2090 Fragments of War (27)

There was no mistaking it…

Sunny had made it one of his life's great pursuits to learn how to see logic in the seemingly irrational, mind-boggling complexity of spellweaves. Therefore, his mind was trained to see purposeful patterns where seemingly only chaos existed.

That was why he was able to recognize the subtle intent in the swirling currents of the storm of swords.

The flying swords were slowly forming a vast array above the battlefield, hanging above Condemnation like a net.

But what, exactly, was that array meant to achieve, and how?

Sunny studied it for a moment.

'It's… sorcery.'

His eyes widened.

He had been wondering why Anvil was only using his Dormant Ability. Now, the answer seemed obvious… it was because he was intending to use sorcery to deliver the fatal blow, not the power of his Aspect.

The patterns created by the flying swords — each serving as a conduit of the Sovereign's essence — were not random. Once Sunny understood the nature of the array, he was able to shift his perspective and recognize them for what they were.

They were the half-assembled frames of enormous runes.

These runes were not written with ink on paper, carved into the stone, and woven out of ethereal light. Instead, they were formed by countless rustling swords, written in the glowing red darkness by sharp steel.

More than that, the runic array was not formed on a flat plain, but instead constructed in a three-dimensional space. That, naturally, was very different from how humans usually wrote, and were therefore accustomed to reading. However, Sunny was a weaver, and he had already experienced the frustrating headache of teaching his mind to perceive intricate three-dimensional constructs.

After all, the tapestries of essence strings he usually dealt with were never flat, either.

'Runic sorcery.'

Sunny was not proficient enough in that type of sorcery to understand the purpose of the array, but he could discern its existence, at least.

[Cassie… do you see it?]

Now that he was paying attention to the storm of swords, Cassie would have noticed where his focus was aimed at, as well. And she was far more knowledgeable about runic sorcery than he was.

There were a few moments of silence as both of them fought against the Asuras desperately.

Then, her mental response resounded in his mind, sounding out-of-breath:

[By the dead gods, what the hell is…]

It was a bit funny, really. She was speaking telepathically, and her mind did not possess lungs. Why was she out of breath?

Cassie paused for a moment, and then added:

[I see it. I've never seen anything like it. It's… some kind of magical prism. A prismatic confluence? A fulcrum? I'm not sure.]

That explanation did not tell Sunny much. He gathered that the runic array was meant to channel and focus something — much like a prism would focus light. But what was it that the King of Swords was intending to channel? Sunny did not know.

He was going to find out soon, though, because the runic array seemed to be almost finished.

As Condemnation stepped into a lake of lava, making it spill out of its shores, Anvil soared into the air in a whirlwind of scarlet sparks. More swords manifested themselves behind him, fanned like a steel halo. One, two, three… six of them, all emanating a sense of dire power.

Added with the terrifying sword he was holding in his hand, that was seven of them.

The six swords shot in different directions, while the seventh remained in his grasp.

The Cursed Tyrant's titanic hand once again surged forward, and the torrents of swords once again tried to stall its obliterating blow… only to be effortlessly shattered and pierced.

The cursed god was moving much faster than a creature of its immeasurable size was supposed to move. Not because its speed was so great, but simply because space itself twisted around it, shrinking and extending to allow the dark deity to pass.

There was another blinding flash, and another wave of incinerating heat.Another shockwave slammed into the dome of the Hollows, sending jagged shards of bone plummeting from a great height.

Anvil was once again struck down.

He fell into the lake of lava, this time taking a little longer to stand up.

His fearsome defenses finally seemed to reach their limit. The vermilion cloak that hung on his shoulders was scorched, and his black armor was dented. Most shockingly of all, two thin streams of blood were flowing out of his nostrils, crimson drops falling down and evaporating in the scorching heat.

Nevertheless, the Sovereign just smiled coldly.

Because just at that moment, the runic array was finally complete.

The flying swords that formed the steel storm all happened to be just in the right place for a short, carefully chosen moment, outlining countless immense runes in the air around Condemnation.

The Cursed Tyrant finally seemed to sense the trap, but it was already too late — since the array only assembled itself a split second prior, there was no time to react.

The cursed god silently turned its head and looked up, a hint of a strange emotion appearing in its inhuman eyes.

Then, the flying swords ignited with a cold radiance, and far below them, Anvil grasped his sword with both hands to deliver an upward slash.

That slash was both swift and deliberate, beautifully lethal… but it was futile and insignificant at the same time, having cut nothing but air.

And yet…

The runic array seemed to exist for that one slash only.

Sunny did not know what Anvil had channeled with the help of sorcery — if it was merely his soul essence, the authority of his Domain, or even his sheer will. All he knew was that the runic array was brought to life by something, somehow infusing the slash of the King's sword with truly harrowing power.

It was as if an endless invisible blade slashed the world following the path of his steel sword, cutting the world apart.

The lake of lava was cut in half,and the invisible blade continued to travel upward, toward Condemnation's titanic body.

However…

Condemnation was a Cursed Tyrant, after all. Submitting to its will, space twisted once again and started to move the malevolent deity out of the path of Anvil's inconceivable cut…

Until space itself was cut, as well.

The Tyrant did not manage to avoid the invisible blade completely, but it did manage to avoid being wounded by it too severely.

All Anvil managed to cut was Condemnation's wrist. This time, the Cursed Tyrant did not escape unscathed — its arm was cut deeply, almost severing one of its hands.

Sunny froze.

The vast runic array dimmed, having exhausted all its power.

And the cursed god was still alive.

It was wounded, but not at all seriously.

'Is that… all?'

He turned his attention to Anvil, wanting to see if the King of Swords was dismayed and rattled by his failure.

But he was not.

The Sovereign was simply standing in the lava, looking up with a darkly satisfied expression.

And his invisible blade…

Did not dissipate after missing the titanic body of Condemnation, continuing to travel upward.