's spine when heard that voice, especially when no one could reach this place. Even those Elders sent by the Demonic Churches and Corrupted Cult were unable to break through the maze formation protecting this place!

"Who-...!?"

He was to ask who the intruder was when he suddenly swallowed his words after seeing the person walking out of the shadows in the corner of the hall.

As someone quite familiar with the circle of experts within the game, it was impossible for him not to recognize this uninvited guest.

"Lich God Immortal! What are you doing here!?" his face suddenly turned grim when he saw the latter.

But before he could hear any response from the other party, another person's voice reverberated within the hall.

"Tsk! Tsk! So the defective product is also here. You have disappeared after that 'incident', yet here you are showing before 'us'."

At this moment, a hooded individual walked out of the coordinator's office, right across the throne where Axion was sitting, and entered the hall in a laid-back manner.

Immortal did not have to guess who the other 'guest' was as he replied. "This is quite surprising. To think, Azazel, one of the strongest forces of that person, to be sent here."

"It looks like the 'Pandemonium' have put quite a lot of importance on this operation," he then paused for a moment as he remembered that this guy loved to collect things.

He then pointed at the floating miasma and Axion, especially on the latter's chest, before asking. "Or is it because of those things?"

Axion, on the other hand, felt an even stronger threat coming from the other person, which made his already grim expression even worse.

If it were just Immortal, then he would still have a chance. Even if he could not win, he was confident that he could buy as much time as he could – at least until the backup arrived or even until the entire ritual ended.

But if this guy, who just arrived was added, he was not sure if he could last that long.

"This is going to be dangerous," he mumbled as he stared at the two uninvited guests, who seemed to be ignoring his existence.

Chapter 1692: Messing with the Others Once Again

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Axion was staring warily at the two uninvited guests before him, thinking of a way to solve his current predicament.

Seemingly sensing the thoughts that Axion had, Immortal suddenly turned to him and spoke. "Relax. We will not make our move yet. At least until that thing in you had fully ripened."

Axion was trying to secretly send a message to his companions through their team channel. But the expression on his face suddenly turned ugly after realizing that the place was currently isolated by a powerful barrier, which also blocked all kinds of signals coming in and out of this place.

Seeing the expression that Axion was making, Immoral suddenly started smirking. "Don't try doing anything funny. Just behave there and patiently wait for 'your' turn."

He then turned his attention back to Azazel before asking. "So, how are we going to settle this?"

Azazel squinted his eyes as he stared at Immoral before saying. "As the missing piece that has become a defective product, I don't think you are worthy to decide anything."

Immoral went silent for a moment as heard those words. He then gave the other party a provoking look before asking. "You can give it a try. Let's see how strong one of the said generals of his army is."

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As the situation within the tomb was somewhat getting heated, a pair of hooded individuals stepped into an isolated part of the Plague Lands, quite far from the battlefield.

One of them was a man wearing a dark grey cloak with small dark patches all over its surface, seemingly creating a hazy and eerie miasma around the cloak to his presence.

The other was a girl hidden by a white cloak with silver-white feathers attached to its surface. She was holding a tall holy staff, which was a head taller than her, and had a golden globe at its tip that was constantly releasing a holy aura to ward off the dark miasma coming out from the Plague Lands.

"I know that this place is in a mess, but I never expected that even the air is this filthy," commented Cloe as she scanned the surroundings.

It was her first time stepping into this place since it had transformed into a region polluted by such a strong stretch of plague energy.

She had to admit that she had somewhat underestimated the power of the Plague Race as the contamination that they carried was no weaker than what the Corrupted Monsters and Demonic Creatures were carrying in their bodies.

The pollution that they carried through the plague was even worse than those creatures to some extent.

"So, what are your plans?" she asked as she turned to Shin.

Shin glanced at the update of the event that he had gotten from Exheart before saying. "I plan to hunt some powerful monsters and players, who managed to achieve decent positions within the Plague Army."

He paused for a moment before continuing. "It seems like one of the generals was captured by an NPC Templar. From the information that I have gotten, particularly the description of the captured person, I think that it is the cunning assassin who I fought earlier."

"That guy is quite tricky to deal with, especially when he is very proficient in creating multi-layered schemes. I wonder how he has fallen into that trap, which cost him being captured," he added as he fell into deep thought.

He then threw that thought at the back of his head before sticking to his original plan. "Anyway, let's go for a hunt while looking for the main locations that need to be purified based on your mission."

Cloe nodded her head as she opened the 3D virtual map before her, which fully showed the entire region of the Plague Lands. On it, there were three huge dots, which seemed to be formed by a dark miasma, along with countless red dots surrounding them.

"These three places are the Plague Nests where almost all the Plague Monsters within the region had gathered," she pointed at them for a moment before turning to another three locations near them. "But our target places are these three points as they were the places where the cores of those nests are located."

"Getting near them is not that hard, but dealing with the guards protecting these placers is the real problem," she took another pause as she zoomed into those places, showcasing three huge Plague Monsters.

"These monsters are all in Lord Rank, which is why no one dared to get near those locations carelessly even if they find the locations quite suspicious."

"The top forces participating in the event will not dare to get near them unless a Templar of the Church of Light or other Holy Knights from different churches acted as the vanguard for them."

"Unfortunately, none of the churches would send any of those knights as they are in the forefront of the battlefield, where an Overlord Rank Monster is situated."

"They have to keep on that monster to prevent serious casualties on our side," she added as she briefed Shin on the information that she had gotten from the Church of Light.

At the current stage of the game, dealing with the Lord Rank Monsters was still far beyond the player's reach, much less an Overlord Rank Monster, which was impossible for anyone to challenge in the Awakened Continent.

In this current war, such monsters were nothing but a Quest Scenario, where the players could only hope to get a small slice of the pie once the situation became even more chaotic.

Understanding this situation, Shin could not help but ask. "So, are you telling me that it is only up to the two of us to deal with those three Lord Rank Monsters and their underlings before we can purify those core points?"

Cloe nodded in confirmation. "And during the process, a Quest Scenario will take place, where I can summon a Valkyrie to assist us in battle."

"But the tricky part is I can only summon these Valkyries three times. And their strength is only limited to General Rank, which is equivalent to Lord Rank Monsters," she added clarifying their situation.

"So, you are telling me that we can only use them as trump cards. Moreover, we also have to take care of the unforeseen variables that may affect our mission," added Shin as he realized the nature of Cloe's quest.

"This is indeed quite tricky to deal with," he commented as he understood some of the hidden tests underneath the 'simple' tasks they had at hand.

"Why do I feel that the Church of Light is as unreliable as the Church of Sun and Moon when it comes to quest assistance," he complained a little as he tried to formulate a decent plan to solve the possible issues that they might face along the way.

"Should we ask for some assistance with the others?" asked Cloe as she also found their situation a little troublesome.

Even though she was quite reluctant to rely on others as this was a rare chance for her to quest with Shin alone, she knew how important it was to solve their current situation.

But Shin rejected the idea as he shook his head. "No, it is fine. It is still quite manageable, especially when it is a part of a Quest Scenario."

"Our only problem is those variables that may hinder us during the process," he added as he tried to look for solutions. "The best way to deal with this situation is to create a disturbance that can misdirect the attention of everyone away from our targets."

"If only we can move that Overlord to act and cause a commotion on the main battlefield, then we will not have this problem."

"I refuse to believe that those guys will ignore such a fat bag of points right before their eyes, especially when all they have to do is wait for the opportunity to land the final hit after those Templars do all the work."

As he reached this point, a sudden flash of ideas entered his head, making him wear a familiar grin underneath his mask. "Eh!? That's right! We the Templars are unwilling to move until that fat sheep take action, why not force them to do it."

He paused for a while before turning to Cloe. "Let me make a couple of calls. I have a plan."

Not long after, he pulled out his contact list and looked for a couple of names before making a call one after another.

"Yo! I've got a job for you. The pay is good and I will compensate you with your loses. But you have to make sure to complete the job successfully and time it well with my signal."

"Don't worry. It is just a 'simple' infiltration job with little poking of the hornet's nest."

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The calls lasted for quite a while before he turned to Cloe, who was giving him an odd look.

She was silent for quite a while before regaining her senses. "You-... you sure are evil when it comes to other people."

Shin just shrugged his shoulders as he added. "You can't blame me. I am only doing it for our success!"

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In the meantime, Exheart, who was currently resting in the temporary base that the Righteous Churches had set up at the border of the shrinking Plague Lands, could not help but shake his head and wear a bitter smile after ending the call.

Bryan and Hellban, who were also resting near him, noticed the multiple changes in his expression.

