

## Fate/Bonds Beyond Humanity

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### 85- Let There Be Khaos II: Rain of Death

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Everything was going according to her King's plan, in Ravel's perspective at least. "I am next." The Daughter of Phenex declared while stepping forth. Her glare towards her fellow pureblood blonde as searing as her flames. "Something to say about my challenge, Diodora?"

They were standing on the sixth floor of the castle, the last one before they could reach the traitorous Astaroth and rescue their friend. All of Rias Peerage was still standing despite being debilitated, Luvia showing signs of exhaustion even as she retained the air and dignity of a noble lady.

Yet everything was working as intended and Ravel could see Rias' strategy even if her King never uttered a word about it. Mostly what the redhead did was soothe their dragon's rage, asking him to focus on Asia's safety.

It was obvious that the last floor would have the most terrifying of challenges and she intended to throw the Red Dragon Emperor at it with all his fury.

Which meant that it was Ravel's turn to fight.

\*So you are sending a Knight this time?\* Diodora sounded upset but not angry and they could only guess why. \*Very well-\*

"Wait a second." The Princess of Ruin suddenly interrupted the man, making him frown. "What are you plotting?" She made a show of looking around. "You have no more peerage members left and I doubt you dragged other devils inside this dimension. If you did, they would have already attacked instead of letting you run the show."

'That is true.' Ravel of course knew every single one of Diodora's Pieces laid either defeated or dead.

\*Obviously I have more tricks up my sleeve. But perhaps the question should be; do you want to keep the game going?\* Diodora made a show of grabbing Asia's hair and pulling her face up. \*You all have a princess to rescue and I need Rias defeated. How I do that is up to me, isn't it?\*

"Oh, how I hate this bastard..." Kiba voiced his thoughts and several in his team agreed.

Luvia in particular clicked her tongue with distaste. "We will have to deal with the obstacle, whatever it is."

Upon hearing that comment, Akeno chuckled. "One would think he would use sleep gas or something like that to knock us out." All knew every word the Queen said enraged Diodora more than anyone else's. "Or better boundary fields. Or an army. Or maybe just fight like a man-"

\*You little-\*

"Ravel and Gasper will fight this time." Rias declared, cutting off her enemy making her youngest Knight nod while pulling the Married Twins from her back.

It was logical for both of them to go next so every Piece besides Ise had fought once before the last floor, that way avoiding whatever Geas or taboo the traitor and his allies may have attempted to place in the castle.

Sure it needed their consent to activate if it was a magical contract of some sort but Rias wasn't taking chances.

Unfortunately Gasper didn't realize any of that. "Eh? Buchou?"

Calmly Rias turned to her Bishop and placed a hand on his shoulder. "I need you to watch Ravel's back on this, Gasper. Our enemy sacrificed his Pieces too early... too easily." She glared at Diodora who watched the interaction impatiently but said nothing. The sooner the fight started the better. "And this isn't a Rating Game anymore. There are no rules and we can't just trust his word."

A nervous look appeared on the young man's face. "Like when the witches attacked the club?"

"Yeah, exactly like that." Rias said it delicately. She knew the former dhampir was afraid as that would be his first real fight in a long time, even as support.

"But if I lose... Then Asia will..." However his fear wasn't for himself and the King of Gremory smiled proudly but sadly.

"You can do it." Koneko said simply, punching the young man's free shoulder.

"Yeah. Show this bastard what a real man can do." Ise said firmly, his furious eyes never leaving Diodora who scoffed at the declaration. If it was either because of Gasper's age or girl clothing, it was anyone's guess. "We'll save Asia."

It was the right thing to say and the smaller devil nodded with determination. "Thanks, everyone." He stepped forwards to stay besides Ravel who nodded in his direction. "Let's do this."

"Absolutely." The Daughter of Phenex glared at Diodora once again.

The traitor clicked his tongue with annoyance. \*Fools and children. It will be a pity to see you die, Ravel.\* Nobody believed he was being sincere in the slightest. \*This time things will be

different. You are right, Rias, from the very beginning I have been holding back some of the Khaos Brigade's most useful gifts so they didn't kill you by mistake.\*

Magic circles appeared several meters in front of the peerage and soon dropped off several creatures that couldn't be natural. "Chimeras?!"

Indeed Luvia was correct in the identification of the threats that Diodora dropped on the floor because it would be hard to call them anything but chimeras. Six creatures had appeared before the group with six legs connected to red scorpion-like bodies that sustained a torso full of scales.

Because instead of a scorpion's head it was like someone had shoved half of a naga's body with half of its tail on the scorpion's body. The head and arms were also from different species; the limbs carried fur and long claws like a werewolf's while the head belonged to some sort of bird with a long beak and black feathers.

They also were extremely hostile since despite not receiving any orders, the six creatures released hawk-like cries before speeding up towards Rias Peerage. Diodora laughed as they all struggled to dodge the blows, not even caring about the Heiress of Gremory's life. His laughter grew louder when one of the chimeras brought its tail and almost impaled Luvia.

\*Careful! They sting!! Hahahahaha!!\*

Realizing the man no longer cared about any rules, Akeno took the lead. "Everyone but Gasper-kun and Ravel-chan, fall back!!" Her Lightning flared and a huge magic circle blocked a claw that almost took Kiba's arm. "Stay behind so Buchou and I can lift up some barriers."

Ise, whose patience was almost fully spent, roared. "Fight back!!!"

"He still has Asia!" Rias retorted more calmly while helping Akeno with the shields. She still made time to drop a magic circle in front of her Pawn, halting his advance. "Even if he isn't playing by the rules, we have to keep that in mind."

Diodora laughed louder while the Red Dragon Emperor gritted his teeth in fury before pulling his power back. "Shit!!!"

Outside of the barrier both Raven and Gasper were doing their best to avoid claws and stingers from the chimeras. 'These chimeras must be lab grown with so many parts belonging to several different creatures of the moonlit world.' The Daughter of Phenex thought while using Kanshou to block an attack and cut off the offending stinger with Bakuya. The creature cried in pain which caught the attention of the other five. 'Huh, those swords are really good! As expected of Noble Phantasms-'

Her train of thought was interrupted when another of the chimeras reached her and tried to stab her chest with its claws. Opening her flame wings, she dove down trying to get beneath its insectoid body but the remains of the naga's tail bent to put itself in her way. Which she didn't mind since it gave her space to throw a double slash on it.

Green blood was spilled when the Original Married Twins bit on the scales and tore the flesh beneath them. The creature cried in pain much like the previous one but Ravel had no time to finish it off because its claws came down for revenge. Other chimeras were already joining with it, their stings failing to hit the pureblood Knight.

'Looks like they are smart enough to identify each other as allies.' The girl pondered while flying backwards to avoid the hits before focusing flames in her hands. Her first attempt at using her fire with Kanshou and Bakuya failed, much to her irritation. 'Aren't they supposed to be compatible with anyone so long they are together, Mage of Swords?'

Burying any irritation she might have felt, Ravel concentrated the fire of her wings on their tips before pushing the flames into a huge blast. Compared with what it was during the match against Rias the attack was much weaker but still enough to leave the chimeras with minor burns.

Burns that healed almost instantly a few seconds after being inflicted, which also happened to every previous wound including the ones caused by the Married Twins. It could be accounted for by a good constitution or fast healing until everyone noticed the sting that had been previously cut off had grown back again.

"High speed regeneration!" Rias pointed out. "How?! Chimeras made with so many components usually fall apart!!"

A disgusted Koneko began to approach her King. "Buchou, their Ki, it..." But words failed to describe what she felt.

"What sort of abominations did the Khaos Brigade create?" Luvia asked out loud.

"Don't let them sting you!!!" Ise pointed out the obvious but it needed to be said.

"Obviously!! **Phoenix Wings!!!**" Ravel replied while throwing more fire in the chimeras' direction with a greater intensity than before. The six creatures quickly spread out, two getting hit but falling back to heal while the others kept charging. "Crud. Is this how it feels like fighting my Clan?!"

Ravel dodged the hits easily enough thanks to her wings, her arms pulling back for a mighty swing with the Married Twins against one of the chimeras. She took its arm and landed for a second before diving into its naga's torso with the Noble Phantasms stabbing right through it.

The creature's claws tried to rip her off but only ended up slashing her back as she remained firmly in place while the Knight's flames grew brighter, her wounds healing faster so the blonde could prepare the follow up.

Until enough energy had been accumulated in her wings and legs so Ravel could use them to propel herself up with both blades in the creature's body. It was the equivalent of hot knives going against butter, just on a bigger scale that included swords far better than simple knives.

That chimera stood no chance as its body burned from the inside until it finally died when the Married Twins emerged from its skull, completely destroying it. 'One down.' The Knight could feel how the heat was increasing the Noble Phantasms' potency but knew it wasn't all they could do. 'Now for the other five!'

Half expecting them to charge again, Ravel enveloped herself with her wings and raised the Married Twins, getting ready for the next blow. Instead she found the chimeras surrounding her with slow but careful steps. In that their scorpion legs were perfect because it allowed them freedom to move without lowering their guard.

Yet that wasn't the most frightening thing. "Don't tell me... you monsters have intelligence?!" Ravel realized with some horror and even as the bird-like features didn't change, she could see the chimeras were all acting carefully and in unison. 'Not like a pack hunting in sync but a group anticipating each other's next move to surround their target without allowing a single breach.'

During all that, Diodora just laughed. \*Still confident you can win, Ravel?\*

Yes, she was. "Just because these creatures can think doesn't mean they are actually smart, Diodora!! **Phoenix Wings!!!**" Increasing the fire output on her back, Ravel dove to the right towards the closest chimera. Bakuya was pulled back while Kanshou was held forward, ready to stab its head, a fate almost written in stone with how close she was. 'Got you!'

However the creature did something unexpected and leaped over the Knight's head at the last second, evading even the White Twin when the blonde brought it down to try and cut off its escape route.

Indeed the leap had been perfect and saved the chimera from all avenues of attack Ravel had tried to lock it in. The only flaw in that maneuver was that the creatures didn't have wings, which the girl quickly tried to use to her advantage by stopping her flight to attack the one above.

"RAVEL KEEP GOING!!!!" Akeno tried to warn her kouhai but it was too late, the blonde was already using her fire to stabilize her speed and turn around swiftly.

During that transition there was a moment where all momentum simply stopped, the point where the initial acceleration was neutralized and where the Phenex devil planned to generate a new one to finish off the chimera, was when she was most open.

The secondary movement didn't happen because the other four creatures knew about it too, all of them rushing to attack her in many ways. Bakuya cut off a claw going for her neck while Kanshou severed a scorpion foot while using fire to try and keep the other two chimeras at bay.

Once again the creatures showed their intellect and stayed away from the fire while rescuing the wounded one. It was a development she didn't like but the Knight really couldn't do a thing when a huge pile of stone was thrown at her face and knocked her down.

The attack came from the chimera that leaped over Ravel where it used its scorpion legs to hang on the ceiling. Already the creature was removing another chunk off but instead of just throwing it the chimera leaped down towards the Knight of Gremory.

Who just freed herself of the first one and had little time to deal with the second, especially with the giant chimera behind it. Already Ravel could tell most of her avenues of attack were cut off by either the huge rock or the stinger that was poised to strike the moment she moved around.

'Isn't its view blocked?' The Phenex thought while raising her swords and getting ready to dive into the attack, hoping to cut the chimera down before it could counter attack. Her plan ready, she opened her wings fully and got ready to leap when noticing the chimera wasn't moving anymore. 'What the-'

"Ravel-san!!! Attack now!!!" Gasper, in his bat form, shouted. His eyes shone brightly, an indicator of his sacred gear being active.

"Thanks, Gasper!!!" The Daughter of Phenex beated her wings once to accelerate her flight and cut the chimera into several pieces. Kanshou and Bakuya sang in unity as their owner slaughtered the frozen monster with ease. "Get to the others!!!"

"Roger but it will take some time!" Quickly the Bishop broke apart into several bats, all of them focusing on the creatures. Forbidden Balor View successfully affected every single one of them but the effects weren't immediate, something he already half expected because, "These guys have some sort of magic resistance!!!"

In fact Gasper had been trying to help with his sacred gear since the fight began but only managed to make it work when Ravel was really in danger and the adrenaline helped push more mana through his eyes.

And the Knight of Gremory realized that when noticing the creatures' movements barely changed under the former dhampir's assault. "What in Goetia's name did those scoundrels not add to these chimeras?"

"How did they even manage such successful chimeras like these in the first place?" Rias wondered out loud as something was nagging at the back of her mind and she couldn't tell exactly what.

Several things were just rubbing her the wrong way about those chimeras, the way they coordinated being the main issue. Chimeras raised in workshops were usually too unique and independent, sometimes smart but not to that degree. They weren't moving like monsters should.

Without a shadow of a doubt there was some real intelligence behind their actions, as demonstrated when one of the last remaining four broke ranks to pursue Gasper just after their kin was cut down by Ravel.

They understood why that chimera in particular froze in the air, perhaps not all details but enough to reach the correct conclusion. 'Perhaps they even understand speech...' Rias realized with horror as Ravel dodged a stinger that almost took her head.

"Can these things even be classified as chimeras? They are too intelligent and have too many convenient characteristics to fight against devils. They are akin to anti-devil weapons of some sort." Luvia pointed out carefully, the magus growing ever more curious about those things.

"Biological weapons... that is a frightening thought..." Rias' mind was running rampant as the familiarity of the situation grew in her head. 'Did I ever cross something like that before?'

"Doesn't matter what they are! Gasper and Ravel need to kill them!!"

"Ise is right!" Kiba supported the Pawn and grasped his sword again. "Maybe we should go in-"

\*Careful there. I want Asia alive.\* Diodora commented with an expression which mixed rage and confidence as he observed the chimeras began to push back Rias' Pieces while concerning the others.

Not that the Princess of Ruin cared about him at that moment, her mind trying to come up with exactly what was bothering her about those creatures. 'Legs of scorpion, body of naga, head of a bird, arms with fur and claws. There is so much there that shouldn't fit! Whoever made those chimeras can only be called insane.' She shook her head and focused on the threat, trying to come up with something to tell her friends so they could win. 'Too many different animals, most of them too rare or too uncommon to be used as chimeras... Except by the legs? Are they just from an insect or is there something else about them that benefits their creation... They aren't cumbersome or in the way. If anything, those legs are the body parts that chimeras can use best...'

True enough, she realized once reaching that train of thought, those scorpion legs seemed to be the strongest part of the chimeras' bodies. They regenerated faster than the rest and were slightly resistant to Ravel's fire, which was proven as fact when she lit up the floor and they ignored the flames.

Soon the trio fighting the Phenex Daughter was moving in coordination again, never giving Gasper a clear line of sight while covering each other from his view for more than a few seconds at least while the isolated one chased the Bishop.

Sure the bats tried to blast it back with magic circles but his attacks lacked the strength required to push the creature back. Gasper formed a single bat once again to focus on that sole enemy but once he did, the creature sped up. Its claws would have certainly hit the Bishop if Ravel hadn't flown in that moment to try and take its head.

Fortunately for the Knight she managed to do so by taking a hit from another chimera and

using it as an impulse. By the time she reached her new target the claw marks were already closed and she was roaring with fury as Kanshou decapitated the beast.

Once the body hit the floor, it was like a switch was flipped and the others changed their postures, two of them moving to support their ally while the final one began chasing Gasper. All they moved in perfect coordination, every pair of legs giving those monsters the movement speed and the ability to pursue Gasper wherever he tried to hide.

The duo acted smartly from then on, not just throwing random swipes towards Ravel but also focusing on using their stingers more. When she tried to go around them to support Gasper, their attitude shifted and one of their claws hit her shoulder, slamming the blonde on the floor.

Fire burst from her wings quickly after that. **“Phoenix Wings!!!”** Ravel tried to burn them both but the creatures retreated with minor burns, shoulder to shoulder.

Just watching those chimeras moving around reminded her of some unpleasant memories of disgusting insects being controlled by an insane Mage.

A Mage she had hoped her beloved had killed. “Oh no, please tell me those aren’t Zolgen’s creatures!!” It implied he was alive and that wasn’t good for anyone. “Diodora!! Are those the work of a Mage?!!!”

Her fellow pureblood looked at her with confusion before shrugging. \*How am I supposed to know? I requested something strong to guard the floors and it was provided.\* Lie or truth, nobody could say, all they got from his tone was petulance. If Rias hadn’t already sworn to kill him, she would be doing it anyway just for that comment alone. \*Besides, are you sure you should be worried about who made the chimeras and not the creatures themselves? Your Bishop looks like he is flying into some trouble.\*

Indeed Gasper was doing his best to try and keep his eyes focused on the chimeras attacking Ravel while being pursued, much to his detriment as his attacker was unrelenting and actively tried to block his sight.

The creature truly used its body well by having the naga’s body extend to its limits while chasing with its scorpion legs. To try and get some distance the Bishop flew closer to the ceiling with hopes of evading the chimera but it was smart enough to walk on it, rushing to grab the bat with its huge claws.

