

"I need a way to erase that distance..."

VILLAIN 401
Chapter 401: The Shadow and the Puppet
Sansa vs. Adriana — or more accurately, Beatrice's puppet.
The battle had reached its climax.
After unlocking her version of Seris's armor, Sansa quickly realized she couldn't sustain it for long. Unlike Seris's composed ice, her shadows were chaotic — far stronger, but far more draining. The sheer consumption of stamina forced the princess to make one thing clear: she had to end the fight now.
But Beatrice wasn't about to give her that chance.
The witch kept her trapped, bombarding her from all directions with blades, spears, and spells — never leaving the slightest opening.
"You're about to lose my dearest friend,"
Beatrice sneered, unleashing another ruthless barrage.
In response, Sansa wrapped her shadowy wings around herself, forming a cocoon that held off Beatrice's onslaught.
The defense held, but barely. Her stamina was running dry and it was only a matter of time before the barrier cracked.
Realizing this, Sansa's mind raced, analyzing every possible move.
Beatrice was smart. She kept her distance at all times, never letting anyone get close. Even with the boost from her armor, Sansa's enhanced speed and power weren't enough to close the gap so easily.

Under the pitch-black sky, the battlefield was lit only by Beatrice's magical cannons — and in that moment, Sansa remembered something crucial:
In the darkness her shadows were at their peak.
Recalling her berserk battle against Frey Starlight and Oliver Khan, she swirled her shadows around her and dove toward the ground at full speed.
"Trying to flee? And where do you think you're going?"
Beatrice laughed, redirecting her projectiles downward.
Sansa continued her dive — exposing herself to attacks from above — until she vanished into the earth, swallowed by shadow.
Beatrice blinked.
"Her presence it's completely gone."
Irritated, she scanned the battlefield. Sansa's aura had disappeared without a trace.
Then her voice echoed from the void:
"This is a gift from the demons you worship so faithfully."
"As long as there's darkness I can move freely through this battlefield!"

Sansa had reappeared, crouched in the shadows of a high ridge above the gate.
Without hesitation, a colossal hand of darkness formed around her arm. She hurled it down toward Beatrice, aiming to crush her.
"Annoying trick"
With a flick of her staff, Beatrice conjured a massive shield above her head. The hand slammed down with brutal force — but her barrier held firm.
"Your cheap tricks won't work on me."
But as she spoke
Every cannon and weapon she had summoned was suddenly shattered — one by one — by shadowy blades erupting from every corner of the darkness.
As long as shadows existed
Sansa could strike from anywhere.
It was the same terrifying power that once shook even the highest Imperial generals.
Beatrice recognized it instantly.
"A knockoff of the Shadow King's power how pathetic."
"And this silly imitation will be your downfall!"
Sansa surged forward, forming another colossal hand — this time around her left arm.

She combined both hands into a massive spiraling drill of shadows and launched it downward. The drill spun violently, breaking through Beatrice's barrier with sheer force.

"I was closer to you than anyone else. I was your only real friend... and yet I failed to see what you were hiding behind that shy, innocent face."

As the drill spun, more and more shadowy blades erupted across the battlefield — Sansa pressing harder.

She had always prided herself on her ability to read people better than anyone else. But with Adriana, she had failed.

If she had realized sooner, maybe they could've prevented the catastrophe that followed.

But she hadn't. Despite distrusting nearly everyone...

She let her guard down for the one girl who had pretended to be meek and kind.

And now... she was paying the price.

"It's too late to undo what's been done ... but I will kill you here and now!"

Gathering every last ounce of strength, Sansa surged forward to finish it — to carve through Adriana's defenses and end her.

But Beatrice had one more card to play.

With a whisper of magic, a radiant circle of light wrapped around her like armor ... a divine shield that stopped every last blade of shadow cold.

"Your powers are truly formidable. After all, they're derived from the Shadow of the King but"
With a wicked grin, Beatrice raised her right index finger toward the sky.
"Your shadows are far too weak, Sansa. You can't even wield your own power properly. How disgraceful."
A small ember of flame appeared at the tip of her finger. Within seconds, it grew into a blazing miniature sun that illuminated the battlefield with violent brilliance.
"Burn them for me."
The searing light drove away all the shadows that blanketed the battlefield.
"If this were truly the King's Shadow, a paltry light like this wouldn't erase it. But you you're just a cheap imitation, Sansa. Kihihihi."
The comparison itself was unfair.
The true King's Shadow required the power of the Lord of Light himself to be countered — not the might of a mere puppet.
The gap was immense.
Now, with all the darkness wiped away, Beatrice pointed her hand directly at Sansa.
"Goodbye."
She unleashed a beam of devastating aura that swallowed Sansa whole, tearing through the ground beneath her with explosive force.

It was overwhelming and Beatrice was certain it would be enough.
But the truth quickly proved otherwise.
She only realized something was wrong when a sword made of shadow pierced through her abdomen Sansa had reappeared within the very beam meant to destroy her, having withstood its force using what remained of her armor.
Half of her shadow armor had already disintegrated. Her body was bloodied and broken.
Yet she had finally closed the distance.
Her blade now embedded deep within Beatrice's stomach.
"I finally reached you"
Sansa gasped for breath, face to face with the witch, her shadow blade lodged deep.
It should have been a critical strike — fatal, even.
But Beatrice showed no pain. She smiled.
"Well done, Sansa."
Genuinely praising her, the witch raised her hand once more and fired another devastating beam of aura at point-blank range, blasting Sansa violently toward the ground.
Screaming in pain, the princess crashed, her body breaking on impact. Her shadows dispersed completely.









A simple pillar of light .. yet it pierced straight through Sansa's chest without mercy, leaving a gaping, bloody hole over twenty centimeters wide.

The beam shot through her entire body, exiting her back and leaving an empty cavity that revealed the sky beyond.

Sansa's eyes lost their spark almost instantly. Blood poured endlessly from the wound as her body crumpled to the ground.

At the same time, Adriana's body also collapsed ... the shadows that sustained her puppet vanishing along with Sansa's fading life.

Their lifeless bodies lay side by side, both staring blankly at the empty night sky, their blood pooling beneath them.

It was the final note in a brutal battle ... between a cunning witch and a princess who fought until the very end.

Sansa Valerion vs Adriana.

This round ended in a draw .. and the death of both.

Chapter 402: Who am I?

Most of the battles had now come to an end.

Only a few remained before the curtain would fall on this final round.

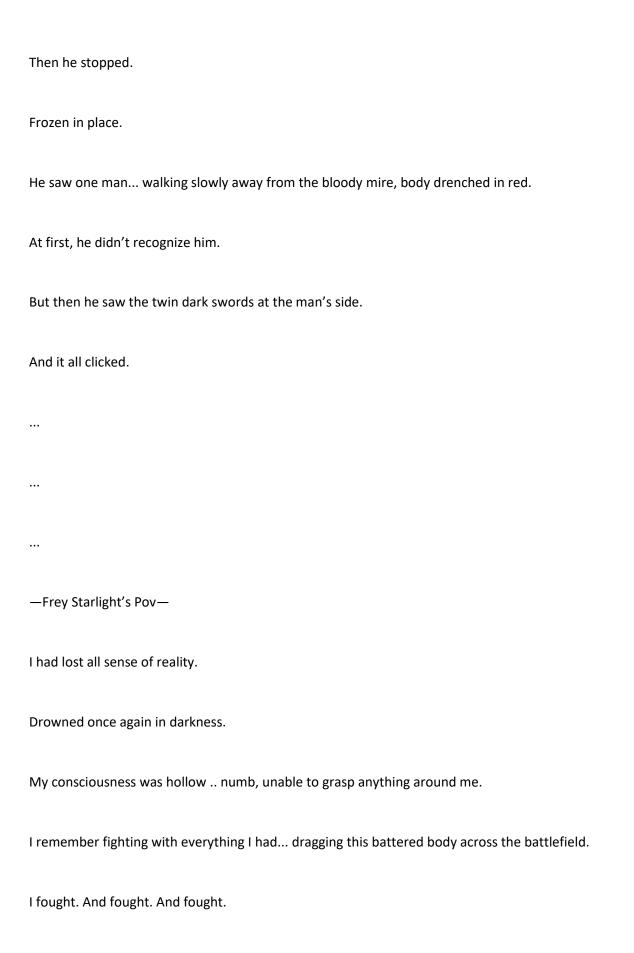
Somewhere in the vast battlefield...

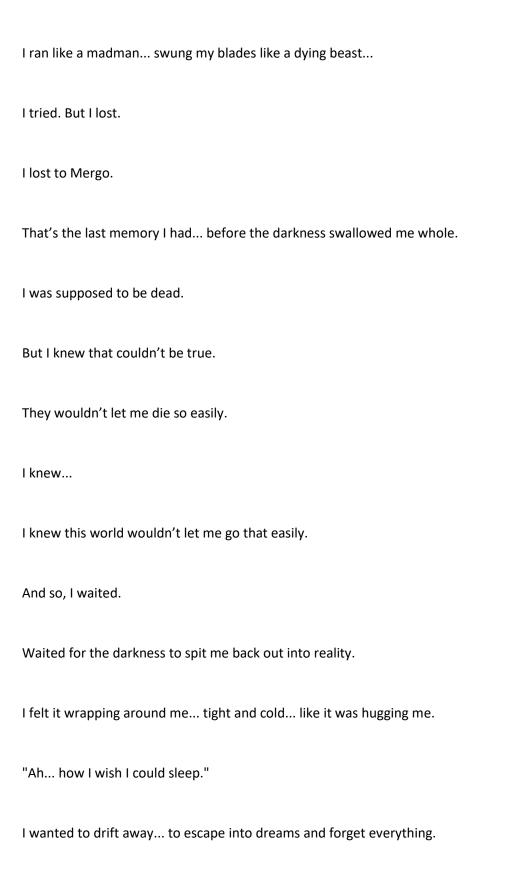
Draxler sat atop a jagged rock, his sword plunged beside him into the ground.

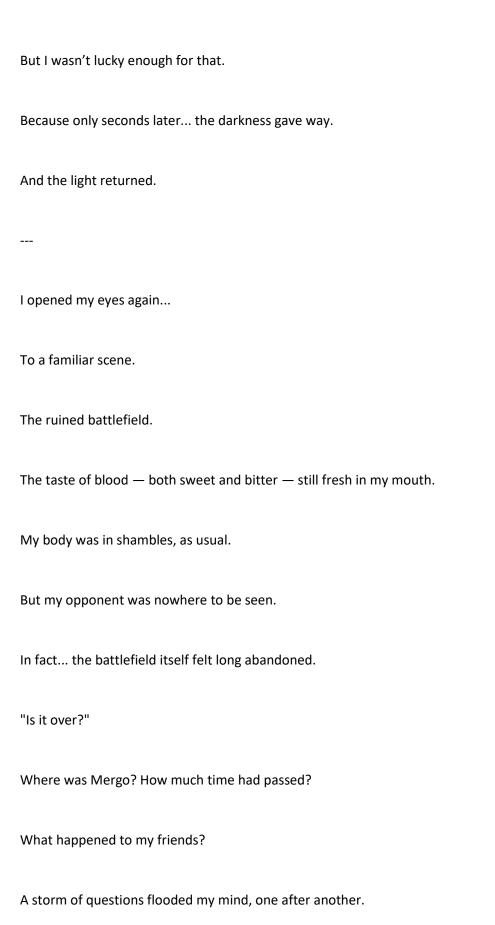
Running a hand through his orange hair, Beatrice's chosen knight sighed in boredom as he surveyed the ruined wasteland before him.
"That bastard he really ran off."
After a long, intense battle, Ghost Umbra had proven to be a serious threat one Draxler considered a worthy opponent.
But just as their fight reached its peak
Ghost had vanished, slipping away with a powerful, unexpected strike that sliced through Draxler's right side.
The knight wiped the blood from his wound and tasted it.
"He really got me that Ghost Umbra."
Sheathing his blade, Draxler turned and walked away from the battlefield.
"I'll remember your name, kid."
He had no intention of chasing Ghost further not after sensing the monstrous aura radiating from another nearby clash.
Even a warrior of the Ultras knew when to back away from something truly monstrous.
Meanwhile
Far from Draxler's position, Ghost Umbra clung to a cliffside, his body covered in deep, gaping wounds.