The two exchanged glances at each other before Bryan finally stood up and walked over to Exheart. "What is it? It looks like you have eaten rotten food with those expressions."

Exheart snapped out of his daze when he heard those words. He then turned to the latter, before saying. "I've gotten a commission offer from that guy. Are you interested?"

"That guy?" Bryan was confused at first before realizing who the latter was talking about. A solemn expression washed over his face as he asked with full seriousness. "Let's hear it out. What kind of commission is it?"

Exheart felt a little troubled about how to explain the entire mission before finally summarizing everything in simple words. "A suicide mission."

"A what!?" Bryan felt like he had heard it wrong so he could not help but ask again. "I feel like I did not hear you clearly. Can you repeat it?"

Exheart sighed as he repeated. "A suicide mission."

Chapter 1693: Misdirection

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As the event progressed further, another rumor spread across the Plague Lands, making everyone somewhat uneasy.

For the side of the Plague Race Players, felt immensely threatened due to them being the main targets of the subject of the said rumors.

It was said that any Plague Player, who managed to become a high-ranking official, had become the target of assassination. It was not exactly new since they had always been the target of many as killing or capturing them would earn the opposing side great merits and event points.

They were not that bothered about it, especially when such players had an army of Plague Players and Monsters under their command.

But it was only until they learned the identities of the individuals hunting them.

There was only a pair of 'hunters', but the reputation of those two was more than enough to make anyone fall in despair.

Battle God Sickarius and Gentle Goddess Arielle – these were the identities of the two people hunting the Plague Players.

One was one of the rising stars of the game and said to have reached the pinnacle of combat while the other was a legendary supporter, who was also recognized as the number one healer of the game.

The majority of the Plague Players were terrified when they learned that they had become a target of those two monstrous players.

Even if they were also considered Apex Players when compared to the majority of the virtual community, they were still far from being a match for those two, especially when they were working together.

Moreover, some had also seen those two purifying the land where most of the Plague Monsters were gathered. This could only mean that those two were currently doing a special quest, which was different from everyone.

Such news also affected the players participating in the event, who were siding with the Righteous Churches.

The competition between the top forces and highly skilled independent players was already at its highest and most competitive stage, so adding these two monstrous individuals would further propel the competition into a more intense state.

This caused multiple ripples that affected the whole state of the event.

Everyone seemed to have found a common enemy that they wanted to take down first before proceeding to the final stages of the event.

The Plague Players wanted to remove this pair of huge thorns on their side while those on the side of the Righteous Churches wanted to hinder the progress of the two so that they would not earn that many points during their hunt.

This situation resulted in Shin and Cloe being in constant battle against the two sides.

Little did these people know that they had been led on as there was a small group of elites who managed to sneak into the depths of the Plague Lands while everyone was busy chasing those two.

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"Tsk! Tsk! They have really done it. That guy sure is crazy!" commented Exheart as he shook his head after hearing the reports of the battle from one of his in-game friends.

In the end, he accepted the offer that Shi had given him as he could not fight the temptations laid on the contract.

He might be one of the apex experts of the game, but he still could not ignore the benefits that were offered to him for this commission, especially when he read in the contract that he would get a customized weapon from the number one Blacksmith of the game once the commission had ended.

Moreover, it was just one of the conditions laid in the contract, so it was impossible to reject such an offer.

With that, he did his best to convince all his friends to join him and form a small group yet filled with elites to do this commission.

He did not spare any effort as he had mobilized all his connections within the game to form the most ideal group, which would also increase their chances of completing the mission.

But the mission itself was not something that could be achieved easily.

Just like what he just said earlier, the main goal was no different from a suicide mission as they had to sneak into the camp of the opposing faction before using the especially special drug that Shin had given them earlier to the Overlord Rank Plague Monster right in the heart of their enemies' camp.

This drug was some sort of sedative that Adept Hands had concocted before and given to Shin for the trial run.

But Shin had never found the right opportunity to use the drug until today.

The drug contained a special substance that could agitate the monsters after sniffing them. It would then make the monster lose its mind, going into its berserk state.

It was one of her unusual creations as no one would be in their right mind if they tried using such a thing during their raids.

But the true purpose of the drug was quite intriguing as well since it would force the monster to enter their berserk state much earlier, which would then make them weaker once they had existed in that state and when the effects of the drugs wore off.

Nevertheless, only those who have lost their minds would dare to use this thing, so it became a somewhat failed product.

But it became different when it came to Shin, who had this sadist and masochist at the same time.

She believed that he would find a way to use this miracle drug on certain occasions, which would make them shine brightly.

Especially so when Shin was a magnet of trouble.

"Hey, Exheart! Are you sure about this?" asked one of his friends, who joined after hearing about the compensation even after failing the mission.

"Caldor, I know that you only join because of the compensation. But let me warn you. You will not get even a penny if you do something stupid and sabotage our mission," replied Exheart with a stern gaze.

He then turned to another direction, looking at the Dark Elven Archer and asking her. "Can you check the surroundings with your innate skill, Sophia? We are already quite deep into their territory. It is better to be careful."

The Female Dark Elf named Sophia nodded her head before quickly looking for an elevated spot to activate her skill.

While she was doing her task, Exheart, as the group's acting leader, started giving everyone their respective task as they took a quick stop into this hidden place.

"Hella, can you and Jason be on the lookout for a moment and guard her?"

"Bryan, use that useless nose of yours to scout the path ahead. Let Howling Blade and Silent Kill accompany you."

"Hellban, lead the other magic classes to set up the illusion and isolation barriers. We will be camping here for a while."

"Paladins and Priest, recharge the blessings of our talismans."

"Those who are free and have a high lifestyle profession, help the others with their equipment maintenance and replenish our supplies."

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When he was done, he quickly found a secluded spot, planning to contact Shin about their progress.

They had reached quite deep into the Plague Lands, but they were still far from reaching their destination, so he had to inform Shin about their situation so that they could adjust their timing.

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Shin had just ended a call before turning to Cloe in a certain part of the Plague Lands, which was quite hidden from most of the players.

"They have infiltrated quite deep into their camp, but it seems like they can't penetrate deep enough at the moment because of the sudden increase in security," he said, informing her about the update that Exheart had reported. "I think we have to continue what we are doing for quite a while before proceeding to our main goal."

He paused for a moment before commentating. "It seems like something has happened in the Tomb, making those people wary."

His sharp instincts told him that something big must have happened in that place, giving him a sudden sense of urgency. "But I also feel that we have to make a little haste because I am getting a bad feeling about this."

"Are we going to change our strategy?" asked Cloe as she hopped down from the boulder she was sitting on.

Shin thought for a moment before shaking his head. "Not really. Just a minor adjustment should be enough."

"Are you sure?" asked Cloe as she looked at him with full suspicion.

Shin chuckled when he saw her inquiring look before reassuring her. "It is fine. We just have to move a little closer to the 'fire' to create an even stronger 'blaze'. I feel like what we are doing is not intense enough."

Understanding the hidden implications behind his words, she could not help but ask. "Which side are we heading then?"

Shin turned in a certain direction as he grinned. "Let's pick this way then. I feel like pocking the nest of our old 'acquaintances'."

Chapter 1694: Misdirection (Part 2)

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To make their plan successful, Shin and Cloe needed to find a much bigger target than they were hunting previously. They had to create a bigger commotion that would attract the attention of everyone within the Plague Lands so that Exheart and his group could finish their secret task.

Which bigger target did they need than the huge forces that were operating within the region?

The most ideal target that they had was those with some history with them. More specifically those who had provoked them before.

The most ideal target that they had was the Seven Seas Group, which had established an Ultra Guild alongside the smaller guild and organization that they had acquired and absorbed.

There was also the Blood Carnival, which was somewhat active during this event after the Corrupted Cult and Demonic Churches had gotten involved.

Some dark guilds had been tricked by the Blood Carnival into provoking the Empyrean Talons. But targeting them would be less impactful, so Shin had written them off from his target list.

His eyes were only focused on the big fishes in the pond, which would give them a lot of 'benefits' when things went even more chaotic.

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Shin was traveling with Cloe at extreme speed not bothering to hide their presence. They might even be announcing their arrival to the opposing party as they proceed.

Shin was hopping from one branch to another, utilizing the trees as he traveled, while Cloe was flying with a pair of angelic wings on her back.

Since the time Shin had given her the [Dawn's Mantle], she went to different places just to find and gather all the materials she needed for its upgrade.

She then asked Harmony, the Chief Tailor of the Hand of Midas, to modify the mantle and enhance all its other features.

At this moment, this item had been promoted into peak Obsidian Rank (Meteor) with the overall upgrade that it had.