Afraid that his sacred gear was helping Ravel and he couldn’t break eye contact, Gasper committed more power to Forbidden Balor View for a few seconds, freezing the three chimeras chasing the Knight for as long as he could.

Ravel saw the instant the sacred gear worked and successfully cut another one of the chimera’s heads. But before she could move to the next she heard Rias scream. “Gasper!!”

The Bishop was fetched from the air, his body beginning to be torn by the chimera’s claws. All heard the dhampir’s scream with his normal voice before he turned into a cloud of smoke.



The King of Gremory almost dashed to the rescue but her Queen used their shield to keep her back.

They all heard Diodora laugh at their efforts as he held Asia's hostage.

Soon Gasper was forced to reform his real body, his back, chest and right shoulder bleeding and several bones but his sacred gear was still active, his pink eyes shining in the two chimeras' direction.

He cared not about his own safety and ignored Koneko and Ise's screaming for him to protect himself or run. All his focus was on protecting Ravel and making sure his friends were safe.

That they could reach Asia as fast as possible.

The chimera's stinger came down to finish the Bishop off but never got that far because Ravel chose to intercept it with the Married Blades. "Are you an idiot?! Watch your own back!!"

"But you we need to-"

"You think Onee-sama will be happy saving one of us if another dies?!" She asked with fury before taking a claw in the heart. Fortunately she was a Phenex and besides the pain, that had her smiling, it only hurt the chimera more because her fire spread on his fur. "I hope she punishes you after this!!"

"Fifteen spankings." Rias declared happily that Gasper was still alive. Relief poured from the group in waves.

"See?!" Ravel asked before cutting the chimera's arm off and kicking it away before turning around to block another one's stinger. "Also, if you can use your sacred gear again, it would be helpful!"

While her wounds had already healed thanks to her Power, the newest Piece of Gremory could feel her reserves of mana diminishing by the minute. Pushing back against the stinger, she advanced to cut that chimera's head but the creature used its arms to protect its neck while another sent its stinger from her right.

Ravel was hit on her midriff but just pushed more fire out of the wound to try to melt the stinger only to realize the thing was more resistant than she expected. 'Looks like the only way to harm them,' Kanshou cut the scorpion's tail and Bakuya came next to cut its neck, 'is with the Noble Phantasms!'

However the damage wasn't fatal and the chimera was already retreating as another one scratched her back and slammed her down from behind. Like the previous one it also brought its stinger to bear, planning to pierce her head.

It was Gasper's turn to save his teammate. The Bishop split himself into several bats and attacked from everywhere, blinding the chimera. They all began to bite its neck, head and shoulders, the creature's scales strong but not invincible. He was also strengthening his fangs with mana, something that proved fairly successful.

That chimera found itself unable to attack and began panicking, flailing its arms around to try and get rid of the bats. Some were hit but the ones already biting the creature refused to let go even as it began to jump around.

Ravel found herself free to stand up and notice the other chimeras charging to help their kin. However, they weren't fools and even their advance was cautious, trying to go around her, realizing that her swords were able to cut their scales.

Despite that the Knight didn't mind them picking the long way. It was also proof that while the chimeras had some intelligence they weren't experienced. Or at least smart enough to realize she was extremely close to the one they wanted to save.

Obviously nothing stopped the Daughter of Phenex dashing straight towards the chimera Gasper was distracting and slashing its body exactly in the junction between the scorpion legs and the naga tail.

From there the girl turned her blades upside down and made her way up towards the creature's face while stabbing the rest of its body. That approach gave the Bishop time to notice the attacks and move out of the way. The chimera he was feeding on struggled to even fight as the blood the former dhampir had taken had weakened it greatly.

That added to the damage Ravel was doing during her short climb had pretty much destroyed the monster's muscles and worsened its situation by having the creature bleed all over.

Too much blood had already been lost and by the time Ravel had reached the chimera's head it was already struggling to even heal itself. Nothing could be done then when Bakuya took its life with a clean swipe of its neck.

Both remaining chimeras stood there, perplexed, for a long moment. Their minds could understand that the other four of their kind had been slayed but were failing to grasp the how. Having been made to kill devils, they didn't understand how a member of that race could kill them so consistently.

Their creator, a man with blue hair and yellow eyes, had offered their lives to the Old Satan Faction with the promise they could kill anyone in their path. After some trials and tests which involved the six being attacked from several sides, the terrorists were confident in those words.

So were the chimeras who understood all that had been said and believed themselves invincible because their creator had said so. It never crossed their minds the creature that made them could be lying or exaggerating for his own reasons.

For the chimeras were intelligent but inexperienced and ignorant. 'Frogs in a well' who only knew what their creator wanted them to.

But if those chimeras could claim anything about their existence was their capability to learn and adapt. While they didn't know what Noble Phantasms were, or what made Kanshou and Bakuya special, after watching how easily they were cut down, the two grew wary of those swords.

More than that they learned their 'invincibility' was false and so began to wonder what else could kill them. The pair looked at each other before turning towards Ravel again as Gasper reformed his normal body besides the girl.

"You are looking better..." Phenex commented with a grin upon seeing that her teammate no longer was sporting a single wound.

Gasper licked his lips clean before replying. "Their blood has a lot of magic properties besides poison."

"Wait! Poison?!!"

"Gasper, you aren't poisoned, are you?!" Akeno asked out loud upon hearing what their little Bishop had been drinking.

Yet the boy just shook his head shyly. "No... Ise-senpai's blood is more dangerous..."

"So the Red Dragon Emperor's blood made him resistant to poisons?" Kiba couldn't help but be miffed. Especially when Luvia drew a note block from somewhere and began to write that information down. "Was that always a thing?"

A green glow escaped Ise's left hand. [You are welcome.]

Noticing their enemies were distracted the two chimeras advanced again but much more slowly and carefully considering their reduced numbers. Against swords that could kill them and a sacred gear capable of freezing time, the two already knew their odds of winning were small.

However they were created to kill.

Every aspect of their design was based on that principle alone and it was something programmed on their very being. The thought of escaping never crossed their minds, only of destroying the enemy whoever they were. If anything they only considered momentarily retreating to find some way of terminating the devils in the castle on a better opportunity.

But that wasn't possible either and after some pondering the two last chimeras of the fifth floor charged full speed towards the blonde pair, one behind the other as the one in the front raised its claws and stinger above its head.

“Careful!!” Full of new blood on his body, Gasper found himself standing up and activating his sacred gear easily. His eyes shone with power even if he received little extra mana from his lunch.

Poisoned blood may not have affected him but there was little for him to use after having already healed himself. Everything else that blood could give was thrown in Forbidden Balor View regardless so he could paralyze the chimeras.

The maneuver worked perfectly and the creature froze in place as its time stopped. The Bishop was about to let out a cheer of triumph before the chimera’s body was shoved forward.

His sacred gear had successfully trapped a chimera but the other one was pushing its kin’s body with all its might despite the former’s time being frozen. Because even in that situation the world still moved which allowed anyone or anything to influence the one’s under Forbidden Balor View’s effects.

Such was the power and the weakness of that particular sacred gear; stopping time just for specific targets allowing the user to influence their existence and then allowing the consequences of certain actions to catch up with their victim once the task was completed.

A powerful ability capable of challenging one of the Concepts of the World without truly stepping on its toes thanks to its limitations. Of all sacred gears God created, that could easily be called one of the most paradoxical.

Nevertheless it was powerful, even a second frozen under Forbidden Balor View’s power and a target could completely miss the sight of their enemy or suffer a fatal blow. Neither of those happened on that occasion, not when the chimeras schemed so one of them wouldn’t be affected by Gasper’s power.

With a shriek of exertion and fury the creature the other like a malformed tank, taking advantage that the other chimera had raised its arms body as high as it could to completely block anything behind from being seen.

“Get down!!” Ravel ordered while pushing Gasper away, a furious but determined look in her face for she quickly deduced what the creatures had done. ‘A cunning maneuver, full of holes nonetheless!’

Once more the Daughter of Phenex dove into the fray with Kanshou and Bakuya poised to slash the closest chimera which she did successfully with two strikes, one to the neck and another just below the chest cutting the chimera into three pieces.

However the chimera’s time returned and it opened its beak to let out a squirm of pain just before the blonde’s blades connected. Which was because the other chimera had stabbed its kin’s body through its back to hide its tail and hit whoever was going for the fatal blow.

That turned out to be Ravel and she had used Kanshou to open the chimera’s chest making

way for the last one's stinger. Even as a Knight the blonde wasn't fast enough to react and the blow connected with the center of her chest.

Usually an attack like that shouldn't be dangerous nor concerning, she was a Phenex after all, however Rias' suspicions and how the fight had developed until that point made everyone cautious of those chimeras' capabilities.

Especially when their Knight failed to heal immediately.

“““Ravel!!!””””

All her peerage shouted her name with concern when the blonde's wings disappeared and her flames grew weaker. Those more skilled, like Rias, Akeno and Koneko, could tell the young woman still had power and the ability to fight. Yet it was like the Daughter of Phenex's Fire suddenly burned weakly.

Her knees fell on the floor as the pureblood coughed blood before grunting in pain while trying to raise her arms against the scorpion's tail between her breasts. Her hands were shaking but she refused to let go of the Noble Phantasms, intending to bring them down for some revenge.

Unfortunately her body was sluggish to answer even as the Fire inside her began to pour around the stinger. Still it was slow and her movements weak, giving the chimera enough time to crack its tail like a whip and launch her far away.

\*Finally! One down!!\* Diodora clapped with triumph which made Ise growl in anger. \*Oh, don't worry little dragon. After the half baked vampire, you are next!\*

“Do you really believe Ravel will die with just that?!” The Princess of Ruin asked with anger that was shared by everyone glaring at the mirror.

The Priestess of Medusa spoke next, Lightning cracking around her. “Better be prepared, Diodora Astaroth. We will be seeing you soon.”

“Very soon.” Koneko said confidently as she watched Gasper begin to dodge the chimera's stinger.

Diodora glared at the group before chuckling. \*You are delusional. Phenex or not, she will die once her energy runs out. Fire always disappears once it burns out all of its fuel.\* From the distance he could see the girl struggling to try and get up as flames pretty much dripped from her chest with her blood. \*And I have in good authority that poison is extremely lethal.\*

“No more lethal... than Holy Water...” The noble Knight managed to speak while getting back on her knees.

“That is it, Ravel! Focus most of your energy on getting rid of the poison!!” Akeno cheered.

While Rias focused on their Bishop. "Gasper! Don't try to attack it!!" The King's order came in time to stop the former dhampir from creating another magic circle. "Keep your distance unless it presents an opportunity!!"

Just hearing that had the creature attacking more frenetically, turning around to whip its tail once again which almost connected with Gasper. "I think he understood you, Buchou..." Kiba observed and Luvia nodded in agreement.

"We shouldn't be surprised. Coming up with plans against that sort of intelligence won't help much unless we can do it covertly."

"... I could try to use Gift..." Ise mumbled with fury as his eyes never left the mirror. Never left Asia.

Gently, Koneko patted his arm and shook her head which Diodora found amusing. \*If you don't care about my new toy~\* Another growl escaped the Red Dragon Emperor's throat. \*Fufufu. You can try and make all the plans you want... Just play by my rules.\*

"He sounds more confident." Akeno whispered by Rias' side.

Her King nodded. "Way too confident. But that is fine..." She turned back to the fight. "They will get through this, I know it."

Gasper kept avoiding the chimera's claws for a few more seconds, trying to think in some way to counter the chimera. Transforming back into a bat, he accelerated his retreat while staying on the air, away from the ceiling and floor. Obviously his hunter began pursuing him regardless, claws, sting and beak trying to catch the Bishop almost desperately.

However the bat was quick and didn't need to concentrate on his sacred gear anymore so escaping the attacks was much easier. Three magic circles formed in front of him before unleashing several blasts. None made effect and the creature leaped in his direction with murderous intent.

Not willing to be caught again, Gasper became a black fog and avoided the blow. 'It can be stronger than me, faster than me and heals better than me but it can't use mana.' Because if the chimera was unable to its mana directly, if it had any. 'I just need to hit him hard! Hard enough to break his defense!!'

Problem was that Vladi had no idea how. Unlike most of his friends he lacked the means to inflict any real damage to his enemies. Magic could compensate but all his training and skill went to evasion or using his sacred gear.

Because of that, so long as he only needed to focus on his enemy, Gasper wasn't going to be struck down any time soon. He easily evaded the chimera's claws and, once its patience ran thin, it began to throw stones the devil's way. Immediately the Bishop turned into fog, evading them all without trouble.



Turning off his sacred gear, Gasper focused all his power on the magic circle but it wasn't enough, couldn't be enough and he suddenly knew it. Something inside him was saying that he was lacking something fundamental. Something that would make his attacks and himself much stronger.

Everyone watched the chimera approach the former dhampir, its body being burned and recovering just as fast as Gasper could inflict damage. It was only a matter of time before it reached the blond and ripped him apart, its arms losing fur and skin several times, claws always pointed to the Bishop.

During that time Ravel had already recovered enough to stand up with her own strength, a glare of hatred focused on the chimera. "This humiliation..." Her recently recovered heart began to beat more intensely than ever before as the poison in her words grew more potent than the chimera's. "You made me look like an idiot in front of Onee-sama... You made me look like a fool in front of her..." She muttered as her flames returned to her back and the dozens of magic circles that made her feathers grew active once again. "I'll make you pay!!"

An explosion marked the Daughter of Phenex's return as she flew straight towards her ally mana beam and jumped inside it with the Married Twins ready to take someone's head. She reached it before anyone could react, diving in the stream of mana without fear or worry while swinging her weapons half madly.

"NO!!!!" Gasper panicked and abandoned his attack but not fast enough to stop it from hitting the pureblood devil. Exactly at that moment was when his efforts were successful and the chimera's body was hurled far away. "Ravel-san!!" Not that he cared, his concern was his teammate.

Who had pushed around to the side after her attack. "I got him!!!" The Knight declared proudly out of nowhere while standing up. On her left hand besides holding Bakuya she also held the head of the last chimera. "I got the ugly!!!"

The former dhampir couldn't help but let out a weak laugh before dropping on his back and almost passing out. Only the voices of his friends kept him going.

"Nice!!"

"Great job!!"

"As expected of my Knight and Bishop!"

"Way to go, Ravel!!!"

Diodora fumed while Rias Peerage celebrated their victory, King and Queen dropping their barriers while racing to make sure younger members of their group were actually fine and supply them with medical attention.

Surprisingly it was their Knight who actually needed some help as sported a couple of wounds. "Ravel... are you out of mana?"



With a blush and a little embarrassed, the younger woman answered. "Just a bit tired, Onee-sama..." Then she offered her enemy's head. "But I got him!"

Rias shook her head with mirth before helping the younger woman stand up with a massage on her back. "Maybe I should give you a spanking too for throwing yourself inside mana like that after just healing from poison."

"Fufufu. Maybe she would like it, Buchou." Akeno joked upon seeing the blonde flush grew more intense.

Before Ravel could say something in her own defense she felt two hands on her back. "Nice job, Bird Brain." Koneko congratulated while using Ki to help the Knight's situation.

"Heh, what else did you expect, Mangy Cat?" The pureblood devil replied without moving, accepting the nekomata's help.

A little far from them, Kiba helped their Bishop stand up. "Great work, Gasper. You really pulled through back there." Yuuto was proud of the smaller blond who grinned shyly just as the taller blond began to mess with his hair. "That is my Kohai!"

"Do you need any blood?" Luvia offered calmly while dropping to a knee close to the Bishop. "Or some potions?"

"No, Luvia-senpai. I'm fine." The smaller blond tried to stand for himself but failed.

Only for Kiba to keep him on his feet. "Whoa. Calm down a little, Gasper. You used a lot in your last attack. And after using your sacred gear too... I think I never saw you use so much mana all at once."

"We definitely need to improve your control and mana management." The Rook of Gremory stood her full height, crossing her arms with a pensive expression. "Sure your piece gives you a lot to work with but attacking like that was wasteful and doesn't suit you. Maybe we should work on teaching you some... exoteric arts." She chuckled at the thought which made the boys shiver. "Yes... A dhampir learning magecraft. I don't think that was done before. What sort of potential do you have? I can't wait to find out, fufufu..."

Ideas were already running rampant on the former Heiress of Edelfelt's mind and they both knew it, feeling in their bones how the mage was practically already drawing plans to throw the youngest blond on the grinder to unveil his talents.

"Senpai... I am afraid."

"So am I, Gasper... So am-"

"Open the next floor!!" A furious voice snapped everyone back to the present and broke their reverie from victory. Ise stood there glaring at the mirror, a bright red aura around his body as his eyes met with Diodora's. "Open the fucking next floor already so I can rip your head

off.”

Indeed the Red Dragon Emperor didn't feel any joy for his younger teammates' triumph nor could partake in any celebration. When the fight ended he wasn't thinking about it anymore and just wanted to move on to the next one because he understood that Asia was just two more floors away.

