2008: Terrifying Beast

The exchange of pleasantries was over, and the battle of the Saints had now begun.

As if to signify its descent, the ground shook violently, and a thunderous roar of a distant explosion rolled across the battlefield, coming from somewhere far to the right.

Nephis must have engaged her own share of Transcendent foes.

Sunny wondered briefly how many Saints the Song Army had sent to face her. More than him? Or less?

In any case, it did not really matter...

No matter how many of them Song sent, it wouldn't be enough.

The Saints of the two armies clashed across the vast length of the battlefield, ripping the fabric of the world apart. Today was a day for many firsts — the previous battle had been the first time such an inconceivable number of Awakened warriors entered the battlefield, for example, all consumed by the murderous song of war.

And now, close to seventy Saints — most of the Saints there were in existence — were fighting with each other in their stead… it was the most terrifying clash humans had ever witnessed, by far, dwarfing the bloody battles of the Chain of Nightmares with absolute ease.

Far away, the soldiers of the two retreating armies froze in place, watching the dreadful calamity in terror.

The gods were fighting. What were mortal men to do?

Of course, at the moment, Sunny did not care much about their plight. As one of the warring demigods, he had his own problems to solve…

And what diabolical problems they were.

'This is going to be... damn interesting…'

Facing seven powerful Saints was not something even he could take lightly.

Especially if three of them were of a divine lineage.

The lineage of Beast God...

An unknown power had shattered space, throwing Sunny and his Shadows apart. Of course, he immediately attempted to remedy the situation by ordering Fiend to come back by using Shadow Step.

Sadly, it did not work. The space was continuously being manipulated, and every time the steel Shadow tried to escape, it folded on itself, bringing him right back.

Sunny was not sure if the shattering of the space had been done by an enemy Aspect or a powerful Memory in possession of one the Queen's dsughters, but it was quite effective in preventing him and his Shadow from moving freely to support each other — for now, at least.

His Shadows would have to fend for themselves, and so would Sunny.

He wasn't very worried about Saint and Serpent. Fiend, however…

It seemed that Song had learned their lesson after losing two of Mordret's Reflections to the ravenous steel troll. Today, that had come prepared to deal with the Supreme Devil who served the Lord of Shadows.

Sunny did not know where the Song Army had found the older and more terrifying cousins of the Chain Worms, but the three appalling creatures were a very detrimental foe for Fiend.

After all, they fed on metal, and his entire body was made from blessed steel.

'Not good…'

Still, Sunny wasn't too worried about Fiend, either — if Song thought that the most frightening thing about that little imp was his impenetrable steel armor, they were going to learn the error of their ways quite soon.

In fact, Sunny was mostly worried about himself.

Fighting seven Saints was better than fighting thirteen… but it was still a challenge.

Taken individually, each of these exalted warriors was not a real threat to Sunny — and even if their collective power was summed up, he would not have to cower in front of it.

However, that was the peril and dread of fighting humans… when several of them came together, the sum was often greater than the parts. Sunny had known it from all the way back on the Forgotten Shore, where dealing with the Carapace Scavengers had become more tenable than it was supposed to be after Nephis joined him.

Even added together, the power of two Sleepers was not comparable to that of an Awakened Beast. However, with Nephis serving as bait and Sunny attacking from the shadows, they had managed to bring countless of those terrifying beasts down.

That was simply the most elementary example of how cooperating with another human could enhance one's lethality far beyond one's power.

And in the present situation… it was Sunny who played the role of a terrifying beast. The Saints of Song, meanwhile, were the weaker hunters who had joined forces to bring him down.

'Dangerous.'

His enemies were among the most seasoned warriors of humanity, as well. They knew how to cooperate with each other seamlessly, not making any mistakes he could exploit.

There was not enough space for more than three of them to attack him at the same time, for example. So, instead of rushing forward all together and getting in each other's ways, four Saints fell back while three advanced at him with stunning speed.

The three attackers were the obsidian jackal, the three-headed canine — Ceres — and Lonesome Hole.

It did not mean that the other four were doing nothing, though.

In fact, they might have posed more danger than the melee vanguard.

He could already see Silent Stalker nocking an arrow on the string of her sword, while Beastmaster spun a strange-looking sling.

Two remaining Saints took to the sky — one of them was Siord, the harpy, while the second one was a gargoyle with a powerful stone body and wide wings.

The Saint of Sorrow. Tamar's father was here, too.

Sunny was going to have to deal with a barrage of range attacks pretty soon.

But first…

He had to survive the obliterating assault of three melee powerhouses.

Ceres and Lonesome Howl were already tough enough to handle. It was the obsidian giant that gave Sunny the most pressure due to the sheer immensity of his size, though.

The jackal towered above the battlefield like a dark titan, wielding an enormous polearm with a gold crescent blade. That polearm… seemed great and sharp enough to cleave a small fortress in half.

Watching the towering giant barrel at him with murder burning in his bestial eyes, Sunny felt like an ant.

He was suddenly… annoyed.

This scene reminded him of facing Goliath for the first time.

Those were not happy memories.

And although the obsidian jackal was truly blameless in that regard…

He was going to pay for making Sunny remember something so unpleasant.

'Let's see which one of us is the ant…'

As the bestial giant approached, Sunny was suddenly enveloped by a tide of shadows.

And then, a colossal figure forged from pure darkness rose to meet the giant face-to-face.