Clutching the pair of dark daggers he'd brought from Londor, he forced himself to keep moving, staggering with each step.
"That man he was strong. Too strong."
It was the first time Ghost had encountered a warrior like Draxler.
His strength had continued to rise throughout the fight nearly reaching SS rank by the end.
"If I'd kept fighting, I would've died."
Even after landing a blow with his spatial-cutting technique
Ghost had only managed to slice through Draxler's right side.
Knowing he couldn't win, the silent killer had withdrawn turning his focus instead to what mattered more.
Finding his friends.
He was so badly wounded that dizziness overtook him from the sheer amount of blood he had lost.
Assassins like him were never meant for prolonged direct combat. Though Ghost was undeniably powerful he knew his limits all too well.
"I need to find the others—fast."
He kept repeating the words like a mantra, forcing himself to move forward, step by step, unaware of his surroundings.

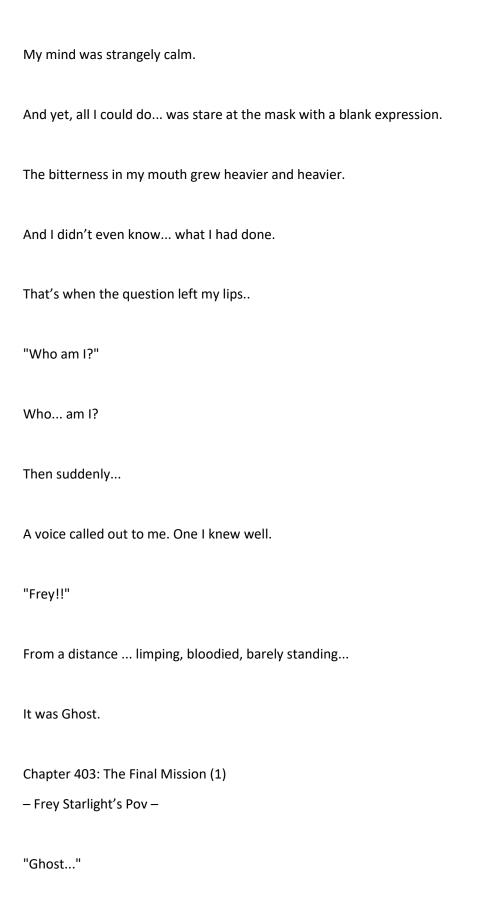
After a few minutes of dragging himself through the desolate terrain
Ghost finally emerged into an open field—one that offered a wide view of the ruined wasteland ahead.
But the moment he stepped into that clearing, he froze.
Eyes wide. Mouth agape.
The only sounds he could hear were the shrill cries of crows and the haunting screech of the wind.
The stench of blood stifled his nose and for someone so accustomed to death, even he found it unbearable.
Before him
The land was torn and scorched, as if ripped apart by gods. Giant craters dotted the battlefield like open wounds.
And scattered across them were broken corpses shredded, mangled, soaked in blood so thick it pooled into a crimson lake.
There was nothing left in that place but death.
Hundreds no, possibly over a thousand.
"What kind of battle could've left this behind? Who the hell fought here?!"
Ghost muttered unconsciously, staggering forward in disbelief, trying to process what lay before him.







Despite the injuries, I felt something strange my body could still push far beyond its limits.
It was as if my strength hadn't faded at all.
And then as I stumbled in confusion
I felt it.
That cold touch against my face.
I lifted my hand instinctively reaching for it
That cold, black metal.
Behind me, lay a thousand corpses.
At my feet, a sea of blood stretched endlessly.
And there I stood unaware that I had been wearing that mask the entire time.
Silently, I removed it from my face.
And there it was the Nameless Mask.
I didn't feel pain like last time.
No.



My assassin friend appeared before me.. battered, bruised, and in a terrible state himself.

But seeing him brought a fleeting sense of relief to my heart, a fragile joy laced with worry, as I was still clueless about what had happened to the others...

"I knew you wouldn't die, Frey."

Relief washed over Ghost's face as well, revealing an expression he rarely showed anyone.

"I won't die, my friend. Be certain of that."

In this vast universe, I'm the last person they should be worried about when it comes to survival.

Ghost was glad to see me, but his eyes lingered on the field of corpses behind me. That's when he finally asked, puzzled—

"Was this your doing?"

With the Nameless mask now hidden, I didn't even glance at the carnage behind me. I simply looked forward.

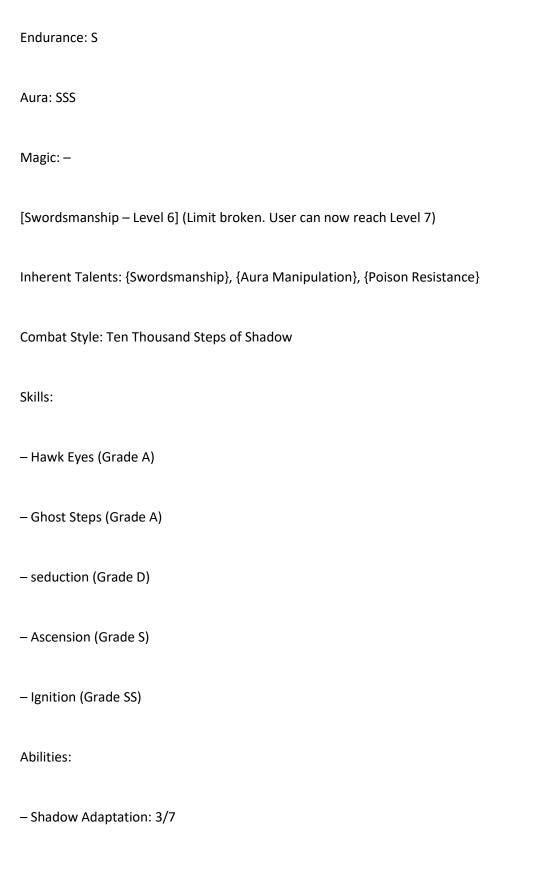
"I repelled one of their armies here. It bought us some time... but we need to move. More will be coming soon."

With Ghost here, I'd finally found a lead to the others .. thanks to the witch's mark still with him.

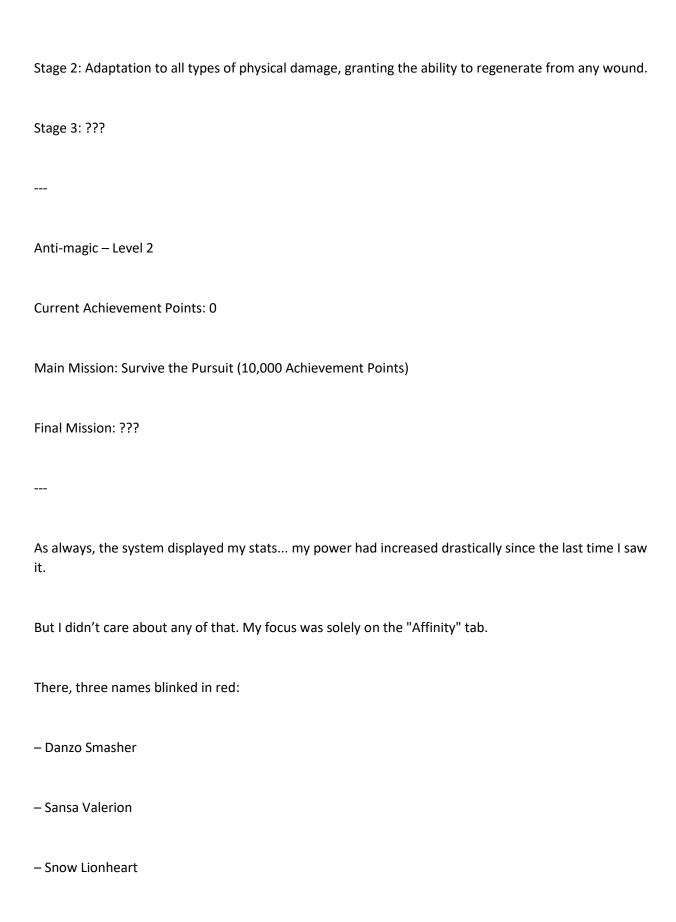
"Let's move. We have to find them before it's too late!"

After drifting in a mental void, I'd finally regained my grasp on reality ... remembering what happened, and why I fought so fiercely.

My comrades... especially Danzo. They all faced terrifying enemies, and were closer to death than ever before. Ghost shared my thoughts, so we didn't waste a single moment. We took off immediately, guided by the witch's mark still faintly glowing on him. At the same time, I opened the system interface .. finally deciding to use the Third-Person pov, a feature I'd hesitated to activate until now, afraid of the harsh truths it might reveal. With my heart pounding, I stared anxiously at the system window as it lit up in front of me with a cold blue glow. Host Name: Frey Starlight (Dual Soul) Class: Swordsman Talent: SS Current Rank: A Strength: A-Speed: A+ Agility: A



Stage 1: Adaptation to all combat styles, allowing user to counterattack any opponent.



I used the Third-Person Perspective on all three, over and over again—but no matter how hard I tried, all I found was darkness.
Each time I activated the skill on one of them, the screen would immediately go black. I couldn't see anything. I couldn't reach them.
That cursed darkness only deepened my anxiety, and slowly, the dreadful thoughts began to eat away at me
It had already been so long since I fought that army and since I faced Mergo
Enough time had passed for every battle to be over.
Which meant everything had likely already ended.
Then what was the meaning of that darkness?
Were they simply unconscious? Or?
The more the worst-case scenario began to take shape in my mind, the more painful the pressure in my head became.
Clenching my fists tightly, I charged forward, pushing Ghost to pick up the pace.
"We need to find them as fast as possible!"
Ignoring the fatigue that dragged at my bloodied body, I forced myself to keep going—demanding more, giving more.