And he was fighting next.

The only thing on Rias Peerage's way to rescue its missing member was who or whatever Ise was going to face in the next floor. Anxiety and anger created a boiling pot of emotions that threatened to explode at any moment. Which should be a good thing for Diodora if he stopped to think about it.

Despite how volatile the situation was, time wasn't on the traitor's side and he could try and use the Red Dragon Emperor's rage to his advantage to either move things along or perhaps trick the younger devil in some way.

Yet Diodora Astaroth also wasn't immune to his own emotions. \*Who do you think you are to order me around, vermin?\* The pressure of his situation finally started to affect him.

Much like the other floors the fifth one failed to claim any victims even if it was clear that neither Gasper or Ravel are going to be fighting again any time soon. Both were exhausted with Rias having to spend a few more resources to keep them functional while on enemy territory.

Still nobody died and that was a problem considering there was only one floor between Diodora and his enemies, making him increasingly nervous even if the last challenge should be too much for Rias Peerage.

But the man wasn't thinking about possibilities and instead was giving in to his rage. \*You think you are better than me? Just because you- you are mere blights in the Underworld who managed to survive some mindless creatures and stupid toys?!\* For the first time in a while Diodora stood up from his throne. \*You are nothing!! Just prisoners who haven't-\*

“Just shut the fuck up and open the next floor.” Ise's growl was rougher and animalistic by that point, making Diodora freeze in his tracks.

Both from the image in the mirror and from beneath his feet the pureblood devil felt that something really dangerous was staring directly at him. No longer was he dealing with a former human or even a fellow devil for the presence that threatened his life couldn't belong to either.

Instead he saw the head of a giant red creature staring firmly at him.

Through him.

Its green eyes were so sharp that Diodora felt like his soul was being dissected. His hands quickly went inside his sleeve to hold Ophis' snake but he didn't open the bottle, at least not yet. Pride proved itself useful when he glared back at the dragon in the mirror and Ise returned to his view.

However Diodora still felt the hairs in his neck standing up and the sweat dripping from his brow upon noticing the aura surrounding the Pawn of Gremory; Ddraig's head, for it couldn't be any other dragon, was there, its features waving around but still clear for him to see.

The Red Dragon Emperor's animosity presented itself in full on the shape of the Original as the Welsh Dragon's presence amplified Ise's presence by making him far more intimidating even without his sacred gear.

\*Vermin...\* Slowly Diodora calmed down, even if only Rias noticed his unbalanced state, before remembering time was running out. \*... I shall concede your request since we can't waste anymore time. It isn't like you will survive the next floor anyway for your challenge... is definitively too much for vermin like you...\*

Regardless of what he said, the traitor devil had already begun to draw Ophis' snake from his clothes in preparation to take its power. A huge part of him was arguing that was just a precaution and taking the Dragon God's power was only logical since there was a chance some of Rias Peerage survived.

A smaller part of him was more honest; it was afraid and wanted Ophis' power to not feel fear anymore.

Especially the born from the Welsh Dragon as it kept glaring at him for a few more seconds while Ise stood there doing the same. "Open the floor."

\*Tch...\* An order and a demand wrapped into one but Diodora didn't fight it anymore. Instead he just waved his hand and opened the path.

Ise didn't waste time and began to fly up. "Akeno-" Rias began to order.

"No!!" The Pawn roared before the Queen could throw her chain. "I'm fighting next and then we're saving Asia. Let 's go."

'He isn't thinking straight.' Ravel realized, understanding that whatever patience the brown haired boy had was gone. 'Fighting like that...' Slowly she turned an eye to her King.

Who could understand the Red Dragon Emperor's anger but still played safely even as the mirror of that floor shattered. "Fine but we are going slowly! Akeno, he flies a millimeter up before we get there, you pull him down!!"

They all heard Ise grit his teeth before feeling a powerful presence on the floors above. "That power reminds me of Katerea during the Peace Talks." Akeno pointed out.

“Ophis...” Rias deduced quickly, recognizing the same. “Is it the next floor-”

“Buchou, we have to go!!” Ise cut his King off angrily.

“Kiba, let me.” Luvia, understanding how bad the situation was, took hold of Gasper by the waist. “Hold on.”

Opening his wings, the Bishop prepared himself. “Sorry for being a burden, Senpai.”

“After an excellent fight like that, you have the right to be a burden. At least for a little while.”

“But your mana-”

“You know how stubborn the Blue Ogre can be.” Kiba ignored Luvia’s glare even as he moved to the side to help a little. “We are all tired but we must move forward.”

“Well said, Kiba.” Rias praised her first Knight while holding Ravel while Akeno kept her eyes on Ise. Soon they were at Ise’s height but before she could calm or scold him the Red Dragon Emperor dashed upward. “Shit!!”

“Onee-sama-” Ravel had no time to comment about language as the group suddenly sped up to catch up with their Pawn.

Emerging on the sixth floor they found the place empty save for the Red Dragon Emperor who was looking around almost as if stuck in a cage. “Come on! Come on! Show up, you bastard!!”

“Ise, calm down-”

“Buchou, we can’t just-”

“Calm down! That is an order!!” Rias used her own aura to push back the Pawn’s but felt herself losing in that confrontation. ‘He isn’t even using the Boosted Gear and yet he is stronger than me? Since when?’ Shoving those thoughts to the side, deeming them unimportant, her focus was to help the boy and Asia. “Ise, we know you are worried! We all are!! But you can’t just throw yourself into danger like that!! What if Diodora had done the same thing from two floors ago and with something worse on standby?”

“I will kill them.” Hyoudou Issei declared coldly and definitively, not even caring about whatever obstacles appeared on his path. However, just looking at him, the redhead could feel his pain. “... I have to save Asia.”

\*Oh, how touching!!\* Whatever progress Rias made calming Ise down vanished as Diodora’s mirror arrived and they all caught a glimpse of the man. His posture was more confident and his appearance more relaxed, a black aura of power, Infinity’s power, surrounded his body.

Which they all caught on. “Afraid of little old us?” Akeno asked sarcastically.

“He must be.” Luvia added while trying to feel Diodora’s presence as best as she could despite the boundary field’s between them and the pureblood devil. “Only reason he would take on Ophis’ power right now. About time, in my opinion.”

“So much for being a pureblood devil.” Kiba added to their thoughts.

Nodding in agreement with her oldest Knight, Rias stepped in front of Ise, who looked ready to tear the mirror apart, and said. “For someone speaking so much about being a great devil, you really have no faith in yourself, Diodora.”

\*Spare me the ramble, Rias. I am still more of a devil than you.\* Sure enough the man sounded far more proud and confident. With deliberate slow movements he sat back on his throne and began to play with Asia’s hair. \*Don’t worry, I will prove it. If you get here by some miracle.\* Chuckling, the traitor turned his eyes to Ise. \*Looks like you are really eager to get things started, vermin.\*

Ise moved past his King and with a stomp he demanded. “Then open the way so I can kill you.”

Anyone who had known the boy before he Reincarnated was surprised by the declaration and plenty of shocked eyes focused on him. Even Raynare hadn’t got that sort of reaction and they all could easily admit his fury eclipsed everyone else’s.

Which no longer struck fear in Diodora but amused the devil. \*Oh but I can’t wait to see you die. Painfully. Especially since your opponent... can’t be just anyone. You are the Red Dragon Emperor, after all.\* Opening his arms dramatically, he asked. \*Even if there isn’t any other Piece available, is your Pawn the next fighter, Rias?\*

Looking between Ise, Asia and seeing the fury in the former’s face actually made Rias hesitate a little. ‘Fighting in that state isn’t safe but we must rescue Asia.’ Her gaze shifted to Diodora. “You know he is. My Ise will crush whatever you have left and then we are coming for you.”

\*Hahahaha! Excellent!! I would actually be disappointed if you gave up!\* Ise took those words like a challenge and called his sacred gear but Diodora began waving his finger. \*No, not yet, vermin. Match only starts when your opponent appears and, for Rias’ safety, it will only happen once she is a little farther in the chamber. So I better not hear any Boosts or else Asia will... lose a finger? No, she has such pretty hands... A toe would be better to take. You don’t want that, do you?\*

‘So close and yet so far.’ Ravel winced as Koneko helped her place Kanshou and Bakuya on her back. ‘Even if they are just over our heads, nobody here wants to risk Asia. On the other hand he is confident about whatever last monster he has because that was actually a show of concern for his hostage.’

“Buchou...” The white haired nekomata called softly, a really concerned expression on her face. “We need to step back.”

Such a reaction worried the Princess of Ruin for a moment. 'Is she already feeling whatever Diodora is going to throw at us?' Glancing at Akeno and Luvia, she saw they also were confused about Koneko's words. 'No, there is nothing else on this floor...' Then she looked back at Ise and noticed how much more aura he was letting out, understanding her concern. "Ise..."

"Buchou, please." The Red Dragon Emperor's eyes were hidden by his hair but she felt the fury in his gaze even if it wasn't directed at her. "Trust me. I will save Asia."

"We will save Asia." Rias retorted firmly but she could already tell her words fell on deaf ears.

In that moment Ise only saw the goal and whatever was on his way, nothing else. Truly the Pawn was managing to incarnate an angry dragon perfectly, ready to trample anything in his path. A sentiment his friends shared but not to that extent.

All the Red Dragon Emperor did was stare forward, not bothering to acknowledge the redhead's words or the intent behind them and Rias didn't have a clue of what to do about that attitude.

Accepting the boy's emotions since they were for Asia's sake, Rias slowly began to back down towards the rest of her peerage before silently instructing them to step back even further. That was the last floor before they faced Diodora and, Ophis' power or not, she didn't doubt the traitor would throw everything he could to kill as many of them as possible.

He had reason to be confident because what he was about to unleash was one of the most powerful creatures the Khaos Brigade had ever been able to produce. A legacy left behind by a coven of witches that had allied themselves with the Old Satan Faction and had just finished their masterpiece before Gilgamesh killed them all.

\*Very well! For the final round and floor before you reach yours truly it will be a confrontation between beasts!!\* Diodora began with a malicious grin, Ophis' power flowing around his body. He wasn't just confident in his victory but with Infinity by his side the traitor was sure rescuing Rias after she fell in despair would be easy. \*I heard from the grapevine that your Mage has a pegasus, doesn't he, Rias? A gift from his goddess? One of the Legendary Mounts?\* Magic exploded on the floor above as the devil stood from his throne once again as the Princess of Ruin only offered him a cold glare. \*Such a mighty creature is too good for a human. So good that it has been able to help them archive Miracles.\*

"Get to the point!!" Ise demanded and the dragon in him growled with concern.

Before speaking in his mind. [Calm down, Partner. You can't lose control. Not now. A single mistake and Asia is going to be the one to suffer...] However even the Welsh Dragon's words sounded hollow in Ise's ears and he knew it. Already Ddraig could feel fury not his own invading his mind, echoes of hundreds of voices whispering in his ears. [Please, don't lose yourself.]

\*Hurried to die? You don't want me to even introduce your opponent?\* To the surprise of many, Diodora remained calm and eager despite Ise's defiance. \*Here I thought to give you a chance but-\*

"Screw you." Ise's voice sounded even more feral as smoke began to leave his mouth.

\*Fufufufu. Sure, sure. And here I was trying to be nice.\* Diodora sat on his throne again.

\*You see that, Asia? That brat just doesn't know respect! And you wanted to stay with him? I fear what such savage would have done if I didn't save you.\*

Akeno was the first one to follow their Pawn in losing her patience.. "You are insane, Diodora."

\*I am the winner!! That is what matters!!!\*

"You won nothing yet." Kiba pointed out.

\*But my victory is assured because what you are going to face is a creature straight from mythology!!!\* Announced the traitor with pride as a huge magic circle appeared in the middle of the room.

Just its appearance was enough to fill the place with a crushing presence that grew larger by the second. Pure power pulsed from that magic circle as whatever was being called already affected the room without even stepping a foot through it. Wasn't just the place either as people could feel the presence arriving in the pocket dimension.

Koneko was struck with an instinctive fear that screamed for her to run to the hills which she limited to a single step back. Luvia did a better job hiding her apprehension but her skin was crawling and her eyes looked around for an exit. Gasper demonstrated his nervousness more than they all, sweating and hiding behind Akeno.

The Priestess of Medusa felt her power almost jumping from her skin defensively as danger lurked in the place. A feeling Kiba shared as he quickly called forth for Holy Eraser and prepared to shout 'Blade Brotherhood' at the drop of a hat. Ravel drew Kanshou and Bakuya once again, gaining new strength to face whatever promised to rip her into pieces.

Rias' concern grew bigger than any mountain and she glared at the traitor. "What have you called, Diodora? A dragon? An Evil Dragon of all things?!" She feared for Ise, feared for Asia, for her friends and for everyone in that cursed dimension. That powerful presence was just so large she wasn't sure her weakened peerage could defeat it even with all their powers combined. "Answer me!!"

\*Hahahaha! Didn't your Pawn order me to, 'get to the point'? Hahaha!!! That is the point!!!\*

A paw emerged from the magic circle giving way to a golden furred leg that was soon followed by the head of a huge lion. But the lion wasn't alone above its shoulder but not exactly on its back stood the head of a goat with huge horns.

Its body appeared to be all lion except for the extra appendage, the mighty frame bigger than the Golem of Byzantium's, almost reaching the ceiling despite the creature walking out of the magic circle on all fours.

Then the other half of the monster revealed itself; the legs of a goat like its second head ending with a giant tail that was also a serpent with green scales that shone with emeralds and was letting out a poisonous gas from its mouth.

When it finished emerging from the magic circle, the creature let out a powerful roar that managed to make the whole castle shake as the goat and serpent heads unleashed bright flames.

Diodora hadn't been lying, that was indeed a creature straight from myth. "The Chimera from Lycia... But how?" Luvia asked nervously, her body shaking even as she fought against the involuntary movement. "Bellerophon killed it!! Every Legend affirms it!! The pegasus' existence proves it!!"

\*He did... And then her bones were found and someone had a brilliant idea of, what was the word you humans use again? 'Cloning'? Yes, that was it!! To make a clone of the Legendary Chimera of Lycia!!!\*

The Heir of Astaroth declared as soon as Chimera's roar ended and the creature studied the food in front of it. For, to the clone, anything that showed up in the small dimension the Old Satan Faction had it imprisoned while growing up was food to be devoured and nothing else.

It was so for the devils which tried to tame it, the witches that tried to enchant it and eventual traitors of the Khaos Brigade who were condemned to death by its fangs to both really feed it and teach it how to fight.

It was never tamed, much like the Original Chimera who was a child of Typhon, the Bane of Olympus, and Echidna, Mother of Terrors, never was. All who tried met their demise between tooth and claw before being devoured to the bone.

Every contact Chimera ever had with anyone was just as food to be devoured and nothing else so the same thing applied for Rias Peerage. The same thing could be said about the devils and below where it had been transported to and the lion head couldn't help but lick its lips.

Chimera's nose told it there was a feast to be had which was great since the Old Satan Faction hadn't fed it for a couple of days just for that occasion. Yes, the distinct odor of fresh meat, blood and fear were familiar to the creature. If Chimera could talk it would even say that the last of those enhanced the experience.

However it smelled something extra as well, not a new smell for many who fell in its den carried the same odor but not as strong as the being before it was.



For that was the smell of anger born from chemical reactions coming from the one called Hyoudou Issei and unlike anyone that Chimera's clone had ever met in the past, that boy didn't smell like fear.

Indeed he couldn't because the Red Dragon Emperor didn't care who or what Chimera was and would hold the same attitude even if God Himself had walked out that magic circle. He was beyond caring whatever he was going to face and only saw a single fact as important: All he needed to do was kill Chimera to get a step closer to save Asia.

### **[Balance Breaker! Scale Mail!]**

Bright red energy filled the room unveiling Ise's armor that pulsed bright red. Its appearance had Chimera roaring once again before it pounced towards the challenger. Firebreath was unleashed in the Red Dragon Emperor direction but he wasn't phased.

**[Boost! Boost! Boost! Boost! Boost! Boost! Boost! Boost! Boost! Boost! Boost! Boost!  
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Nobody knew how many Boosts Ise's body could take but by the time Chimera even got close enough to hit the Red Dragon Emperor with its claws the armored warrior was unleashing a roar of his own combined with a powerful uppercut that sent it back.

Chimera spun in the air, landing in its feet before roaring again. "You are in the way." Ise declared as mana gathered in his left hand. He had so many Boosts already that the small ball of energy shone so bright that red took over the whole floor. **"Dragon Shoot!!!"**

Ise's fist connected with the mass of power unleashing a blast powerful enough to envelop Chimera completely and move forward without interruption. Such a powerful attack made the whole place shake and everyone could feel it struggling to contain the power unleashed by the Red Dragon Emperor.

When the light finally died down all eyes turned towards the huge hole on the castle's side that unveiled the rest of the dimension on the horizon. A horizon that was unbelievably cracked because of the power which had crashed on it.

