1913 Devastation

The battle for Rivergate began at sunset.

...By the time the sun rose from behind the horizon once more, the ancient fortress was gone.

The towering gates of the great locks were bent, broken, and torn off their hinges. 'l‘he impregnable walls had crumbled. The enchanted siege weapons had been reduced to dust.

The river, which had been held back by the immense dam for thousands of years, had broken free and rushed toward the distant sea.

The devastating flood had demolished the smoldering ruins and washed away the traces of the dreadful battle. The artificial lake around which the city had been built dried up, revealing its muddy slopes. The basin of the river below the cliffs, on the contrary, was flooded.

The entire landscape of the region had been devastated and reshaped, becoming almost unrecognizable. A great waterfall roared as it plummeted from the tall cliffs, while the stronghold of Clan Dagonet was no more.

'...What a pity.'

Morgan looked at the ruins of Rivergate with a wistful expression.

With the loss of the ancient stronghold, the Sword Domain would grow a little weaker, while the Song Domain would grow a little stronger. But that was not the reason for her regret.

The real reason was that Bastion had lost its connection to the sea. Even if Godgrave was conquered by humans, it would never be a safe place — so, no matter which side won the war in the end, the Stormsea would become the connection between the two parts of the great human kingdom in the Dream Realm.

Without Rivergate, it would be much more difficult to establish trade routes to and from Bastion. And trade was the true engine of civilization.

'...Why am I even thinking about this?'

Morgan tiredly dismissed her helmet and spat out a torrent of blood.

The helmet had caved in by a devastating blow, and so had the right side of her face. She could feel the sharp edges of her shattered teeth cut into her tongue and the inside of her torn cheek... an unpleasant sensation, no doubt, but far from the worst of what she was feeling right now.

Mordret had been like a calamity, descending upon them in all his cold, inhuman fury. They had managed to give him a good fight — quite an excellent one, really — but at the end of the day, it was all for naught. They stood no chance against him.

So, Morgan had commanded her six subordinates to retreat, and stayed back to stall the enemy for a little while.

She was starting to regret that decision a bit, now.

"You don't look so well, my dear sister."

Her brother's insidious voice was not mocking or full of dark glee, but rather cold and indifferent. Strangely enough, that only made it sound more frightening.

Morgan looked at herself quietly.

'It's true...'

Her armor had been breached and broken. Her body was terribly mutilated, and one of her arms was practically severed... a commendable accomplishment, really, considering how tough and durable her flesh was. Blood was flowing from countless wounds, painting the shattered stones beneath her into vibrant shades of scarlet — the same color as her strange eyes.

Her bloody lips twisted into a grin.

"Really? I think red is my color, though."

Mordret simply stared at her, probably trying to guess what her next move would be.

His own body did not bear many wounds, because he had used the Transcendent vessels to shield it. The stolen bodies of the Saints of Night were worse for wear — especially those who had fought Raised by Wolves — but sadly, none had been destroyed. His soul had not been damaged too severely, either, despite having faced Soul Reaper Jet.

Mordret knew just how dangerous she was, so he had made sure to suppress her in particular during the battle.

All of them had fought valiantly, but none managed to stop his terrifying assault.

Naeve and Bloodwave had battled their former clansmen in the depths of the river, two against four, making it boil. Nightingale alone had engaged four more vessels of the Prince of Nothing attacking from upstream.

Raised by Wolves had plunged into the water and almost tore the most powerful of the leviathans, a terrifying kraken, apart — and that was after wounding many by bombarding them with gargantuan javelins from high above. Aether had defended the walls, while Soul Reaper had played a deadly game of cat and mouse with four of Mordret's vessels in the south.

Morgan herself had engaged the true body of the mirror wraith.

...Hence her current sorry appearance.

She took a hoarse breath.

"I'll give it to you... brother. You are indeed great and terrible. To think that you have been able to obliterate an entire Great Clan... now only that, but you have even become no different from a Great Clan yourself. What a weird sentence to say... oh, but in any case, it is quite an amazing feat, for a single individual to change the entire flow of the war through his personal achievements."

She spat more blood, straightened slightly, and added in a neutral tone:

"But you know what?"

Mordret raised an eyebrow and remained silent. After a few moments, he shook his head.

"I am a little disappointed. I really expected more from you, sister."

Morgan smiled.

"What? Do you really think that this is it? Surely, no. No... you and I, we are only just starting."

With that, she pierced him with a sharp gaze, and called upon one of the enchantments stored deep within her body.

Instantly, her essence flowed like a tide, washing over her body and seeping deep into its every cell.

Morgan's smile swiftly turned less lopsided. Her caved face regained its previous shape, the deep cuts marring her flawless skin closing as if they had never existed. Her broken teeth were restored to their previous pristine condition. The countless wounds on her mangled body healed, while her arm, which was hanging by a thread, was pulled back by ropes of growing muscle, and was then attached back to where it belonged.

In just a few moments, Morgan was restored to perfect health, her body brimming with energy and overflowing with soul essence. It was as if she had not endured a grueling battle against her brother at all.

She moved a hand, and a deep cut split the stones between her and one of Mordret's vessels, almost severing its head.

Standing some distance away, Mordret scowled.

"...Now where did you find a healing enchantment as powerful as that?"

Morgan simply smiled.

"I guess you might say that I saw it in a Nightmare."