1846 Ground Perspective

The army assembled in a complicated battle formation. With so many soldiers, it was vast and unwieldy, and mostly useless… but not entirely so.

The Masters and the Saints were going to assault the vermilion jungle, but the Awakened were prepared to fight, as well.

Obviously, they had very little chance of killing Corrupted abominations, not to mention the Great horrors who dwelled in Godgrave. However, they did not necessarily need to.

The commanders of the Song Army were well aware of the limitations facing their troops, so they had come up with various chilling, but effective strategies. If it came to that, the task of the Awakened soldiers was not to kill the powerful abominations, but to immobilize them.

Although hard, that could be achieved with numbers alone. Even if an abomination had to be buried in human bodies, that was one way to deal with it.

Of course, Rain felt a bit horrified by the prospect, just like all the other Awakened warriors did. Still, it was not like the Nightmare Creatures would spare them otherwise — so, they were prepared to carry out their orders and do their best., no matter the cost.

Hopefully, that was not going to happen today.

If the Saints and their Ascended retinue succeeded in holding back the tide of Nightmare Creatures, it would not.

The Seventh Legion was positioned in the second line of the formation, so she could not even see the battle. All she could see were the tops of the strange and hideous plants swaying in the distance and the backs of her fellow soldiers. She could also hear the sounds that the wind carried from somewhere far ahead.

Next to her, Fleur trembled nervously and looked at Tamar.

"...It is starting, isn't it?"

The Legacy girl nodded somberly.

"It is."

A few moments later, the sound of a horn rolled above the army, and the ground under their feet trembled slightly.

Rain saw vague silhouettes moving forward from the front of the battle formation. The white surface of the ancient bone was still inclined, since they had not reached the collarbone yet, so she could not discern their shape clearly. But she knew that they were the Saints who had assumed their Transcendent forms, as well as the larger of the Nightmare Creatures enthralled by Beastmaster.

At the same time, the jungle came alive.

She saw the red trees sway, but mostly, she heard and felt it: a harrowing choir of bestial roars and sounds too alien to be described with human language washing over the massive army like a tide, the violent trembling of the ground as countless abominations rushed forward at the scent of human souls.

She glanced at Tamar.

For the rest of them, the fate of the Saints fighting on the frontline was an abstract concept. The Saints were people whom they admired, looked up to, and maybe even knew — as well as the wall separating them from having to face the dreadful horde of Nightmare Creatures themselves.

But it was different from Tamar, whose father was somewhere out there, as well. The Saint of Sorrow was among the warriors whose task it was to make the tide of abominations stop.

There were close to two thousand Masters in the Song Army, but only around forty Transcendent champions.

It did not seem like a lot, but at the same time…

The world suddenly quaked.

The world suddenly seemed to be on the verge of shattering.

The violence of forty Saints unleashing their Transcendent power at the same time was staggering.

Even far removed from the battlefield, Rain felt blood drain from her face. Next to her, Fleur swayed and leaned heavily on Ray. All around them, the Awakened soldiers staggered.

Only Tamar remained standing straight, seemingly undaunted.

She did, however, look at the sky.

As Rain's eyes widened, she did as well.

…Was the clash between the champions of the Song Army and the creatures of the vermilion jungle terrible enough to rip apart the veil of clouds?

Luckily, it did not seem so.

For now.

The sounds of the battle grew much more loud, becoming almost deafening. Rain had to struggle not to raise her hands and cover her ears. To her shame, she found herself trembling.

'Insane, insane… this is insane…'

The fear that had risen from some deep, primal part of her was almost too powerful to overcome. The inability to see what exactly was happening out there, ahead, only made it worse. After all, it was the unknown that was the most terrifying.

All she could see were the backs of the Awakened soldiers that stood in front of the Seventh Legion in the formation.

They were not faring any better than her.

Some were shaking. Some had fallen to their knees. Some had dropped their weapons.

There were those who did not, though. There were those who helped their comrades to stand up and supported them, gripping the hilts of their swords tightly.

Rain wanted to be one of those brave souls, as well.

Assaulted by the terrible cacophony of battle, she looked down, at her shadow.

The sight of it instilled her with strength.

Gritting her teeth, she raised a hand and patted Fleur on the shoulder. The delicate girl looked at her with frightened eyes.

"R—rani?"

Rain smiled.

"Relax. What's the worst thing that can happen?"

Fleur's beautiful blue eyes widened.

"What?! Why did you say it out loud?!"

Tamar and Ray glared at her with resentment, too.

Rain grinned.

She was still a bit of a stranger in this small cohort, so apart from Tamar, the other two members acted a little awkward around her.

It was rare to see all three united in such a sincere display of emotion.

And that emotion was pure outrage, not fear or anxiety. So, her job here was done.

Rain looked ahead and sighed.

Although… she might have overdone it.

From what she could hear, the vanguard of the army had managed to stem the tide of the Nightmare Creatures. A furious battle was happening somewhere ahead.

However, the Saints had not managed to stop all abominations.

Just then, she heard a litany of human cries, and saw bodies flying into the air. It was as if something massive slammed into the front row of the Awakened soldiers at the head of the battle formation.

Human blood spilled on the white bone.

The war horn blared one more time, and the soldiers ahead of her moved forward.

Rain shivered and gripped her bow tighter.

Far ahead, a strange haze rose above the crimson jungle.

It seemed like a haze at first, but soon, she saw that it was a vast swarm of flying abominations rushing from the depths of Godgrave like a cloud.

"G—gods!"

One of the Awakened soldiers near them pointed at the swarm in horror.

Rain sighed and looked at the members of her cohort apologetically.

Her grin grew a little forced.

"Well… I guess that's the worst thing that could have happened…"