'The dimension almost broke?' Rias asked herself in disbelief. 'I knew Ise was strong but that was...'

'It didn't really break but for a second the whole place almost fell apart.' Luvia identified as her body suddenly felt far more light and she gulped fearfully upon realizing the reason. 'His attack was so powerful that the boundary fields themselves crashed down!'

Because the magus knew, much like everyone else, that Ise wasn't aiming towards the castle, its barriers or even its walls. The sole target of his attack was Chimera's clone who once stood in their path. Everything else was truly incidental in the best way possible since the boundary fields limiting them all were just gone.

Chimera's huge frame was gone too, disintegrated under the mighty dragon's fury. The pressure the clone once exerted on everyone was replaced by the Welsh Dragon's presence. Indeed Diodora wasn't the only one seeing the image anymore as anyone looking at the armored dragon could see the Original Red Dragon Emperor glaring back.

Kiba remembered when, once upon a time, Ddraig spoke about wrath and the lack of control that came with it. 'But what if someone managed to keep themselves focused even in the depths of their rage? What if that person was also a dragon?' Never before he feared his friends, not a single one of them. However, that instant was an exception. 'And if that dragon was the Red Dragon Emperor himself?'

The oldest Knight of Gremory understood something about his friend's fury; it was paradoxically warm like a volcano and colder than the tundra. It was a tightrope but one which Ise managed to walk in, at least for moment. Under his wrath the blast had been exclusively done to erase the Chimera clone's existence without harming anyone else.

Gone was the huge creature, only its shadow could be seen on the floor and not much of it, barely the image of a creature raising to its feet and trying to fight back against the thing that would consume it.

Everyone suddenly forgot that Hyoudou Issei wasn't the Original Red Dragon Emperor or that his power was still just a shadow of Ddraig's full might. All they could feel was fear to the point even Diodora stayed silent, contemplating what he should do against the force of nature going his way.

However he still had Ophis' snake with him and even if some of the boundary fields around the castle failed, a few still stood and under his command with exception of those that obeyed only Shalba.

Confident in victory, the Astaroth devil clicked his tongue. \*Not bad... for a vermin.\* Silence descended again when the green eyes shone in the mirror's direction. \*I suppose this means you are an opponent worthy of facing a true devil.\*

A long tunnel moving to the top of the castle opened above the ceiling, one which the Red Dragon Emperor glanced at once before looking back towards the mirror where his enemy remained with an eager grin.

No, not to him but towards Asia who was still a hostage, floating besides the throne. Just looking at her, somewhat safe despite the circumstances, was enough for him to calm down a little. Enough that the aura around him diminished slowly which eased the burden on his friend's shoulders.

Such an action only filled Diodora with more confidence since he believed, \*What is wrong? Growing weaker, vermin?\*

“Enough, Diodora!” Rias quickly moved forward to assume control of the situation and stop Ise from going fully berserker. ‘Was that Juggernaut Drive? No, it would have been more powerful than that and the whole castle would have vanished without a trace.’

Legend spoke of the Heavenly Dragons’ fury and how they, by sheer bad luck and Merlin’s schemes, got involved in the battle between the Three Factions forcing all sides to stop fighting each other to deal with them.

During that occasion God, the Original Satans, Cadres, several Seraphs, Pillars and allies from both sides were present. Despite all that the combined might of Ddraig and Albion was more than enough to crush them all if they didn’t cooperate, that was the sort of power those dragons possessed.

That was why they were Heavenly Dragon Emperors.

If they were free and had their bodies there was no doubt both dragons would be among the Ten Strongest Beings. It wasn’t even an argument but a fact of life that few of their Hosts ever reached the same level as their Emperors. The only exception was when the seal of Juggernaut Drive was unleashed.

For those reasons, Rias was right to be cautious as well as correct in her assumption that Ise hadn’t used Juggernaut Drive but it was a close thing. She could feel the Red Dragon Emperor’s anger boiling and for the sake of her peerage the King knew it couldn’t go any further.

Which was why the Princess of Ruin took the stage once again. “You better have washed your neck, Diodora. Ise here is about to take your head.” A pleased growl left her Pawn’s helmet showing he was pleased with the notion. ‘Fufu, you really aren’t the same perverted from when we met, Ise. I just wished you didn’t have to become like this to show us all what you really are capable of. That Asia was safe...’

None of her training, either under her parents to be a noble or under the Magus Killer to be strategist, had prepared Rias to deal with a situation like that beyond the basics; to stay in control, to keep her subordinates calm, to stand strong so they could rely on her whenever needed.

To point their fury towards her enemies as one would do so with a gun.

‘Anger for a leader can be fatal, anger from followers can be managed.’ Rias Gremory, Crimson Haired Ruin Princess, reminded herself if just so she could focus. Her focus returned to the enemy in front of her. “Hopefully you aren’t planning any other underhanded methods. Are we really going to find you on the final floor? Or is there another devil there who needs Ophis watching over them?”

\*Oh, I am here alright.\* A magic circle appeared on his hand and unleashed a serpentine blast somewhere out of sight.

Everyone felt the power spike but Ise was the first to react. “Buchou!!” He grabbed the young woman and flew out of the way just before a huge black blast crashed into her previous location. The energy made the floor shake but only infuriated the Pawn. “Bastard...”

\*Proof enough for you?\*

Diodora ignored the comment and played with Asia’s head. \*Or are you stalling out of fear? Come on! Time for us to finish this game...\*

Finally the mirror broke, marking the conversation as finished and the King of Astaroth’s invitation for the last floor. An invitation Ise wanted to take with gusto as never before he hated someone as much as he did Diodora. The fury of a dragon was a dangerous thing and the Red Dragon Emperor wouldn’t stop until his enemy was dead.

However, before the armored dragon could take a single step, Rias’ hand grabbed his arm. “Wait, Ise!!”

For a second he thought about ignoring the redhead and just flying up but loyalty still had roots in his chest even as wrath burned everything else. “Buchou, we need to-”

“Stop! Please! Just stop!!” Rias shouted on his face before grabbing his head and forcing eye contact. Sure the green gems of his armor stopped her blue eyes from seeing his brown ones but she remained unphased. “Ise, listen to me. You can’t keep going like this! Your anger is dangerous!”

“But I-”

[She is right, Partner...] Ddraig’s firm voice silenced his host.

Slowly Ise calmed down, his aura grew smaller, as his friends came close and he stared at the gem in his left arm. “Ddraig! What’s wrong?”

[... I told you to never let anger rule you. It is a close call with how things are going but we haven’t crossed the red line.] The ‘yet’ went unsaid but everyone in the peerage knew it was there.

All they knew what that meant, including Ise himself. “But that... this power...” His fist closed, it began to shake before he asked. “If it’ll help-”

[More chances of you killing everyone than saving Asia if you let my wrath take the reins.] Little by little Ddraig stopped hearing the voices that shared Boosted Gear with him. Many of them were his regrets, too many. [Your King is right. You must not lose control.]

“We are going to save Asia, Ise. Just one last step.” Rias reassured her Pawn with Kiba nodding before hitting his friend’s back.

He had to use the Holy Eraser and even then Ise felt nothing. "Last time you helped me. Don't worry, we will take care of Diodora."

'False bravado.' Ravel held the thought for herself as she knew that even if the boundary fields had cracked under the Red Dragon Emperor's fury, most of them were in no condition to fight.

Still the thought counted and Ise nodded. "Right. Right, I need to calm down." They all saw him take a few deep breaths but the weight of his aura didn't diminish. "... Sorry but I can't. Not with Asia... Not when she is stuck there with that creep."

"It is fine. Feel that anger, drown in it if you must." Akeno suddenly said, surprising everyone. Even Ddraig was without words. "But focus on Diodora, only Diodora because clearly you can't concentrate in Asia while you are at it."

Immediately Ise felt attacked. "I just want to save her!"

"Then why are you letting that scoundrel in your head?" The priestess asked directly with harsh eyes. "Yes, he has Asia and yes, he has been too touchy for all our tastes, but that isn't an excuse to let him win up here." She finished touching her own forehead.

Gritting his teeth, the Pawn looked down with anger and resentment but Koneko approached his side and took his hand. "Please, don't look like that again." Her voice was weak, so weak it scared him. "That wasn't... That wasn't you..."

Finally Ise's aura relented and retreated inside his body. The power was all there but hidden behind his scales. "Sorry, Koneko-chan..." Looking around, he bowed. "Sorry everyone."

Luvia approached the Red Dragon Emperor and daringly punched him in the stomach, actually making the boy bend down further. "You better."

Rias let out a sigh of relief as the possibility of her Pawn destroying everything. However her stress didn't vanish as she looked up and saw the tunnel which would take them to Asia. The place where the traitorous Diodora lay waiting with Ophis' snake and a King Piece. Neither power which she could fully understand.

So the King of Gremory saw herself with little choice but to say. "Ise, you are going to face Diodora." Koneko and Gasper flinched but the Pawn nodded. There was an understanding that the task would be inevitably his. "Most of us are exhausted and I have no doubt the second I try to fight him, he will use Asia as a shield." Some of the anger returned but everyone could see the dragon was in control of himself. "But he is underestimating you- No, he wants to fight you to prove his own superiority. Bait him, let him get some hits. Then, once he is secure in his victory and away from Asia..."

"Right, right. I got it, Buchou. I got it..." Ise nodded with some relief after receiving clear instructions, even if it was short lived. His nerves were still getting the best of him and the boy could feel Ddraig's apprehension.

In reality everyone knew that Ise fighting Diodora was probably a terrible idea including they had little time.

“Just remember to keep a cool head and that we are here.” Rias said reassuringly, calming the dragon further. “Now, let 's go save Asia.”

““Right!”” The peerage said in a single voice, all of them determined to see their friend safe.

Rightfully fearing the dragon's fury which could be unleashed at any moment.

.....

Leviathan descended from the sky without effort, gravity taking hold but at the same time not as she went down with far more grace than she would if any force of nature was involved. At least any force that wasn't herself and yet her wings weren't visible to anyone in the stadium.

Certainly not by the devils that began to run and hide in a panic as the rain grew stronger to the point it was harming some of them. It was like small cold daggers were trying to pierce their magic and hit their souls like flesh and bone were nothing but small obstacles to be ignored.

Serafall opened her wings with furious eyes before jumping straight towards her opponent at high speeds as the place got even colder. Her pink mana expanded and became thinner but not weaker as her power began to fight back against her opponent's.

Which actually balanced the things a little since the magical girl's power made it so that the rain affected everyone equally while Leviathan's power had it only affecting those that didn't swear loyalty to her name.

Technically speaking all the Old Satan Faction was included in the latter group even if indirectly but that didn't matter for the blue haired woman, at least not really. If Serafall wanted to level the playing field by making everyone affected by the rain, she could do so and Leviathan would acquiesce, even praise such resolve.

“Katerea!!” What she didn't appreciate was Serafall calling for her descendant's name before their fight started.

A small magic circle shone atop of the black haired woman's wand before the rain's water was used as the foundation for a huge sword several meters taller than her. It wasn't only big but also cold and its presence alone was enough to freeze several drops of rain by just existing.

And then Serafall took a wide swing towards Leviathan, every millimeter the ice sword moved freezing in its wake making its range even larger. Yet the blue haired woman's expression remained the same as the blade approached, her rain turning to a blizzard in some spots.

Which didn't stop her from dodging over the sword before going around it, fully avoiding the gelid air surrounding the weapon, making Serafall's eyes go wide. 'She jumped in the air? Why didn't she-' Her train of thought changed when she noticed how Leviathan's legs were moving. 'She is swimming?'

Indeed what Leviathan wasn't flying but swimming, an impossible action even with how much rain was pouring and despite that the blue haired woman moved her legs almost like a tail.

Her smooth movements allowed her far more speed than they should as well and were so fast that when Serafall turned for a follow up attack Leviathan was already out of her sword's range.

Measures needed to be taken and the black haired woman took them by extending her aura outward, freezing more of the rain, and creating several magic circles with her wand sword before thrusting it forward.

Whatever was water in her field of vision froze solid as several blasts of pink mana were followed by a blizzard as much of the rain became a weapon for her to use. Adding to that she sent her ice sword forwards as a huge missile aimed towards the other woman's head.

Who cared little about the attacks behind her, the rain bending and forming walls of water to slow down their advance as she landed on the lake. Still the attacks kept coming for the rain alone wasn't enough to protect its creator. Not when part of it was used to make an even bigger blizzard to strike her down.

Leviathan raised her hand with an open palm for a huge quantity of water to appear while part of the stadium's flood to channel itself into a wavering ball which grew in mass by taking more water, including the ice from Leviathan's attack.

"Guaf!!" Then the blue haired woman heard a man take a deep breath before coughing some of the liquid that had entered his lungs. Approaching the creature that was once an elegant devil, she came across the one she was looking for. "You came..." Creuseray managed to before having another coughing fit.

Closing her hand, water exploded upwards towards Serafall who raised several magic circles to try and freeze it. She failed and was pushed upwards with her body having to struggle against several different pressures and the impact.

A minor distraction, Leviathan knew, but enough for her to do what needed to be done. "You did well in surviving." She praised the devil sincerely as her rain began to pour again. "But now your fight is over."

"No, Katerea! It is not!!" The severely wounded devil tried to get up but he was missing a foot. Ophis' snakes were already gone even if they left their mark and he no longer could be called a pureblood devil. "If you are going to fight, then I must do so as well!! Together we can-" When he began coughing again, Leviathan raised a hand and summoned a magic circle beneath him. "Wait-!"

Already the blue haired woman knew that was the last word she would ever hear from Creuserey. 'With this, Asmodeus' return is already a certainty.' Looking up she saw a huge 'tree' of ice growing in the middle of sky, dashing backwards to avoid the roots that tried to skew her. "Now let us see if you are at least worthy of the name Leviathan."

The tree fell apart with several magic circles and ice shards that bombarded the area forcing the blue haired woman to dodge. However the magical girl attack wasn't finished and she launched herself towards her enemy with a huge circle in front of herself. Water moved around to block the advance only to freeze into a wall that exploded after a collision.

Both women jumped away from each other, the black haired devil preparing several magic circles and preparing to continue the fight while the blue haired woman watched her enemy with uninterested eyes.

"You changed, Katerea-chan..." Serafall suddenly said as snow fell around her thanks to her aura which was stretching around almost unconsciously. "And since when do you have Sea Serpent of the End?"

"Ah, you knew this face..." Leviathan realized, caressing her own cheek as rain fell around her and refilled the stadium with water.

Which was enough to sound the alarms on the black haired woman's mind. "Are you... you aren't Katerea? Another member of the Leviathan Clan?"

A pause occurred between the two women as the fight settled down around the stadium and people hid from the rain or the powerful combatants whose energy threatened to destroy everything.

"Technically yes but also not."

"Stop being whimsical!" Serafall demanded with ferocity as her power kept expanding and more water froze around her. Yet it never got close to the other woman who stood there unbothered by the cold. "You killed-"

"If you are going to lament any deaths today then you really aren't worthy of the name 'Leviathan'." Decreed the Original one with an apathetic expression. "These lives are irrelevant in the grand scheme of things. Then again, you devils know so little. Always did."

That way of speaking surprised Serafall. "What are you? Who are you?" Something was wrong and her instincts were telling her that the being in the middle of the lake was extremely dangerous.

"Does it matter to you Serafall Leviathan?" Waving her hand around, Leviathan added. "If you are so angry about these deaths then my name is irrelevant. As the ruler of these lands, you should demand retribution, if you care at all." She raised her hands invitingly. "Or you don't care and have a different picture in mind."



“Silence!!” Serafall’s pink aura expanded further around as her magic circle multiplied by the dozen. Hundreds of them aimed towards the one using Katerea’s body. “As Serafall Leviathan, Maou of the Underworld, I shall deliver judgment!! For the ones you killed and the suffering you inflicted, I sentence you to death!!!”

Leviathan nodded slightly. “Very well. I accept your sentence... If you can carry it out, that is.” Her fingers danced and the water rose around her forming several water snakes. “**Sea Serpent of the End**. Show me your mettle, Serafall Leviathan.”

The creatures flew towards the magical girl but her magic circles quickly shot them down before bombarding the blue haired woman’s position. Dashing backwards, every centimeter she moved created more serpents of water who jumped and flew towards the pink wearing devil.

And each of them was strong enough to take a blast of energy and blow it up, casually countering all of Serafall’s attacks while all that Leviathan did was standing around, not even moving while doing it.

She was literally standing in the water which was doing everything for her, frustrating the devil who realized her attacks weren’t getting through. Twirling her magic wand, the former Heiress of Sitri channeled mana into it, manipulating the magic circles she already created.

They all moved in unison until forming a giant bright magic circle that had several different letters and symbols around it, chief of them of course the Sitri Clan’s mark right in the center that pulsed with a blue light of its own.

All water suddenly stopped; the rain remained static in the air, the lake grew still and the creatures attacking Serafall moved no longer, making Leviathan raise an eyebrow. Everything began moving again when the magic circle started spinning, the waters suddenly turning to ice that flew in the older woman’s direction.