She also asked Harmony to change the color to white so that it would match her aesthetics.

What she loved the most in the changes that Harmony had done to the item was the permanent activation of the 'Wings of Freedom' as long as she had enough mana to supply them.

There was a short cooldown duration required in every deactivation of the equipment skill, which would last for as long as 5 minutes.

But the other skills such as 'Flight', 'Glide', and 'Feather Fall', which had at least 2-3 minutes duration each, such a cooldown time was nothing.

She loved this special item, especially when it was given to her by Shin, which added more sentimental value to it.

Aside from that, this would have great value for her when it came to her mobility, especially when she was a support-type player who was constantly being targeted during battle.

The item itself would become one of her signature cards in their future battles just like how it made one of Shin's personas, the Nameless Swordsman – also known as the Angel of Death, famous.

Swoosh! Swoosh!

As the pair traversed through the plague forest, the sounds that they were making quickly attracted the attention of multiple people.

A few distance ahead of them, an intense battle between the Plague Players and a certain group of people siding with the Righteous Churches was currently taking place.

The loud sound that the incoming pair was making quickly paused the battle as everyone turned in that direction.

Shing!

They had just turned their heads when they heard the subtle sound of a sword being pulled from its sheath reverberating in the entire place.

Swoosh!

Then a sudden flash of light blinded everyone before it turned into a thin line in the air, resembling a glowing thread that cut through the air.

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

Shin did not bother to do anything else as he directly 'greet' everyone with his previous signature opening.

The strike was directed to the ranks of the Plague Player, killing multiple of them in the process alongside the Plague Monsters accompanying them.

The health bars of those Plague Monsters were almost in the critical stage, which was why they had been eliminated with just a single strike, especially when it was a powerful skill.

The other group had finally snapped out of their daze when they realized that the points that they were about to get were suddenly stolen by this newcomer.

"Damn! Who is this bastard who dared to steal our kills? Mess him up!" shouted one of them, voicing out the frustration of everyone.

They had been fighting against those Plague Players for quite a while now and even invested a lot of their resources in this ambush that they had launched, so it was understandable for them to be this angry.

Not only that, most of the Plague Monsters that had been killed were Elite Rank Monsters, so the points that they gave were quite high, doubling their anger.

They had yet to recover when a pillar of holy light suddenly descended from the skies and landed right in the middle of those Plague Monsters and Players.

This light had annihilated those who had survived the previous attack while also purifying the land in the process.

When this light finally subdued, everyone saw a beautiful girl in priestess' clothes kneeling on the ground and being supported by a holy staff.

There was also a pair of angelic wings on her back, further highlighting her presence with their sacred light.

Seeing that their prey had not only been stolen before their eyes but also annihilated without them being able to do anything, the group became even more enraged and started attacking the two culprits.

"Wait-...!"

There were some guys, who were still in their right minds despite seeing what had happened. They were quite sober to recognize these two, who suddenly appeared out of nowhere and stole their kills.

They wanted to stop the others from making the worst decision in their lives, but it was already too late as the system had already noticed the other party that they were eligible to retaliate as a form of self-defense.

"F\*ck!"

They could only curse under their breaths when they watched the two monsters make their respective moves.

Cloe raised her holy staff, summoning multiple magic circles in golden color around the opposing party, before slamming the bottom of the staff on the ground, sending beams of holy light from each magic circle.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

Shin, on the other hand, disappeared from his position before appearing before a player from the opposing group.

He then used one of his Tier 2 Skills, the 'Flash of Life', and targeted the heart of the said player, killing them in the process.

As this was an elimination skill that kept on resetting its cooldown for every life he took, he kept on using it to kill everyone in a single strike.

He kept on disappearing and reappearing in different parts of the battlefield while taking lives with a strike like a god of death.

His afterimage had yet to disappear when the person that he just killed fell to the ground with a hole in their chest.

Adding that far that he kept on using his Lightning Steps to increase his speed, he became completely unstoppable for anyone on the battlefield.

Cloe was not someone to be outshone either unless she was acting as a real support.

This time, instead of assisting Shin with her buffs and heals, she chose to be offensive. She was acting more of a mage rather than a healer, showcasing the other side of the Gentle Goddess once more.

She did not need any protection from Shin as she became a reaper herself.

She constantly cast spell after spell, mercilessly sending them toward the opposing side, further eliminating them in the process.

It did not take that long for the two to annihilate the entire group with their flawless teamwork.

...

After clearing the battlefield, Shin and Cloe do not stay in that place for long, as they quickly head to another location.

They did not want to stay in a single place while purposely making a commotion even though it would be more beneficial for their goals.

What Shin wanted was for the other forces to keep chasing after them as they led everyone away from their real targets.

His plan was very effective as those groups were led like headless chickens, not knowing where to go.

They had been led by the pair in circles, making them even more frustrated.

What devastated everyone even further was their casualties could not be replenished as the event conditions prevented those fallen players from rejoining the event as they were tagged as 'dead' people.

At first, the fallen players were unable to log back in the game even if the penalty period was over.

However, due to the prolonged duration of the event due to the appearance of the Plague Race and the involvement of the Evil Factions, the penalty changed a little.

Now, the players could log back in the game once the penalty duration upon death was over, but they were somewhat kicked out of the event, unable to return to the Plague Lands until the event was over.

Due to this, the number of players operating in the Plague Lands slowly decreased, leaving only those who had 'survived' along with the monsters and NPCs.

This forced both sides to 'work' together so that they could return the 'balance' that they were supposed to have.

Little did everyone know that while all the eyes were focused on Shin and Cloe, a certain group of people had finally sneaked within the perimeters of the Plague Race's camp.

Chapter 1695: Misdirection (Part 3)

.....

Rumble!

Somewhere in the depths of the Plague Lands, there was a small group of players running for their lives as they got chased by a huge army of Plague Monsters and Players.

Not only that, right at the front of this army was a colossal Plague Monster, which looked like a hybrid of multiple beasts.

It had the muscular body of a bear and the broad shoulders of a tiger. Its arms and legs greatly resembled what the gorillas had, also running all in fours.

Its head seemed to be from a mixture of a human, an ape, and a bull. There was also a pair of curved horns on its forehead, resembling those of a bull.

This was a Plague Behemoth, the Overlord Rank Plague Monster that the Plague Race had.

This monster was also the totem beast of the Plague Race for this event, acting as one of its middle bosses.

Roar!

The Plague Behemoth was currently in its most enraged state as Exheart and his group had successfully used the mysterious drugs that Shun had provided them to it.

They surprisingly managed to sneak inside the camp of the Plague Race, surprising Exheart and the rest of his group.

They did not expect that Shin and Cloe would be able to distract the majority of their ranks, making them dispatch more of their forces to catch those two.

Naturally, there were still some elite guards, who remained in the camp to guard it. Berdugo, who was one of the main instigators of the event and acted as one of the plague generals, was one of those who were left behind.

But despite his current strength, which reached the level that could rival those Lord Rank Monsters after absorbing an abundant amount of plague energy, tactics, and strategy were not his strongest points.

This was the reason why Exheart and the others were able to sneak through their defensive formation and managed to reach the Overlord Rank Plague Monster, executing their plan.

Exheart and the group had to sacrifice some of their members to break through the formation of the opposing side just to reach the monster.

Then Exheart had successfully thrown the vials of drugs to provoke the Plague Behemoth, making it go on a rampage.

Taking advantage of the chaos, Exheart and the surviving members of the group started running for their lives immediately after.

But what they did not expect was they immediately became the main targets of the monster due to the residual scent of the drug lingering around their bodies.

Adding the fact that Exheart had used too much dosage of the drugs, their situation went from bad to worst.

This led to their current situation, where they had to use the trump card that they had been hiding.

It was the grand chariot that one of the members of their group, who also happened to be a commander of a famous adventurer team.

"Aric! Can this stupid chariot run faster? They are about to catch up to us!!!" shouted Exheart as he stared at the 'moving hill' that was chasing after them.

Based on his estimate, they only had a dozen or so minutes before they got caught.

The owner of the chariot, who was also driving it, could not help but curse after hearing the complaint.  
"Damn! Do you think it is that easy? I am already burning all the Mana Stones that my team has accumulated just to run this thing!"

"You have to reimburse me after this!" he then gritted as he pulled out a football-size gem with multiple colors, resembling a rainbow, before injecting it into the hole right beside the harness he was holding.

"Seven Elemental Crystal? Your Adventurer Team sure is rich, huh?" commented HellBan, who was currently sitting right behind the driver's seat.

As someone who majored in magic, he was familiar with special items that could be used in different kinds of magic experiments.

