1903 Wide Sleeves

For a few moments, neither side moved.

The Saints of the Sword Army had almost recovered from their wounds — all except Sir Jest, curiously enough. Sunny couldn't help but notice that Nephis was able to heal the rest from a distance, but that did not include the old man.

On the other side, Revel and Silent Stalker were also close to being healed. At the same time, something that Sunny had assumed was a severely damaged statue of a fearsome gargoyle moved, revealing itself to be a living creature.

'...'l‘he Saint of Sorrow.‘

Even though they were enemies in this battle, Sunny was a little glad that Tamar's father had survived.

For now, at least.

Even though those who had been wounded most severely were now saved from the clutches of death by pure white flames, both sides were still in a sorry state. Most of them were exhausted, mentally shaken, and wary. More importantly, almost every participant of the battle had expended great amounts of essence in the furious fight.

Funnily enough, Sunny was an exception, since he had been prevented from calling upon his Aspect in the clash against Revel. In addition to that, he barely used any Memories — those put a strain on one's essence, as well, especially with soul arsenals as powerful as those Saints usually possessed. The more powerful a Memory was, the more essence its enchantments consumed.

Unlike the rest. of the fighters, Sunny was fresh and could go on fighting with the same level of intensity for a long while.

Nephis seemed flush with essence, as well — he did not know what she had faced prior to descending from above in a storm of flames, but it did not seem like she had used her Aspect extensively. Apart from that, she was a Transcendent Titan — her pool of essence was seven times more voluminous than that of other Saints, to begin with. Her lineage enhanced it even further. So, both of the most powerful champions of on the side of the Sword Domain were in a good shape... which could not be said about the daughters of Ki Song. Honestly, things weren't looking good for them.

They had started the battle in a supremely advantageous position — not only had they had the element of surprise on their side, immediately eliminating several opponents, but they had also been able to isolate and suppress the leaders of the conquest force.

Now, however, these advantages were gone. Worse than that, several of Mordret's Reflections had already been destroyed. The corpse of the Great Terror was also gone, and it would not be easy to counter Sunny's powers next to Nephis. Revel‘s own power was being suppressed now.

‘We should be able to decimate them.’

Unless Lightslayer had more trump cards hidden up her sleeve, he did not see a way for her to salvage the situation.

Judging by her somber expression, Revel had come to the same conclusion.

She looked up, at the burning ceiling of the vast hall and the vertical inferno left by N eph's descend from the upper floors of the garden temple.

Then, Revel lowered her gaze and looked directly at Nephis.

"...Have you not come to conquer this Citadel for the King of Swords, Changing Star?"

Nephis lingered with the answer for a few moments.

"So I have."

Lightslayer smiled coldly.

"Quite an interesting strategy, to unleash your flames in the heart of a wooden Citadel. If I did not know better, I would have assumed that your aim is to destroy it instead."

Sunny had to admit that there was some truth to her words. Smoke was already drifting into the vast hall from above, and the fire was spreading. The ancient castle had already sustained heavy damage from the furious forces unleashed by the clash of so many Saints —— in fact, it was a miracle that it was still standing. Sunny remembered the first Transcendent battle he had witnessed. Back then, just two Saints — Tyris and Cormac — had destroyed an entire island in their clash.

The people who had left behind this beautiful stronghold were truly remarkable builders, it seemed.

Nephis considered Revel's words for a moment or two. 'l‘hen, her radiance dimmed, and she dismissed her Transformation, turning back into a human. Miraculously... this time, her armor had survived.

However, Sunny gritted his teeth when he saw it.

There were no wounds on the body, but her blackened armor was terribly shredded, pierced in at least a dozen places, and on the verge of collapsing into a whirlwind of sparks.

She had suffered greatly in the battle against Moonveil, it seemed.

His eyes flashed with murderous cold behind the cracked mask.

'...I'll kill them slowly.‘

Whatever fatigue Sunny had felt disappeared, replaced by deadly intent. Standing beside him, Nephis stared at Revel impassively.

"If it means denying the Citadel to the Song Domain... I just might go ahead and destroy it. Why not?"

A corner of her mouth curled upward slightly, and she added evenly:

"Of course, I'll make sure to destroy you first."

Revel's expression turned grim.

She hesitated for a few moments, then uttered through gritted teeth:

"You can try. You might even live long enough to enjoy the outcome. But what about your companions? Will they survive?"

Sunny frowned, not sure why she was saying these things.

Was Revel, perhaps, trying to negotiate a peaceful resolution instead of continuing the bloody battle?

If so, she was extremely naive. There was no way that Nephis would surrender her claim on this Citadel — she would indeed rather burn it to the ground, if that was the only choice. Which it wasn't, since the remains of the conquest force were poised to achieve victory.

But Revel was definitely not naive, so...

'She's buying time.‘

Sunny cursed mentally and prepared to lunge forward.

But it was already late.

By that time, Moonveil had already finished whatever it was she had been secretly doing.

She raised her hands and brought them together, forming a triangle with her thumbs and index fingers.

A split second later, a drop of vibrant crimson blood suddenly materialized in the middle of the triangle...

And Sunny's senses screamed at him that he was in dire danger.

As it turned out, Revel did, in fact, have another trump card up her sleeve.