“Impressive. That is more than the Sitri of my time could manage.” The blue haired woman commented before actually spreading her feet and assuming a fighting posture with a hand extended behind her body while the other rose close to her breasts. Opening her palm, all stopped again just a few meters from her person. “Power of Water doesn’t use ice but you are an odd case.”

Leviathan stopped talking as Serafall burst through the Ice, her wand pointing towards her enemy’s face with a magic circle already unleashing a beam of light. The blue haired woman deflected by pushing the magical girl’s arm to the side followed by bringing her other hand towards the young one’s neck.

The blow came like a viper jumping from a tree but the black haired woman created a magic circle in its path slowing it down enough for her to kick the hand away just as her mana crashed on the floor kicking more water up.

Both struggled to control the Element, the liquid changing to solid and back to liquid again as it took the form of daggers that flew towards Serafall forcing her to create a magic circle otherwise be stabbed in the chest.

Giving enough time for the other fighter to bring her arm back with a dagger made of flowing water against the shorter woman's breast. The black haired woman moved her magic circles around, blocking the dagger and a kick that would have hit her side, before creating another one to blast the bluehead away.

Leviathan was pushed back a few steps but the flowing water of her dagger extended into a sword that she used to parry the staff before it could unleash a secondary attack and give her range to hit Serafall.

It connected with the left shoulder and it was the elder daughter of Sitri's turn to fall back even as the flowing water kept extending. Soon it wasn't in a sword anymore but a spear, one that froze and fell apart once it was far enough from Leviathan that Serafall's aura could freeze it.

Yet the water around her was still moving and several globes flew in her direction before the black haired woman could even blink. Around her the temperature was so low that they instantly froze but then she found herself hit from everywhere by ice shards the size of bowling balls.

And Leviathan was still on the offensive, the older woman opening both her hands to unleash two jets of high pressurized water towards the one who claimed her name. Quickly the magical girl shifted her magic circles again, blocking the jets while trying to ignore the blows from the sides.

Water broke the Ice apart constantly, only to freeze again once it got close enough. "Very impressive. Of all Sitris I faced, you are the second most capable. Certainly the only capable one that could be called devil."

Ignoring her opponent's taunts, Serafall focused deeply on her wand and imagination to increase her power. "**Magical Beam!**" Her staff grew brightly before unleashing a blast without a magic circle.

The spell's name confused her opponent for a second before raising a wall of water to stop the blow. "That isn't just any staff-" Cutting herself to let out a grunt of effort, Leviathan felt the power pushing back against her own. "Certainly stronger than the devils back then..."

Eventually Serafall's attack won but failed to connect as the bluehead dodged seconds before it hit. However that didn't mean the black haired woman was done as she lowered her wand close to ice and took a swing with it, expanding the solid state of water forward. There was some resistance but her pink mana, which was still expanding, fortified her Element.

She moved her pink staff in a practiced choreography before pointing it towards the other woman. "**Grow and expand, Paradise of Levia-tan!**" Such words got the blue haired

woman tilting her head with curiosity. **“Ice Castle!!”** Then the temperature took another dip down and the pink aura became clearer.

But that wasn't all as Ice expanded everywhere around Serafall until there was almost no water in a radius of several meters. All of it obeyed and began to expand further, especially the one aimed towards the magical girl's enemy.

Immediately Leviathan tried to fight back but felt how the Ice wasn't just frozen water but directly connected with Serafall through her Power. “Ah. What an interesting way of using Power of Water.” She observed while actively jumping back to avoid the ice stakes that grew in her position. With another swing the Ice followed the taller woman who began to swim in the air again. “However you are wasting quite a bit of energy with that strategy.”

“Just to get you in the right place! **Magical Discharge!**” Several blasts were unleashed not from the wand or any new magic circle but from an old one; the giant magic circle that Serafall had constructed for her initial counter attack and had been hidden behind a ton of Ice.

Everything had been a set up to get Leviathan on the air and away from most of her Element while frost dealt with the rain. Indeed there was a lot less water around than Ice which took over most of the space and left the bluehead vulnerable to several dozen magic blasts.

Magical Discharge was, after all, the finishing blow of the magical girl Miracle Levia-tan and was essentially a fireworks display supposed to entertain while being the attack to finish off the bad guy of the week from her show.

However what many didn't know was that Serafall took her craft way too seriously and not just as a means to gather fame while improving the citizens view towards the government so her attack was really a wavelike bombardment capable of decimating cities.

Which was why every time it was used on her show they used dummies, golems and illusions so people didn't actually get hurt.

Regardless it was her turn to make rain but not water and instead magical energy, all of which flew towards Leviathan with true murderous intent and packing enough of a punch to destroy the remains of the stadium if she missed.

Of course she didn't, Serafall had set up the attack perfectly and every single pink blast of mana hit her opponent's position unleashing dozens of explosions in that spot as a pillar of Ice went upwards to stab the blue haired woman.

“Truly most impressive.” Yet Leviathan's voice pierced through the explosions just as the ice reached her body. “When it comes to manipulating water you are the strongest Sitri I have met.”

Then the light dimmed and Serafall saw a barrier of ice surrounding Leviathan. “How?”

“Silly devil, you use the skill and think it is just your own. Ice is just water in another form and

all of it belongs to the Sea.” Pointed out the blue haired woman while her spherical barrier fell to reveal her mostly unharmed body. Raising her left hand, the older woman admired the small cut on her fingers. “Perhaps you are worthy of the name Leviathan after all.”

Holding her staff in both hands, Serafall dismissed all her magic circles, focusing only on her wand and aura. “Who are you?”

“Don’t you already know? I was led to believe that despite how you dress, you are smarter than most of your peers.”

“Do you really want to talk about how I dress?” A bead of sweat dropped from Serafall’s forehead as she felt her skin crawl. Not out of frustration but worry. “As far as everyone is concerned I look innocent and cute. You look like a harlot.”

“Your look is to appeal to others, like a harlot, as you eloquently put it.” Was the retort as the woman kept admiring the wound in her fingers. The former wound because it had already vanished. “I dress how I please. There is a distinction.” Her pink eyes began glowing like a gem while studying the smaller woman. “Because I am not a girl who needs to pretend to be happy.”

Gritting her teeth and almost hearing them on her skull, Serafall prepared another magic circle. “Identify yourself! Who are you?! You look like Katerea and come from Leviathan Clan but her mother is dead and had no other children.”

“Really now? Fufufu.” The blue haired woman almost giggled at a joke only she knew. “Do you really don’t know how I am?” The rain poured harder and all ice in the stadium melted despite Serafall pushing the other woman’s influence back. She barely managed to preserve a small island of Ice around herself. “Yes, you do. I believe you do. Come now, prove me right. Since you took my name, I expect you to be at least competent.”

“That is impossible...” There was no disbelief, just doubt, concern and a little panic because the woman before her wasn’t someone simple as a devil.

The creature before her was a being above devils.

“Yet here I am. Sea Serpent of the End is proof of my return.” Was retorted casually as the rain grew stronger.

“You could be another member of the Leviathan Clan!”

“True but would they be this strong or capable? Would they be able to do all I am doing?” The voice pointed out delicately, drawing pleasure from the confusion and panic on Serafall’s demeanor. Like the act of denying her was just an amusing game. “Come now, you had other hints, didn’t you?”

“... You don’t use magic circles...” Serafall realized with horror, the truth unable to be denied.

“Of course not. Devils need the Keys of Solomon and I was never a devil.” Four huge blue

wings, taller than most angels', manifested behind the blue haired woman. Two in her upper back and two from her waist, they were similar to a dragon's with a few red feathers spread on blue leather. "Come now, Serafall... What is my name?" The moment her wings spread around the rain grew even stronger, practically blinding the devil who needed to use magic to protect her eyes. "Answer, child, who am I?"

Horror turned into certainty as Serafall braced herself to face her opponent once again, realizing she wasn't just facing any one. Certainly not a pretender to the throne, not a descendant of royalty or just another devil. Someone else, a person straight from the History books she read as a child.

"... Leviathan of Envy..." Just having said the name made a chill run through her spine as the environment's temperature dropped by a few more degrees and not by her will.

It was because of the women floating amidst the storm like if it was just any other normal night. The water flowed around her body with ease, not weighing or disturbing her few clothes at all even as the wind ran around her almost as if afraid to touch its creator.

Upon hearing her name and Title, Leviathan nodded in acknowledgment and even respect. "Indeed I am and I will always be Leviathan."

"... But that is impossible. You died! Destroyed with the Great Enemy!!" Serafall pointed out and once again the woman nodded in agreement. Despite her own denials, the denials knew the one before her was truly one of the Original Satans. "How are you back? ... Is that... Is that really Katerea's body?"

"No longer hers but my own." Leviathan's hands danced around her arms before moving towards her body, slowly caressing every curve before stopping at her waist. "Although not as great as I once was... It will suffice until I can be magnificent again. But that is for later." Her coral colored eyes focused on Serafall blue ones. "For today I came here to reclaim something else: my name."

The staff the new Leviathan was holding began to shine brightly. "Your name?"

"Yes, my name. You claimed it, right? By defeating my descendants, fools unworthy of it." The older woman opened her arms towards the sky. "I am not upset that you took it. Mostly disappointed that those who shared my blood were weaklings unable to protect it." Lightning began to fall around the area, one almost hitting her. That could never happen for the storm was hers to command. "So you are now Serafall Leviathan, 'Maou' of the Underworld..." The second title was said with a little jest yet her expression remained serious. "For now, at least. Soon the name will be mine, and only mine, again."

Sobering up, mostly because her opponent's power spiked meaning the fight was about to restart, Serafall pointed her wand up and replied. "Forgive me, Lady Leviathan. I wouldn't mind giving your name back. But I can't!!" Magic circles appeared, one atop her wand and two over her shoulders. "As one of the New Satans it is my duty to retain it!! To use its authority to protect our people!!!"

“Foolish girl. I have no intention of letting you ‘give’ anything back.” Water moved around the area until several serpents rose from the stadium’s lake. Most of them were at least two stores tall. “Taking it is only proper. For Leviathan is the Ruler of the Seas. **Monsoon Dance.**”

All Water serpents attacked at once and Serafall had to quickly take flight or die. And she still barely avoided the hits or the blow back from when the area where she stood exploded with water. Water that quickly changed until becoming an even bigger serpent, its fangs aiming to take the black haired woman down.

Fortunately she saw it coming and unloaded the spells in her magic circles towards it a heartbeat later. Frost and mana collided with the huge serpent’s head but water kept going with minor disturbances until the creature swallowed the black haired woman.

Then it kept moving at full speed, Serafall struggling to escape the water prison until she crashed on the hard floor, dozens of tons of water crushing her from above as more of the arena fell apart with Leviathan’s power.

Pink mana ‘stretched’ further and lost more of its color as the lake froze thanks to her power. Ice spread and spread, consuming the giant serpent’s tail that was still on the surface until it fell apart. Eventually the woman herself stood up from the rubble, her back wounded, wings broken and several lacerations but still in the fight.

“**Magical-**” Her next spell was cut short when a jet of Water almost took her head.

“You are barely dealing with the rain.” Leviathan reminded the younger woman, still in the same place. “And did you also forget?” Ice suddenly closed around Serafall’s ankles, her eyes growing wide as her mana failed to fight against her opponent’s. “Ice is just water in another form. The Power of Sitri could never compete against mine even at my worst.”

Raising her hands, two huge pillars of ice formed from the floor before the blue haired woman clapped her hands and both rushed to crush the devil between them. However Serafall’s hands were still free and she twirled her wand around creating five magic circles. Two of them destroyed the pillars while the other three destroyed the ice around her feet.

Not impressed in the slightest, Leviathan raised a hand and summoned several water serpents to attack the devil. Who didn’t stop waving her hand around, combining the five magic circles in a huge one before jumping, placing it beneath her feet, and slamming her wand on it.

“**Magical Stay!!**” The five magic circles all had been made with fragments for the next spell she had builded, always with the intent of combining them all which allowed her to use it with minimal cost.

Waves of pink mana washed over the lake on the stadium making all the serpents stop in their tracks and fall apart, returning hence they came. “So you used Power of Water to cut my mana from the lake. That is why you split the spell into several circles at first, to quickly build it up in an efficient manner...” Suffice to say the older being was slightly impressed.

She completely ignored the glare Serafall was giving her, choosing instead to praise the younger woman's efforts. "Without a shadow of a doubt you are the most skilled member of the Sitri Clan that I have ever met. Countering my Authority with your Power isn't an easy feat."

Whatever else Leviathan was going to say was interrupted by a magic circle that unleashed several blasts her way. Regardless, the taller woman wasn't even bothered since the rain was still fully in her control as Serafall's power couldn't just reach the clouds to counter it.

Indeed the blasts were met by several water arrows and serpents that intercepted each of them without difficulties even as the black haired woman dashed above the lake to try and improve her position.

When Leviathan noticed the other woman jump on the stands and start running, she understood the plan. "Points for cunning and creativity." The bluehead joked a little as, despite having a broken wing, Serafall took flight and created a dozen magic circles before combining them on two huge ones with the Power of Water inscribed in them. "Trying to neutralize the rain like that is a decent idea. However..."

Suddenly Serafall felt someone grab her face and noticed her opponent took over her line of sight. 'I thought she was a Wizard Type-' The back of her head was slammed on the stands and the woman pushed her around it, destroying the place even more. **"Magical Explosion!"**

Faster than Leviathan could react, the pink aura around Serafall shone brightly before blowing up, hurling them both around. As the caster, the black haired woman recovered faster, giving her time to get back to her feet and shoot another wave of mana towards her enemy.

However the water moved under the ancient creature using Katerea's body, becoming an arrow similar to the one which ended Tannin's life. It pierced through Serafall's attack with ease, almost killing the younger woman who barely managed to dodge in time to save her stomach.

Still her midriff was wounded and she quickly closed the wound with a batch of Ice. "Truly you are worthy of the name Leviathan!" Leviathan herself declared with some irritation before her teal aura flared. "However you shouldn't think that just because you have Power of Water that you can counter everything I can muster!"

Slamming her hand on the floor, it was clear the woman had enough playing around as all the water in the area came back to life. Serafall's magic circle on the lake shattered and a huge wave rose to give the younger woman her end. She met it without fear, her pink aura shining brightly before the wave froze.

Another twist of her wand had new magic circles prepared for a counter attack but suddenly someone grabbed her arm and pulled. "What? Who are you?" She saw the face of a man she knew nothing about nor ever saw in her life. "Let it go-"

Then her eyes grew wide upon noticing his own were frozen and out of focus. That person wasn't blind either, his eyes were just useless. They were receptors without any direction as the individual was clearly dead. The hole in his chest said as much, the lack of organs and even hands was another hint.

"There is much more in the Sea than just water." Leviathan pointed out the obvious as other corpses began to jump on Serafall. The devil called magic circles and fought to the best of her ability but some of them had weapons and one tried to stab her back.

Only to collide against a magic circle the black haired devil made with a finger, one that spread Ice over the weapon, breaking it apart before the solid form of water could be used as thousands of knives against other corpses.

It wasn't enough as blood and wounds were irrelevant to the dead. Hundreds had already died that day and she saw a new army emerge made from them. Sure they were falling apart more than the typical resurrected corpse but that was unimportant.

As the new army marched, its mistress moved the waters around the stadium masterfully once again. New serpents and daggers came with the rain and assaulted Serafall's position, forcing the magical girl to retreat quickly, higher on the stadium as she made magic circles on her back.

Higher she went until finding enough space to take a forced flight, Ice correcting her broken wings and acting as casts to make them functional while two huge serpents of water tried to devour her.

Serafall dodged the first before blowing up the second with a blast from her wand, her free hand quickly creating another one to stop Leviathan's jet that would have cut off her head. It wasn't enough as the rain was her enemy and the water from the heavens began to cut her Ice and shoulders, trying to bring the devil down.

However she found herself where she wanted to be, just above the stadium with the army of the dead beneath her. **"Let all the fallen rest! Magical Requiem!!!"**

A combination of her brand of magic and a real spell especially designed to counter an army of corpses. By any means, a counter spell that should be the bane of necromancers made to deliver peace to those already departed when their bodies were being used by nefarious means.

Because if Gabriel could do it, so would Serafall Leviathan.

Yet the effort only made Leviathan laugh with a melody that reminded her of the ocean. "Hahaha. Truly are you so foolish? Is my mana in the rain blinding you that you cannot perceive the truth? If so, let me help you see!! **Sea Serpent of the End: Obey!!!**"

Momentarily the rain stopped as all the water on the sky converged into a single point above Serafall's head before forming a serpent so tall that the woman could see nothing through it but an ocean in the sky.



Before it fell down on her like if the storm itself had decided to give the former Sitri a taste of all its water at once, slamming her down back on the stadium before raising back up again, even bigger since the water in the lake followed it.

Which gave Serafall enough space to get up one more time even as her bones rattled and her body bled from the attack. Once more she pushed her aura forward, preparing to meet the serpent a second time before noticing it was swimming in the sky instead of finishing her off.

