2019 : [R](https://www.webnovel.com/book/22196546206090805/83991483329331898)eaching the Peak

Sunny had been developing his Transcendent Battle Art for a long time now.

A Transcendent Battle Art was the culmination of one's combat technique. Humans underwent a profound transformation when becoming Saints — therefore, their technique had to reach its own version of Transcendence, as well.

On a surface level, a Transcendent Battle Art was an elevation of a battle style to a technique that comprehensively fit the newfound powers of a Saint. Of course, since all Aspects were unique, each such Battle Art was fundamentally different from the rest.

On a deeper level, however, the difference between a mundane battle style and a Transcendent Battle Art was enormously vast. A Transcendent being was, by definition, one that had crossed the threshold separating mortals from deities — therefore, Saints wielded powers that were truly beyond the scope of humanly possible.

A combat technique that flawlessly incorporated these powers had a special nature. It transcended the definition of a battle style just as much as Saints transcended mere mortals.

Hence, the name.

It was not at all surprising, then, that developing a Transcendent Battle Art was a daunting task. It was already difficult enough to disassemble the very nature of a martial style into elementary principles — but then, these axiomatic principles had to be examined, reshaped, or even dismissed entirely, to be replaced with new concepts.

Finally, a comprehensive system of practical applications had to be built on this new foundation. An impossible and revolutionary battle style meant to be used by only a single person.

No wonder it took the talent and resources of an entire Legacy Clan to design a single Transcendent Battle Art… Sunny, however, had done it alone.

He had meticulously created a completely new set of concepts and laws of how a living being was supposed to fight, based on his own unique attributes and abilities instead of human nature.

His Transcendent Battle Art had been on the verge of completion for a while. The theoretical foundation had already been developed, and all he lacked was practical experience to test his design in order to either validate or iterate it.

He had tested and perfected most of it already. But one key element was still unfinished — because that element concerned controlling multiple incarnations in battle, and Sunny had been hiding that Ability of his for a long time.

He had fought some Nightmare Creatures that way in the past, but only now that he was facing a foe as dire, cunning, and skilled as the four Saints of the Song Domain did he receive a bountiful opportunity to really test his mettle.

Everything was clicking together. Everything was falling into place.

Sunny could feel it…

His art was taking shape.

From that first swing of the Azure Blade Nephis had instructed him to perform on the Forgotten Shore to this calamitous battle under the radiant sky of Godgrave, Sunny had never stopped reaching for new heights.

And now, finally, he was standing on the peak.

His art was complete.

…The four Saints descended upon Sunny like a hurricane of fangs, claws, and sharp steel. However, all that met them was darkness and overwhelming strength.

Now that Sunny did not have to create titanic blades to wield with the giant hands of his Shell, four weapons manifested themselves in his four pairs of hands. They were an austere tachi, a great odachi, a somber spear, and an elegant jian.

Each was as potent as a Transcendent weapon would have been, and sharp enough to cut the world.

His four bodies moved in perfect harmony with each other, weaving a dark tapestry of deadly intent. The flawless grace of their unity made the uncanny combat affinity that the seasoned warriors serving the King of Swords displayed seem clumsy and crude, full of dissonance and discord.

Even the four Saints of Song, whose ability to cooperate in combat had been forged in thousands of battles, were no match.

And so… Sunny crushed them.

Each of his four bodies was weaker than one augmented body had been, but the sum of their individual strength was greater than the whole. He could be in several places at the same time, seamlessly interweave offense and defense, build elaborate traps, force the enemy to move where he wanted them to move… all with almost effortless ease.

The possibilities seemed endless.

Best of all, the four Saints were almost like an open book to him. Now that Sunny's own Transcendent Battle Art was complete, he found it easier to read similar techniques that belonged to others. His already formidable mastery of Shadow Dance took another leap, teasing him with an alluring scent of unknown mysteries.

He could vaguely feel what lay beyond…

For Shadow Dance, the ability to mimic the Attributes of other living beings.

For his Battle Art… the ability to incorporate his will into the movements of his sword.

Just like the nebulous archer of the Shadow Realm had incorporated death into the black arrows.

Even in the rush of battle, Sunny could not help but notice that there was a common trait between these two future breakthroughs.

It was that… neither was truly only about combat.

In fact, he could not even call the next evolution of his technique a Supreme Battle Art. Because it was not really a technique, or limited to battle.

It was just what being Supreme meant.

And just like that, a seed of a different kind of understanding was planted in Sunny's mind.

…The furious assault by the four Saints shattered against the elusive barrier woven by his four incarnations. The battle continued at a frenetic pace, but he maintained a calm and chillingly cold attitude, silently pushing the enemies to their limit — and then past it. Soon, the Saints of Song reached a point where their reserves of essence were almost depleted.

Of course, there were a few perilous moments on the way. Sunny had been right — the daughters of Ki Song were indeed harboring a few weapons of last resort.

But it was already too late. Sunny had too great of an advantage. His superiority was both oppressive and suffocating — even when they called upon their trump cards, he managed to deal with the consequences with relative ease.

Especially because those carefully prepared countermeasures were meant to deal with a single powerful opponent, not four. And because Beastmaster had been taken out of the fight before having an opportunity to summon her own.

Eventually, it all came crashing down for the Saints of Song.

The beautiful harpy, Siord, screamed and fell to the ground, grasping a terrible wound. Sunny moved away to deflect an attack by Saint Ceres, but a moment later, another of his incarnations was standing in his place. The elegant jian rose and fell, slicing Siord's tendons and removing her from the battle.

The three-headed canine was next. Sunny was cruel in dealing with her… isolating Ceres from the daughters of Ki Song with three avatars, he leaped into the air and brandished his great odachi. The dark blade flashed twice, and two of her three heads fell to the ground.

Then, it was just Lonesome Howl and Silent Stalker against his four incarnations.

The daughters of Ki Song fought beautifully. They fought valiantly.

But in the end, they still lost.

And just when Lonesome Howl, having long returned to her human form, fell to her knees, feeling the tip of his sword at her neck…

A low, reverberating sound rolled across the vast battlefield.

Sunny stayed his hand and looked up.

His fearsome mask did not reveal any emotion, but somehow, he looked slightly amused.

He recognized that sound.

'...They are calling retreat.'