2212 Battle Royale  
  
Far away from the sweltering heat of Godgrave, high in the frigid cold of Ravenheart, a magnificent black palace was shrouded by the veil of a raging snowstorm. As the winds howled, a low and reverberating sound echoed in the snow, making the people in the city across the great bridge freeze and turn their heads.  
  
There was the groan of stone, and then, the towering main gates of the black palace opened wide foг the first time in countless years.  
  
Beyond the gates nestled deep, dreadful darkness.  
  
A moment later, grotesque shapes emerged from the darkness and entered into the light, moving indifferently through the lethal cold of the snowstorm.  
  
A vast, seemingly endless river of marching dead was flowing out of the black palace, across the stone bridge, and into the towering fissure of the Dream Gate. There were Nightmare Creatures of all shapes and forms in that river, as well as countless humans.  
  
The puppets differed from each other in shape, in size... but a few of them were far more terrifying than all the rest.  
  
Those were the puppets made from the corpses of slain Titans.  
  
As the hurricane of scarlet sparks was giving birth to a vast storm of swords, the first of the Titans passed through the Dream Gate, stepping onto the surface of the dead god's breastbone.  
  
The world quaked under its footsteps.  
  
The dead that stood in front of the Sword Army had seemed like a legion, but now that the icy halls of Ravenheart opened, their numbers suddenly looked paltry and insignificant.  
  
The soldiers of both armies watched in stunned silence as the endless procession of the Queen's puppets marched from the billowing snow, the flow of them never ceasing until an entire army of the dead flooded the bone plain, all of them staring at the boundless clouds of swords with eerie, empty gazes.  
  
The Titans towered above them like grotesque mountains of flesh, some of them so gargantuan that they had barely squeezed through the immense fissure of the Dream Gate.  
  
The sea of puppets faced the storm of swords, with two Sovereigns facing each other in the middle.  
  
It was then that the soldiers of the two great armies finally realized what it meant, and what was about to happen.  
  
The two gods of humanity were going to clash, and fight each other until one of them was dead.  
  
Some soldiers shuddered from relief, realizing that they would not enter battle today. Others simply looked at the astonishing scene in silent awe.  
  
More still were terrified, knowing that mortals like them were not fit to see gods fight. The battles of Transcendent had already threatened to reap their livеs as collateral damage... what kind of calamity would be unleashed when Supremes clashed?  
  
Somewhere in the battle formation of the Song Army, Revel and Moonveil suddenly appeared out of thin air, carried to Godgrave by one of the Song Sаints after returning to the waking world from the darkness of the Spine Ocean. Both were bloodied and battered — Revel especially, her mangled body covered in countless wounds.  
  
As someone ran to bring the healers, she fell to one knee and looked up with a pale face. Her eyes widened.  
  
...The corpses of the four Sword Saints they had brought with them moved, rising from the ground to join the army of the dead.  
  
Across the sea of the puppets and the storm of swords, in the formation of the Sword Army, Summer Knight appeared in a similar fashion. His body was in a better state than those of the Queen's daughters, but his gaze was bleak and dark, devoid of its usual shine.  
  
He looked at the battlefield silently, then lowered his gaze, lingered for a few long moments, and then summoned his armor and his weapons.  
  
Almost at the same time, seven dreadful swords fell from the sky, stopping to hover behind Anvil. He raised an arm, and one of them landed into his hand.  
  
The world itself seemed to shift, as if being bent and torn by the eerie grey blade.  
  
Ki Song looked at the terrifying sword calmly.  
  
"I see you are still a consummate collector. A Sacred blade, is it?"  
  
Anvil lowered his head, the vermilion plume of his helmet moving slightly. His indifferent voice sounded even as he answered, aiming the sword at the unarmed Queen.  
  
"It's still a disappointment... but it will do. At least I'm not in the habit of playing with dead dolls."  
  
Ki Song laughed, her voice drowning in the rustle of countless swords.  
  
"I have some living dolls, as well."  
  
With that, her smile dimmed, replaced by a cold and dark expression. Fearsome, predatory crimson flames ignited in her eyes.  
  
"These toys won't save you."  
  
...A moment later, she was suddenly in front of Anvil. Her bare hand crashed into his breastplate, denting it. Her fingers left deep grooves on the enchanted metal, almost tearing through it.  
  
The force of her blow was fearsome enough to produce a devastating shockwave, pushing the King of Swords a couple steps back.  
  
At the same time, the sea of puppets surged forward like a tide.  
  
The storm of swords had blotted out the radiant grey sky, casting a deep shadow on the battlefield. Now, the swords plummeted from the height, as if the sky itself was falling on the dead army. The flying swords shone as they fell, reflecting the blinding light, and for a moment, it seemed as if the entire world was aflame.  
  
When the cloud of steel collided with the tide of the dead, the burning world seemed to shatter.  
  
The power of the impacts was so immense that they produced blinding flashes of light and waves of unbearable heat. Some of the puppets were torn apart, while some were severely damaged.  
  
However, more still dodged or deflected the flying swords, moving with the cold and calculated skill of sublime warriors. A skill like that was a harrowing weapon in the hands of a being who controlled the mighty body of a Nightmare Creature — after all, it was the skill and intellect that gave the weak humans a chance in battles against the abominable vessels of Corruption.  
  
And more harrowing still...  
  
Was the fact that the flesh of many puppets cut by the swords simply mended itself, erasing most of the damage.  
  
They were not living beings, after all. And since the Queen could control her puppets intricately enough to make them rot or restore themselves from being rotten, she could erase these cuts, as well.  
  
As the heat, the light, and the weakened shockwaves reached the two armies, the soldiers backed away, horrified by the cataclysmic collision.  
  
...The colossal skull watched silently, though, having witnessed far more dreadful battles.