Giving space for the army of the dead to do it, hundreds of devils whose only sound they made was of wet flesh walking slowly around the broken ground. Some slipped and fell before getting up again, their broken bodies representing horrible paintings of how each of them died.

Which was a magic Serafall never saw before. "It isn't necromancy?"

Perhaps waiting for the question, Leviathan sat on the stands to reply with a scoff. "You really think I would waste my energy on something so... pathetic as necromancy?" The idea itself was more than insulting to the blue haired woman. "Of course not! There is water everywhere, even corpses if they are fresh enough." Twitching a finger all corpses began to float. Even those with wings out didn't use them, just moving at their mistress becoming. "If too damaged or missing too much, I can fill them up with my rain." Bones broke as Leviathan made them move in awkward angles just because she could. "Can you see it, Serafall Leviathan? This power is something the Sitri Clan could never reach even in their wildest dreams!"

"Why would we want something so disgusting?!!" Pink grew more white as Serafall felt her blood boiling. "These are our people and you are using them as- as- as puppets made of flesh!!! You are unworthy of being called Maou!!!" Turning around she unleashed a huge beam mana that decimated dozens of corpses.

And she would have kept going if several of them hadn't dive bombed in her direction as the giant serpent spread into several hundreds of its kin to guide them towards their mistress' target.

Serafall jumped around and blocked as well as she could before resorting to her Ice once more. Walls of solid water grew around her to stall her enemies only for sharp tips to emerge from them after a wave from the taller woman's hand.

Gripping them furiously, Serafall struggled to retain control of her Ice only to fall as water was already refilling the place again and some of it made her stumble. A huge spike hit her forehead but the younger woman escaped with just a little bleeding while the army behind her renewed the attack.

"Fufufu. If you say so." Leviathan saw the whole speech as a joke. "The way I see it, after my death, there hasn't been a real 'Maou' in the Underworld. Peace made you weak when it should have been used to grow stronger and spread your roots." The woman sounded

disappointed before chuckling again. "But I shall correct it. Fufufu. That I shall. Before the others return... Yes, cull the weak. Plenty have already lost their lives today and the rain shall take much more before I am done. Especially if the others so called 'Maous' are as 'strong' as you."

Using her wand as a club, Serafall fended off several of the corpses before kicking one body back which pushed another six on the ground. One side taken care of, she quickly formed three magic circles and did a spin, lasers cutting the dead down in droves. The rain restored some of them but perceiving that action she jumped and made a huge magic circle.

"Ahh!!" The blast she unleashed vaporized everything on its path. She kept the power going, moving around slightly while using her aura to float in the air but it wasn't something she could hold for long.

Not because of any fault of her own but because the rain was still going and with her wings wounded it was only a matter of time before she was pushed down once again to deal with whatever else Leviathan had in store.

It happened sooner than she expected due to a hard impact on her back from something that definitely wasn't water and was far stronger than any of the blows she had received since the fight started.

Lifting herself enough to look back, what Serafall saw filled her heart with disgust and pity. "Tannin..."

"Even dragons need water and their bodies have plenty." Leviathan commented as the Dragon King's body, still missing part of his head and chest, took a step forward. One which would crush the younger Leviathan under his foot had she not rolled away. "Masses of power like them need some filling before moving again but it rained for quite a while. At this point, he is just a puppet like all the others."

For that was how the ancient being who called herself Leviathan saw those she made move after death: puppets. Using water as her strings and rain as a source for both the dead and the means to reanimate them, it wasn't hard for her to make an army.

Not the strongest army to be sure since they were slow, weak and unable to use magic but making rain was how she fought so that wasn't even a cost. Making them move arguably wasted more energy but the value was so negligible for Leviathan that she didn't care.

"This is no better than necromancy!!!" Serafall retorted before jumping to the right and avoiding the dragon's tail. Unfortunately he wasn't the only puppet present as several others jumped towards her again forcing her wand to blast them away and almost die by Tannin's hand.

"They should be happy that their lives are of some use... Well, at least their bodies." Leviathan commented dismissively while Serafall summoned a taller magic circle and blew Tannin's arm off. The attack was supposed to destroy the rest of his chest but the Dragon King's body was powerful even after death. "It isn't like I even killed them. I am just making

use of what was already lost. Those from my side should be honored that they will still kill you and march around the capital while the others... they are enemies, why should I care?" She shook her head in mild disappointment. "Maybe you are worthy of the name Leviathan in power but mentally you are still too immature. A pity, since you refuse to take this fight seriously."

Serafall jumped around several magic circles to approach Tannin's head, forming a huge sword of ice and cutting it off while glaring at the other woman. "Unlike you, I am not trying to kill my own allies."

Her words were cut short when Tannin's remaining arm pushed her on a wall and the dragon corpse tried to crush her. The black haired woman began to fight back but she could tell that the situation was almost unsalvageable because of its weight.

Leviathan just shook her head in disappointment again. "I heard that in this... Underworld Civil War, that you demonstrated a prowess worthy of my throne." Which was what she wanted to see and Serafall refused to show. "Worried about the city? The weaklings there? Well, if it is any consolation, hundreds of them have already died." The temperature dropped a little and the blue haired woman chuckled. "Lilith, after all, wasn't built to deal with this much rain. I bet someone like you can imagine the damage I am inflicting... without even trying..."

Yes, Serafall could see the catastrophe in her mind's eye: buildings falling apart, devils flailing around as rain threw them around, sharp winds cutting children down, people drowning and dead already floating to the surface.

Truth was that Leviathan was right in a sense, peace made the average devil weaker and her power was specially suited to deal with unprepared civilizations. A place like Lilith, which on average had a couple short rains per year, wasn't built to deal with a storm like the one already going out at full force.

Even a few minutes were enough to ruin the place's structure, much like it did with the stadium, and anyone who wasn't fast enough to get somewhere high or strong enough to not fall because of the wind would have a swift death.

And then become part of Leviathan's army.

Their power didn't even matter anyway, she only needed bodies to throw at her enemies.

"You..." Serafall's aura flared even more strongly, the pink color almost fully vanished as the woman felt a deep rage. "I am going to kill YOU!!!!!!!"

Pink turned fully to white and Leviathan felt the real power of Serafall Leviathan. "Finally!"

The white aura spread around and the temperature of the whole stadium fell to several degrees as she roared. "**Celsius Cross Trigger!!!**" Her aura exploding and pulsing towards the sky and reaching the clouds.

A second later all the stadium suddenly turned into a land of winter, all exits were closed, all bodies were turned into small amounts of Ice including Tannin's which was perfectly preserved inside a glacier the size of a mountain.

But Serafall's spell had spread even further to the point no more rain was falling since the clouds in the sky had been frozen as well. So was every body of water in the stadium and several kilometers outside of it.

In Lilithe the devils who were struggling to survive found themselves stuck in the cold and a land of ice and snow as far as the eye could see. The buildings that hadn't fallen were sustained by their Maou's Ice.

Be them friend or foe, all they felt was the cold as Serafall unleashed all her power focusing only on Leviathan's mana to fully neutralize the rain while also trying to not kill anyone by accident even if that wasn't really possible.

As her blue eyes opened after unleashing her powerful spell she could feel some lives disappearing on the Ice but there was little she could do. Even if the former Sitri knew who they were, her control over her Element wasn't so great she could just save them from miles away.

That she would have to trust Falbium with since the man would have realized what happened. "Sirzechs..." Serafall spoke, a hand on her ear as her magical girl uniform began to fall apart. Much like it, her whimsical attitude also vanished as the general from the Civil War took center stage. "Please make sure everyone is as far away from here as you can."

She knew the warning came up late, that some died because of Celsius Cross Trigger already, but against Leviathan and with the people of Lilithe in danger, the woman found herself without time to think.

A moment later she got a reply. \*Serafall, we already evacuated everyone we could-\*

Serafall turned off the spell before grasping Tannin's arm that was still holding her down against the wall. Ice left her fingers and spread over arm until it joined the rest of the corpse inside a glacier before the whole thing came crumbling down.

Free once again, Serafall jumped out of the wall as white mana covered her body with temperatures so low that anything on Earth would have died if they were close. Her almost naked body was soon covered by her Element until a bodysuit made of Ice with some armor had covered her form.

Sporting boots with long heels that could only be called spikes, knee and shoulder pads that molded with the rest of the suit presented with a snowflake design, every centimeter from below her neck had been covered.

The ribbons that once held her hair broke free as Serafall jumped around the snow and ice until reaching what was formerly the stadium's stands. Her black locks ran freely as her blue

eyes grew as cold as her power and she observed her adversary who was casually floating above the frozen floor.

“There she is.” Leviathan had her knees folded and a hand holding her chin while she admired the passage before turning towards her ‘inheritor’. “What a beautiful view you made. Certainly worthy of Leviathan.” ‘Standing up’ on the air, she grinned at her opponent. “Now I can really reclaim my name.”

Serafall’s fists shook with fury. “You are going to pay for everything you have done!!”

“How passionate for someone so cold. Fufufu.” Teal aura exploded around her. “Come on, come on... Make this worth it.”

“‘Make this worth it’? After all this that is what you got to say?!!” Serafall’s white aura flared back, the cold getting worse but unable to affect either of the women. “I am going to ground you into dust...”

“Please, try.” Magic exploded from both sides as they attacked at high speeds, Leviathan flying higher while Serafall skated on the floor as they kept blasting.

Most of their attacks hit and nullified each other but some got through more often than not since both women focused only on attacking and dodging. Leviathan was hit four times: one in the chest, two in the arms and another on the thigh. Serafall got hit six: Three on the midriff, one on the head and two on her hands as she tried to counter those attacks.

Which gave Leviathan the advantage as she sent forward two water serpents from her hands without missing a beat. They froze five meters before reaching the black haired woman, which didn’t stop the attack but slowed it down considerably. Enough so to be used as platforms which was what she did.

As the heads of the serpents crashed on the floor, Serafall sped up towards Leviathan who was cackling at the attempt to reach her. So amused was the older woman that she decided to dive down and throw a punch at the devil’s face that broke her footing. But it wasn’t for free and the younger woman sized her arm and created several magic circles between them.

So short was the distance that both sides suffered from the blasts unleashed but between the two it was Serafall who was in control since she not only attacked Leviathan’s body but also began the process of freezing her arm.

Leviathan ignored the magic attacks and sent several kicks on the younger woman’s midriff who retaliated in kind. They kept trading blows for a few seconds as the ice spread on the older woman’s arm only for it to break apart making Serafall grit her teeth.

Still the Sitri devil didn’t give up and formed a bigger magic circle between them. The second it was formed the older woman was already crushing it with a powerful knee. She saw it freeze a second later, the bigger circle splitting apart into several smaller ones, all of them unleashing a chilling wind.

“My, my. You really do know how to use the Keys of Solomon.” Leviathan commented while Serafall tried to blast her back again. That time, however, the elder of the two pulled herself to the side to avoid the blow, their only point of contact being her arm. “But you still need an instant to create your circles. How is the hand, by the way?”

“Peachy!” Serafall opened her wings to charge forwards, succeeding despite how damaged they were. Her grip on Leviathan’s arm grew tighter. “You are going to die a cold death!!”

When the black haired woman tried to create another magic circle, Leviathan crushed it, and grabbed an arm of her own. “Hahahaha! Sounds worse than my last one!!”

Around and around the two went in the air, spinning, flailing uncontrollably, up and down, up and down. There was no coordination or impulse as they fought with each other but only on the surface as one of them had already a plan in place to kill the other.

A spell that used the Laws of Nature.

With her strategy set in stone even before the fight began, because that was without a shadow of a doubt her strongest attack and the the steps for it were very specific, Serafall did everything she could to try and pull Leviathan down to the floor where the Ice was stronger.

It was the only place where her Element was more prevalent as the sky was a reflection of their fight, snow and rain dancing with each other trying to overwhelm its counterpart only for the conflict to keep going without a winner.

However it didn’t take long for the blue haired creature to realize there was a plan in place, mirth escaping her coral colored eyes. “So you want to bring me down?” Between the two of the fighters, only she still had functional wings which she immediately began to employ in the struggle. “Do you forget that any water obeys my will? Even that in your body?”

Immediately Serafall began to feel something pushing her heart and brain from the inside but a small push of mana cut the older woman’s strings. Yes, she could control any water but not absolutely control it so long one had the means to fight back. However another insight the former Sitri gained was that mana was still involved somehow.

Which was reassuring of her chances of victory, if only slightly. “What is wrong? Afraid of a little Ice?”

“What is wrong? Afraid of a little water?!” Leviathan’s fingers rested above Serafall’s stomach and the black haired woman only had a second to let go or be cut in half. “Yes you are~”

Despite having avoided most of the blow, the pressurized water had managed to cut her armor and flesh just below the left breast. She could even tell that some of her ribs got damaged but fortunately she had escaped away just in time before things got worse.

At least she could fix herself in an instant thanks to her Element yet the newer Leviathan knew she was in a bad pinch since her grip grew slack and the older one managed to break free of it before sending the black haired woman back to the ground with a kick.

Magic circles quickly formed to slow down her fall, the closest glacier turning into a huge pile of snow, a soft surface just where she crashed. It wouldn't absorb everything but magic and her constitution took care of the rest so the next instant later Serafall was already on her feet and fixing her body while raising a shield.

Even as her bodysuit absorbed most of the damage, itself had been damaged so she fixed it up in a second before connecting any broken bones with Ice. Healing wasn't the devilkind's forte but her Element had always given her a certain advantage. Although it was arguably how much she could employ it against Leviathan.

'Sea Serpent of the End was always powerful but in her hands...' Focusing on the fight, Serafall blocked a serpent of ice before rolling to the side and avoiding another one just barely. The temperature around her was several degrees colder than before yet it wasn't enough. 'I need to get her down but first... I need to get to her!'

Leviathan was flying around without much concern, fighting against the Ice to expand her senses since her rain was 'disrupted'. 'She is using my power against me but not enough to really have an effect. Ah, if our descendants were half this competent then we would have won the war.' Opening her wings, she spread her aura around further and began creating a huge body of water above her head. "Since you insist on freezing everything, deal with this!!"

The huge ball was the size of the stadium and the sort of attack that could flood it on its own. Yet Serafall's Celsius Cross Trigger was still affecting the place so it wasn't long before it turned from liquid to solid. Now the attack would crush the stadium under its weight and the devil with it.

Serafall couldn't just raise the temperature back up again since that wasn't how her magic worked nor would that help with the most expedient manner to defeat Leviathan. Victory in mind, she raised her hand with a particularly different magic circle, pink of color once again and with Ajuka's symbol on it, calling her weapon.

For her wand still was mostly intact, just covered in ice but that was mostly her fault since the object was particularly vulnerable to her mana but also made to function despite low temperatures.

Admittedly she didn't like to use a wand outside her condition as a magical girl but beggars couldn't be choosers and she really needed something extra to deal with the giant ice ball the size of a meteorite.

"**Magical...**" The words felt weird in her mouth, being said not in her uniform but an armor proper for war. She wasn't there to bring cheer to the Underworld but looking for her own survival which would make her a failure as a magical girl. "**Discharge!!!**"

Yet the attack was unleashed anyway not for the children of the Underworld as she usually claimed it was for but instead she let it loose her sister, father, mother and friends who would be sad if she were to die.

Of course in her 'unrestrained state', the attack was much bigger than previously with hundreds of streams of mana exploding against the ball of Ice. It broke apart in a second, several pieces of it falling downwards only to be eradicated by more of Serafall's attack.

Leviathan clicked her tongue angrily. "Why, oh, why couldn't my descendants be half as competent as this?!" She half moaned, almost screaming with frustration because of that single truth. "This is so frustrating! Ah!! It even annoys me to kill someone so competent..." A moment later all emotion vanished from her face as she took hold of her vices. "But so it must be... Devils must remember who their real rulers are."

With those thoughts she brought her hands together and prepared to make another giant ball of water only to see several flashes darting towards her. Realizing her previous attack had been completely dealt with, the blue haired woman dodged the constant blasts before unleashing a huge jet of water as a counter.

It reached the magic circle on the ground in an instant despite transforming into ice. Leviathan half expected her enemy to dodge but was shocked when the magic circle broke without anyone in sight.

"What the-" From her left came a shadow and before she finished turning around she saw Serafall bringing down her arms like a hammer over her head with an impact that unleashed a giant shockwave.

The newer Leviathan had used her Ice to build an improvised pair of wings for stability while using several fragments of the older Leviathan's previous attack to jump higher until getting in position to catch her predecessor off guard.

Adding more to the attack was a pair of heavy gloves made of Ice which began to shine white as the black haired woman descended from the sky with her fists cocked back. Leviathan was trying to stabilize her flight back but soon received a powerful punch to the jaw.

Before getting another, and another and another.

All the way down Serafall kept punching, roared with rage completely unlike her magical girl persona but like an amazon after her prey. Ice and mana grew thicker around her arms, keeping the gloves stable even as her adversary kept trying to break the weapons, either with her power or, involuntarily, with her face.

