1987. Siege of Bastion

The Nightmare Creatures had reached the shore, crawling out of the surging lake like a swarm of horrors that had escaped the forbidden depths of Pandora's box. In the darkness of the night, their wet, slithering figures glistened with the ghostly radiance of reflected moonlight. Enormous limbs rose high into the air and plummeted down, making the ruin shake as they sank into the rubble to pull the monstrous bodies onto land.

This time, of course, it was not Pandora who had opened the mystical box out of curiosity.

Instead, Morgan's monstrous brother had done it out of malice.

Still, she wasn't too concerned.

...If these poor creatures had known any better, they would have stayed in the depths. They would have guessed that the box had not been locked to contain the horrors inside - instead, it had been locked to protect them from the true monsters that dwelled beyond.

Witnessing the chilling tide of abominations, Soul Reaper smiled.

“I guess it's my turn.”

She did not seem particularly impressed by the sheer dread and splendor of the chilling scene. The blue-eyed wraith remained calm and laid-back, as if facing a swarm of Great and Corrupted abominations was not a death sentence for most Saints.

Then again, this Saint in particular had long proven that death was afraid of her, and not the other way around.

Morgan gave her a brief look.

“Lure them into the ruins.”

Jet raised an eyebrow, amused.

“They'll topple the wall.”

Morgan looked at the crumbling wall they were standing on. This great fortress — what remained of it — was her ancestral home. Three generations of the Valor family had dwelled here, and it was from these ruins that the glorious Sword Domain was born.

She shrugged impassively.

“Let them topple it, then.”

Her brother was determined to stop at nothing to destroy Valor.

There was no step he would hesitate to take, and no sacrifice he was unwilling to make.

That was how one won a war.

And Morgan... Morgan was the Princess of War. She was prepared to sacrifice the entire world if it meant achieving victory, let alone these ancient walls.

Soul Reaper smiled crookedly, then picked up her war scythe, raised it above her shoulder... and tossed it forward with tremendous force, as if throwing a javelin.

At the same time, her body turned into a torrent of mist and swirled around the scythe, being carried away from the safety of the fortress by its pull.

Far below, Aether had reached Athena's position and dashed past her, rushing back toward the wall. Raised By Wolves herself lingered, summoning a long spear and looking at the approaching tide of abominations with a grim expression.

It was then that the ghostly war scythe landed among the Nightmare Creatures. Suddenly, a chilling mist exploded from it in all directions, obscuring the view.

A moment later, haunting wails resounded from within the veil of mist, echoing across the restless lake.

Morgan had no time to pay attention to that part of the battlefield anymore. The Nightmare Creatures, calamitous as they were - just a couple of them could have destroyed all of humanity a few decades ago were merely a diversion today.

The true threat was her brother.

“Athena, retreat!”

Below the wall, Raised by Wolves stared at the cloud of mist with a complicated expression, then gritted her teeth and dashed back.

Morgan could see Tyhaon's fin towering above the surface of the lake as it cut the surging water. Her brother was moving around the ruins, threatening to attack them from the east.

At the same time, a vast swathe of the lake west of the crumbling castle boiled, revealing glimpses of gargantuan tentacles and an abominable body surfacing from the depths.

There were more Transcendent vessels advancing from the south, as well.

Morgan scowled for a moment, calculating the timing.

‘...He got me good, this time.’

Her vermilion eyes glistened in the darkness.

Despite the head start, Aether reached the battlements at the same time as Athena. Morgan studied them for a moment, then spoke evenly:

“Nightingale... intercept Knossos and his retinue, if you will. Athena, stall Typhaon for as long as you can.”

After Soul Reaper, these two were her strongest champions. In fact, they were no weaker than the former pillars of the House of Night, Typhaon and Knossos, had been - despite being decades younger and far less experienced. Morgan even suspected that they would have slain the legendary Saints in battle, if given the chance to face them one-on-one.

Sadly, the two Stormsea Saints were dead, and it was Mordret controlling their bodies now. Not only was her brother fearsome, but he was also shrewd and cunning, never letting his most powerful vessels face her best warriors without an advantage.

So, she could only hope to stall them today.

Athena sighed, then dismissed her spear and crouched. A moment later, the crumbling wall shook, and the stones under her feet cracked the beautiful Saint soared into the air in a stunning leap, seemingly flying toward the swiftly approaching fin.

As she flew, her body, which seemed to be cast of polished steel, expanded in size.

By the time Raised by Wolves landed in the water, she was a steel colossus at least a hundred meters in height. A great wave rose from her plunge into the lake, and a deafening thunderclap rolled across the lake, making the trees on the distant shore sway.

She was standing far away from the ruined fortress, and yet, the water barely reached her things.

The lake was deep enough to swallow even a giant like Athena, but she had chosen her battlefield carefully — there, the water was deep enough to lure Tyhaon to come, but not so deep as to leave her no fighting chance.

Of course, she could have fought him at the bottom of the lake, if she so wished. Saints could hold their breath for a long time, after all however, fighting a Transcendent of the House of Night in the depths was something that only people with a death wish would do.

...Almost at the same time, a graceful figure dashed across the black sky, rushing west.

Nightingale assumed his Transcendent form as he flew, and soon, moonlight glistened on the beautiful scales of a majestic dragon. His great body was dark like the night sky, and his eyes were like silver stars. The vast shadow of his wings covered the tall waves, raising up a hurricane.

Morgan sighed.

The three government Saints were each handling an overwhelming foe.

But it was up to her and the Saints of Night to face the most dreadful adversary.