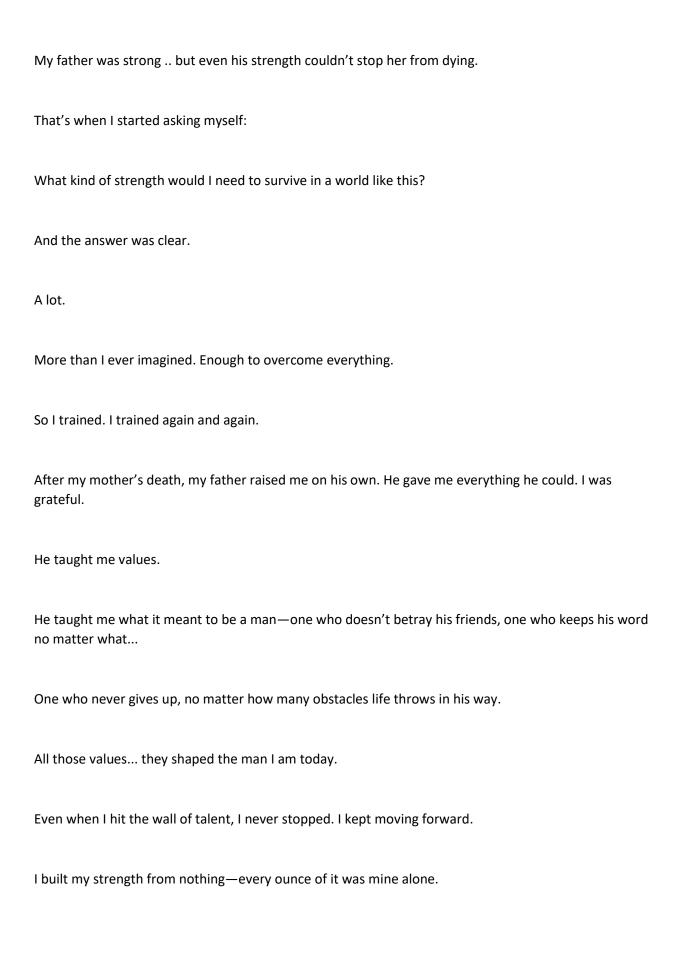
But it didn't change anything. With all my senses honed on what lay ahead, I realized we'd entered a tunnel carved deep into one of the larger mountains. As I examined the surroundings more closely, I recognized them—they looked eerily similar to the battlefield where I'd last seen Danzo fighting. A spark of hope ignited within the pit of black despair consuming me. "Ghost! Are you sure the mark is leading us here?!" In response to my urgency, Ghost raised his hand and showed the faintly glowing witch's mark. "Yes. One of them is definitely here." His confirmation stoked the hope within me even more. If the mark was still active... that meant Danzo was still alive. Somewhere, deep within these dark caves, he was still breathing. Knowing that, I couldn't hold back anymore. "Which way is it pointing?!" I shouted, and Ghost hesitated for a moment before pointing toward a solid wall of stone.

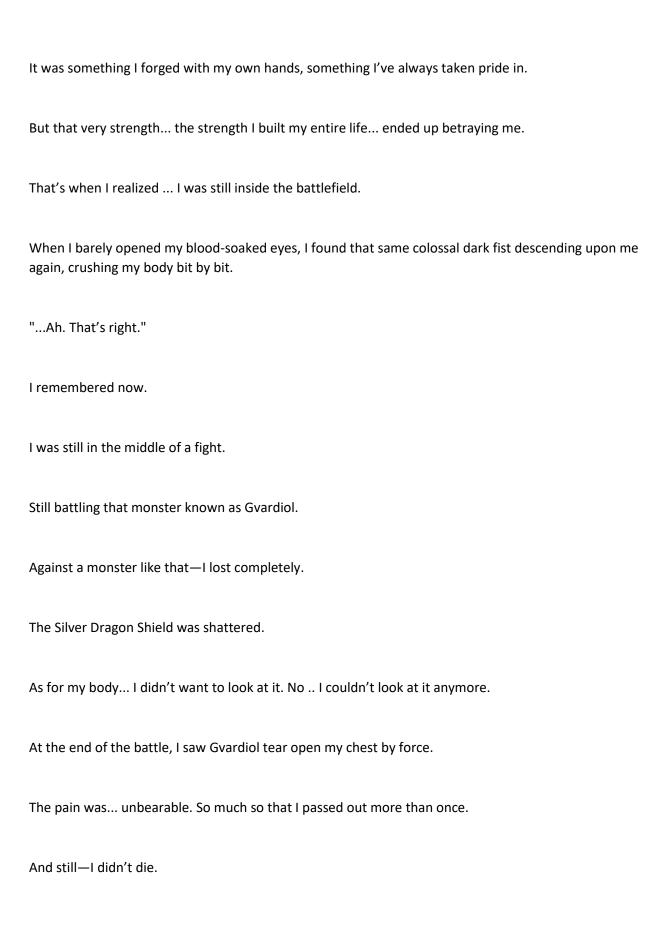
This entire mountain was a maze of intersecting tunnels .. if we kept taking turns and searching blindly,

we'd never make it in time.

Understanding that, I drew both swords and unleashed my aura once more.
With a single wave of dark aura, I blasted through the stone wall carving our path by force.
"Let's go!"
I kept tearing through the rock without pause, forging a new path straight through the mountain, with Ghost close behind, guiding me toward the correct direction.
"At this rate, the whole place might collapse on us, Frey!"
Ghost warned, worried we'd be buried alive.
But I didn't care.
"We'll make our own way out if we have to. We just need to reach him now!"
I had already given everything I had. I had fought until my body could barely move, until my breath ran dry.
So please Danzo
Please
Hold on. Don't die.
That was my only wish.

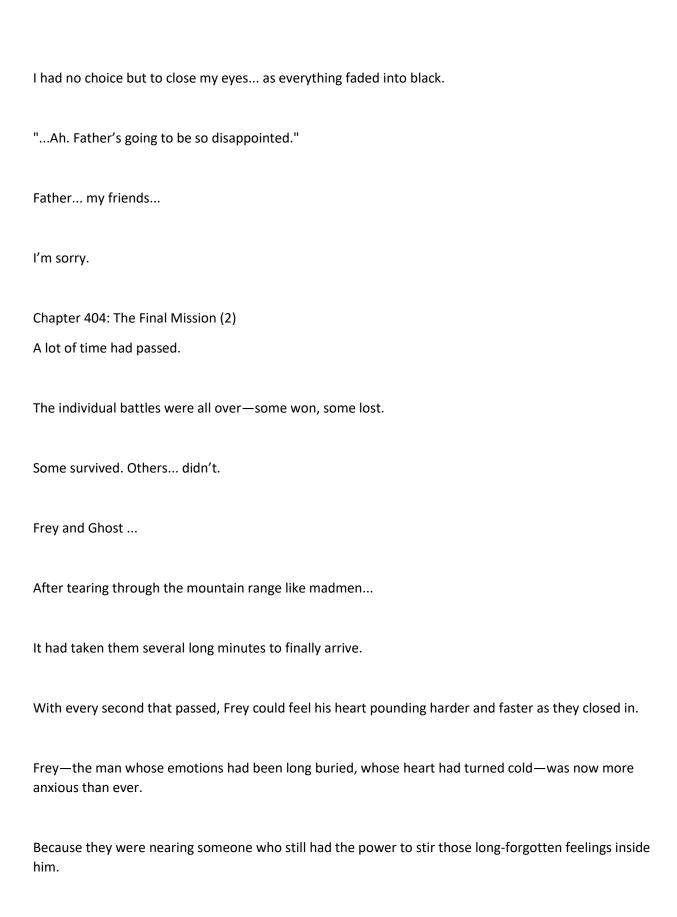






Did my resilience buy me a few extra minutes?
But the pain it was too much.
Bones shattered. Chest torn open. The world turned black.
I lost.
Completely.
Those memories of my mother and my father that flooded my mind earlier
Was this what they call a person's final moments?
The moment your life flashes before your eyes?
Did that mean I was dying?
Was this the end?
I genuinely wondered—especially once the pain vanished all of a sudden.
That's when I realized
I had lost all sensation.
This world had always been cruel.







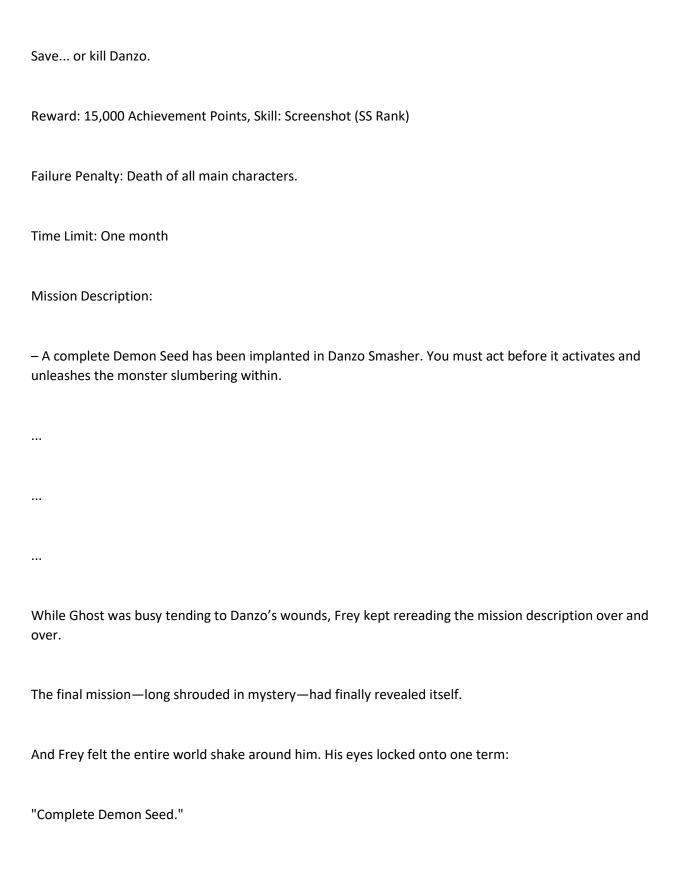
His chest ripped open, his face covered in blood
His armor shattered into fragments
And blood spilled everywhere
That was him.
Their friend.
Both Frey and Ghost dashed toward him like madmen.
Their faces twisted in fear and panic.
They gently held onto him—unable to accept the brutal reality before them.
He was in a terrible state.
So mangled that some of the wounds had exposed bone.
Frey felt fury surge through him but it was drowned out by something far stronger
Fear.
"Danzo"
He said his name with a trembling voice.

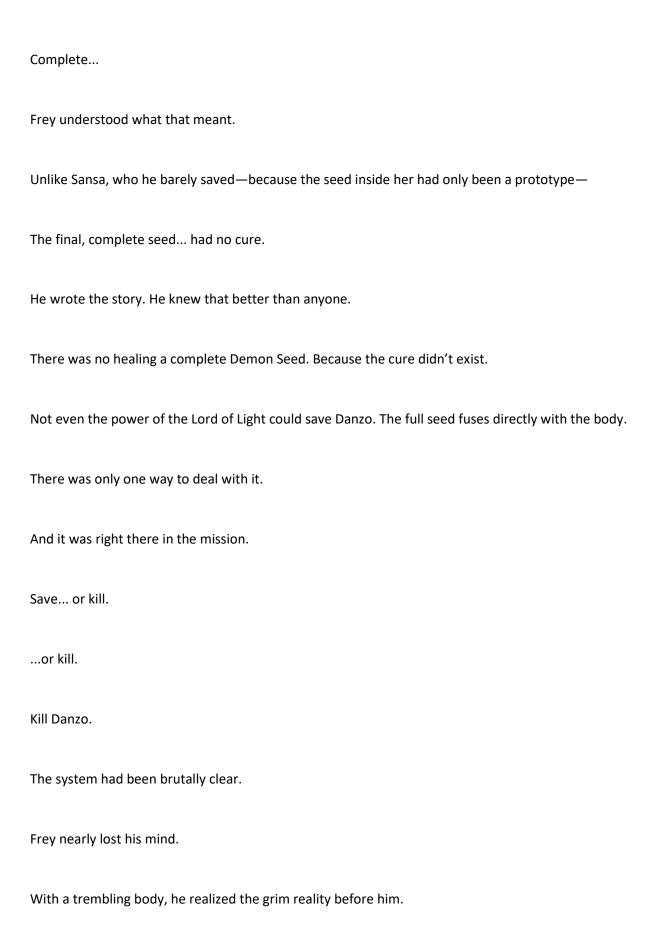
And then, in that moment
Ghost, who had been checking their friend's broken body, suddenly shouted:
"He's breathing!"
"What?" Frey asked, stunned.
Ghost repeated himself, louder this time:
"He's breathing, Frey! He's alive!!"
It took Frey a few seconds to process the words.
Danzo was alive.
Ghost immediately began treating him as best he could, while Frey placed his hand over Danzo's blood-soaked chest.
And then he heard it.
A faint heartbeat.
A sound that brought him back to life.
"He's alive!"
Disbelieving, Frey and Ghost clung to their friend like madmen.

