1787 Ack

The situation... was not good.

Ray had managed to stall the monstrous hand, hacking it to pieces with his weapons - he wielded a short sword in one hand, and an axe in the other. Rain had blinded the abomination with her arrows, and Tamar disabled two of its arms.

The problem was that the creature had just too many of them. Rain had already counted nine, and more were rising from behind the climbing monstrosity like a ghastly forest.

Worse still, it was an Awakened abomination. She had aimed at the obvious vulnerability first - the eyes - but other than that, there wasn't a lot of damage she could do. Even if her arrows pierced the tough hide of the creature, it would not harm it too much.

Tamar faced the forest of monstrous arms with grim resolve, wielding her hefty zweihander with daunting skill. She used both of her Abilities to dance between the barrage of killing blows. The young Legacy seemed like a steel whirlwind, alternating unpredictable jumps with short bursts of stunning speed. Torrents of fetid blood were released into the frigid air from her great blade.

She managed to stall and damage many limbs of the abomination, in large part due to the creature having been blinded, but could not advance to attack its body.

‘Crap…’

Rain dropped her bow and unsheathed her sword.

"Why are you just standing there?! Get back!"

The petrified porters were stirred by her shout and staggered away from the carnage. Miraculously, none of them was dead yet.

The abominable claws rained down in pursuit of the elusive Legacy girl, sending pieces of stone flying. A net of cracks spread on the ground from each missed blow, viscous blood spilling into the narrow fissures.

Rain dashed forward and supported Awakened Ray, who had managed to sever two of the hideous hand's fingers, but almost got pierced by the long claw of the third.

They were in a stalemate, and that stalemate wasn't in their favor. The creature was continuing to climb up from the canyon, and once it crawled onto the plain, whatever resistance Tamar was able to offer would be overwhelmed.

So, someone had to reach the abomination and deal it a mortal wound. Rain would have gone herself, but she was mundane - her tachi would not be able to slay the giant.

Ray, on the other hand, was Awakened, and wielded enchanted weapons, Better yet, he could become imperceptible, So, with come luck, his blade would reach the creature's neck without being blocked by the countless claws.

"Go! I'll finish this thing off!"

The young man glanced at her with wide eyes, hesitated for a split second, then nodded and disengaged. He must have thought the same, A moment later, Ray was gone.

Literally.

He Activated his Awakened Ability and dissolved into the air. There was no sound, no smell, no... anything. It was as if he had never existed at all.

Rain brandished her tachi, deflected a terrifying claw, and then kicked the severed hand with all her might.

The hand was the size of an adult human, and weighed quite a lot. Still, Rain's kick sent it rolling backward.

With two fingers missing, it had turned rather clumsy. The bizarre thing was still trying to turn itself over when she dashed forward, turned her sword, and thrust it down, using all of her own weight to make the strike more powerful.

The tachi pierced the monstrous palm, slid between the bones, and nailed the severed hand to the ground.

It was a mundane blade, so an Awakened abomination could easily snap it. However, even an abomination would have to follow common reason to achieve that - it would need proper grip and support, at least, ideally good leverage. Laying on the ground, impaled through the center, the monstrous hand had none of those So, it just struggled fiercely, unable to free itself for now.

Rain staggered back, then looked up to evaluate the situation.

Tamar had managed to sever several more arms, but was hopelessly stuck in the avalanche of monstrous limbs. Blinded, the creature flailed them with no sense or reason, making a mess of the plain.

Ray would be having trouble closing in, as well he might have been invisible, but the space between the survey team and the massive body of the climbing abomination was full of stone shards and deadly claws. Ray was still a corporeal being, so making way through the carnage was not going to be easy.

On the opposite side of the canyon, Fleur had climbed the ropes and was now standing on the edge, shouting something as she summoned her Memories.

Rain couldn't quite hear what the pretty healer was shouting, but she managed to read her lips.

"...Tyrant! It's a Tyrant!"

'Damn.'

Rain had never faced an Awakened Tyrant before. Nor had she ever wished to.

As she faltered for a moment, shaken by the revelation, a blurred silhouette shot over the chasm.

Then, the Echo of the glant wolf landed on the Tyrant's back, tearing at its shoulders with sharp claws and sinking vicious fangs into its neck.