What Aric, the owner of the chariot, had injected into their ancient war vehicle was something that could only be found in places with a high density of man, which was also the place where seven different elements converged.

HellBan had only seen such a thing once, and it was when he had visited the Mage Tower of the Divinity City.

The Seven Elemental Crystal was a treasure that could be used in multiple things, making its price so high that it could bankrupt an entire Powerhouse Guild just to get a piece of it.

Even if the size of the one that Aric had used was just a tiny piece compared to the one that HellBan had seen in the lobby of the Mage Tower, it was still big enough to cost a huge fortune.

It was expensive enough to cost a limb of a Powerhouse Guild.

The corner of Aric's mouth twitched when he heard those words before saying. "My team has suffered a lot from the very first high-ranking quest that we have received after setting foot in the Awakened Continent just to get it, so be thankful that I am using it just to save your \*sses."

Due to the pure and immense energy that the Seven Elemental Crystal had, the speed of the grand chariot sharply increased, making them leave their pursuers in dust.

But that only applied to the Plague Players and Monsters as the Plague Behemoth did not only keep up with them but also rapidly approached them.

"Hey, Exheart! Just how much drugs did you at that monster for it to chase after using this hard?" asked Bryan as he could not believe that the berserk monster was still fixated on catching up to them even this far.

Exheart hesitated for a moment before sighing. "I've thrown all of it."

The atmosphere turned silent as the group stared at him speechlessly about what they heard. – "No wonder the monster had gone insane completely." –

Fortunately, they had run far enough to reach the border where the allied forces of the Righteous Churches had set up their camp, giving them some hope for survival.

"We are safe at last," Exheart heaved a sigh of relief after seeing the tents of their camp on the horizon.

Right after he said those words, he suddenly felt that the atmosphere had suddenly turned strange.

Raising his head, he noticed that everyone was looking at him with a fierce glare.

"What?" he could not help but ask, especially after seeing that they wanted to strangle him.

"Of all times, why do you have to jinx it now?" said Bryan while suppressing the twitching of his mouth.

Swoosh!

Not only after, everyone felt that the surroundings suddenly turned dark, as if the little sunlight passing through the cloudy sky was being blocked by something big.

Raising their heads to the sky, they saw the colossal figure of the Plague Behemoth rapidly descending toward them.

"Damn you, EXHEART!!!!!"

He had obviously jinxed it.

....

While all of that was happening, every force operating in the Plague Lands immediately received the news, making the halt their plan of entrapping the part that gave them a huge headache.

The news about the Overlord Rank Plague Monster making a move was a big issue. Especially so when it was rushing to the camp that the allied forces of the Righteous Churches had built.

In their minds, this could only mean one thing. The event was progressing to the next stage.

If that boss monster was making its move, then those Templars, Inquisitors, and Archbishops stationed on the camp would, without a doubt, make their response.

Sure enough, right after the news about the Plague Behemoth reached their ears, another big news immediately followed – those powerful NPCs had made their move and were now engaging in an intense battle against it.

Not long after the forces of the Plague Race and the Evil Factions also arrived, helping their Totem in battle.

Chaos immediately broke out as the two sides clashed. The war resumed, and the next phase of the event was started ahead of time.

"Issue me command! Tell everyone to drop whatever they are doing and head to the battlefield! We are joining in that battle."

"Summon everyone! We will not miss this chance to farm at some point. And if we are lucky, then we can even steal the last hit on that Overlord, greatly promoting our ranks!"

"We are heading to that place! We can't afford to lose this chance to the others. We will snatch the ranks of those fools ahead of us."

"Forget about those two. We will be joining the main battlefield. Moreover, those two will surely be there given that there is a big fish in the tank. They can't afford to miss it. We will take them down altogether by then.

Different commands were passed down from the higher-ups of those top forces, dropping the idea of capturing Shin and Cloe as they chose to join the competition to snatch the Plague Behemoth.

They made everyone in the entire Plague Lands gather in the place where the two major sides were fighting.

Little did they know that this was exactly what their earlier targets were planning—creating smoke in the west while attacking the east.

"It is time!" said Shin as he also received the news.

He then turned to Cloe, who was quite impatient to finish her quest, so they could proceed to its next stage, which would also end this event altogether.

"Let's go," she said as stood up from the small boulder she was sitting on.

Shin nodded before they swiftly headed to their first destination.

Chapter 1696: Dynamic Duo

.....

With the camp of the Plague Race, Berdugo was constantly giving out orders to his subordinates. He was also controlling some of the Plague Monsters, organizing their forces.

He was about to lead the Plague Forces when Magnolia suddenly ran at him with a hurried look on her face. From the look of it, it seemed like something serious had happened.

Frowning deeply, Berdugo turned at her as he mumbled to himself. "It is rare for her to leave her post and come here. Something very urgent must have happened for her to be personally coming here."

Sure enough, Magnolia immediately went straight to the point right after reaching him. "There is a huge problem. Our core nests are under attack!"

Berdugo could not help but raise his brows after hearing her words. This was much more serious than he had expected.

Those three nests were the main source of the Plague energy that filled the entire region aside from the Tomb of that Fallen King.

"Tell me exactly what happened," asked Berdugo.

He might not be as cunning as Asesino or as smart as their leader, but he still had a lot of experience when it came to commanding their forces given that he was a veteran of virtual games.

This was why he was one of the authorities of their adventurer team. Whenever they needed someone to decide what to do due to the absence of the other leading figures, it was he who was leading them.

"I am not sure about the exact situation either as I just received the report that the core nests are under attack," started Magnolia, trying to organize the information inside her head.

"But from what I just heard, one of those nests has already been taken down by the assailants when the reports have reached my ears."

"Everything happened a little too fast, making us unable to respond," she added as a serious look washed over her face.

Berdugo suddenly frowned even deeper as he heard more of the report. "How can it happen? There is a Lord Rank Plague Monster stationed to protect those nests, so it is hard to take it down without our notice."

"Especially when we have placed an elite group to guard those places as an additional power," he added in confusion.

"Who are the said assailants?" he asked as he felt that this should not be that simple.

Magnolia hesitated for a moment before answering. "It is not confirmed yet, but based on the descriptions of the survivors... there is a high chance that it is that monstrous duo, who are creating trouble for everyone just recently."

"Battle God Sickarius and Gentle Goddess Arielle?" it did not take Berdugo that long to guess who she was talking about as there was only a single pair who could achieve such a feat present on the Plague Lands.

He then further deepened his frown when he thought about this. "With just the two of them?"

He did not believe that those two could take down those Lord Rank Plague Monsters that easily even with their unrivaled powers.

Even if this monstrous pair could possibly do such a thing, it shouldn't be that fast, where their forces were unable to respond and call for some reinforcements.

"It is impossible. I know that they are strong, but it is impossible for them to 'solo' such a boss monster yet given the progress of the game."

"They may be a little ahead of everyone, but the gap can't be that huge. If it is just a Chieftain Rank Monster, then it can still be possible. But a Lord Rank one here in the Awakened Continent? Impossible!"

As Berdugo was trying to deduce the reason why their core nest had fallen that easily, Magnolia suddenly injected. "Some of the survivors said that they had seen the Gentle Goddess summon a powerful Valkyrie that helped them take care of the Lord Rank Plague Monster."

Hearing that, Berdugo frowned a little deeper as he mumbled to himself. "If that is the case, then it may be possible. But for such a summon to be that powerful, there must be other variables that make it even stronger."

It did not take that long for him to figure out the reason. "Quest Scenario! They must have triggered a quest scenario opposite to us!"

"We have to inform the leader about this! This going to be the main piece of what we are waiting and looking for!"

As he was about to say something more, the expression on Magnolia's face suddenly turned grim as she received another report.

"The second core nest has already fallen! What are we going to do?" she started to panic as she knew that they would be in dire states if they let this continue. "Are we going to send reinforcements to the third core nest or are we letting them do what they want?"

"If only Asesino is not captured by those bastards, then he can manipulate the battlefield with ease."

Berdugo sighed as he heard the latter parts of her words. He then could not help but praise how cunning Shin was with his plans.

"I am sure that this is all part of his plan. Starting from creating trouble to attract all our attention up to provoking the Plague Behemoth... then to suddenly ambushing the core nests... everything must be a trap after trap to lure us in!"

He then turned to Magnolia as he voiced out his plan. "Issue a command to our remaining forces – tell them to gather at the tomb and guard the entrance!"

"I am sure that it will be their next destination after taking care of all the core nests. We must welcome them with our warmest. That will be the final battle."

Hearing his words, Magnolia could not help but furrow her brows. "Are we not sending any reinforcements to the third core nest? You must know, that the process of resurrection will be delayed greatly if all three nests are taken down."