"He's alive!!!"
"We need to help him"
Frey's voice cracked with emotion, his mind too shaken to think clearly as tears welled in his eyes.
Channeling his SSS ranked Aura through his palm, he placed it over Danzo's chest, trying to circulate aura into his friend's broken body
But the moment he did
Frey's face darkened.
"The aura channels. The core it's all shattered."
And then, he realized
Danzo was paralyzed.
He'd never fight again. He wouldn't even walk.
But he was alive.
Frey's mind burned.
What had happened?
How had his friend survived?

Did the enemy spare him? Leave him crippled instead of killing him?
If that were true then it was a cruel mercy.
Still, Frey didn't care.
What mattered more than anythingWas that Danzo was still breathing.
Yet, no matter how hard he tried
Frey couldn't shake the unease gnawing at his heart.
Something didn't feel right.
Gvardiol
Would he really spare their friend?
Frey wanted to believe it.
But the ominous feeling swelling in his chest kept growing faster louder
Staring at his unconscious friend, Frey failed to notice the system notification that had been blinking beside him for some time now.
And then—after a few more seconds—he finally saw it.
The system kept flashing insistently, demanding his attention.

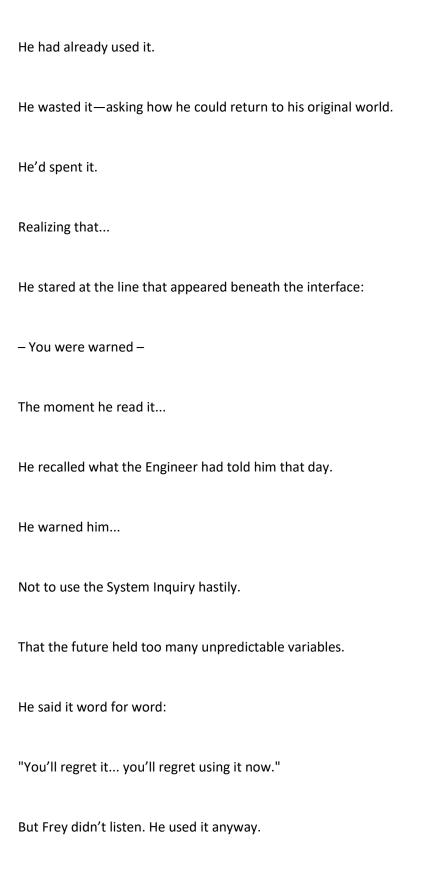
Frey knew something had happened.
He had no choice but to comply.
Slowly he opened the system interface again.
Everything was the same.
Except one thing.
With wide eyes and a heart threatening to explode inside his chest
Frey read the words displayed before him.
"The final mission?"
It had appeared again.
The mission that had been marked only by question marks ever since he won the Victoriad
was now back.
Main Mission:
Survive the Pursuit (10,000 Achievement Points)
Final Mission:

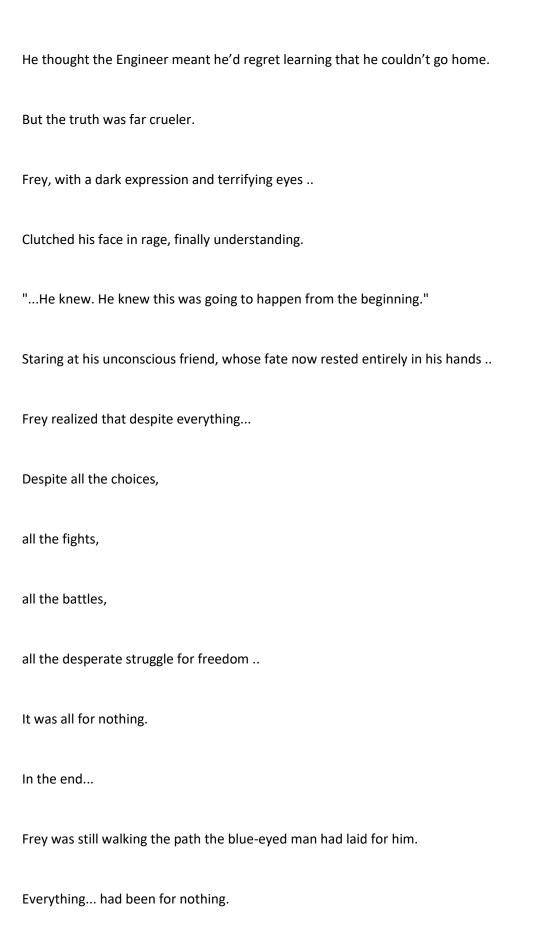


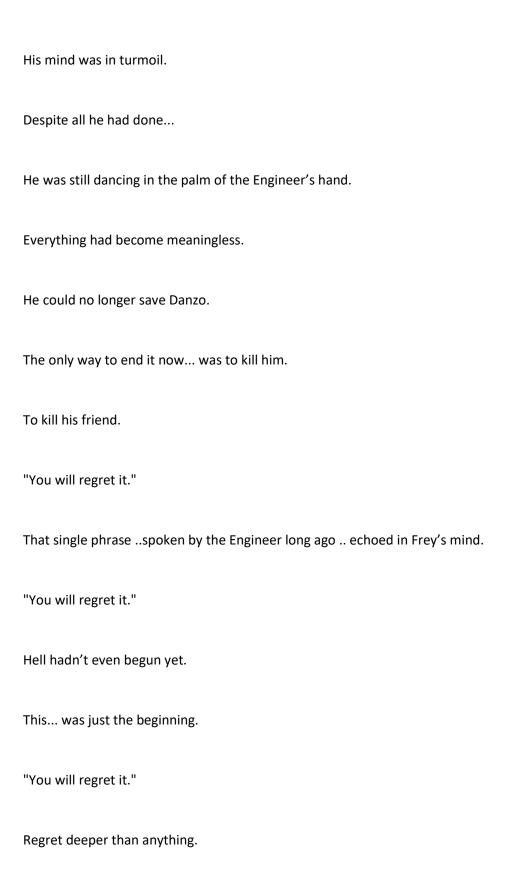


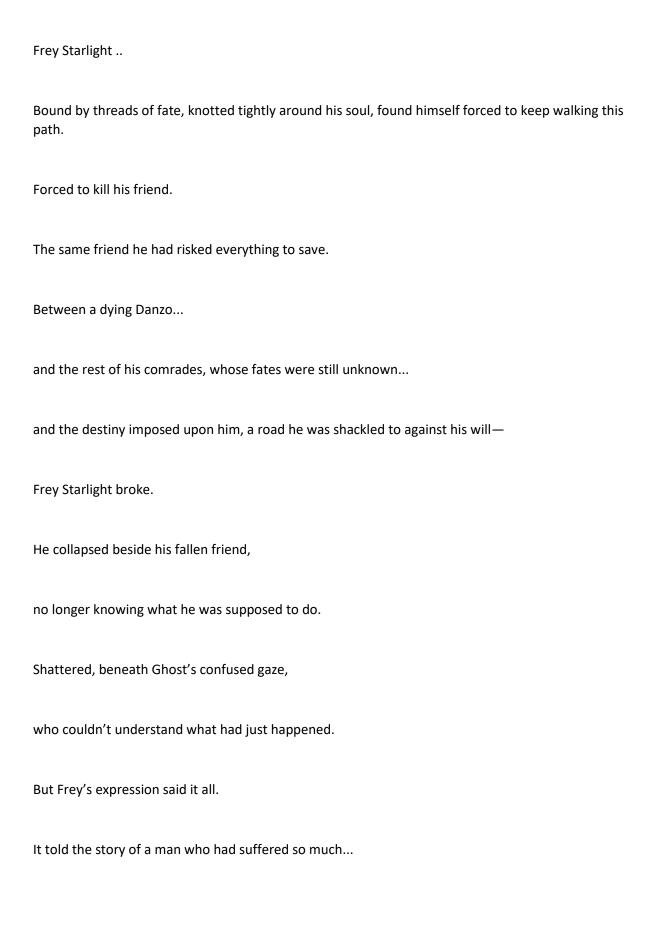


He asked with a clenched heart, banking everything on the system.
And it replied instantly.
Frey expected the usual answer that he lacked the required points.
But that wasn't what he got.
Instead
– This question cannot be answered using Achievement Points.
Such inquiries require the use of the System Inquiry ability.
"System Inquiry!?"
Frey Starlight immediately remembered the ability.
The reward he earned from completing the first final mission his victory at the Victoriad.
System Inquiry allowed him to ask the Engineer one question, and the blue-eyed man would be forced to answer.
But right then
Frey remembered.



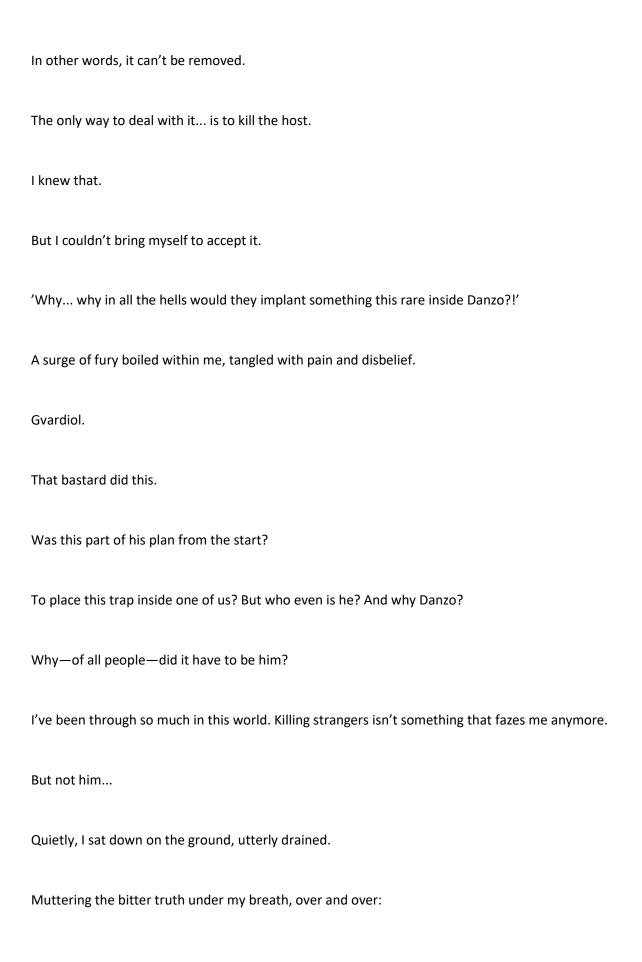






that he no longer knew how to go on.
It was painful.
Unbearably painful.
Chapter 405: Last Stand (1) — Frey Starlight's POV —
This chase was nearing its end.
Standing there, I looked at Danzo, unconscious, while Ghost poured every ounce of his medical knowledge into treating him as best he could.
The deeper he examined Danzo's body, the more he realized the extent of the damage.
He was injured so severely that Ghost struggled to even locate a single intact part.
Bruises, fractures, and trauma covered every inch of his body. His aura core had been shattered, along with every single pathway that carried it.
Some areas were worse than others his legs, in particular, were nearly destroyed.
Ghost had probably already figured it out.
Danzo was paralyzed.
But still alive.



