1989. Home Sweet Home

Morgan had her bow, and the Saints of Night had already summoned their weapons.

In this battle, their strength would be stifled by having to fight on land. However, that did not mean that they were powerless — far from it.

Naeve was wearing light, but immensely resilient armor sewn from the skin of some unknown sea monster, wielding a long harpoon made of bone as a spear. His indigo eyes seemed to glow in the moonlight, and his handsome face was both somber and cold.

Bloodwave had summoned a heavy armor forged from dull metal, which made his towering figure seem even more formidable. He was armed with a heavy cutlass — there were two of them before, but one had been destroyed in one of the previous battles. Now, the taciturn Saint simply used the claws of his steel gauntlet to rend the flesh of his enemies.

Aether reached toward the sky, grasping a ray of starlight and manifesting it into a thin blade. The youngest of the Saints did not possess as much physical strength as the rest of them, but made up for it with speed and skill. The weapons he could weave from starlight were absolutely lethal... still, his Aspect was not suited for close combat that well.

Not that anyone was suited well for facing Mordret.

Today, the defenders of the crumbling fortress were weaker than they had ever been. Morgan's three most powerful champions were away, each dealing with their own crisis.

Her brother, meanwhile, still possessed more than enough vessels to take the castle. Some of them were following Knossos and Typhaon, but ten — including his true body — were here.

They had already scaled the outer wall, avoiding the cloud of mist and the Nightmare Creatures that were still fighting Soul Reaper within it. Mordret himself lingered at the top of the rampart, looking up at the second ring of the battlements.

Despite the apocalyptic noise of the battle, his voice reached Morgan and her Saints clearly.

"Ah... how sweet it is, to finally come home"

Despite the sweet words, his tone was deep and dark, full of nothing but coldness and malice.

He smiled.

"Aren't you going to welcome me, sister?"

Instead of an answer, Morgan sent an arrow flying his way.

Laughing, Mordret swatted it away with his sword. As the Spell whispered in her ear, announcing the Memory's destruction, her brother and his vessels leaped off the outer wall and rushed toward the second ring.

'I guess he's done being sentimental.’

Morgan sighed and dismissed her bow, summoning a sword instead.

All around Bastion, runes carved into the ancient stone suddenly lit up with ethereal light as its enchantment array came alive.

Before, Sentinel Swords left behind by her father would come alive and fall like steel rain on the heads of the invaders. Many other deadly enchantments would activate, as well, enveloping the ruined fortress in a defensive net.

Sadly, most of the array's power had been exhausted in the past few weeks. The Sentinel Swords had been shattered one after another, the reserves of essence powering the array had been drained, and many of the runes forming it had been found and destroyed.Now, the colossal enchantment was a pale shadow of its former self.

It still did one thing particularly well, however...

It restricted both the Others and the Aspect powers of the Prince of Nothing.

Here in the crumbling fortress, he could only rely on brute strength to obliterate its defenders.

Morgan raised her sword and prepared to fight.

Four Saints against ten Transcendent vessels of a murderous madman — the odds were not too great.

...For her brother, that was.

Because while he could not use his Aspect, Morgan could still use hers.Activating one of the enchantments stored in her body, she sensed dire strength permeating her very being. Time seemed to slow down a little.

Smiling viciously, Morgan dashed forward and met the first of the Transcendent vessels as it leaped onto the wall.

Those of the taken Saints who could move on land in their Transcendent forms had kept them. Those who could not had become humans again.

Each of them looked different, but all — both humans and creatures — had the same cold, inhuman, unfeeling look in their eyes.

With dark flames of boundless wrath burning beneath the cold surface.Morgan crossed swords with one of the human vessels, throwing it back off the wall. But in the next moment, she had to dodge back as a gargantuan clawed hand fell on the battlements, sending a rain of sparks flying in all directions.

The claws bit into the ancient stone, and a hideous snout rose above the parapet, resembling that of a giant crocodile. The triangular fangs snapped, almost taking Morgan's arm off... or at least catching her in a crushing trap.

Her body was as hard as steel, so her limbs were not that easily separated from it.

A moment later, two swift figures dashed past the crocodile's head, and she had to defend herself from two insidious blows.

Morgan managed to deflect one, but the second scratched against her armor. Worse than that, the enchanted blade seemed to have left a corrosive film in its wake, making the black steel of her breastplate boil and flow down in thín streams of bubbling metal.

That was what made her brother so deadly.

Not the number of his vessels, and not their power.

It was their perfect coordination, which allowed them to fight as different parts of the same organism.

Because they were.

If it were any other pair of enemies, Morgan would have managed to evade both blows, but the vessels of the Prince of Nothing left no chance to the enemy.

‘Damn it’

Ten of them...

The enormous crocodile head rose into the air, revealing an immense neck. The creature's body was both reptilian and humanlike in nature, and it was truly enormous, standing almost as tall as the wall. The towering creature unleashed another blow at the battlements, making a section of them crumble from the obliterating force of the impact, and outstretched a mighty hand. A hurricane of sparks swirled around it, starting to form into a giant bronze trident.

Morgan pursed her lips.

On both sides of her, Naeve, Bloodwave, and Aether had already clashed with the remaining six vessels of the Prince of Nothing.Mordret himself was holding back, for now, waiting to see if Morgan had prepared any traps for him.

‘...Should I be flattered? He really seems to have a very high opinion of my abilities.'

Well... who could blame him?

After all, she did have a trap prepared.

In fact, this whole battle, and this whole siege, had been a carefully constructed trap.