2218 Deep Grey Sky  
  
The calamitous battle between the two Supremes had stunned the two great armies gathered on the surface of the dead god's breastbone. The soldiers were stunned, the soldiers were awed, the soldiers were terrified…  
  
However, they weren't the only ones affected by the cataclysmic tyranny of the deific confrontation.  
  
Deep below them, in the dim twilight of the Hollows, the ancient jungle was in turmoil as well. The Nightmare Creatures dwelling in the darkness stirred, disturbed by the inconceivable fury of the clash between the two Sovereigns. The aftershocks of the battle had reached even the Hollows, sending the abominations into a frenzy. The jungle itself seemed to have come alive, as if sensing a threat.  
  
...Or a feast, perhaps.  
  
Knowing that he would have to face the Sovereigns himself, Sunny had been watching them fight intently. However, his shadow sense reached far and wide — he pаid attention to what was happening in the Hollows, as well.  
  
So, he was quite possibly the only person on the bone plain who knew what was happening in the Hollows at the moment.  
  
That was the reason he was one of the first to understand what the Sovereigns had done.  
  
'Crazy bastards…'  
  
The King and the Queen actually managed to break the bone plain. Perhaps he should not have been surprised, knowing that Anvil had already cut a fissure in the dome of the Hollows once… but back then, during the fight against Condemnation, it had been the result of a conscious action that demanded a great amount of effort, preparation, and a grand act of sorcery.  
  
This time, the dead god's bone was broken simply from the strain of serving as a battlefield for the two murderous Supremes.  
  
And the damage wasn't contained to a minor fissure, either — instead, a net of countless cracks snaked across the northern end of the titanic breastbone, making it look like shattered glass.  
  
And all these cracks led to the Hollows, which boiled with frenzied activity.  
  
The ancient jungle of Godgrave had been starved of sunlight as of late. The human armies had banished it beneath the surface and kept burning the crawling vines, thus breaking the cycle that allowed the abominable ecosystem of the Hollows to thrive.  
  
Without the scarlet infestation spreading to the surface, the ancient jungle was denied the nutrients it needed to sustain itself — the consequences were not showing, yet, but they would turn grave before too long. The jungle starved, and therefore, the dreadful abominations dwelling under its canopy were starving as well.  
  
That was why the jungle, and the abominations too, rushed to the surface when countless cracks split the dome of the Hollows open.  
  
'Damn it.'  
  
"Get up! Prepare for battle!"  
  
Sunny's hiss sent Rain scrambling to get up. All around her, the warriors of the Seventh Royal Legion were trying tо stand despite the quaking ground too. Seishan's voice broke through the cacophony of the apocalyptic battle:  
  
"...formation! Face the cracks! …fire!"  
  
But it was already too late.  
  
The single vine that had extended from the crack a few moments ago had already turned into a hundred. All across the length of the jagged fissure, the tendrils of the ancient jungle were crawling out of darkness, attaching themselves to the sun-bleached surface of the bone.  
  
And there were more than one fissure around.  
  
The tide of scarlet infestation really looked like frothing blood that swelled and spilled out of deep cuts, flowing endlessly…  
  
Of course, the vines were merely a herald of what was about to come — great bridges that the jungle had risen to connect the depths of Hollows to the sunlit surface.  
  
A moment later, a hideous head rose above the edge of the nearest fissure, and a Great Beast pushed its massive body onto the bone plain.  
  
Rain stared at it with wide eyes, terrified, then drew her bow with a trembling hand.  
  
…Of course,her arrow bounced off the dark hide of the monstrous creature without leaving even a scratch on it.  
  
Things were even worse in the formation of the Sword Army.  
  
Their enemy was located closer to the edge of the titanic breastbone, which meant that the Hollows were quite shallow there — after all, the subterranean hell did not extend to the very wall of the dead god's sternum. In fact, the position of the Song Army was only partially above the Hollows, the rest of it standing on nothing but solid bone.  
  
The Sword Army was not as lucky. Since it was positioned further south, there was nothing by the dark expanse of the abominable jungle below the warriors of the Sword Domain. Therefore, they were going to face more horrors… they would also be surrounded from all sides, while the warriors of Song would be safe from rear attacks, at least.  
  
Not that it mattered. Neither side was going to escape the onslaught of the scarlet tide unscathed — if they could escape it at all.  
  
'What do I do?'  
  
As the Lord of Shadows, Sunny was in the thick of it. He could rush to help the soldiers, slaying as many Nightmaгe Creatures as he could…  
  
But he also had to wait for the perfect moment to attack the Sovereigns. If he was too late, one of them would kill the other and grow infinitely more powerful… if he did not wait long enough, neither of the Supremes would have exhausted their strength, and fighting both of them would be suicidal.  
  
He could not allow himself to get distracted.  
  
Seeing as a train-sized centipede crawled out of a deep crack and loomed over a dozen Awakened soldiers, the entire length of its underbelly opening to reveal one ghastly, endless maw, Sunny cursed and dove into the shadows.  
  
Emerging from them a split second later, he lashed out with his odachi. The thick red carapace of the centipede was cut cleanly, and the upper third of its monumental body was severed from the rest of the monstrous creature.  
  
The severed third fell to the ground with a deafening boom… and twisted, already scurrying to swallow its first victim.  
  
The lower two-thirds continued to emerge from the crack, seemingly unconcerned with losing the entire upper portion.  
  
Sunny wasted a split second to stare at the abomination, appalled.  
  
All around him, more Nightmare Creatures than he could count were climbing to the surface, many, if not most, no less dreadful than the giant centipede.  
  
His gaze turned even darker than it had been before.  
  
A drop of ichor fell from the blood of the odachi and broke against the weathered bone.  
  
'Curse it all…'