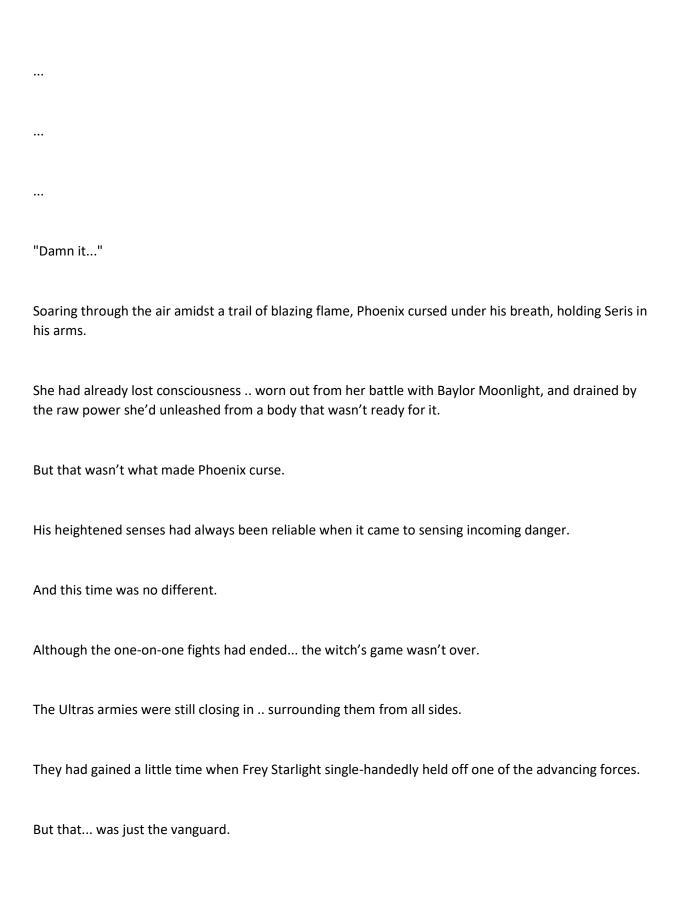




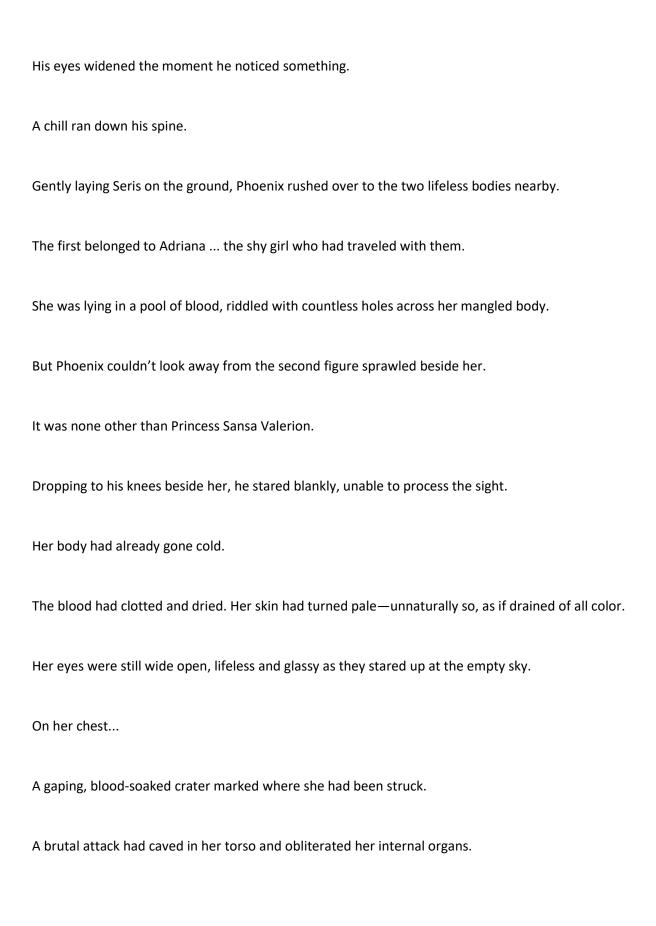


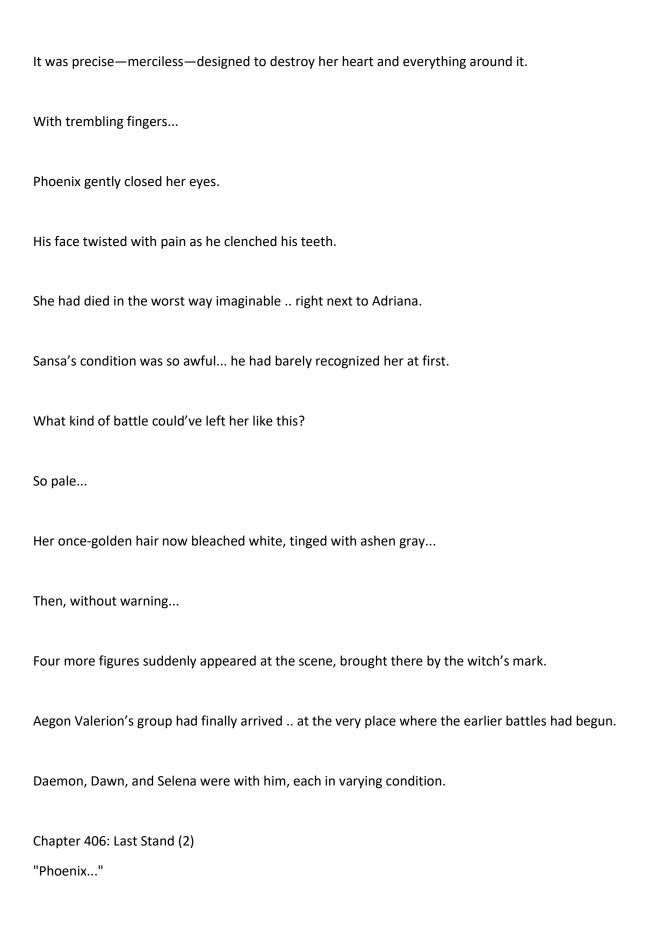






Now, the real storm was coming.
An overwhelming number of enemies were marching in fast.
Among them were powerful warriors even Hollows who had once faced off against Maekar's army.
Realizing the scale of the threat heading their way
Phoenix Sunlight found himself unable to make a decision.
He had always trusted in his strength.
But now, he couldn't even guarantee the safety of those under his care.
Especially not the girl he held in his arms.
Ever since it was revealed that the red portal was a trap they had no way back home.
Suddenly aware of where he was, Phoenix realized he had instinctively returned to the site of the red gate while trying to locate the other students through the witch's mark.
And without warning, he dove toward the location.
The area was in ruins—a clear sign that a fierce battle had taken place.
But Phoenix couldn't detect any active marks nearby, which meant the student who'd been here was either gone or dead.
Descending to the ground, still carrying Seris



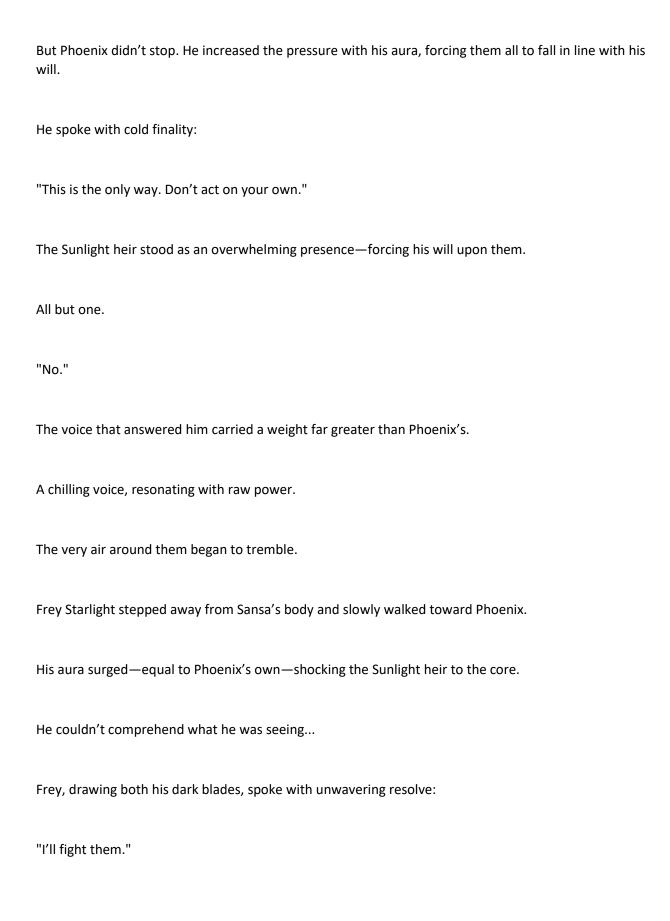


Aegon looked toward him, then to Seris, and finally to the corpses of both the princess and Adriana.
He pieced together what had happened in an instant.
"So my foolish sister is finally dead, huh?"
The prince walked forward calmly, while the others followed, examining the fallen.
All except for Daemon, who silently kept his distance.
Dawn and Selena showed clear signs of sorrow for the comrades they had lost.
The only one who survived that battle was Seris—and even she was barely hanging on.
Staring down at his sister's lifeless form, Aegon Valerion showed no reaction.
He didn't flinch. He didn't look away.
Instead, he lifted his eyes toward the distant horizon.
And after just a few seconds he let out a sigh and wore his usual smile once more.
"So, Phoenix what now? What's your next move?"
Up until now, every decision they'd made had led to disaster.
And now?
What choice could they possibly make when an entire army was closing in on them?

The portal had been placed, quite absurdly, at the very center of the continent's western side ... The exact place Beatrice had commanded all her forces to converge upon from the beginning. As if she knew the final act would unfold there. The Ultras armies crushed the earth beneath them, marching in from every direction. The elite students were completely surrounded. Phoenix and the few who remained standing stared into the distance—at the final enemy they had no choice but to face. Thousands of soldiers... All of them against a handful of elite students who had barely survived their individual battles. The enemy continued to draw closer, and the tremors of their advance sent a chill down every spine. Then, the others began arriving—one by one. Lara Croft came first, barely carrying Snow on her back. Then Frey and Ghost—the last to make it. As they looked at one another, their expressions were a storm of mixed emotions... Especially when they saw the state of Snow and Danzo... And Frey—alive, against all odds.

