1874 Lord’s Lieutenants

Sunny did not shy away from using the power of his subordinate Saints, but there was a limit to how effectively he could handle them. After all, they were spread across the long frontline — even though he could move with startling speed, he still had to reach a Saint and explain what he wanted them to do, which took time.

His Shadows, however, answered his mental command and knew exactly what he wanted from them without the need to use words. In addition to that, each of them was also more fearsome than any of the Saints under Sunny's command.

Therefore, they acted as the three pillars of the entire offensive, moving ahead of the soldiers to defend them from the more powerful foes.

Unlike Sunny, who moved constantly from one threat to another, his Shadows mostly remained in rigid positions relative to the battle formation of the war party, and drew the threats to themselves instead.

Saint defended the left wing of the battle formation. The graceful stone knight fought with methodical and ruthless precision, but left utter devastation in her wake. Her black blade was elegant and chillingly lethal, using the least amount of effort and motion to deliver fatal wounds to the Nightmare Creatures attacking her in a constant flood.

Her shield, on the other hand, was barbarous and savage. When it was not blocking an onslaught of devastating blows, it was crushing and mangling the bodies of abominations like a wrecking ball made of pure darkness. Its black surface was slick with blood, and its rim had a few dents in it — however, her shield did not yield, just like Saint did not yield.

Her movements seemed unhurried, but somehow, the tide of abominations that would have drowned anyone else never seemed to overwhelm her. She moved through it with indifferent grace, and severed bodies fell to the ground everywhere she went.

Blood flowed, severed limbs and mutilated corpses littered the smoldering moss, and frenzied roars shattered pitifully against her cold, indifferent silence.

Serpent defended the right wing of the battle formation. Its presence was not the most striking, but it was the most eerie — Sunny's soul companion rarely stayed in one shape for a long time, switching between them to respond to the situation in the most fitting way.

Sometimes, a giant onyx snake slithered through the burning jungle, swallowing weaker abominations or coiling its great body around the towering monstrosities to suffocate them in its crushing embrace. Sometimes,

a fleeting human silhouette would appear, moving through the darkness to face unknown dangers.

Sometimes, the shape of a hideous Nightmare Creature would reveal itself in the smoke, tearing other abominations apart. There was only one trait that all of these beings shared — their figures were inky-black and surrounded by shadows.

Serpent was not as perfectly suited for mayhem and carnage of battle as Saint and Fiend were, perhaps, but it easily made up for any deficiencies with endless flexibility.

More importantly than that, Serpent served a vital purpose — with each enemy it killed, a little bit of Sunny's essence was restored. Therefore, Serpent's value was not limited to the Nightmare Creatures it defeated. It contributed to each kill Sunny made, as well.

…And lastly, there was Fiend.

At the moment, Fiend was the most powerful of the Shadows. As a Supreme Devil, his power was vast and dreadful, and for that reason, he played the main role in today's battle.

Fiend defended the center of the war party and was the tip of the wedge formed by Saint, Serpent, and the eight Transcendent champions. His position was deeper in the jungle than that of everyone else, and therefore, he drew the most enemies to himself.

And when the enemies found him, he ripped them to shreds in the most gruesome and frightening fashion.

Towering at five meters in height, with a body made of polished black silver and infernal flames, he was like a dreadful demon who had crawled from the depths of hell. The edges of his dagger-like claws were suffused with an incandescent red glow, cutting flesh and bones like butter. The blood of the creatures he killed boiled and evaporated before touching the ground.

Fiend was savage and brutal, reveling in bloodshed as he tore his enemies apart with bare hands — which he had four of — but that did not mean that there was no sophistication to his seemingly frenzied slaughter. It was, in fact, a chillingly calculated and shrewd affair merely masquerading as mindless barbarity.

He not only retained the devious cunning and diabolical intelligence of his original self, but had also been taught by Saint. It was just that Fiend had no need for weapons, so the style she had taught him was predominantly centered around hand-to-hand combat.

When his claws and spikes littering his powerful steel body were not enough, Fiend unleashed his infernal flames, breathing out long jets of crimson fire. Countless abominations died in agony,

incinerated by it, or were scorched so badly that slicing them open presented no problem to the ravenous Shadow.

And even then, he was holding back. Due to the nature of his task, Fiend had to plant himself in the middle of the burning jungle and lure the enemies to him, so he was not using Shadow Step at all — with it, he would have been even more deadly.

There was another trait that made Fiend especially terrifying, though. This one was utterly invisible, but had an undeniable effect on the flow of the battle.

It was his will. As a Supreme creature, Fiend's will had an effect on the world — perhaps not as drastic as that of the Great Nightmare Creatures due to his young age and personality, but still quite real. More than that, Sunny strongly suspected that Fiend's [Lucky] Attribute somehow fused with the influence of his will, which was why even more things went according to how the bastard wanted them to go.

Perhaps that was the reason why so many of the most powerful foes emerging from the jungle ended up targeting the ravenous Shadow instead of going directly for the battle formation.

Of course, Sunny did not know whether that happened because Fiend really wanted to perform his duty well... or because he simply wanted to eat them.

The battle raged on. The jungle burned, and the war party slowly advanced forward, pushing the scarlet infestation further and further back.

The harrowing orgy of violence seemed to have no end, boiling and seething under the cloudy expanse of the radiant sky.