1898 Chewing on Glass

Inside the ancient Citadel, a terrifying battle was drawing close to a grim conclusion. The interior of the great hall was devastated, and although smoke had not reached here yet, the dark expanse was permeated by sweltering heat. The shattered floor was awash in blood.

The battle had not gone well for the Saints of the Sword Army. Most of them were already dead — only four remained, each struggling to stay alive.

Saint Roan was battered and bloodied, his white mane painted red. His lightning had been extinguished, and although his enchanted armor — a gift from his daughter to celebrate his Transcendence — had served him well, it was now a shredded mess of torn metal, a blow or two away from crumbling into a river of ethereal sparks.

Sir Jest was surrounded from all sides. His Transcendent form was that of

a demonic abomination with goat—like horns and malevolent eyes, his gaze overflowing with terrifying malice. He had fared well against the Saint of Sorrow, dealing grievous wounds to his stone opponent, but as his fellow champions of Valor fell one after another, the situation changed for the worse. Saint Helie was severely injured, as well. Her sides were wet with blood, torn apart by terrible claws. Her beautiful face was pale from pain and fatigue, and her powerful bow had long been destroyed. Even her shield was on the verge of breaking apart, while her spear already had several cracks on its long blade. The fourth surviving Saint was slumped on the wide back of the Transcendent form, barely conscious from losing too much blood. He was the one who had been struck by Silent Stalker's arrow in the ambush — ironically enough, others were dead, but he still clung to life. Despite that, he was of not much use in the battle.

Their enemies, meanwhile...

Two dreadful great wolves were circling Roan, preparing to finish him off — they were Lonesome Howl and one of her Reflections, both in much better shape than the winged lion.

The second Reflection was pursuing Helie, barely kept back by her spear and shield.

The corpse of the Great Terror had been destroyed, and so were two of the risen Saints. However, three more had been taken by the Queen of Song — now, they surrounded Sir Jest, attacking him to assist the Saint of Sorrow.

The situation was bleak, and none of the Saints of Swords saw a way out. Even Sir Iest did not seem that amused anymore.

His malevolent eyes narrowed, and a deep, inhuman voice resounded in the devastated hall, sending a chill running down the spine of the Saint of Sorrow: "How troublesome... how frustrating. At this rate, I won't get to see if your intestines are also made of stone..."

His monstrous mouth twisted into a snarl.

Sir Iest threw one of the living corpses aside and lunged at the stone gargoyle, ignoring dead hands tearing at his flesh.

At that moment, however, the great wolf that had been pursuing Helie suddenly spun and leaped at the monstrous satyr, its maw opening to tear the sinister Saint apart.

Saint Helie swayed and staggered, on the verge of succumbing to her wounds. Lonesome Howl was already lowering her graceful body to the ground, snarling as she prepared to lunge and sink her fangs into Saint Roan's throat.

Then, however...

There was an eerie sound, and every living being in the ruined hall lingered for a moment, turning their attention to the dark portal of the shattered castle gates. Nothing happened for a split second, and then, a massive silhouette flew from the darkness, crashing into the floor with a pitiful groan.

It was an enormous black panther, her sable fur torn apart and soaked in blood — she was still alive, but just barely.

Lonesome Howl froze for a split second.

And in that split second, an infernal figure of twisted black metal silently appeared from the shadows in the middle of the hall.

Fiend did not waste any time before plunging the already chaotic battle into a state of absolute carnage. His four hands moved at the same time — the lower pair slashed at two Transcendent corpses, instantly reducing them to two piles of bleeding meat, while the upper pair reached forward and grabbed the head of the longing Reflection.

His dagger-like claws seared the thick for and easily pierced the wolf's skull. A moment later, he squished the Supreme Beast's head like a rotten pumpkin and tore it apart.

...Having learned a bitter lesson, Fiend did not try to take a bite out of the deceitfully appetizing Reflection.

That was not meat! Instead, it was tasteless glass.

With his arrival, the flow of the battle instantly changed.

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Somewhere above, Saint grasped the heart of Revel's Reflection and crushed it in her armored fist.

There was a sound akin to a mirror being broken, and the dark creature froze, the light of life slowly disappearing from its beautiful eyes. Then, a strange ripple spread across its body, and a net of thin cracks revealed itself on its alabaster skin.

A moment later, the Reflection shattered into a rain of silver glass. The glass shards scattered on the floor and then dissolved into a stream of light, which was then devoured by the flowing darkness.

Saint lowered her hand tiredly.

Sunny only knew what had happened after hearing the faint sounds of breaking glass. Fused with Serpent, he was in the middle of a fierce brawl against the true Revel — both the beautiful demon of darkness and the bestial monster Serpent had turned into were on the floor, their bodies entangled, trying to rip each other to shreds.

Lightslayer was winning.

There was a disgusting crunch, and a wave of blinding pain sent Sunny into a daze. Dire Fang‘s lower jaw was now almost torn off, hanging askew on several shreds of: mangled flesh, a torrent of blood pouring down on Revel's arms and chest

Serpent shuddered and reeled back, involuntarily weakening its grasp on her body. That gave Lightslayer enough room to push the massive creature away and pull her leg up, placing it between its body and hers.

Then, with a powerful kick, she sent the monstrous body of Dire Fang flying back.

Still disoriented, Serpent crashed down a dozen meters away, making the floor quake from the force of the impact.

'Ah...'

Sunny pushed down the excruciating pain and tried to access the situation... which wasn't easy to do, considering that he was still blind.

Saint had to have destroyed the Reflection. So...

What was happening now?