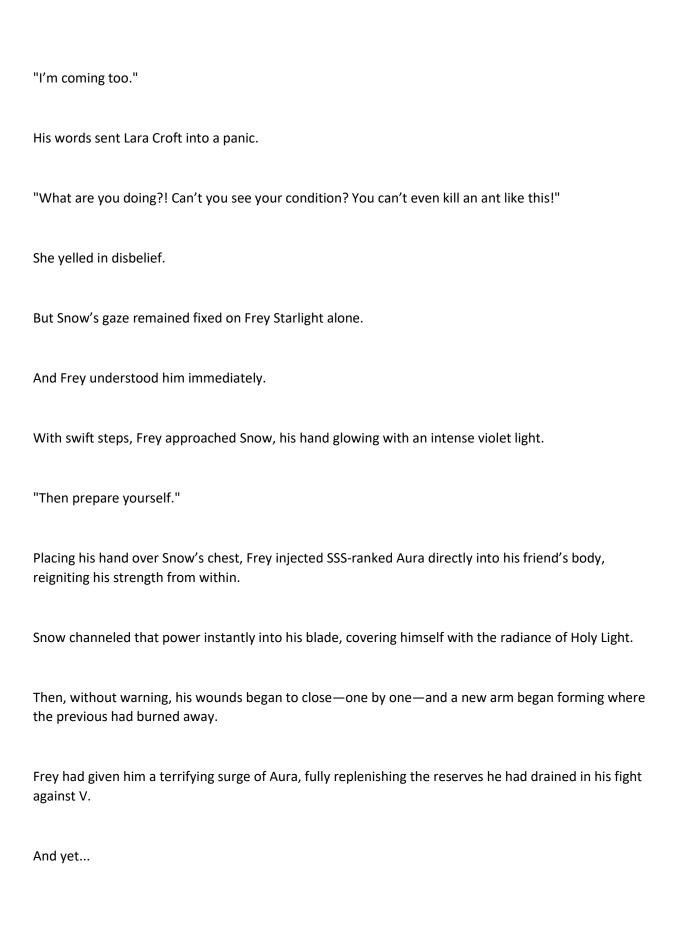
But there was no time to process any of that.
The earth beneath them was still trembling—unceasing—warning them of an enemy they could not possibly withstand.
Among all of them, Frey walked forward, his face darkened beyond recognition.
He passed Snow Lionheart, unconscious after his body had been consumed by dark flames
Then paused beside the body of Sansa Valerion, the princess.
She looked so different now from the last time he had seen her so empty, so drained of life.
Frey said nothing. His face remained unchanged.
But his eyes they said everything.
Beneath that calm facade, something was building inside him.
Something ready to explode.
Only Ghost, standing just behind him, could see it.
As for the elite class, they stood frozen in place, staring at the colossal army that had surrounded them.
"What do we do now?"
Lara Croft, gripped by fear, gave voice to the question that haunted them all.

Terror and hopelessness had seized them
Until Phoenix stepped forward—and unleashed his blazing aura.
Flames erupted around him, drawing every eye.
"Everyone, group up here. Don't engage. Not until the end. Wait until I open a path for you."
He stepped forward, fully prepared to fight.
"Our only chance of survival is to break through one of their weaker flanks and carve a way out. That's our only hope."
It was a simple plan.
The miracle of the Sunlight bloodline would charge in alone—Phoenix would take on the army himself to open a path for Frey and the others to escape.
Even now, he wanted to protect them.
Which made Aegon sigh.
"You're seriously going to face them alone? You'll be dead long before you open any path."
He was stating the obvious.
Phoenix's plan was suicidal.



With a shadowed face, a suffocating killing intent erupted from within Frey, making everyone around him flinch instinctively.
It was the killing intent forged through the slaughter of a thousand enemies one after another, without pause.
"I'll kill them all one by one!"
Frey was determined to spill blood.
After everything he'd been through after all the horrors and losses that had piled up one after another
He had finally reached his limit.
Something inside him was on the verge of exploding.
He couldn't remain still anymore.
He wanted to slaughter the bastards who had done this to him.
He wanted to destroy them all, to feed the raging fire that was devouring him from the inside to forgeteven just for a while all the grief that had shattered him.
He wanted to return to that state the one from when he killed a thousand men before.
And now, that suffocating aura of death radiated off him like a storm.
This was his escape—the only way to flee the cruel reality pressing down on his soul.

If it meant forgetting everything, even temporarily
Frey was more than ready to kill. As much as it took.
Now he stood face to face with Phoenix, their chests almost colliding.
With an aura equal to Phoenix's, Frey made it clear there would be no stopping him. Not this time.
Especially not when he was this strong.
"We'll fight!"
Frey repeated, and at last, Phoenix gave in—realizing that Frey's strength would be a vital force in the coming clash.
"Then we break through together."
Phoenix sighed, accepting the inevitable.
More stepped forward, ready to join the fight, offering their help.
But the one who moved first was someone no one expected.
"Wait!"
Barely standing, leaning on his sacred sword
Snow rose, using a single arm, his body burned and brokenbut his golden eyes still shone with unwavering light.



It had barely scratched the surface of the titanic reservoir of aura within Frey.
He then turned to face the others.
"Anyone who wants to fight—step forward!"
Now that Snow was fit to fight again, Frey pointed at the army ahead.
"If you want to survive, then fight for your life!"
Unleashing his Aura, Frey began empowering everyone around him, one after anotherthose who willingly stepped forward.
Each of them was shocked by the sheer magnitude of power he shared.
But in the end, that didn't matter.
What mattered was the enemy standing before them.
With Phoenix at the front, and Frey and Snow by his side
The elite class advanced, preparing for one last battle against the Ultras army
An army that had already taken so much from them. Chapter 407: The Elite vs The Ultras (1)
Positioned at the rear of the Ultra forces encircling the Elite Class

Maria exhaled slowly, finally feeling her wounds begin to mend after her grueling battle against Daemon and Dawn.

Her power was formidable .. but it came with a troublesome weakness. As an Empyrean, Maria was now unable to continue fighting, which was why she had fallen behind the vanguard.

The final battle was about to erupt at any moment, and when it did, the last surviving students of the Elite Class—the most gifted generation in imperial history—would be slaughtered.

Their deaths would be a devastating blow to the enemy, as these young talents had demonstrated frightening potential.

And yet, Maria felt nothing. If anything, the whole situation struck her as profoundly tragic.

How far humanity had fallen... to the point where humans were forced to kill humans, over and over again.

"You look like hell, dear Maria."

A familiar voice pulled her from her thoughts, slurred with that same drunkard's grin she remembered too well.

"Lord Mergo..."

She said his name unconsciously, eyes widening in shock at the sight before her.

The Lord of the Dark Hive... Mergo .. stood before her barefoot, his frail body battered and bruised, one hand resting on the hilt of his sword and the other clutching the severed head of Lawrence.

"What happened to you?!"

Maria stared in disbelief at the elder's wounds, dried blood crusted around gashes that looked fresh, as if carved by a cursed blade.
"Why haven't you healed yourself?"
She asked, baffled. Someone of his infernal power should've been able to recover easily. But Mergo merely shook his head.
"It's not that I don't want to I simply can't."
Clutching his fractured chest, Mergo let out a crooked smile as he recalled the fierce battle.
"The wounds that sword left on me refuse to heal. It's like he cursed me with every slash. All I can do now is stop them from getting worse."
Maria frowned instinctively. It was hard to imagine someone as powerful as Mergo suffering like this at the hands of a single opponent.
"Who did this to you?"
As soon as she asked, his face came to Mergo's mind.
"A monster with inhuman strength. A fighter like none I've ever seen. Heh His power kept climbing, until I had no choice but to flee in thr end."
Still carrying Lawrence's head, Mergo began walking alongside the Ultra army, Maria at his side.
"You're telling me one of the Elite students did this to you?!"
It made no sense and yet it was the truth.



Everyone braced themselves for the final act.
It was time to end it.
The Ultras forces had reached the center at last, encircling the Elite Class from all directions.
Within the ranks of their main force stood several prominent figures
Gavid Lindman marched at the front. Lords of the Ultras, like the furious Godfrey—still enraged from his last fight against Phoenix—followed closely behind.
Others, like Gvardiol, and even the Hollow Evelynwho had yet to reappear were also present.
One could say that nearly every major fighter of the Ultras continent was gathered here. The empire's chances of survival were practically zero.
"We ended up playing that stupid witch's game," Gavid Lindman growled, his voice bitter with rage. "When we should've done this from the start."
He had never wanted to waste time on Beatrice's twisted "game." His plan had always been simple: crush Frey and his allies with overwhelming force.
But Beatrice had promised to surrender willingly if they participated in her game.



Harnessing an astonishing amount of fire aura, Phoenix ignited the skies above, launching the flaming beast without warning straight into one of the weaker flanks of the Ultras army.
He was clever—targeting the vulnerable first.
And in seconds, the giant phoenix swelled in their vision, threatening to incinerate them alive.
"Holy hell."
Gvardiol burst into laughter at the sheer spectacle.
Then, without warning
The phoenix exploded. A violent eruption swallowed a terrifying number of Ultras soldiers, burning them to ashes.
After unleashing one of his most powerful long-range techniques, Phoenix immediately charged in, a
blazing inferno wrapped around him, determined to tear through their lines.
Gavid Lindman was the first to respond, drawing his aether blade and lunging toward the young lord of the Sunlight family.
He would not allow him to rampage unchecked.
But just as he moved
An earth-shattering explosion erupted behind him.

Gavid spun around instantly, eyes widening at the pillar of violet-black aura shooting into the heavens, ripping through the battlefield with devastating force.
The blast engulfed another wave of Ultras forces.
Startled, Gavid tried to speak
Only for another explosion to erupt, this time from a completely different direction.
This one was pure, radiant light.
Matching the first in every way.
Gavid was stunned. He didn't understand it—he knew nothing of Frey's Ignition, nor of Snow's Grand Cosmic Formation.
But it didn't matter.
The battle had begun.
Swords were drawn, spears unleashed, and the warriors of the Ultras surged forward, roaring in fury, charging toward the sources of the explosions.
Snow and Frey stood side by side—then split apart, cutting into the enemy ranks with a terrifying synergy.
From above, Phoenix turned the battlefield into a living hell, raining fire relentlessly.
Behind him, Daemon followed, supporting his assault from the rear.

They had to draw attention. They had to survive. It was the only way Phoenix could open a path for the others to escape. Survival meant staying alive for as long as possible. Tearing through corpses, Frey and Snow fought like madmen, obliterating anyone who got close. "Kill with one strike, Snow! If they survive to the second, we'll be overwhelmed!" Frey shouted, wild and relentless. "I already know that!" Snow shouted back, the two of them standing back to back before launching in opposite directions—one	Together, Frey and his allies carved through the enemy lines, slaying dozens, even hundreds—but they had only touched the edge of the vast army surrounding them.
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He fought like a demon, slaughtering his foes one by one, driven by fury and an unquenchable thirst for blood. With his endless aura reserves and a body that defied injury, Frey became a walking catastrophe. On the other side, Snow Lionheart matched him blow for blow, unleashing his full Warlord Form, commanding all six elemental forces to destroy everything in his path. Despite being outnumbered, the Elite Class launched a devastating first strike. "I could do this all day!" Frey roared, blades flashing, aura howling around him. Just like before—just like when he endured a thousand enemies... He was ready to do the same .. stand against the enemy hordes without hesitation. But the elite's brief advantage didn't last long. Within seconds, Frey's blade collided with a sword that not only blocked his strike .. but overwhelmed it. Standing face to face with him .. Gavid Lindman appeared, his cold gaze burning with murderous intent. Chapter 408: The Elite vs The Ultras (2) He recognized his opponent immediately.

