2087 Fragments of War (24)

As the storm of swords descended upon Condemnation, the Asuras seemed to lose interest in the Saints. The ancient golems turned around, observing the battle between the Sovereign and the cursed god… then, one of them raised its diamond spear and threw it with measured, powerful swing.

There was a thunderous roar, and the ground beneath the golem cracked.

The diamond spear flew through the darkness like a shooting star, becoming incandescent and igniting the very air around it. Its fiery trail was like a wound left on the dim twilight of the Hollows.

It was aimed at the back of the King of Swords, who hovered high above the ground in the distance.

Luckily, one of Helie's arrows struck the spear in the air, producing a fearsome explosion and knocking it off course. The stunning shot left the beautiful equine Saint open for a split second, though, which almost cost her her life.

Sunny manifested his three incarnations and snarled as each of them attacked one of the Asuras.

"Keep them busy!"

He was not even entirely sure why he was trying to prevent the minions of the Cursed Tyrant from attacking Anvil. Wouldn't it be better if the damned Sovereign was either killed or severely wounded in the battle?

No… probably not. With Anvil debilitated or out of the picture, there would be no one left to contain the Queen of Worms. And once her Domain consumed the entire world, neither Sunny nor Nephis would be able to stop her.

That was the rational reason. The irrational reason, though, was that he simply did not feel right siding with the Nightmare Creatures in a battle against humans.

Sunny and his incarnations, as well as Fiend, clashed with the Asuras. The Saints abandoned caution in favor of fierce offense, too — with their combined effort, the dreadful golems were temporarily stalled.

A vast swath of the overgrown ruins was devastated by the chilling violence of their furious battle…

But the devastation could not even remotely compare to the calamity unleashed by the King of Swords and Condemnation.

At the heart of the ancient city, the colossal figure of Condemnation was finally enveloped by a storm of swords. Because of how gargantuan the Cursed Tyrant was, its movements seemed deceptively slow. With each step it took, the Hollows quaked.

The cursed god was slowly raising a hand when the flowing river of swords slammed into its body, turning into an enormous steel whirlwind.

Each of the countless blades struck Condemnation with obliterating force.

Flashes of blinding light and flowers of flame bloomed across the dark expanse of its titanic body — those were caused by kinetic energy turning into heat and light, much like what happened when the projectiles shot by the massive siege railguns hit the hordes of Nightmare Creatures under the walls at Falcon Scott.

Only these explosions were infinitely more destructive, carrying the will and essence of a Supreme being. More than that, there had barely been a few dozen railguns firing at any given moment in Falcon Scott. Here, there was a myriad of swords, all striking the Tyrant continuously.

Sunny suddenly felt a chill run down his spine.

As he watched a hurricane of light and flame swallow the titanic form of Condemnation, his eyes widened.

'Crap…'

Then, the furious forces unleashed by Anvil's attack crossed a dire threshold.

The colossal Tyrant was wreathed in flames entirely by then, with a storm of swords continuing to bombard its mountain-like figure with a daunting barrage of annihilating blows. The heat unleashed by them was so great, in fact, that the air itself seemed to ignite.

It was like a chain reaction.

The world shuddered, and then exploded with furious light. A harrowing wall of flame suddenly formed in the distance, reaching almost all the way to the dome of the Hollows. The dim twilight that had reigned here for thousands of years was instantly vanquished… and the ancient jungle covering the ruins was, too, turning to ash almost in a split second.

The nameless city was revealed from under its suffocating embrace for a brief moment, looking almost like it had before the civilization of Godgrave succumbed to the ruthless challenge of the Nightmare Spell.

It was a beautiful sight.

Then, the ancient stone itself melted, turning into rivers of incandescent lava.

The towering wall of incinerating flame rolled outward, consuming the ruins from the center outward...

There was probably a moment or two before the deadly heat reached the outskirts of the city, where the Saints were fighting the Asuras.

Sunny allowed himself a split second to witness this awesome scene of unfathomable devastation.

Then, he dashed back and shouted:

"Rivalen!"

The Saints seemed to understand his meaning, swiftly moving to stand by the enormous rhino's side. Sunny frantically looked around to see if Cassie was there, but he did not have to worry — she was, just a step or two away from him. In fact, she had probably arrived first.

Rivalen's shields managed to surround them just before a wave of unbearable heat arrived. The power of his defensive Aspect weakened the heat, the shockwave, and the flames enough to allow the Saints to endure. Fiend's wide back protected them, as well.

A couple of heartbeats later, the dome of invisible shields was swallowed entirely by the wall of flame.

The world had turned into a fiery abyss.

'Ah…'

The air itself had been burned away, so they could not breathe. Luckily, Saints could last for a while without oxygen… it was still unpleasant, though.

But they survived.

The jungle had turned to ash. The ruins melted. The air burned.

Eventually, with nothing more to feed on, the fire died down.

Sunny could see clearly once again.

Directly in front of him, Fiend's black carapace had turned incandescent. The ravenous Shadow did not seem to be in discomfort, though — instead, he was gleeful, bursting with bloodlust and vigor, as if having absorbed some of the incinerating fire into his steel body.

Further away, the Asuras were standing, surrounded by wisps of smoke. Patches of red moss that had been covering the abominable golems were gone now, burned away, revealing their true appearance.

Beyond the Great Nightmare Creatures, the vast ruins of the ancient city… were utterly gone, having turned into a hellish landscape of ash and molten lava.

And further still…

The Cursed Tyrant, Condemnation, remained intact and undamaged.

It still bore the scar where Neph's flame had burned its body, but the harrowing conflagration summoned into the world by the hurricane of Anvil's swords did not leave even a scratch on it.

Condemnation's titanic hand was reaching forward from the billowing cloud of black smoke, as if to swat the King of Swords away like an annoying pest.