Berdugo shook his head as he said reassuringly. "It is fine. Our goal is never been the resurrection of that king the moment when the Evil Factions have gotten involved. It is to survive and buy as much time as we can for our leader."

"I am not sure what it is, but I can tell that he is planning something after using those words when he is locked inside the tomb hall."

He was one of the longest members of their team, so he was very familiar with their leader. He could tell that Axion had some other plan after seeing the involvement of the Evil Factions in this event.

Magnolia still had her doubts, but she still chose to trust this brute one more time as he was more senior than her within the group.

\*\*\*

Boom!

A huge temple made of bones suddenly collapsed within a cave, which seemed to be hidden away from everyone.

Amid the settling cloud of dust that was caused by the collapse, a pair of silhouettes walked out of it in very calm steps.

Shin, who was one of them, turned around and looked at the collapsed temple before saying. "This is the third and last one. What's our next move?"

At the same time, he raised his hand and looked at the set of sharp teeth of an unknown beast in his hands. These teeth were radiating with the densest plague energy that he could find in this region.

"And are you sure that you don't need these things? I feel like you may find some use of them later," he asked as he turned to Cloe.

They had collected two other things from the previous nests, which were acting as the main core of those places, signifying their importance.

One of them was a pair of goat horns while the other was an elongated and toothless skull of another unknown beast.

He was sure that they would have some uses later once they reached the main tomb that was causing all of this, especially when they looked like a whole set.

Cloe shook her head repeatedly as she answered. "I have no use for them, especially when they look like a set of cursed objects. Do you think a Priestess like me will be needing them? Especially when I am the Holy Maiden of the Church of Light?"

"You can just purify them," Shin shrugged his shoulders in response.

"And do you think it will be that easy given how dense the plague energy that they are carrying?" Cloe snarled before adding. "Given that we are short of time, we don't have to luxury to head to the church either."

"Moreover, I can feel that purifying the spots of the three nests is more than enough," she continued as she looked at the Valkyrie floating in the collapsed temple while chanting out a series of holy prayers.

Swoosh!

Not long after, a burst of blinding light illuminated the entire place before exploding into specks of tiny lights that slowly fell into the ground.

The moment when they touched the ground, the plague energy that was still lingering in the cave suddenly dissipated.

The entire place was now purified.

Right after this, Cloe received a notification from the system. She skimmed through it before turning to Shin. "I've got an update from the system."

She paused for a moment, organizing the information inside her head, before continuing. "It seems like we still have to participate in raiding the Overlord Rank Plague Monster and take two more curse objects from it before anyone else."

"Did it mention which curse object we are looking for?" asked Shin.

Cloe glanced at the notification for another time before answering. "It said that we needed the claws and—... the brain next."

The corner of Shin's mouth suddenly twitched when he heard that before asking. "Are you sure that you have not taken the wrong quest?"

"Why do I feel that it is a Cult's quest rather than something issued by a Righteous Church?" he added, feeling something weird about the quest.

Cloe, on the other hand, shrugged her shoulders before saying. "That is why I am leaving the curse objects to you to handle."

"If something goes wrong, it is you, who will take on the first bunt before anyone else," she giggled, teasing him.

Chapter 1697: Dynamic Duo (Part 2)

.....

Shin and Cloe quickly headed to the place where the main battlefield between the Evil Factions and the Righteous Churches of the Plague Lands.

The moment when they arrived at the vicinity, they were immediately greeted by a chaotic battle scene. The huge body of the Overlord Plague Monster could be easily spotted on the battlefield due to its massive size.

It was currently surrounded by multiple people from both sides of the Evil Factions, particularly the Plague Race, and the Righteous Churches that were constantly fighting within the vicinity near the Plague Behemoth.

The surroundings of this Overlord Monster were very chaotic due to the continuous battle around it.

Moreover, there was also the battle between the Plague Monster and the Templars and Holy Knights of the Righteous Churches. The battle on this side was so intense that it was constantly creating explosions in different places, killing those around them as collateral damage.

"This is going to be a little tricky," commented Shin as he saw how chaotic the battlefield was.

It looked more like a riot rather than a battle. Even a war was more 'organized' than what they were seeing. It was because the number of forces involved was too many. The current scene was like a royal rumble between multiple sides.

The number of rivals currently present in this place far surpassed the ideal number for competition, which was why the situation had become like this.

Those forces that were rivals with one another, disregarded the fact that they were currently in alliance as they wanted to snatch the last hit on the Overlord Rank Plague Monster that was engaging in an intense battle against the NPCs.

Even if the Health Bar of the Plague Behemoth was still at its healthiest state, these crazy people were still trying to dominate their competitors so that they could get a better position when the true contest finally started.

On the other hand, the side of the Plague Players was slowly getting the upper hand due to the foolishness of the opposing side.

Since those guys prioritized getting the benefits, their forces were way too scattered compared to the unified forces of their opposition.

It was not that hard to imagine the current state of the battle as it was already quite obvious given the current situation.

If not for the overwhelming power of those NPCs, then the result of this battle had already been determined ages ago.

...

"How are we going to proceed?" asked Cloe as she also find that their situation was quite tricky to deal with.

"Should we wait until the last moment? After all, our job is only to steal those cursed objects," she added, trying to find the most ideal path for their current situation.

Shin thought for a moment before replying. "Let's observe first. We have to be wary of those NPCs on the side of the Evil Factions after all."

"Those Elders of the Corrupted Cult and Archbishops of the Demonic Churches are still on the sidelines, waiting for the opportunity to defeat 'our' side in one fell swoop."

He then paused for another time, thinking about something, before suddenly turning to Cloe. "As the Holy Maiden of the Church of Light, you have a certain level of authority to mobilize their forces, right?"

"Yeah. It is one of the privileges that come alongside my title," Cloe looked at him confusedly at first before suddenly realizing what he was planning to do. "Don't tell me, you want to do something with them."

Remembering that Shin also had the same level of authority as the Envoy of the Sun and Moon, Cloe quickly looked at him with wide-open eyes. "You-...!"

"That's a good idea!" she added as he agreed with such a plan.

Shin pointed his chin at the ongoing battle filled with chaos before adding. "Look at that situation, it will only be a mess if this continues. It is better if take control over their forces and fix it before they become unsalvageable."

...

Boom!

Bang! Bang! Bang!

At the center of the battlefield, where the Plague Behemoth was fighting the NPCs of the Righteous Churches, the forces of the players from both sides were positioning themselves near to make sure that they would be able to respond the fastest the moment when the situation called for it.

The side of the Righteous Churches wanted the last hit of the Plague Behemoth while those from the Plague Race were waiting for the chance to eliminate a dying NPC of the opposing side.

But as these people were preparing for such situations, something unexpected suddenly happened.

The Templars, Holy Knights, Archbishops, Inquisitors, and other NPCs from the side of the Righteous Churches suddenly halted their actions before swiftly retreating in a very organized manner.

Those from the Church of Light and the Church of the Sun and Moon were the first to retreat while the rest from the other churches quickly followed.

It was as if someone with absolute authority had given them an order, making them follow it without question.

The players around from both sides were caught off guard by the actions of the NPCs, particularly those from the side of the Righteous Churches.

They were too focused on keeping an eye on their surroundings, marking both their direct competitors and those Plague Players. Due to this, they were unable to respond properly when the Plague Behemoth suddenly shifted its attention to them.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

Boom!

"What!? What is happening!? Why the NPCs on our side are suddenly retreating!?"

"What the heck!? Why was the aggro suddenly directed at us?"

"Retreat! Retreat! Get away from the Overlord as far as possible."

The already chaotic formation of those forces from the side of the Righteous Churches became even more chaotic as they tried to disengage from the Plague Behemoth, trying to save as much as they could and lessen their losses.

But since they were already too near the Overlord Monster, getting away from it became near impossible.

Their earlier preparations for last hitting the Overlord Monster had become the greatest mistake had ever made.

To make the situation even worse, those from the side of the Plague Race took advantage of this situation, dealing a more crushing blow to their opposition.

But before they could push even harder, the NPC forces of the Righteous Churches came back and in an even more organized manner.

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

Bang! Bang! Bang!

First was the series of Holy Spells that swallowed the forces of the Plague Race, bombarding them with a consecutive explosion that kicked up some dust in the air and blocked their line of vision.

Rumble!

Not long after, loud and simultaneous steps came behind the cloud of dust, which was immediately followed by a line of heavily armored groups of Holy Knights charging forward.

Boom!

The powerful momentum of this charging group of knights bulldozed everything in their path, crushing and knocking everyone in their path.