Frey didn't hesitate. He kept pushing forward, unleashing a flurry of strikes so intense that his blades seemed to dance in his hands. Gavid met him blow for blow, matching his speed, deflecting each attack with calm precision. "The one who crushed the army of a thousand... defeated Lawrence... overwhelmed Mergo... that was you, wasn't it?" Gavid spoke evenly, revealing his aether blade as their clash intensified, sparks erupting as their weapons collided with ferocious power. Aura clashed, flames burst from their swords, and they became locked in a cyclone of steel. "You're strong, no doubt. But is this the power you used to defeat Mergo?" Slash! Activating his Phantom Form, Gavid let Frey's blades pass harmlessly through his body .. then slashed cleanly through Frey's chest with his aether blade. Frey gritted his teeth as blood spurted from the gash. "Looks like Mergo was drunk again..." Gavid smirked, effortlessly countering every strike Frey threw at him. "You're strong .. but you're no match for him."

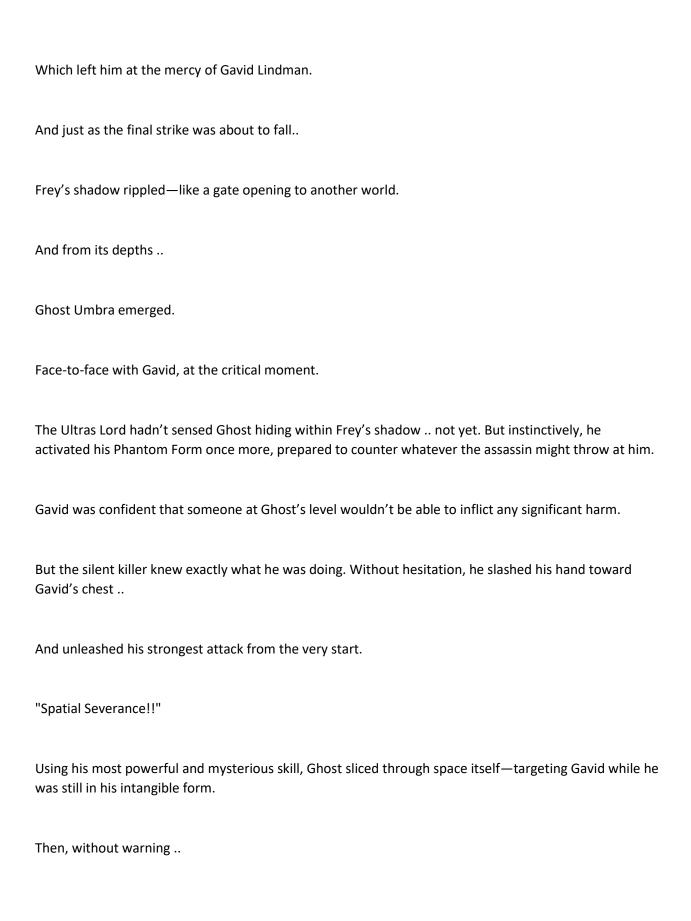
Frey's swords once again passed through Gavid's phantom-like form, while the aether blade found flesh

with brutal ease.



And yet—his pace never slowed.
He kept attacking with the same ferocity, making Gavid realize something about him.
"Regeneration, huh?"
Gavid stepped up the pressure, pouring more power into his strikes, trying to end it in one blow.
"Regenerate all you want. It won't matter when your head is rolling on the ground."
"You talk too much for a noble of the Ultras."
Frey's eyes glowed violet as he kicked his speed into overdrive, dashing in circles around Gavid at blinding pace.
He struck from every direction, aiming at blind spots, looking for an opening in Gavid's Phantom Form.
"Clever," Gavid admitted with a smirk.
"You already know the weakness of my ability."
"But it still won't help."
Despite being attacked from all angles, Gavid's sword moved with unnatural precision, blocking everything without needing to turn intangible.
"There's a wide gap between our ranks, boy."
Breaking through Frey's defense with astonishing speed, Gavid's aether blade clashed violently with both the Dark Sister and Balerion.





Phoenix was forced to fight both Godfrey and Gvardiol at the same time.
The elite class found themselves on the verge of defeat and barely fifteen minutes had passed since the battles began.
From the start, the difference in power had been overwhelming.
"We're going to be annihilated"
Lara Croft stood in the rear with Selena, shielding the unconscious Danzo and Seris.
Her voice trembled as she took in the scene the battle was hopeless.
The Ultras had surrounded them on all sides, intent on wiping them out completely.
At that moment
She realized there was no escape.
They were utterly trapped.
Everyone in the elite class knew it yet still, they fought to their last breath.
In their darkest hour, covered in wounds, soaked in blood As death crept closer with every second
A blinding beam of light struck the battlefield without warning, shaking the earth as it descended.
Everyone turned to the source of the blast—

And were stunned.
A massive pillar of light had descended from the heavens, glowing intensely in the distance.
"That's"
Selena's eyes widenedshe was the first to recognize it.
Then suddenly
Every member of the elite class heard a voice in their minds—a voice none of them had heard before.
"Run to the gate! All of you!"
It was Millicent.
Her voice was so overwhelming that their bodies moved on instinct they all began running toward the beam of light without even thinking.
But the light had landed within the enemy lines if they wanted to reach it, they'd have to break through the Ultras.
There was no guarantee that the light was even a way out.
But for some reason
They all chose to believe in Millicent's voice.
At the same time the beam appeared

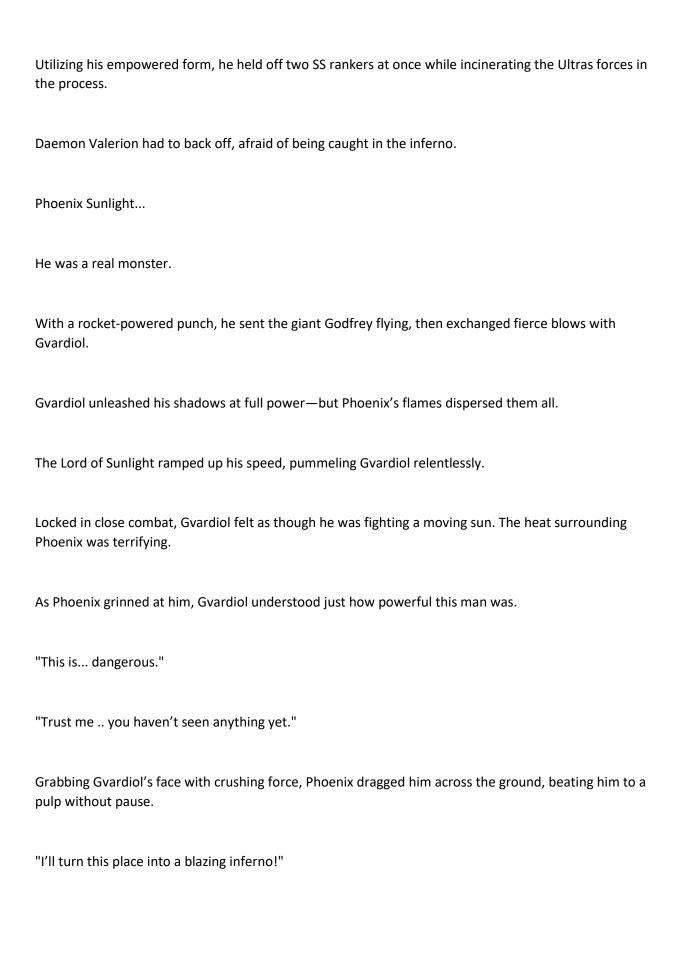
Another figure entered the battlefield, cloaked in a veil of dark aura.
"How rude barging in just when the game was about to end."
Beatrice emerged in her true body, smiling wickedly. She had appeared to deal with the arrogant intruder who dared cast magic inside her domain.
It had taken all of Millicent's strength just to pierce Beatrice's field in the first place—which explained her delay.
And now, even after succeeding
Beatrice immediately moved to shut her down.
Aware of this
Millicent screamed from the other side:
"Now! We only have one minute before her domain expels us!"
In sync with her words
The sky blazed with light, and two overwhelming auras tore into the battlefield at once.
From between them
An old man descended, landing directly above Beatrice.



On the other side, Ser Alon Valerion wasted no time. The moment he stepped in, he lunged at Beatrice and cleaved her in half with a dazzling speed.
"I know that, damn it!"
Leaving Beatrice stunned by the sudden blow, Ser Alon followed it up with a massive beam of light, engulfing her completely and turning her into dust.
"Let them see who the Iron Emperor truly is."
With Beatrice wiped out in under three seconds, both Mergo and Gavid Lindman appeared around Ser Alon, surrounding him as they recognized the threat he posed.
Both were SS+ rankers with terrifying strength and speed.
Yet their blades never even grazed Ser Alon, who blinked behind Gavid in a flash, his body still blazing with light.
With an even faster swing, Ser Alon unleashed a blinding, rocket-like strike. Gavid barely had time to react, raising Aether in defense only to be hurled hundreds of meters away, crashing violently into a distant mountain.
On the other side, Mergo activated the Ushigatana's power, releasing thousands of invisible slashes in under a second in a desperate attempt to cut the Iron Emperor down.
"Cleave!"
Releasing a thousand strikes, Mergo expected at least some to land
Only to witness something unthinkable.

Ser Alon Valerion, moving at the speed of light, effortlessly dodged every single slash—appearing right in front of Mergo in less than a second.
"Unlucky for you I move at light speed."
His sword gleamed with blinding radiance before delivering a devastating strike that sent Mergo crashing into the ground like a meteor.
Floating above the battlefield, Ser Alon sighed after taking down both enemies in under ten seconds.
"I'm getting too old for this kind of fight."
As he gathered more power of light around him, the Iron Emperor's aura flared intensely.
"Let's end this quickly."
This was a power unknown to the new generation.
If Emperor Maekar Valerion fought at lightning speed
Then the Iron Emperor moved at the speed of light!
"Don't drop your guard, Alon! That witch's still alive!"
Millicent shouted through gritted teeth as she continued her duel with Beatrice.
Their battle was hidden only witches of their caliber could even perceive such a clash.

