2083 Fragments of War (20)

Sunny would have loved to think that the senseless slaughter at the Two Crossings had been put on hold while Anvil was secretly realizing his daring plan to lead an army through the Hollows, but in fact, the opposite was true.

There had to be mayhem and carnage to cover up his absence and mask the signs of the dreadful battle with Condemnation, after all. So, the war entered a period of demented intensity while the King was absent from the frontline.

So, it was good that it did not take them long to reach the overgrown ruins of an ancient city where Sunny and Nephis had once rescued Tamar of Sorrow and her friend Fleur.

The King of Swords and his retinue of Saints were currently observing the ruins from a small distance. The Cursed Tyrant was hidden out of sight, but Sunny could feel its profane influence permeating the air.

He could practically see the Sword Domain clashing against the boundary of Condemnation's territory — only to recede like a wave, powerless to usurp the will of Condemnation.

Out there in the ruins, even the authority of a Sovereign would have to bow to a more tyrannical presence.

The man himself was standing just a few steps away from Sunny, observing the ruined city with an indifferent expression. That expression had not left his face ever since they entered the Hollows, making it seem as if nothing here was worthy of making his heart stir.

It was to the point that Sunny was starting to wonder if Anvil usually ate Cursed Tyrants for breakfast.

Actually, it was hard to imagine Anvil eating any kind of breakfast. Did Sovereigns even need to eat? Their souls were far beyond the concept of mundane, and their bodies were not quite mortal either. So, he was not sure.

He was also painfully aware that it was his first time being so close to the King of Swords while surrounded by so few people. The small size of the subjugation party made Anvil seem almost… approachable.

'Well, what the hell? You only live once.'

Sunny decided to just go ahead and ask.

He turned his mask toward the King of Swords and spoke in a cold tone:

"Have you slain a Cursed Tyrant before, Your Majesty?"

Anvil regarded the ruins for a few more moments, then slowly shook his head.

"I've slain a few Cursed Nightmare Creatures, but none of that Class."

Sunny stared.

'...Then why the hell are you so calm?'

They were about to attack the lair of a Cursed Tyrant. A Cursed Tyrant! Condemnation was not just some big abomination — it was a true deity. A deity that had succumbed to Corruption.

They were intending to slay a god.

The rest of the Saint shifted uncomfortably. Sunny gave them a glance.

They were… a strange group, considering the circumstances.

He understood that Anvil could not pull too many Saints from the frontline without making their absence too noticeable. However, the particular people he had taken with him were all a bit odd of a choice.

Sunny was the most obvious pick, since he had extensive knowledge of the Hollows and had already faced Condemnation once. However… he was also known to be unusually partial to Changing Star of the Immortal Flame clan, who was currently in a strained relationship with the King.

There was Cassie, as well. She was a loyal follower of Nephis, too… not that it prevented her from being in very good standing among the Saints of Valor. But it was still strange to see her here, since the blind seer was not exactly known as a powerful combatant. Bringing her to a battle with a Cursed Tyrant did not make a lot of sense.

Saint Helie was with them, too… she was a warrior of great renown and well-liked in the Sword Domain, so it was not too strange to see her here. However, the King had just executed her uncle, Orum, not too long ago. Was he really relying on Helie as a champion, or keeping her close to observe her?

Then, there was Roan of White Feather. Unlike the other three Saints, there was nothing controversial about Roan… at first glance. But he was married to Saint Tyris, who was the cornerstone of the entire Sword Army here in Godgrave. Before that, their clan had not been looked upon with favor. One could almost imagine that Anvil was using Roan as a hostage to keep Sky Tide in check.

Saint Jest, meanwhile, was one of the most loyal subjects of the royal clan. Even now that the Citadel of the Dagonet clan had been destroyed, he was valued by the King greatly. However, his Aspect mostly dealt with emotions and thoughts. Considering that they would be fighting mindless automatons in the ruins, the old man would find it hard to contribute to the battle in a meaningful manner.

Finally, there was Rivalen of Aegis Rose…

Actually, Sunny could not think of anything odd about Saint Rivalen. That guy was a perfectly fitting choice. His loyalty was stellar, and his Aspect was uniquely useful in almost any situation.

But wasn't it strange, to be the only one who was not strange when everyone else was?

Perhaps Rivalen was the most suspicious!

Sunny shook his head.

'I think my nerves are getting to me.'

He pointed to the ruins.

"In any case, as I explained before, the Great Nightmare Creatures populating these ruins are called Asuras of Condemnation. They seem to be remnants of the human civilization that once thrived in Godgrave — powerful suits of enchanted armor parasitized by Corruption. So, don't try to behead them or damage the corpses trapped inside the golems. Go for the armor itself."

Sunny lingered for a few moments, and then added tensely:

"As for Condemnation, I only know that it's huge. I ran away immediately after it appeared, and even then just barely."

Anvil gave him a curt nod and headed toward the ruins calmly.

"Leave the Tyrant to me. Today, I will be the condemned."