Leviathan tried to break free but the speed descent wasn't helping her situation and Serafall had magic circles constantly attempting to freeze her opponent's body, especially her huge wings.



Didn't take long for them to reach the ground, the collision shattering the point of impact and forming a huge web pattern while the blue haired woman let out a scream of pain which was promptly interrupted by another punch to the face.

However that wasn't enough to take Leviathan down and with some extra leverage she plantated her hands on the ice before kicking her enemy off. Immediately both felt each other pull the Water but only Serafall was still in position to keep attacking. Her covered fist made contact with her enemy's face again while the other moved to hit the open stomach.

A third hit was about to connect when the ice beneath their feet shot up and almost pierced the white dressed woman, forcing her to cover her face. Not letting herself be detained, the older woman broke part of her attack to use it as daggers.

While a huge block of the Element was blocked by Serafall's quick reaction, her bodysuit was cut in several spots just before Leviathan took advantage of the opening to kick her as hard as she could.

Being sent flying wasn't surprising considering her opponent so the black haired devil was already ready, creating more snow as her opponent laughed before asking. "So, what comes next? You managed to bring me down! You must have some sort of plan!!!"

Bringing her arms forward, Leviathan usurped much of the terrain and sent huge ice rocks towards Serafall who formed four magic circles to shoot them down while allowing the gloves in her arms to fall off.

Serafall could feel Sea Serpent of the End dominating the area, watching how the blue haired woman's power fought and defeated her own with the minimal amount of effort. Mostly because the black haired woman herself was giving ground and allowing the Ice to melt in preparation for her greatest strike.

For her real skill with Power of Water wasn't the control of the Element itself but using it to lower the temperature of anything she could get her hands on because, much like her opponent pointed out, there was water everywhere.

Usually Serafall's strongest spell needed a few minutes of preparation before being unleashed but Leviathan was doing her a favor by filling everything with water once again, the rain being a welcome sight for the first time since their fight began.

'Here goes...' Serafall crossed her arms, the palms of her hands upside rubbing with her elbows as she took a deep breath and began to focus. White lightning jumped from her hands until forming an arch above her head.

Cold energy danced, making the temperature around her drop even lower than before, rebuilding a small island for her in a couple of seconds. Leviathan raised a curious brown and sent several water serpents inside the other woman's territory with a careless gesture of her fingers.

They froze solid in an instant, building an improvised wall around Serafall who smirked at the attempt. "Have some more?"

"What are you playing at?" A little irritated by the taunt, Leviathan began to take flight once more which the devil couldn't allow to happen.

In a desperate attempt to stop the older woman she unleashed a wave of energy around herself, breaking the statues to use them as projectiles. Once away from the devil's range it was easy for Sea Serpent of the End to melt the water again but nonetheless its owner was cautious.

Caution was exactly what she didn't need because when Leviathan took a few seconds to study the situation she gave Serafall the time she needed. The spell had to be prepared while the opponent was close to a huge amount of Ice and her power at its peak. Since all conditions were archived, everything was ready for her strongest attack.

Uncrossing her arms upwards, the white energy was channeled just before her neck and began to transform as Serafall pulled her hands back to then thrust towards the energy, pushing the energy forward when her palms met with a magic circle.

**"Absolute Cross Freeze!!!"** Her spell took the form of a giant snowflake with a dozen tips and a pattern that was somewhat similar to the Sitri's Clan symbol.

And it flew quickly, faster than any other attack Serafall had used before, spinning around vertically. Wherever it passed the Absolute Cross Freeze dominated the area for less than a second yet all liquids turned into solids and Ice spread far and wide until the spell reached its target.

Leviathan took too long to move and knew there was something odd about that attack compared to the one's before it. Unfortunately for her there was no time to think and all she could do was try to fight against Serafall's trump card.

Sea Serpent of the End tried to take control of Absolute Cross Freeze.

And it failed, not because Serafall's spell was stronger than Leviathan's power but because there was no water there to be found. It was pure mana, one tuned to a frequency of a real spell very similar to those magicians used. Power of Water had nothing to do with it, neither was she using her Element for the spell itself.

A proper attack for a magical girl who was aiming to defeat a villain.

When the attack was just a few centimeters from Leviathan, she raised a barrier to meet the snowflake only for it to explode just before making contact. Knowing there was no way such a thing was a fluke, the woman prepared to move only to suddenly realize her feet were stuck on Ice.

However it wasn't only her feet as soon her whole body began to be encased on Ice in a

matter of milliseconds as the temperature of the place where she was standing dropped to absurd low degrees.

-273.15° Celsius or -459.67° Fahrenheit, the Absolute Zero and the point where all atoms and even particles stopped moving.

That was Serafall Leviathan's trump card, not a direct attack using her power but a spell that reshaped the temperature of a determined area so long as there were places around where the energy could be transferred to.

In truth she couldn't just summon Absolute Zero out of nowhere which was why the excess of water and eventually Ice around was important: besides lowering the temperature to the lowest degree possible, she also used the Ice to get rid of whatever extra energy her spell couldn't deal with.

Within the epicenter of the spell, where Leviathan was locked inside a malformed block of Ice that regardless covered her completely, was always losing energy meanwhile the rest of Serafall's Ice worked to keep that particular place cold.

"Uff..." Serafall dropped to her knees in relief since if that hadn't worked she didn't know what would. "That was the toughest fight I ever had in my life... Even Grayfia wasn't that tough..." After a few deep breaths to recover her energy later, the black haired woman shook herself off her stupor. "To think that I would have to use Absolute Cross Freeze to defeat someone... You really are worthy of the title of Maou." She didn't dare to approach Leviathan's resting place, her body wouldn't be able to survive Absolute Zero, not as weak as she was. Without concern she stretched her spine while closing her eyes to try and feel the life signs around her Ice. "Falbium managed to get everyone in the city but..."

Celsius Cross Trigger had killed dozens of people which depressed the former Sitri. Unfortunately there was nothing she could have done as Leviathan proved herself to be too strong for her to hold back.

'I need to dig out the bodies. If there are some of us there I-'

Lost in thought she only realized an attack was coming when something had already pierced her skin and was about to reach her heart. Already about to die she managed to move out of the way just enough to be left with a hole on her chest that went off to the side and was bleeding constantly.

"What-" That time she fell to her knees and coughed blood since despite saving her heart several other organs had been wounded. "Who-"

"My, my. You are really worthy of the name Leviathan!"

"That voice-" Serafall's fearful eyes stared at the ice block looking the other woman away.

And found Leviathan smiling at her as she slowly began to move inside the ice, something definitively in the realm of impossibility. Yet it was done so anyway, Leviathan left the ice

prison looking no worse for wear, a beautiful grin blossoming in her face. When she phased out of her prison completely, standing on the water without a drop touching her skin.

Playfully Leviathan embraced herself, shaking her arms. “Bhurr. So cold~”

“How? ...That is impossible!” Serafall barely managed to fight off her shock, trying to get up again. Only for a jet of extremely pressurized water to attack her from the side and almost cut off her right leg. “Argh.”

Only then she realized that almost all ice was gone and the stadium was a lake again. A second later, rain poured with new strength. Blue eyes met pink, one with confusion and other with pleasure as the owner of the latter began to walk towards her ‘successor’.

“Did you really think freezing me was going to work?” Leviathan asked playfully, a very pleased smirk on her face. She had wounded her opponent severely during the moment most people completely lowered their guard; when they thought victory was theirs.

“That was Absolute Zero!” Even without anyone sustaining it, her spell remained strong. Yet the coffin of ice laid empty while it sat on a small island, the only ice refusing to melt.

It would, in time, as the rest of it disappeared and energy began to accumulate in that area once again. Nobody could change that fact, not when the conditions for true Absolute Zero were basically unnatural.

Normal ice melted with ease despite Leviathan paying no attention to it, her eyes turned back to look at her supposed prison. “‘Absolute Zero’? What is that? Something that came up after my death?” Looking back to Serafall, the water jumped from behind the other woman and pierced her arm making the devil flinch. “Answer my question.”

Part of Serafall wanted to stand defiant and not give her opponent the satisfaction of getting anything from her but the black haired woman knew she needed to buy some time to recuperate and counter attack.

“... It’s a law of thermodynamics... Of nature...” She amended upon seeing the confusion on the taller woman’s face and feeling more water shaking. The latter phenomena was gone but the former remained. “It was... discovered by humans... Absolute Zero’s... the point where... everything stops.”

Serafall was having more and more difficulty talking but Leviathan got the picture. “You mean something that can stop atoms? Fascinating! I didn’t know humans had discovered that!” By her face and her tone of voice, the woman was legitimately impressed. “I knew that technology had advanced after my early demise but for them to study atoms already... Well, most of them would already know about it if a god or another taught them but if the knowledge is spread out then...”

‘The atom was discovered way before your death...’ Serafall didn’t dare to say it regardless. Her mind was too busy trying to figure out something else and she attempted to play with Leviathan’s good humor. “How did... you escape? How are you... still moving?”

Stopping her praises for Humanity, Leviathan looked at the other woman with a smug grin. "Oh dear, you thought you were fighting a devil this whole time, didn't you?" Serafall felt cold and it wasn't because of blood loss. "The Laws of Nature can't affect beings beyond their scope. Even if low temperatures can stop atoms... I can just get mine moving again... Or just keep them moving in the first place."

The implication of that statement was huge because that wasn't something anyone could do even if they were immensely powerful. Sure enough people as strong as Serafall could do things like not care about breathing, which was why she never feared drowning during the fight despite her opponent.

If anything the impact of the water and how Leviathan could pressurize it were Serafall's ultimate downfall who could recognize that the latter means was how the damage on her chest came to be.

As her blood was added to the lake, the devil put some effort and failed to generate Ice through her bodysuit to close the wound. The creature before her, someone who claimed to be a being above devils, was undoubtedly stopping the process while studying the spell which used Absolute Zero.

In reality Leviathan was examining the concept of Absolute Zero itself, a soft click leaving her tongue after coming to a single conclusion. 'That wasn't the result of Power of Water but this woman's skill...' Sure some of the Power was involved but what made Serafall's attack devastating to 99% of existing creatures in the universe was her own ingenuity. 'Which means I can't just do the same, no matter how much I try.'

And she was trying, the blue haired woman wasn't showing it but ever since learning about Absolute Zero she had been trying to reproduce some ice that could reach the same state where all atoms and particles were frozen.

Serafall didn't know that nor bother to count the time Leviathan was taking to finish her off. Her efforts were in three things; closing her wounds, recovering the communication spell to warn the others about Leviathan's existence and counter attacking.

Yes, Serafall Leviathan wasn't done, she had one more card on her sleeve, not a powerful spell like Absolute Cross Freeze but a trick that should take down her enemy as well as herself because of how injured she was.

Despite knowing death was close, the black haired devil found no hesitation, the image of her family smiling at her giving the woman all the resolve she needed. Splitting her focus into two, she directed most of her mana towards healing herself.

While sending a small reserve towards her fingers hidden inside the water and creating the smallest magic circle she could, one the size of a finger's tip. Her blue eyes watched Leviathan as the seconds passed and the woman kept staring at the ice Absolute Cross Freeze made.

'Almost...' Her mana searched for the signal hidden in the center of the arena. Searched the weapon she was sure couldn't have been destroyed just yet. 'Almost...' At least she was certain it hadn't been destroyed but when another second ticked down and she found no sign of it, despair began to rot her soul. 'Almost!'

However she didn't give up, despair being turned into fuel to push forward her determination as the reality of the situation was immutable unless she succeeded in taking Leviathan down: many would die, possibly her sister with them.

Finally Serafall found the instrument of her work, or what was left of it, the wand that had been with her since she became the magical girl Miracle Levi-tan. Immediately she sent as much power she could spare towards what was left of the wand before getting a second wind.

Channeling as much mana as she could, her bodysuit falling apart revealing naked flesh, Serafall charged towards Leviathan with a white magic circle pulsing with energy and a blast of Ice already flying towards the blue haired woman.

Who took the attack in the face without trouble and a smirk on her face. "One last gambit?"

"Ahh!!!" Serafall abandoned her Element and began to push mana against her enemy but at that point it was too late and water had already pierced her arm, cutting her muscles and immobilizing it. "AAAAAAHHHHHHHHHHHH!!!!"

Which was fine by her because she still had another arm already forming a second magic circle, that one a bright pink the same color of the magical girl uniform that had been destroyed when the fight first began.

The second blast was blocked by Leviathan's hand but it wasn't the only attack as that magic circle had been made with the equation to manipulate a certain magic wand. Said wand had been previously used as a distraction and conduit to keep Magical Discharge going despite away from its owner, in a previous moment of the battle.

Several waves and blasts had broken Ajuka's creation in many parts but the important thing was the golden star which carried a huge quantity of mana inside it. Mana that Serafall had fed her weapon for years, always with it on hand every time she could.

It wasn't without any strategic purpose either, she just liked using a wand.

Jumping from beneath the waves came Serafall's last resort, a pink star, formerly gold, pulsing with power and ready to blow up.

Only to be stuck in place as Leviathan commanded the lake to surround it before turning into a ball that had hundreds of serpents inside pushing the star towards the center. It cracked once because of its owner's efforts, blowing up a second later with what should be a glorious blaze that would have consumed the stadium.

That didn't happen as the water serpents in the lake involved the blast in an embrace that suffocated it with Leviathan's power. And so a blast that should have taken down the stadium, its creator, her enemy and a huge part of Lilith, disappeared after just a spark inside a giant sphere of water.

Serafall couldn't believe her eyes but that was her reality even as her legs finally lost all their strength due to her final effort and the wounds in her body. Yet she couldn't even muster the will to try and stop the bleeding anymore and was left to stare at her enemy with wide fearful eyes.

Slowly Leviathan turned to the kneeling devil, her pink eyes shining brightly. She didn't say anything, nothing needed to be said as her smug expression told the whole story; that was the face of the victor and the one who won due to her own superiority.

No superiority of skill but one literally born out of her own existence for there was no denying the blue haired woman's words that she was something above devils, that was the only way she could surpass Absolute Zero.

There were very few creatures who could shrug off the Laws of Nature like that, so few in fact that the former Heiress of Sitri was sure she could name them all. Between those there were ones who were old, some who were powerful and few who were strange even for the moonlit world's standards.

And Leviathan fit in with none of them.

At least that was what she believed and yet Serafall had to ask. "Are you a goddess?" Because the alternative was even more bizarre than a god of some kind creating devils. It was only then, at death's door that she realized something, 'We know little where three of the Original Maous came from...' The image of the Ancient Devils crossed her mind, one in particular. 'Zekram-'

Then all thoughts vanished as a huge pressure slammed on her shoulders and the devil felt her heart beating so quickly it was about to burst. Every part of her body shook uncontrollably and the blood leaving through her wounds stopped in place for reasons she couldn't understand.

Until Leviathan revealed an expression full of unmistakable disgust; shadows covered the left side of her face as her pink eyes shone ominously while staring at the devil like she was the most despicable thing in the universe.

Every trace of humor, curiosity and appreciation were gone from the woman's face, her power growing more sinister as it builded up to a crescendo that hadn't been present when their fight began.

Rain poured once again, stronger than before.

It marked someone's death and both of them knew it.

“Good bye, Serafall Sitri.” Leviathan raised both hands in front of her chest and face, her aura growing as she brought her arms up.

When they came down, so did all the Sea’s fury: the water grew extremely violent from one moment to the next, slamming Serafall down and throwing her around everywhere as the pressure kept building up.

There wasn’t a lake in the stadium anymore, just a huge mass of water jumping around without anywhere to run while a storm raged above it. Harsh winds weren’t the only problem either as serpents jumped around and struck wherever Serafall ended in their domain, hundreds of them attacking together in perfect harmony.

Without nowhere to run and no more strength to fight, Serafall silently withstood the pain with all the dignity and grace from someone in her position. Although defeated, the magical girl wasn’t going to cry or beg.

Hope was gone for her either way and it was only a matter of time before her body couldn’t hold on anymore. Just a few seconds inside the True Leviathan’s attack and the devil could already feel her limbs and bones being torn apart. Her power went first, whatever was left of her aura falling and washing away with the water.

In that moment, when the last flicker of her life was about to be extinct, Serafall saw her past.