That damned thing finally made it across the canyon.

Tamar's Echo seemed like a Fallen Beast or Monster, at best... It wasn't quite powerful enough to destroy an Awakened Tyrant outright.

However...

It was very large. And it weighed a lot.

The abomination was still trying to climb out of the chasm, hanging awkwardly with half of its massive torso towering above the edge. When the monstrous wolf landed on its back, the wolf's weight was added to the Tyrant's own, pulling it into the deep abyss.

It swayed back precariously.

A frenzied shriek escaped from the creature's maw, and it flailed its arms in the air. It was still holding onto the edge with two hands, but now, more of them scratched the stone with their claws, leaving deep grooves in it.

The Tyrant's fall was arrested.

With so many hands trying to keep the abomination from falling, Tamar received a bit of breathing room.

Without wasting even a split second, she dashed forward.

"Ray! The hands!"

Her zweihander drew a beautiful are in the air, then fell down like the blade of an enormous guillotine. It severed the fingers of one of the two main hands the Tyrant was using for support.

At the same time, the fingers on the other hand were suddenly torn apart, and a vague silhouette of a young man revealed itself in the air. He was hacking at the fingers with his weapons, aiming to damage the joints between the phalanxes.

Rain used her leg to throw her bow into the air, caught it, and nocked an arrow on the string in one fluid motion. A moment later, the arrow pierced into the deep wound dealt by Ray, disabling one of the fingers.

With both of the main support hands damaged, the rest could not hold the weight of the Tyrant anymore. When the Echo jerked its head and pulled the abomination back with all its weight, the ghastly creature finally slid off the edge and disappeared into the depths of the canyon with a deafening howl.

Rain trembled and lowered her hands.

'D-damn... that was intense!'

She exhaled slowly, then glanced at the porters.

Everyone was in one piece. The survey specialists were all fine, as well.

Which was... more than a little unexpected.

'Did my teacher protect them secretly?’

Rain suspected that he did. Especially because the dead pilgrim was suspiciously missing.

Had the dead man been swept into the canyon in all the mayhem, or had her teacher pushed him Into the chasm while no one was looking?

She would have to ask him later...

But it was too early to relax, still.

Picking up her quiver, Rain lamented the loss of several arrows, then circled around the pinned hand of the Tyrant and approached the edge of the chasm.

She stopped near Ray and Tamar. All three of them looked down.

The depths of the canyon were shrouded in darkness, and it was impossible to say how far down its bottom was.

Ray swept his hair back nervously and looked at them.

"Do you think it's dead?"

Tamar lingered for a moment, then pursed her lips and hesitantly shook her head.

"I haven't heard anything from the Spell."

Turning back, she glanced at the severed hand that Rain pinned to the ground with her sword.

"Go finish that thing off, Ray. It should be the Tyrant's minion... what a bizarre creature, by the dead gods."

Who had countless hands instead of proper minions?

Ray sighed, then readied his weapons and headed away from the edge.

A storm of sparks rose around the Legacy girl, and then, the wolf Echo manifested itself behind her. There was no need to let it be damaged by the fall - she had simply dismissed it, then summoned it back.

Finally, Tamar turned to Rain and studied her for a moment.

Then, she scowled.

"You..."

However, before she could finish the sentence, chilling wail resounded from the depths of the canyon, reverberating across the plain. It was like the world itself was weeping.

The flood was coming.

It was impossible to hear her voice now, this close to the chasm.

...It was also impossible to discern what Fleur was shouting.

Rain stared across the canyon in confusion. The Awakened healer was jumping and waving her hands in the air, pointing at them with a desperate expression on her lovely face,

"...ack!...ope... ing... all! ...ack!"

Rain could barely hear anything because of the wailing.

'Ack? What is trying to... pack? Attack? Crack?’

Back?

Suddenly, he eyes widened.

Rain looked at Tamar in panic, but it was already too late.

The edge of the canyon... had been damaged severely by the barrage of blows dealt to it by the Tyrant. The weathered stone was broken and cracked.

And just then, it finally crumbled.

Before Rain could do anything, the entire side of the canyon suddenly moved, and then collapsed, falling into the wailing darkness.

And the two of them were pulled down with it, plummeting into the bottomless chasm alongside countless tons of broken stone.