2232 Cold Front

"Then we attack."

There was nothing more to say.

The time for words had run out.

Nephs crouched slightly, and then shot into the sky. Surrounded by beautiful radiance, she was like a white star ascending into the tempestuous expanse of the stormy sky — the soldiers watched her flight with numb expressions, her pure light reflecting in their eyes.

Far above, the Ivory Island moved. Its seven chains rattled as the flying island dove into the storm of swords, weathering the fury of obliterating steel with indomitable stillness.

Left alone on the ground, Sunny temporarily filled the emptiness left by Neph's departure — his fearsome onyx armor was already awash with blood, and more was added to the crimson coat as he cut down powerful Nightmare Creatures that threatened the core of the human army.

But despite all his deadly grace and chilling strength, the Lord of Shadows was a poor substitute for Changing Star. His sword was just as ferocious as hers, true, and he could slay abominations just as well. However, he could not heal the wounds of the fallen soldiers, and he could bolster their faltering courage with hope either.

But that was alright.

Because Sunny had his own ways.

Some distance away, the original incarnation of the Lord of Shadows — the dark swordsman wearing a fearsome mask — reached one of the wider fissures in the bone, a trail of death and destruction in his wake. His black odachi rose and fell, cleansed of all blood in one swift and fluid motion.

Then, the serpentine blade rippled like a stream of liquid darkness. A moment later, it had already transformed into a long, tenebrous spear.

Sunny looked past the slithering mass of scarlet vines, into the depths of the jagged fissure. He remained motionless for a moment, and then cast his spear down into the darkness.

The spear let out a thunderous roar as it broke the sound barrier, falling into the depths of Hollows.Its dark descent mirrored Neph's radiant ascent into the sky almost perfectly.

By the time Nephis reached the Ivory Island, Serpent pierced the thick canopy of the scarlet jungle and hit the ground with a powerful explosion, a deep crater forming in the spot where it struck the ground.

The jungle was like an inconceivable being that had awoken from deep slumber, teeming with abominable movement and life. Great pillars of intertwined vines were growing at unnatural speed to connect the depths to the surface like tendrils of fleshy tissue. Countless Nightmare Creatures were rushing to climb them, driven mad by the scent of human souls.

Of course, the sudden explosion had not gone unnoticed. Many abominations veered from their paths, approaching the point of impact with frenzied snarls.

What met them was a piercing, eerie chill flowing out of the deep crater. The pit itself was swirling with a strange white haze, and the air above it was so cold that drops of condensate water were falling down like rain.

Tiny sparks were dancing in the pillars of light that poured through the broken dome of the Hollows, glistening like precious jewels.

These jewels… were flakes of snow.

As the eerie chill spread, turning infinitely more violent and tyrannical in a split second, the drops of rain turned into ice, and the white haze exploded from the crater, growing into a furious snowstorm.

Then, a terrifying silhouette rose from the crater.

It was a massive creature of an eerie and grotesque shape, made entirely from ice. The ice was inky and black, but the creature was full of color due to numerous flowers blooming on its surface, their petals an intense azure color.

The contrast between the vibrant beauty of the flowers and the appalling body beneath was striking. Vast plumes of snow drifted from the flowers like pollen, shrouding the creature in a frosty haze. At the heart of the eerie abomination, barely visible through the ice,there was a small shadow that vaguely resembled human remains.

It was Serpent, who had assumed the form of the Corrupted Tyrant… Winter Beast.

Winter Beast, that vile horror.

A long time ago, Sunny had lost his cohort to its profane power.

Lаter, he returned to the frigid expanse of Antarctica and killed it.

And now that he himself was a Titan, Sunny could finally command that power for himself.

'Freeze, all of you…'

As a storm of swords was raging in the sky above Godgrave, a snowstorm suddenly consumed the dark depths of the Hollows. Chilling winds blew with ferocious power, bending the ancient trees of the jungle to the ground. The streams and rivers turned to ice. Countless vermin were instantly annihilated, frozen solid by the unnatural cold, and shattered as they fell down.

A few of the vine bridges were frozen and snapped, as well. Those that were still rising slowed their growth, sapped of life. Countless Nightmare Creatures plummeted down, their roars drowning in the howling wind.

Of course, the inhabitants of the abominable jungle could not be compared to the refugees of Falcon Scott and the brave soldiers of the First Evacuation Army… they were far more powerful, far more ancient, and far more resilient. Most of them were Corrupted themselves, and far too many were of the Great Rank.

Even exposed to the deathly cold of the Winter Beast's frigid domain, they did not succumb to its icy grasp.

But they did not escape unscathed either. Enveloped by the wind and the swirling snow, the Nightmare Creatures were weakened, wounded, and slowed down.

[You have slain a…]

[You have slain a…]

[You have slain a…]

Distracted by the cacophonous litany of voices, Sunny silenced the Handy Bracelet. He had unleashed a frigid hell in the Hollows, and the harvest of abominable lives Serpent was reaping was uncountable.

And every life Serpent reaped sent a trickle of essence flowing into Sunny's soul due to its [Soul Reaver] Ability.

So,a torrent of essence drowned him like a flood, replenishing his spent reserves.

Much more importantly…

The soldiers desperately fighting for survival in the sweltering heat of Godgrave suddenly felt a wave of mercifully cold air wash over them, and saw billowing plumes of snow rising from the cracks in the bone plain.

The flood of Nightmare Creatures that threatened to drown them did not exhaust itself, but it did grow less overwhelming. Fewer abominations were emerging from below, and those that did crawl to the surface seemed weakened, covered in ice and moving slowly.

The pressure on the warriors of the two warring Domains was alleviated somewhat, and they could finally breathe… at least for a moment.

Sunny smiled darkly behind Weaver's mask.

Sure, he was not like Nephis, who inspired hope and healed the wounded soldiers.

But he could inspire fear and bring death to the frenzied Nightmare Creatures.

His way was not any less effective.