*Years after the Underworld Civil War ended and the new government was still trying to stabilize its footing, Serafall received excellent news, the kind so great that she dropped everything on the capital and teleported towards Sitri Manor in less than a minute.*

*Still dressed in her black and gray uniform, the same one she wore pretty much everyday in her position as Minister of Foreign Affairs, she dashed towards her mother’s room mostly ignoring the servants trying to slow her down.*

*A brief “Hello!” to her father later and Serafall was there, outside her mother’s room, fixing her clothes to make sure she was proper. It had taken her a few seconds to fix her long dress skirt and the uniform, enough time for her father to catch up to her in the hallway.*

*“Dear, your mother still needs some rest.” Lord Sitri said between deep breaths making his daughter giggle.*

*“Is that why they had to stay in the hospital for so long?” Serafall asked with an excited grin. Finally she was free of responsibilities and could see her family. “Don’t worry. I won’t be loud. Promise.”*

*The black haired man shook his head and, just to be safe, used several magic circles on the door. “Fine. Fine. I won’t hold you back, Cupcake.”*



*Serafall shook her head even as she grinned at the nickname. 'If you couldn't burn calories with magic, we would have to roll you around the manor.'*

*Deliberately slowly, far too slow for her own tastes but nonetheless Serafall was committed to the action, she opened the door as carefully as possible despite her father's magic eliminating every sound it could make.*

*She didn't want to disturb the newcomer, first impressions were important.*

*Soon she was inside her mother's private room where the beautiful woman laid in her king size bed with its curtain's open and several maids by her side ready to cater to her every whim.*

*However, no matter how much Serafall loved to see the woman, the real reason for her visit was someone else. Someone that the older woman was happily holding in her arms, rhythmically rocking them slightly left and right while humming a lullaby.*

*Indeed in the short haired woman's arms was a bundle of blue covers that hid the form of Serafall's little sister, someone who had come to the world a few weeks ago. Unfortunately several appointments and compromises got in the Maou's way, stopping her from meeting the baby earlier.*

*However all was settled, everything was done and the young devil was more than excited to finally meet her sibling. "Is she-"*

*"Ssh." Lady Sitri hushed her older daughter gently, still watching her newest daughter in her arms. "She only slept a few minutes ago and I don't want to wake her up."*

*"Milady, if you allow us-"*

*"No, no. I will take care of my daughter myself." And Lady Sitri was proud of having done the same for Serafall for as long as she could.*

*Until the war came and her daughter had to grow up faster than intended, at least for a pureblood noble devil. It wasn't just love that inspired the beautiful woman to work harder to take care of her newest child but also fear.*

*Fear the ceasefire would end, fear another war would come, fear things would go wrong again.*

*Because of that, despite having been ordered to rest by the doctors who insisted the birth had been extremely exhausting and taxing on her body, Lady Sitri refused to stay more than a few meters from her youngest.*

*Her last child if the doctors were supposed to be believed. Not that she would complain, it was already a miracle for a devil family to be blessed with a second one. That, of course, also influenced her fears of losing her baby.*

*After a prolonged stay in their Clan's private hospital to make sure everyone was healthy and safe, added to another round of insistences that Lady Sitri should rest, they returned to the manor just in time for Serafall to finally get out of work.*

*There she was, standing at the door and excited to meet her sister but holding herself back to make the least noise possible. The maids could practically see a light bulb popping above her head when the woman opened her wings and slowly floated towards the bed without needing to take a single step.*

*Once close enough, Serafall couldn't help but let out a huge smile as she managed to see the little face resting on her mother's shoulder. It was so small and pure that she barely believed it could exist yet was just in front of her anyway.*

*'Sooooooo cuuuuuuuuteeeee!' Serafall remembered thinking as her hands slowly approached her sister's face but stopped just before touching her.*

*Blue eyes met blue as mother and daughter looked at each other, the elder with a grin and very much amused by her older daughter's reaction. "Do you want to hold her?" She spelled silently and Serafall 'jumped' from joy.*

*Fortunately she was still flying so it was just a short up and down that made her mother happy before she gently offered the bundle of joy in her hands towards her oldest daughter who approached with all the care in the world.*

*'She's so cute!' The thought came back with giggles as she held her younger sister. Perhaps because of the shaking of her shoulder or because of how active babies could be, soon she saw violet eyes like her father's looking at her. "Oooh... She 's waking up."*

*Half expecting her mother to ask for the baby back, Serafall was pleased when the older woman just watched her daughters interact with an earnest smile. "You remember the name we chose?"*

*"Of course. How could I forget?" Serafall replied with excitement, her eyes never leaving the baby. "Nice to meet you, Sona. I am your older sister." Violet eyes focused on blue or at least the older devil thought they did.*

*After trading glances for a couple of seconds, baby Sona raised her hands as if trying to grasp something and Serafall tilted her head to the side, trying to understand what the baby wanted.*

*"She wants to know you better." Her mother commented as she rested her head on a pillow. Despite her best efforts, the exhaustion of taking care of a baby had taken its toll.*

*Yet Lady Sitri was much calmer with both of her daughters in the room and her husband at the door, at least that was what Serafall believed. In truth the Maou didn't think much about her mother's struggles as all her attention had been diverted to baby Sona on that occasion, the most pure thing in the world.*

*Without hesitation the older devil lowered her head and allowed the baby to touch her face, gleefully feeling how her small hands played with her nose and cheeks, even trying to pull them despite her little strength.*

*Calmly Serafall took it all in, basking in the attention. "Was I like that too?" Her words had come out wrong because Sona grabbed her lips but her mother could understand well enough.*

*"Hmm~ No, you were less energetic..." Lady Sitri lost herself in nostalgia as one of her maids nodded in agreement, the oldest of the bunch even if she didn't look like it. "Yes, yes. You were so silent most of the time that I worried... But then you would get hungry. And what a pair of lungs..."*

*"That is right, dear." Lord Sitri came inside with a happy smile. "I remember hearing her cries from the office once or twice and running to see what was wrong."*

*Serafall grinned with happiness upon seeing the expression on her parents' faces before she heard a sound that would change her life. It was soft, gentle and almost mute but soon grew enough that plenty of the present could hear.*

*Sona was giggling to her sister while trying to push and pull with all her might. It was the most beautiful sound that Serafall had ever heard and the smile on her face was just precious.*

*Eventually the baby settled into a smile, her eyes shining with joy as Serafall brought her hand up to touch her nose. Small Sona clapped at it excitedly, eager to keep playing with her older sister who didn't hesitate to sit in the bed with her mother and move her hand around.*

*Yes, that joy she brought to her sister, the smiles, the giggles, the happiness that everyone shared, that was the path in life Serafall wanted to take. Contrary to most devils the black haired Maou wished no power or glory nor did she chase a grandiose dream.*

*What she most wanted was to see people smile like her sister did, to entertain and be entertained by those willing to partake with their laughs just like her sister was doing for all present.*

*A few days later Serafall would finally enact an old dream she had and become a magical girl.*

*"Serafall!!!" A scarlet comet fell on the lake, vaporizing most of the water in its attempt to reach the black haired devil.*

*Leviathan floated backwards while her rain diminished and a smile returned to her face.*

*"Well, well, well. I have to say I didn't expect you to show up here. At least not this soon."*

*The blue haired woman commented to the man dressed in black and gold armor who was wrapping her previous opponent in a dark cloak, holding her in his arms. "Your predecessor would never bother to come rescue us like that. Proudful as he was, that man was always in*

the front lines for the sake of showing his superiority, too busy to rescue anyone. Does your humility make you a stronger or weaker man than him, Sirzechs Lucifer?”

Immediately the man identified the respect in the woman’s tone even if more of his focus was protecting Serafall’s deeply wounded body while healing it with his EM. ‘This is bad...’ But that also was a problem because he could tell his friend’s condition was far from being good. “I can’t speak for him, just for myself. And when I felt my friend’s life was about to be extinguished...” He turned to her, his deep blue eyes shining red. “... I had to save her.”

“Fufufu. So I suppose the dragon and the soldiers weren’t your friends?” A taunt and a successful one at that, they both knew it. “Rizevim told me you probably wouldn’t show up, not until you knew he wasn’t a factor. Looks like there are just so many buttons we can press until that is no longer true.”

“Is he planning to come?” Sirzechs asked directly, knowing that he was the only chance the Underworld had against Lucifer’s progeny.

“Who knows~” It wasn’t like he expected a straight answer anyway so Leviathan didn’t give one. “I came here to recover my name, which I did successfully. Even though Serafall is still breathing... For now.” Scarlet power filled the stadium and she felt her rain being pushed back. But that wasn’t the only thing of note. ‘He isn’t using Phoenix Tears and yet her life signs are improving... But that won’t be enough.’ She smiled with interest. ‘Still, that something of note... I didn’t know healing magic had improved that much.’

She wasn’t very concerned with Serafall living anyway, not when the name Leviathan was only hers once more with the devil’s defeat. Indeed, the only reason she wanted to finish off Serafall was just to feel a sense of accomplishment and to not leave a job half done.

Sirzechs held the woman’s body closer as his left hand remained inside the cloak with EM. “I am not letting you kill her.”

“If this is the Love of Gremory... Runeas sure left you all with a troublesome legacy.” Leviathan may not have planned facing the new Lucifer so soon but a part of her was more than interested in measuring the man. Deep down she needed to know if he was worthy of his name as well, the name of the one whom she admired. “You will have trouble fighting me and healing her so let us see the weight of your words.”

True enough, Sirzechs could feel how every drop of rain carried a little of the woman’s mana but he wasn’t phased. In fact he was unconcerned and she could see it by his demeanor, so calm and collected despite having a half dead friend in his arms and an enemy in his sights.

“Tell me...” The redhead started slowly, his aura growing darker. “... are you truly Leviathan? Are you really her?”

The blue haired woman chuckled. “What do you think?”

“I think it should be impossible for you to return from the dead and I also think that with you around the peace that we build is hanging in a very delicate balance.” The many devils who

would run to follow her just by who she was couldn't be counted. "Unless, of course, you swear you aren't planning to restart the Great War."

"Oh~ And if I do swear such an oath... Would you relinquish your throne to me?" Leviathan asked, intrigued.

"Without hesitation." The redhead's reply was equally as calm as the question which shocked the woman. "So long as you also swear to honor the compromises and promises me and my friends have already made."

"And Serafall Sitri would agree to it? Would the others?" Her amusement began pouring from her whole body, her hair dancing almost like a tail, as she named the woman she maimed.

"We never wanted the thrones, your descendants forced our hand." Sirzechs answered honestly, knowing that Leviathan's life meant the possibility of another civil war if things were handled poorly. 'Serafall just wants her show and family, Ajuka will be fine so long he has his experiments and Falbium... Honestly he would be fine just sleeping around most of the year.' Truly every Maou had one interest or another, a passion that they could follow wholeheartedly because of their positions. 'With certain contracts, she will have to keep her word. All she has to do is sign them and all the Underworld, including me, will bend the knee, devils won't need to fight each other so long Leviathan is on our side...'

Leviathan's presence was an opportunity to free them from the shackles of leadership while at the same time reunifying the Underworld since there would be no need for an Old or New Satan Factions under one of the Originals.

However there was a catch, "And if I say that I could care less about your promises and compromises? That I want to restart the war right here, right now?"

"Then your second life will be a short one." The retort was colder than she expected.

But Leviathan was pleased. "Fufufufu... Hahahahaha!! Amusing! You are an amusing man, Sirzechs Lucifer!!" After controlling her laughter, she added. "He would have liked you..." Then her expression sobered up as her pink eyes shone with malevolency. "We also have our pride, our goals, and your promises are in the way of such goals." Her smile was gentle but also fierce. "So I will have to reject that offer. There will be no peace, not until we have all we want and our promises are kept."

"I see... Then you leave me no choice." Sirzechs pulled Serafall's body to the side. That done he inflamed his aura, his power shooting to new heights and parting the clouds above their heads.

Fighting was inevitable at that point but both knew who was at a disadvantage as one of them had an almost corpse to protect. Yet the redhead was undeterred if not confident despite who his opponent was. If anything his resolve only shone bright despite having to protect Serafall with one arm while defeating an enemy with the other.

"You could submit." Leviathan's teal aura grew stronger as the rain poured mostly around

her. The lake danced beneath her feet, moving until almost every drop of water was behind its creator.

“We also have our pride.” A magic circle the size of his hand appeared in front of him.

“He really would have liked you!” Leviathan threw an arm forward, a torrential wave escaping the limb and taking the form of a giant serpent to devour both devils in a single bite.

From the magic circle in front of Sirzechs, a perfect sphere of Destruction took shape before the man whispered. “**Ruin the Extinct.**”

The orb advanced quickly and both attacks met each other in the middle for a collision that should have shaken the Underworld. However it did not because Lucifer’s attack began to take in the water inside its dark red form and Destroy it while advancing towards its real target.

Yet Leviathan didn’t even flinch, instead she smirked and increased the water’s output while combining it with more of her mana. Little by little the sphere began to slow down as its rate of Destruction began to lose against the Element being sent inside it.

Sirzechs frowned upon seeing his technique being surpassed but wasn’t really surprised. ‘Shouldn’t expect less from Leviathan.’ Raising his free hand once more, he created a new magic circle. “**Ruin the Extinct: Maximum Onslaught.**”

A blast of Destruction, the size of a rope or cable, connected to the orb and began to feed it with Bael’s Power. Soon the sphere started to grow in size and advance forward, devouring not only the water being sent against it but also the construction itself.

“Hahahaha!! Not bad, Gremory-Bael!!!!” Leviathan brought her other arm up as the rain began to diminish. No longer the woman needed to change the landscape, that wouldn’t help against that particular adversary.

Because she could see how Ruin the Extinct was ‘devouring’ everything on its radius and Destroying it from the inside. Sirzechs’ control over the Power of Destruction was so terrifying that he made a thin layer of mana to hold a huge mass of Destruction in the inside and completely under his control.

“Fufufufu! Wonderful, wonderful! You are worthy of your name as well, Sirzechs Lucifer!!!” Leviathan’s mana expanded forward as serpents of water started to descend from the walls and outside the stadium. None bothered to attack the devil, all moving to stop Ruin the Extinct. ‘Well... that won’t be enough!’

Grinning at the dreadful situation she found herself in, the blue haired woman could freely admit she wasn’t going to beat Sirzechs in a fair fight. Despite summoning almost all the water in the area, her power wasn’t enough to stop Destruction that was moving towards her just a little quickly by the second.

However her attacks were slowing it down and the redhead had a very clear weakness in his arms. "Let's see how you deal with this!!" Leviathan roared as suddenly her teal mana grew even more intense.

Sirzechs blinked at that as he felt the power spread and amplify. 'What is she up to?' Suspecting something really bad was about to happen, he started to look around for the woman's trick. His eyes found it quickly, she wasn't trying to hide it. "Grr."

Surrounding Lilith's Stadium were huge waves, each taller than most buildings in the Underworld. It was the flood that had assailed the capital for the last few minutes but all of it converged in a single point.

That was why the woman had stopped the rain, focusing on controlling the water already on land. Easily she could summon it from the skies and once inbound there were many who would call it a Sea of its own thanks to the quantities she could call upon. Because of that fact every drop was hers to command.

And so the new Lucifer found himself facing against a flood tailor made to kill a single devil.

Leviathan noticed that Sirzechs realized what she had done. "Well, will you abandon your friend or will you stand against my tide?" She felt him trying to push his attack forward to kill her faster but hers would land first. "We shall see. **Sea Serpent of the End: Tides of Catastrophe!!!**"

As the waves began to fall and Destruction expanded to become more encompassing, neither of the fighters realized something was deeply wrong with the crystal ball used to watch Rating Games.

It cracked, a long and ugly scar on the orb's center that began to expand.

Leviathan would know little to nothing about it but Sirzechs should have suspected something was terribly wrong with his sister, the arena or both when that happened because the mystic code was directly connected with the pocket dimension where matches were held.

That not only facilitated things for the audience to see Rating Games but also assured that several emergency procedures could be used with it to either cancel matches or save the participants in case the pocket dimension fell apart.

So each of those crystal balls, the Underworld holding a total of seventy two of them as the number was considered sacred to devils, were stronger than most people believed. Both Sirzechs and Ajuka made sure they could survive most disasters and even a bit of Destruction.

Proof of its toughness was that during the Khaos Brigade attack or the fight for the name 'Leviathan', the crystal ball didn't even budged from its perch despite the inability to show the Rating Game.

The connection was still there, just blocked due to sabotage.

And the saboteurs were gone or dead.

So a single crack was a problem, doubly so when it came from nowhere which, in that case, shouldn't happen unless very specific circumstances came to occur which pointed towards a dangerous situation inside the pocket dimension.

However there was nobody to see it happening nor to notice how it grew in less than a fraction of a second before the crystal ball unleashed a bright multi-colored light from its cracks, falling apart an instant after.

Several colored red, blue, green and black magic circles took its place, all of them teleportation spells. Still something else went wrong and the red magic circle quickly overwhelmed and took over all the others, its size growing several times larger than the crystal ball.

A pulse of energy escaped the giant circle, one so strong that the fighters could no longer ignore it. Unfortunately for both the Ruin the Extinct and the Tides of Catastrophe were already in motion so both sides would be hit by the full force of the attacks.

However that mistake occurred because the power from that magic circle was too great to be ignored.

A second later the teleportation spells began to drop down the devils who previously were stuck inside the Rating Game; Rias Peerage and all of Diodora Peerage, including the dead.

But the most important thing was the huge figure in the middle of them all, holding a blond haired devil who couldn't stop crying as its long, clawed grip, kept hold of his body.

Next thing all of Lilith heard was the roar of a furious dragon.

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