1722 Slingshot Maneuver

The Wolves had been a company during the Southern Campaign, consisting of around a hundred Awakened and ten times as many mundane soldiers, as well as a platoon of MWPs and a robust stable of specialized vehicles. The majority of the mundane members of the Wolf Company were not frontline specialists, but instead support personnel meant to facilitate and enhance the combat effectiveness of the Awakened.

However, the company had swelled in the past few years, turning into a battalion consisting of a thousand seasoned Awakened warriors and around five thousand mundane soldiers. It had also distinguished itself as one of the most elite combat units of the government forces, earning the official title of the Wolf Army.

The Wolves were, first and foremost, shock troopers. They often fought in isolation from the rest of the government forces or led the attack, dropping directly into the fiercest locations on the battlefield from the Black Beast Locket.

That was right. Effie not only had her own army, but also often carried it around. Their most common strategy was for her to assume the giantess form, cleave her way to a strategically important point, and deploy her legion in a flash of shocking violence.

It was the same today.

As Effie's roar stunned the nearest Nightmare Creatures, rows and rows of soldiers materialized on the rubble of the burning city, as if marching out from the depths of hell.

A moment later, the Awakened vanguard already unleashed a barrage of arrows, projectile weapons, and long-range Aspect Abilities.

At the same time, heavy artillery vehicles launched concussive shells, and the lumbering MWPs came to life, the barrels of their armaments blooming with fire.

The melee fighters had already closed down their ranks, forming a loose phalanx.

...The tide of Nightmare Creatures descended upon them in a demented frenzy, only to be broken, torn apart, and pushed back.

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"Show them hell!"

Effie's booming voice thundered from above.

Invigorated by the sight of their commander, the Wolves let out ferocious howls and redoubled their efforts to eviscerate the Nightmare Creatures.

'Cheeky bastards...'

She bent down and swiped her hand across the ruins of a building, grabbing a hulking abomination and using it as a projectile to crush dozens more into bloody paste.

Effie observed the battlefield from high above.

For the moment, at least, everything was going according to plan.

The Wolves had a simple, but dire objective - to secure a stronghold in the ruined city that would serve as a bulwark against the horde of Nightmare Creatures.

The seven Gates were positioned far away from the dry riverbed, so most of the abominations were amassed on the other side of the city center. The position where the Wolves had deployed was on the outer edges of the center, above the largest underground civilian shelter, and close to the reserve control station responsible for the city's automated defense systems.

They had to push the Nightmare Creatures back, establish an impregnable fire line, bring the defense systems back online, secure the perimeter, and help funnel the surviving civilians into the shelter.

At the same time, the main force of the Western Quadrant army would advance from the rear under Kai's leadership, cleanse the western part of the city from abominations, and join the Wolf Army, effectively drawing a clear battle line straight through the city center.

That was the plan, at least.

Of course, the entire plan depended on a single presumption: that the three Saints would be able to slay, or at least hold back, the primary targets the Gate Guardians.

Because no matter how elite and experienced the Wolves were, and no matter how numerous the Western Quadrant army was, mortal soldiers like them were simply incapable of stopping Titans, let alone facing Great abominations in battle.

Effie glanced at the towering figures of the two Titans, both drawing closer. The Corrupted Tyrant seemed to be moving in the direction of the Western Quadrant army, which had already engaged in a bloody battle on the streets of the city.

That one was Kai's problem now... sadly, it seemed that the reinforcements would be delayed.

The true horror, though, was the Great Devil, which had abandoned the outskirts and crossed the ruined walls of the city, moving unhurriedly in the direction of the Wolf Army.

The creature was still dozens of kilometers away, but its presence already felt suffocating.

'We can still win.'

In this battle, the government army had a secret weapon. That weapon was the Seneschal of the Great Clan Valor...

Saint Song of the Fallen.

Information was the lifeblood of warfare, especially so when one was dealing with Nightmare Creatures, many of whom possessed great and terrible powers. Knowing your enemy was more often than not the difference between life and death.

And with Cassie whispering into the ears of Effie, Kai, and Jet, they would know what the enemy was capable of once the abominations got within range of the Dormant Ability.

...Of course, no one except for the three of them could know that the blind seer serving the King of Swords was secretly assisting the government.

'It's good to have friends…’

As Effie thought that, Jet suddenly spoke in a calm, cold voice:

"I think the situation calls for the slingshot maneuver."

Effie looked down, studying the tiny, beautiful woman standing on her palm. Soul Reaper's icy blue eyes were full of grim, murderous, and cold resolve.

"That one? Are you sure?"

Jet nodded, then smiled faintly.

"Yes. I'll stall the Great Devil until you and Kai are done dealing with the other Gate Guardians. Don't play with your food and come help me as soon as you can."

Effie hesitated for a moment, holding back the words of concern.

Jet was right. Dealing with two Titans was already outside the realm of possibility... if the Great Devil was allowed to enter the fray and join forces with them, everyone would be doomed.

Eventually, she simply smiled.

"Alright. Just... don't kill it before we arrive! Or, if you do and receive a weapon Memory, give it to me. You already have your Legacy Relic, while I'm sick of fighting abominations with my bare hands. Their guts get stuck between my fingers. It's disgusting..."

Jet grinned.

"Deal. Now... do it before I change my mind!"

Effie sighed, then shifted her body, slowly bringing the hand on which Jet stood back. She extended her colossal arm backward, keeping it level with her shoulder.

The slingshot maneuver was not something the two of them had learned from books on military science. It was something they invented after participating in countless battles together.

Well, calling it a "maneuver" was mostly a joke. They just liked how legitimate it sounded, which was a bit funny, considering the actual procedure.

The procedure in question, meanwhile, was rather simple.

Effie strained her muscles, exhaled, and slung her arm forward.

Her hand rotated, the open palm facing the wind. Jet would have slid off and plummeted down if not for the fact that the pressure of acceleration pressed her into the vertical wall of polished steel. A mundane human would have been crushed by such pressure, but her Transcendent body was immensely resilient. She endured, kneeling slowly and looking up.

A small hurricane was raised by the passing of the colossal arm. Effie grunted... and pushed her palm forward with all her might, launching Jet into the air like a supersonic missile.

The Soul Reaper soared into the sky, flying in the direction of the distant Great Devil with terrible speed.

As she did, her figure was suddenly surrounded by wisps of ghostly mist.