The forces on the side of the Plague Race were unable to respond properly as the unexpected turn of events came a little too sudden.

The forces of the Righteous Churches were supposed to retreat, giving the other side to push forward. But they suddenly turned back once again and with an even greater intensity, turning the tides once again.

The Heavy Armor Holy Knights did not stop there as they quickly set up a solid line of defense, preparing to engage the incoming Plague Behemoth.

BOOM!

They raised their shield even higher before simultaneously slamming them into the ground.

They then simultaneously activated one of the most basic, but also one of the most important skills of the Knight Class – the Shield Wall.

Swoosh!

Connecting their skills, a thick and towering wall of light was erected, blocking the advance of the Plague Behemoth.

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

At the same time, holy lights fell on the bodies of the holy knights, enhancing their overall stats and blessing their bodies.

In response, the already sturdy wall had become more powerful right before the charging Plague Behemoth charged straight into it.

Boom!

The shining wall trembled violently right after the collision, but nothing happened other than that. Even the heavy-armored Holy Knights did not move an inch despite the strong impact upon collision.

The Plague Behemoth even stumbled a little, shaking its head from the little dizziness that it had gotten from the collision.

But before it could recover from it, a gentle yet commanding voice suddenly reverberated on the battlefield.

"Now!"

Right after getting the signal, the Archbishops a few distance behind the Holy Knights simultaneously raised their holy staffs and cast their spells all at the same time.

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

Clank! Clank! Clank!

Magic circles suddenly appeared underneath the Plague Behemoth before holy chains simultaneously shot from it and firmly wrapped themselves on different parts of the Overlord's body, restricting its movements.

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

At the same time, the Holy Mages and Inquisitors on the same line as those Archbishops cast multiple spells and sent them to the Plague Behemoth.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

(-50,245), (52,123), (51, 996), ...

Huge numbers appeared on the head of the Overlord Monster, signifying the huge damage that the group had dealt.

But it was still quite negligible given how huge the Health Bar of the Plague Behemoth was. It barely moved despite the number of spells that bombarded it.

Roar!

But it still became even more enraged despite being in its already berserk state.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

It dragged the golden chains wrapped around its body and bumped its shoulders at the shield wall repeatedly, causing it to shake violently.

The Holy Knights were now getting immense pressure coming from the Overlord Plague Monster due to the repeated collisions. But they remained firm and steady, blocking the monster to the best of their abilities while trusting those comrades behind them.

The Archbishops repeatedly healed those at the frontline while also casting a couple of buffs from time to time.

At this moment, the Holy Mages slightly paused their attacks as they prepared for an even stronger spell.

Realizing this, the Plague Behemoth became even more aggressive, hitting the shield wall with all its might.

Boom!

A hole was created as a group of holy knights was blasted away by a powerful strike from the Overlord Monster.

But when the Plague Behemoth was about to break through that gap, someone suddenly flew straight to it.

Swoosh!

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

Roar!

A huge figure of the monster suddenly appeared as that person unsheathed his sword and swung it forward, heading straight to the income Overlord.

Boom!

(-1, 983, 218)

Another set of huge numbers appeared on the head of the Plague Behemoth as the force upon impact made it somewhat stumble backward, forcing it into retreat.

Seeing its massive body almost falling upon impact, the players from both sides of the Evil Factions and Righteous Churches could not help but turn to the suspended figure of the man responsible for the previous attack.

At first, they thought it was a powerful NPC, given how mighty that attack was. But then they saw the familiar black-and-white half-smiling and half-crying mask of that person, and the hood of his cloak fell from his head due to the intense wind caused by the earlier attack.

They did not have to guess who it was, as the guy in question had just earlier kept on creating trouble for everyone within the Plague Lands.

They knew that he would be participating in this raid, but they did not expect that he would make such an entrance.

Not only that, it seemed like the whole army of the NPCs under the Righteous Churches seemed to be obeying his command.

Be out everything, the scene of him forcing you the massive body of the Plague Behemoth in retreat was still the one that stunned them the most.

The damage that he dealt might have been a little scratch compared to the monster's still-healthy HP bar, but the impact that it made was strong enough to send the message to everyone.

The Battle God Sickarius had joined the battle!

Chapter 1698: Dynamic Duo (Part 3)

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"Attack!" said Shin with a quiet yet commanding voice. The battlefield was 'silent' due to his appearance, which made his cold voice reverberate in the entire place.

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

His body was still slowly descending from the air and the gazes of every player within the vicinity were directed at his figure when a series of flickering silhouettes flashed and flew past Shin's figure in the air.

The Templars, who were waiting for his signal, immediately made their moves. They leaped into the air and flew straight to the Plagued Behemoth, which was currently trying to regain its footing.

They successively swung their swords, sending a holy beam or sword waves at the Overlord Monster, bombarding it with powerful attacks.

Boom! Boom! Boom!

Consecutive explosions erupted as the attacks landed cleanly on the body of the Plague Behemoth pushing it further by each collision. Adding that the attacks were thrown successively, the knockback effect that they had was stacking up, pushing the monster further down to its knees.

Unfortunately, the Plague Behemoth was an Overlord Rank Boss for a reason, so making it fall would be very hard.

Roar!

The Plague Behemoth released a deafening roar that shook the entire battlefield, making those with average willpower be on their knees.

But due to the blessings of the archbishops stationed at the backline, the Holy Knights and Templars were able to withstand the roar as they poured on the gap that the monster had created earlier.

"Release!"

In the meantime, Cloe, who was leading those at the backline, sent out her signal to which the Holy Mages released the magic spell that they had been preparing since earlier.

Zong~! Long~! Long~!

A huge magic circle suddenly appeared, covering the entire range within the five-hundred-meter radius. This magic circle filled with mystic sacred runes, created a huge prism domain that extended up into the sky.

This domain had locked everyone within and prevented anyone from getting in.

Roar!

Seeing the domain, the Plague Behemoth became even more enraged as it could feel that the plague energy filling the air was slowly being purified by the holy powers that were gradually gathering in this place.

The Overlord Boss glared fiercely at the group of Holy Mages in the distance, wanting to rip them into pieces.

Unfortunately, the Templars and Holy Knights were constantly preventing it from advancing, thoroughly pinning it in place.

It became even more enraged because of the situation, making it attack more aggressively.

Shin did not sit idle either. He actively joined the battle while also carefully manipulating the formation of the frontline, making their attacks and defense more efficient.

From time to time, he was also throwing an attack of his own, even though most of his attacks did not deal that much damage to the monster.

Regardless, the effects of each of his attacks were able to disrupt the rhythm that the Plague Behemoth was trying to build as well as the energy accumulation that was supposed to be gathering inside its body.

Seeing the Plague Behemoth taking a beating from the forces of the Righteous Churches, those from the side of the Plague Race had finally regained themselves and started assisting their Totem Beast.

The powerful NPCs that the Evil Factions had sent were also planning to make their respective move after seeing that the situation was getting a little out of hand.

But when they were about to step into the battle, the Commander, who was leading the NPC forces of the Righteous Churches earlier suddenly appeared before them and blocked their path.

Along with his direct subordinates, who were also at the Captain and Lieutenant Ranks, they formed a barricade that prevented the opposing NPCs

Shin had already arranged their roles earlier in that brief moment.

Seeing that his commands were on point and reasonable, the Commander NPC agreed with his arrangements, especially when the commander could feel the immense threat that these elders and heretics sent by the Corrupted Cult and the Demonic Churches.

The players immediately realized that the tides of the battle were surging once again. They quickly picked up their respective weapons and resumed their battle.

But this time, it would be hard to just join the battle as the already troublesome and well-organized formation of the NPC army earlier had become even more perfect under Shin and Cloe's command.

Those at the side of the Righteous Churches realized that they had to get rid of these two somehow so that they could sneak inside their formation and get near the Plague Behemoth when it was time for the last hit.

Those from the side of the Evil Factions, on the other hand, felt like they had to get rid of the pair so that they could regain their earlier upper hand.

Unfortunately, targeting the two was not as easy as it seemed. Forget about the fact that those two were absolute monsters of the game, particularly in their respective abilities and areas of expertise. Just getting near the two of them alone was already a challenge due to the NPCs surrounding them.

Cloe was currently in the middle of the Archbishops and Holy Mages, giving out commands one after another. If it was just those NPCs supports and range classes, then it was still possible to approach her.

But with the protection of the Templars, who remained to protect the backline, and the presence of the Inquisitors guarding the rear, trying to get near her was close to impossible.

Meanwhile, Shin was even harder to reach as he was mixed in the ranks of those Templars and Holy Knights fighting at the frontlines.

