2222 Friend or Foe  
  
Sunny would have loved to say that the two great armies united in a beautiful display of human camaraderie, but in reality, nothing that grand happened.  
  
The bone plain was still crumbling, and the jungle was still spilling from the depths of the Hollows like a scarlet tide. The situation worsеned quickly, and all that remained of order – what little of it had been left by then – swiftly collapsed into mayhem and chaоs.  
  
Minutes after the Sword Army reached the buckling line of Song soldiers, both forces were overwhelmed by the flood of abominations. The ground quaked, and the cracks spread. The battle lines collapsed, the officers lost control of their units, and the two forces merged into one vast sea of desperately fighting soldiers.  
  
It was not that the Song soldiers and the warriors of the Sword Domain, who had been enemies less than an hour ago, discarded their differences and embraced each other as comrades. It was just that no one cared about which side the people around them belonged to anymore.  
  
There were only humans and Nightmare Creatures on the bone plain, now.  
  
…And the demigods who continued their terrifying battle in the sky and on the ground, ravaging the fractured surface of Godgrave with their inhuman power.  
  
If there was one reason why the soldiers still held, refusing to collapse into the endless tide of dreadful abominations, it was that the core of the human sea stood like a monolith in the path of the Nightmare Creatures and broke their terrifying momentum.  
  
There, white radiance shone beautifully amidst the maelstrom of steel and abominable flesh, washing over the human warriors and healing their wounds, while at the same time enveloping the grotesque figures of the powerful Nightmare Creatures and melting them like wax.  
  
That was where Changing Star made her stand. The seasoned veterans of the two great armies rallied behind her, serving as an anchor for the mass of desperate soldiers and preventing them from drowning helplessly in the encroaching darkness.  
  
Sunny played his part as well, of course. While Nephis made herself the axis of the sea of human warriors, he spread his avatars and Shadows along the edges of their disorganized mass. There were five incarnations of the Lord of Shadows sowing death and destruction on the fractured bone plain, now, as well as Saint, Fiend, and Nightmare.  
  
There were also all the Saints of the two Domains, fighting side by side.  
  
In one corner of the battlefield, Sunny couldn’t help but chuckle when he found himself fighting side by side with Saint Jest – he was still determined to kill the old bastard… but that would have to wait until a later date.  
  
In another place, he found himself rescuing none other than Beastmaster from the jaws of a Great Monster. The beautiful enchantress spared him a glance and smiled weakly.  
  
“Well… aren’t you a sight for sore eyes, Lord Shadow.”  
  
He looked at her coldly, then sneered behind the visor of his helmet.  
  
“Sorry to say this, but you seem to only have one eye left.”  
  
Commanding her thralls to lunge at the avalanche of Nightmare Creatures, Beastmaster grinned. Her grin looked quite terrifying, considering that the entire left side of her face was missing.  
  
“Don’t you worry… it will heal. Ah, why do they also go for my face?”  
  
Someplace else, Sunny saw Summer Knight making his way toward the distant radiance of Neph’s flames.  
  
He saw Dar of the Maharana clan unleashing a devastating rain of arrows on the Nightmare Creatures besieging Rivalen of Aegis Rose. He also saw Saint Helie taking on a Great Beast that threatened to devour Mercy of Clan Dagonet, Jest’s grandson…  
  
That one was both poetic and ironic as well.  
  
But mostly, Sunny had no time to observe the raging sea of violence boiling all around him, since he was forced to concentrate on his own five avatars and the distant clash between the two Sovereigns.  
  
…Somewhere on the battlefield, Sid the Fire Keeper cursed as she dodged the claws of an enormous abominаtion. The beast resembled a monstrous ape with six spindly arms, its gaunt body full of festering wounds and crawling with wriggling maggots. She used her Aspect to deliver a powerful blow to the creature, but her sword barely managed to leave a scratch on its skin.  
  
Her shield, however, slammed into it with enough force to throw the abominable ape back.  
  
A slender figure in a red dress was revealed on the ground behind it, struggling to rise.  
  
Sid grabbed the woman and pulled her to her feet.  
  
“Stand up, you fool!”  
  
Felise looked up at her with a dazed expression, blood flowing down her bеautiful face.  
  
She spoke hoarsely:  
  
“I can… stand… on my own…”  
  
Sid snarled.  
  
“Shut the hell up! And help me!”  
  
The two faced the Nightmare Creatures, covering each other’s backs. Sid brandished her sword, while Felise raised her wavy dagger.  
  
A moment later, the abominations were upon them.  
  
Some distance away, Saint Tyris of White Feather was facing down a Great Demon, her cold face betraying no emotion. Unable to assume her Transcendent form in the storm of deadly swords, she was forced to fight as a human.  
  
As she lunged forward, a powerful gale pushing her sword to incredible speed, an enormous winged lion with white fur crashed into the demon, tearing into its side with sharp fangs. The Great Nightmare Creature simply shook it off, turning to unleash a fatal attack at his wife.  
  
Before its jaws closed around Tyris, however…  
  
A wave of darkness surrounded it like a whirlрool, and Revel appeared from it like a beautiful fiend. The onyx talons crowning her wings pierced the demon’s throat, and she grabbed its jaws with both hands, straining her muscles to rip them apart.  
  
A pained roar drowned the thunderous clamor of the battle, and black blood flowed down.  
  
Not too far from the three of them, Rain and Tamar found themselves surrounded by a swarm of human-sized insects. The ant-like creatures were less indestructible than other horrors of the ancient jungle, but their sheer number was a terror to behold.  
  
They were fighting them desperately, with Rain wounding the abominations and Tamar finishing them off. However, the monstrous ants were simply too many…  
  
Just as Rain staggered, a bolt of lightning suddenly flashed past her, striking into the mass of vile creatures and chaining from one to another, instantly causing several of them to collapse.  
  
Glancing back, she saw a young woman with golden hair, her armor dented and her white cloak smeared in blood. The young woman spun, cutting down another abomination, and took a shaky step back.  
  
The three of them found themselves standing back to back with each other.  
  
Taking a labored breath, Rain forced out a smile.  
  
“Hey, you… I know you, don’t I?”  
  
The Feather Knight answered without turning, her tone cold:  
  
“…I guess.”  
  
Rain chuckled.  
  
“How’s your leg?”  
  
As the swarms of ants recovered from the damage dealt by the lightning and rushed at them, the young woman answered with a hint of vitriol in her voice:  
  
“How’s your neck?”  
  
Sadly, there was no time to answer…  
  
Far away, standing on the battered surface of the Ivory Island, Sunny tilted his head to avoid a stray piece of shrapnel and looked into the sky with a grim expression.  
  
There, a river of blood and a rustling sphere of deadly steel collided once again, tearing a hole in the storm of swords.  
  
Down below, the Titans were slowly breaking out of their chains.  
  
His eyes were dark.  
  
He exhaled slowly.  
  
‘Not yet…’