The scale of the battle was already devastating enough to kill the surrounding players in an instant. Moreover, those attacks that killed such unlucky people were only the shockwaves stray energy beams, and explosions caused by the Plague Behemoth and the NPC Forces.

They were also outside the center of the battlefield at that time, so it was hard to imagine how much harder it was to be at the frontline.

The players were already having a hard time figuring out a way to get near the Overlord Boss, yet here was Shin joining the battle as if it was something trivial.

Seeing that it was somewhat of an impossible task to eliminate Shin, the higher-ups of each force joining the battle could not help but take a gamble.

They would send their strongest members to the center of the battlefield and try to join the battle, copying what Shin was doing.

It was the same for both sides of the Evil Faction and the Righteous Churches, seemingly having a tacit agreement.

They sent all their people to the frontline without much thought to how Shin was freely manipulating the NPC army despite being someone like them.

Naturally, Shin realized their intention, but he did not immediately try to eliminate those elite experts who tried to join the battle. He wanted to use them as free labor before throwing them to the side once it was finally time.

But at the same time, he also could not afford to let them roam on the battlefield freely, so he had to show them who the boss was without showing much of his real power.

With a signal, he ordered one of the most elite Templars and instructed them to monitor the newcomers, preventing them from doing anything funny later.

Fortunately, the Templar that he had instructed was one of the loyal devotees of the Church of the Church of Sun and Moon, making it easier for Shin to 'control' them.

The templar moved without hesitation and followed his instructors immediately after.

The elites, who had thought that they were able to sneak into the battlefield much easier, could not help but pause their actions after seeing the powerful Templar blocking their way.

One of the foolish youngsters wanted to do something stupid by relying on his background and wealth to suppress this so-called NPC and 'punish' them.

"How can a mere NPC dare to halt our actions?" asked this youth as two of his companions suddenly pounced on him. One covered his mouth to prevent him from saying anything, while the other held his arms firm so that this fool could not make the matter worse.

Unfortunately, the situation was already out of hand as Shin shook his head. "I originally wanted to do this in a more 'civilized' way, but I guess I still have to engrave into their minds their situation."

"Fortunately, someone has 'volunteered' to be the perfect example," he added before signaling that Templar.

Without any hesitation, the Templar swung his sword and cut the foolish player down, killing him with a single strike. That guy did not even have the chance to do anything before he was killed.

His companions were also included as the Templar Knight did not show any mercy and included them as the 'example' that Shin was looking for.

Everyone could not help but halt in their tracks as they stared at Shin warily.

Shin ignored the looks that they were making as he gestured to them. "If you want to join this battle, then you are more than welcome to join. But since this is now my playground, you must follow my rules if you don't want to end up like those three fools."

After that, he ignored the rest of their reaction as he left to resume his post. But not without leaving that powerful Templar behind to 'monitor' these guys and manage their actions.

They now became Shin's free laborer and he was planning to work their \*sses hard.

## Chapter 1699: Dynamic Duo (Part 4): Targeted

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Watching the ongoing battle from a safe distance, the players with the greatest fighting capabilities present in the Plague Lands help of the respective forces that they belonged to gather at a single point, having a 'secret' meeting.

A Tigerkin Berserker was to arrive at the meeting place. He could not help but sigh when he found that no one had arrived yet. "Those guys have never changed. Always late when it comes to such matters."

This guy had an immense bloodlust that clearly indicated that he was a bloodthirsty and battle-hungry person. The aura that he was passively emitting was more than enough to warn those who were near him to think twice before provoking him.

"Taking behind our back once again, Bloodflame?" said an Elven Thief, who seemed to be purposely emitting an immense killing intent to let others know his presence. It was the complete opposite of those from the same class, who were supposed to stay lowkey and be invisible to everyone's eyes.

The Tigerkin Berserker squinted his eyes when he saw the newcomer. "Mamba? Now this is surprising. Where are the other Hydra Heads? And I thought that you guys were not participating in this event. What are you doing here then?"

The Elven Thief from the Blood Elf Tribe shrugged his shoulders as he replied nonchalantly. "Those fools are left to oversee the events in the other continent."

He then paused for a moment as his eyes suddenly turned fierce. "As for my reason for coming here... I don't think it is your business."

Bloodflame just chuckled as he took the threatening tone of the other party as some sort of joke. "I see, I see. Then I can expect something interesting to happen."

Mad Berserker Bloodflame was a top Maverick God of the Shadow League, which was a group of maverick players who disdained to participate in any kind of professional league as they believed that the real strength of an individual could only be shown in a real battlefield, which was in the wilderness or war areas of the game.

After all, whatever you experienced between the two was different, especially the latter stage as it was filled with unexpected variables that you would risk your life such as unexpected ambushes from assassinations and chaotic battles where anything could happen.

Regardless, each member of their group was a top-notch expert, ranging from powerful Maverick Gods up to some Godlike Players with very high rankings on the ladder.

As for Mamba, he was one of the Hydra Heads of the Hydra Guild, so it was not hard to imagine how strong he was. Given that the Hydra Guild was publicly recognized as the number one guild of the game, especially after the most recent guild war between them and the Central Order, where they showed their overwhelming power.

Every Hydra Head of the guild had a thief or assassin-related class, which was their unique feature compared to the other guilds.

But that did not mean that every member of the Hydra Guild was an assassin as they were not like those guilds, which were considered hitman groups.

Assassin Union might be dominated by Assassins and Thieves due to the nature of their guild, but there were still some people, who had different classes. But at the same time, the said players with such classes still had their respective means to hide their tracks and presence as well as methods to eliminate their targets such as sniping someone from afar.

The Hydra Guild was such a unique guild as almost all their higher-ups had such a unified class specification.

As one of the Hydra Heads, Mamba was one of the well-known Godlike Players of the group. But unlike the others who had a dedicated title, he had multiple ones, albeit mostly minor due to the less popular tournaments that he had participated in.

His in-game achievements, on the other hand, were mostly unnoticed as he was instructed to focus on eliminating specific targets rather than building up his fame.

Regardless, he still became a very famous assassin, ranking quite high in the Assassination Expert Ranking List and Godly Assassin Rankings, especially when he was one of the guys that made the Berserker Thief fighting style famous within the gaming circle.

As both of these guys were bloodthirsty players, their fighting spirit and competitive nature started to kick in right after seeing each other. They were itching to clash against each other, forgetting about their purpose in coming here.

But before they could even charge at one another to give it a go, another player arrived at the meeting place.

"Tsk! Tsk! Creating trouble already? I hope your Guild Leaders beat the crap out of you once this operation fails," said a lazy voice.

Turning their heads toward that direction, the pair, who were on the verge of breaking into a fight, saw a swordsman walking the path of a Blade Demon.

It was a Tier 3 Class, which was the direct promotion of the Tier 2 Class Dual Blader. Given that this person possessed the direction of the promotion of a regular class, his skills, and strength were something that could not be underestimated.

All players, who had managed to promote their regular class path into Tier 3, were among the best and most elite individuals in the game.

Adding the fact that he was a higher-up of a well-established and famous guild, he was by no means weak.

But this was not all as his reputation did not just end here. Just like Mamba, he was a highly ranked Godlike Player. But unlike the other party, who was ordered to play it a little 'lowkey', this person chose to be taken out of the official ranking list voluntarily because of unknown reasons.

"Oh~! Would you look at this? The Lazy Sword of the Mythical Guild is here! Arlo, the Sleeping God!" said Bloodflame sarcastically after seeing the other party.

"I heard that you and the others have some issues with the Empyrean Talons which is why you are joining this operation," he added as the grin that he was wearing grew even larger.

Finding another powerful opponent makes his blood boil, making it hard to suppress his desire for battle.

Arlo did not say anything as he was too lazy for it. He was even too lazy to come over to this place as well. If not for the Guild Leader directly telling him to get involved due to the huge loss that their guild had suffered at the hands of Empyrean Talons in the Sacred Light Kingdom, then he would not be here in the first place.

He just looked for a random spot to lie down before signaling the two. "You two can start fighting for all I care. Just don't disturb my nap."

Since the others were still not here yet, he wanted to take this opportunity to have his precious nap time. "Just tell me when this useless meeting will start."

After that, he closed his eyes and ignored the existence of the two altogether. What would happen next would not concern him anyway.

As for these two trying to sneak attack him, he was confident that they would not dare to do that even with their respective characters who loved fighting. Every expert within the circle of Godlike Players and

Maverick Gods of the old ranking list knew not to provoke this sleeping god as he had gotten that title for a reason.

Even if Bloodflame wanted to try it, his rationality still won as the mission given to him by the League Master took priority over everything else.

It was at this moment when another person arrived. This time, it was a knight cladded with a set of full-body heavy armor. The armor seemed to be a mixture of steel and gold given the shade that it had.

The armor was also filled with golden runes, but the most glaring of them all was the pair of golden sun emblems engraved on each side of the shoulders.

"Tyrone is here to represent the Golden Dawn!" he announced with a thunderous voice as he approached the meeting point.

"Oh! The goody to shoes is the representative of those hypocrites? This team is getting messier the more time goes by," said Mamba as he could already tell that all the troublemakers of the top forces present in the Plague Lands and planning to work together to take down that problematic duo of the Empyrean Talons messing up their plans would be gathering here.

Tyrone, the vice chief tank of the Golden Dawn and also known as the Golden Shield of the Sun, was a Maverick God who could be ranked as one of the top tankers of the game.

He could also get a Godlike Title of his own if he wanted, but he kept on avoiding the idea of joining any kind of professional and official tournaments for some reason.

He kept on saying that it was against his code as a knight, which made him a laughingstock when he first started his career as a gamer.

But after the Guild Leader of the Golden Dawn picked him up from the slump and polished him into what he was today, Tyrone became a key figure.

The only problem he had was that eight-grade syndrome that he never graduated from despite being in his early twenties.

Not long after, the other representatives arrived one after another, filling the place with their overwhelming auras.

This meeting was meant to target Shin and Cloe, who were racking up a lot of contributions and event points due to their current performance.

Everyone here wanted to stop that as they knew it would be impossible to catch up to the two if they let them continue like this.

Chapter 1700: Dance of the White Witch and the Dark Swordsman (Part 1)

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Shin could not help but frown deeply as he felt that the raid against the Plague Behemoth was taking a little longer than he had expected. Moreover, the Overlord Monster seemed to be under the Berserk State for quite some time when the effects of the drugs should have ended ages ago.

It was only at that moment that he remembered to open his system log, particularly his message panel. That was only when he realized what had happened, especially after reading the last message that Exheart had sent.

"Using both of the vials? An overdosage of those drugs? Then this Overlord Boss Monster is high?" the corner of his mouth could not help but twitch due to the late report that Exheart had sent to him.

"No wonder the effects of the drugs are absurdly long and a little fiercer," he added before quickly smirking. "But it is also for the better. Once the effects of those drugs wear off, the side effects will also be much worse."

He then paused as he swept his gaze at the battlefield before suddenly sighing. "But it will also give these fools some hope, making the situation much more chaotic."

"I guess I have to execute the other plan and push it ahead. I need to eliminate these guys before they become annoying later," he was about to go with his plan when he suddenly sensed something strange.

There seemed to be something odd in the air filling the battlefield. He was quite familiar with this feeling as it was something that those who wanted him dead were always giving him.

"Want to play a hunting game?" Shin raised his brows a little before smirking. "Let's see who will be the prey."

At the same time, he sent a message to Cloe, informing her about the hidden guys plotting against them.

They had already expected something like this, but Shin could tell that the ones targeting them were not like the first batch that was sent earlier to join the boss raid at the center of the battlefield.

"Should I play for a fool and lure them out or should I take the initiative to attack," he mumbled as he paused his tracks, thinking what to do next.

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In the meantime, Cloe, who had just gotten the warning from Shin, further heightened her guard. She was already feeling somewhat uneasy for quite a while now, making her suspect that something was going on behind the shadows.

With Shin's warning, her suspicion became true instantly as she trusted Shin's instincts, especially on these kinds of occasions.

She glanced at her surroundings while continuing to give orders to the NPCs at the backline. She was pretending that she was not aware of the hidden dangers that were lurking in the shadows of the battlefield.

She first looked at the formation of the NPCs and took note of the gaps that could possibly be used by those guys to sneak into their ranks.

Given that she was under the protection of these elite group of NPCs along with their high perception, it was close to impossible to penetrate their formation by ordinary players of thief and assassin classes.

But if they were someone with god-level skills, then sneaking inside would be much easier. With the serious tone that Shin had when he sent her the message, Cloe knew that the ones targeting them would most likely be of such caliber.

As she was doing all of these, a mild and quiet fluctuation of mana appeared in certain places. If not for her constant surveying of the surroundings and the special magic circles meant for detecting any hostile intent around her, then she would have most likely missed these signals, especially in the middle of such a hectic and chaotic battlefield.

"They are already somewhat surrounding me!" Cloe was a little surprised at how fast the other party made their moves.

They might still be quite far from her current position and their numbers were quite low, only having 3 members. But given that all three of them managed to sneak inside their formation without alerting these NPCs around her, she knew that they were at least at the level of a high-ranking Godlike Player or a top-notched Maverick God.

Not waiting for them to make their moves, Cloe decisively raised her holy staff and cast 'Illuminate', which was a skill that was commonly used to reveal those under stealth.

But her version was much more advanced and greatly enhanced by her dense holy powers.

Swoosh!

The NPCs around her were somewhat taken aback by her sudden actions, especially when they were currently in the most crucial stage of the battle.

The Plague Behemoth was already about to fall! With a little more patience, they would be able to take down this filthy monster.

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

The three players, who were planning to ambush Cloe, were slightly taken aback by the sudden move of their target. But they were still able to regain their composure and took advantage of the confusion of the NPCs to quickly rush toward her.

Mamba of the Hydra Guild was the first to arrive as he was nearest to her. The burst of speed that was produced by multiple layers of speed-boosting buffs and his movement skill produced an unimaginable effect, making him reach Cloe in almost an instant.

He was already swinging his daggers at her as a crimson light enveloped them.

But before his perfect strikes could reach their target, Cloe, who was already anticipating the attack, suddenly slammed her staff into the ground and cast 'Repel' to send him flying back to his previous location.

Bang!

Swoosh!

At the same time, another person reached her side, perfectly timing his ambush when Cloe had already expended the previous spell, which was one of the fastest to cast among the defensive skills of healers.

This person was a Wolfkin Hunter (Beastman Thief) with a pair of sickles. He was already about to use his weapons to sever Cloe's head with a perfectly timed ambush when an invisible barrier appeared around Cloe and protected her from any harm.

Clang! Clang!

"Tsk! You are getting rusty, Oblivion!" said a mocking voice as the third, and final assassin, materialized beside Cloe and poked the barrier with his stiletto, popping the only protection that she had like a bubble.

Their coordinated actions were perfectly executed despite them working together for the very first time. This was the advantage of being an apex predator of the game. They would be able to work with other experts of such caliber without problem given their rich and vast experience.

But despite all of that, Cloe remained calm. She was not an ordinary player either! Her other title as the White Witch of the Everlasting Night was not for show.

Shriek!

She opened her mouth and released a deafening cry that halted the actions of the two due to the fear debuff that they had gotten from the spell.

Immediately after that, she quickly slammed her holy staff on the ground, sending another strong ripple that pushed the two away from her.

It was only at this moment when Cloe 'relaxed' her posture. She swept her gaze at the three, who just tried to ambush her with their almost seamless coordination, before slightly frowning her brows.

"Mamba, one of Hydra Heads of the Hydra Guild; Oblivion, the Fangs of the Scavengers Mercenary Group; and Drex, the Fleeting Wind God," she mumbled as she identified them. "This is going to be a little trickier to deal with."

She knew that she would have the assistance of the NPCs around her. But she was still not confident that they could protect her as these three were Godlike Players in the field they chose to walk with.

One of them was a Berserker Thief, which relied more on bursts of speed and powerful attacks, almost neglecting the other advantages of the profession. They were famous for their hyper-aggressive style of fighting and relentless attacks that never ceased once started.

The other was a tricky assassin, who loved to launch an ambush with the most unexpected yet most effective time. He was a type of assassin, who patiently waited for his opponent to lower their guards before striking at the moment they least expected.

As for the final one, he was known for his perfect balance of speed and stealth skills. Among the three, he might not be the strongest, but he was the trickiest to deal with given that he could also switch between the two well-known styles of thief classes.

Looking at the three warily, Cloe could not help but turn her gaze at Shin, who was still busy commanding the other NPCs at the frontline while also actively participating in the raid.

If the ones attacking her were at this caliber already, then the ones that he would be dealing with on his side shouldn't be any weaker, especially when he was much easier to ambush given the state of the battle at the frontlines.

Regardless, she remained calm, fully trusting Shin with his skills. What she needed to do for now was deal with these three before helping her partner later.

As she made a decision, her eyes suddenly turned cold and sharp.

Given the expression she was wearing, it was clear that the other side of the Gentle Goddess was about to reveal herself again.