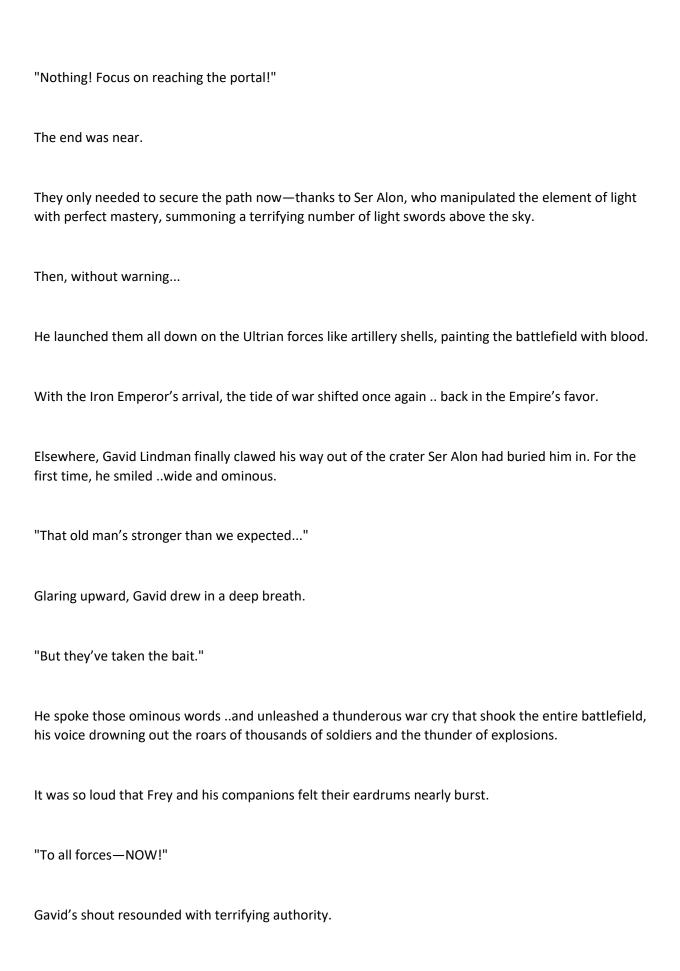
Witches of higher ranks fought by manifesting their Domains within the battlefield. Once a witch cast her Domain, she could conjure impossible phenomena and bend reality itself. This was why witches always sought to dominate the battlefield first. Beatrice had established a tremendously strong Domain. It had taken Millicent considerable time to pierce through it using her stellar magic and open an escape portal .. bringing herself and Ser Alon into the field. But Beatrice didn't give her a moment to breathe. She pressed in relentlessly, forcing Millicent to remain locked in combat. Millicent knew she couldn't last long—and she wouldn't be able to cast any more spells due to her focus being entirely consumed by their duel. On the other hand, Beatrice couldn't act freely either .. which was the only silver lining of the situation. "Everything rests on you now, Ser Alon!" "I told you .. I know!" And Ser Alon didn't waste time. Meanwhile, the elite students fought with newfound ferocity as hope finally appeared on the horizon. Phoenix, in particular, was astounding—battling both Godfrey and Gvardiol simultaneously. He unleashed hellish flames like a walking furnace.



With flames surging endlessly, Phoenix continued to carve a path for the elite class—clearing the way for them to reach the portal. Millicent's spell hadn't been perfectly accurate .. she had opened the portal behind the Ultrans, lacking the exact coordinates of Frey's location. Still, the path home had never been closer, which drove everyone to fight with renewed ferocity. Among them, Frey and Ghost continued mowing down the Ultrans in large numbers, having finally shaken off Gavid's pursuit. Frey unleashed more and more dark slashes. But then, he came to a sudden halt, a grimace darkening his face. "Damn it!" He cursed harshly, feeling his body begin to stiffen, refusing to move as it should. It was as if his weight had multiplied several times over. Even simple movement became a struggle. "What's wrong, Frey?!" Ghost, covering his back, kept tearing through enemies but quickly noticed Frey's slowing pace.

Frey himself didn't fully understand what was happening to him, yet he forced his body to swing the

twin blades again and again.





His body radiating with light, he prepared to intercept them.
Yet Gavid Lindman laughed, mocking the Iron Emperor's effort.
"Hold your horses, old man. Your opponent has already arrived."
And in that instant
Everyone on the battlefield—Ser Alon included—felt the hair on their bodies stand on end, as a suffocating pressure suddenly descended from the sky.
All eyes turned upward.
Ser Alon knew instantly the man was already behind him.
Spinning around at the speed of light, he found his opponent had mirrored his movement perfectly.
A rocket-like punch was already flying toward his face.
From the man's fist, serpents of violet lightning erupted, overwhelming Ser Alon's brilliant light.
Overwhelmed by the sheer momentum, the Iron Emperor was launched backward, crashing into the ground his body shaken by the force.
"Alon!!"
Millicent screamed, unable to process what she had just witnessed.
Her eyes were fixed on him.

And so were Frey's.
The man who had entered the battlefield had extremely long black hair, blistered grayish skin, and glowing crimson-red eyes.
He didn't look human.
But many recognized him instantly—for he had been the final adversary in the last great war between the Empire and the Ultrans.
"No way"
"Is that?!"
Shocked voices spread across the battlefield.
Despair returned once again.
And Frey, eyes narrowed, uttered the name
"Dragoth"
The strongest leader of the Ultras had finally appeared.
"Impossible! Didn't Abraham Starlight kill him in the last war?!"
Everyone on the Empire's side asked the same question but reality couldn't have been more different from what they believed.

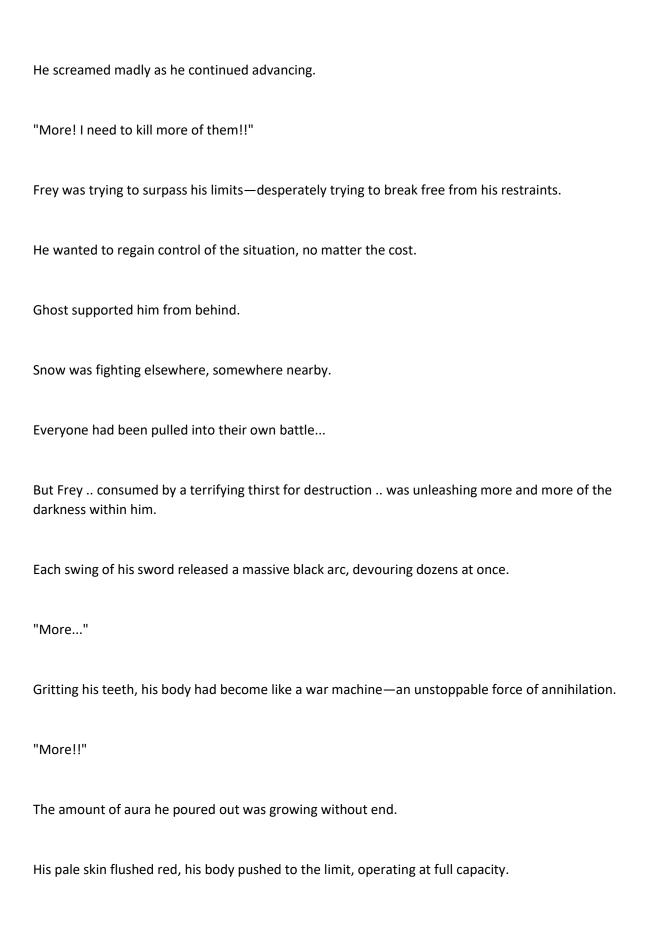
Sitting in the distance, Mergo let out a long sigh as he sat on the ground.
"Freeing you wasn't easy, so don't waste my efforts Human Demon."
The liberation of Dragoth
That was the real reason Mergo hadn't led his army directly, instead leaving it to the young Laurence.
Once Dragoth had been brought back, Mergo returned late, which explained his appearance before Frey only at the end of the battle.
But none of that mattered anymore.
"The Human Demon has returned though the long imprisonment seems to have affected his mind."
With a playful grin, the drunken old man leaned against a large boulder, watching the battlefield from afar.
"He might be a little insane now."
Right as those words left his mouth
Dragoth unleashed a terrifying battle cry, his full dark power erupting as the very air around him trembled.
Peak of SS+ rank.
No, the pinnacle—just one step short of breaking into another realm of power.
That was Dragoth, the Human Demon.

And Ser Alon—having released all his strength—returned to the skies, facing Dragoth head-on.
The Iron Emperor had reached his peak as well.
A catastrophic clash was about to begin.
Chapter 410: The Elite vs The Ultras (4) Dragoth no longer appeared sane. He looked more like a wild beast.
Staring at Ser Alon, who wielded his golden sword and surrounded himself with radiant light, Dragoth began to hallucinate.
He no longer saw Alon.
He saw a different man a figure from his past, who once wielded a black sword and radiated with overwhelming starlight.
The man who had once defeated him.
And with that memory, Dragoth's rage multiplied exponentially.
With a roar, he lunged at Ser Alon, tearing through the skies with terrifying speed.
In response, at light-speed, Ser Alon surged forward, colliding with him as a titanic clash of auras erupted in the heavens.
"What kind of monster are you?!"
He shouted, launching blow after blow.

Alon's sword clashed with Dragoth's fists.
The exchange was blisteringly fast—so fast it left hundreds of afterimages across the sky as they both unleashed shockwaves that shattered the clouds.
The Iron Emperor wielded light.
Dragoth, on the other hand, unleashed a bizarre aura of violet-black lightning that screamed with dark energy.
The battle was utterly devastating.
Each time their deadly strikes collided, any unfortunate soldier below caught in the aftermath was turned into nothing more than bloody pulp.
Ser Alon was incredibly fast—almost inhumanly so.
But even he realized
This time, time was not on his side.
Not with a monster like Dragoth unleashed.
"This is bad"
Now locked in combat with Dragoth, Ser Alon knew he could no longer intervene against the Ultrans who had breached the portal.
They had already begun appearing on the other side inside the Empire.

Far to the north
Oliver Khan pushed Ada Starlight behind him and stepped forward, his crimson eyes glowing fiercely as he faced the Ultrans appearing from thin air.
"Get ready Carmen Starlight."
He spoke coldly, understanding exactly what was happening.
Carmen answered with only a nod before dashing alongside him toward the invading soldiers, ready to stop them.
The plan had been turned completely on its head.
The Witch's Game was reaching the ending Beatrice had orchestrated from the very beginning.
Ser Alon was now locked in battle with Dragoth
Millicent remained stuck in her fight against Beatrice
And the elite class had once again found themselves surrounded back to square one.
Fierce battles among the high-rankers raged in the sky
Desperate, brutal fighting continued on the barren lands of the Ultran continent, where the elite students still fought to survive
And now, a third battle had begun in the north of the Empire, as Ultran troops broke through to the other side.

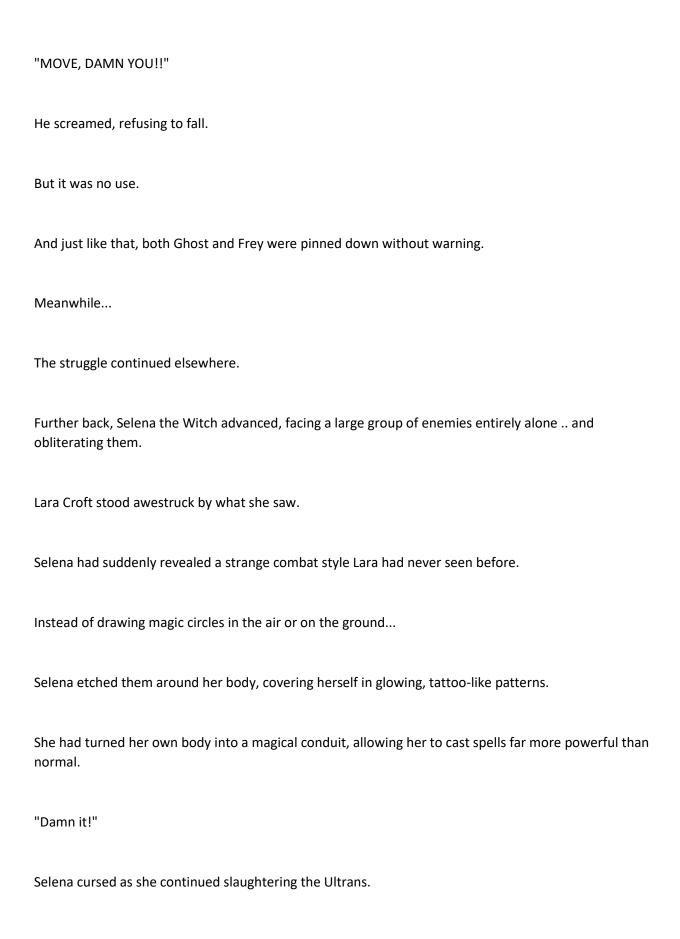




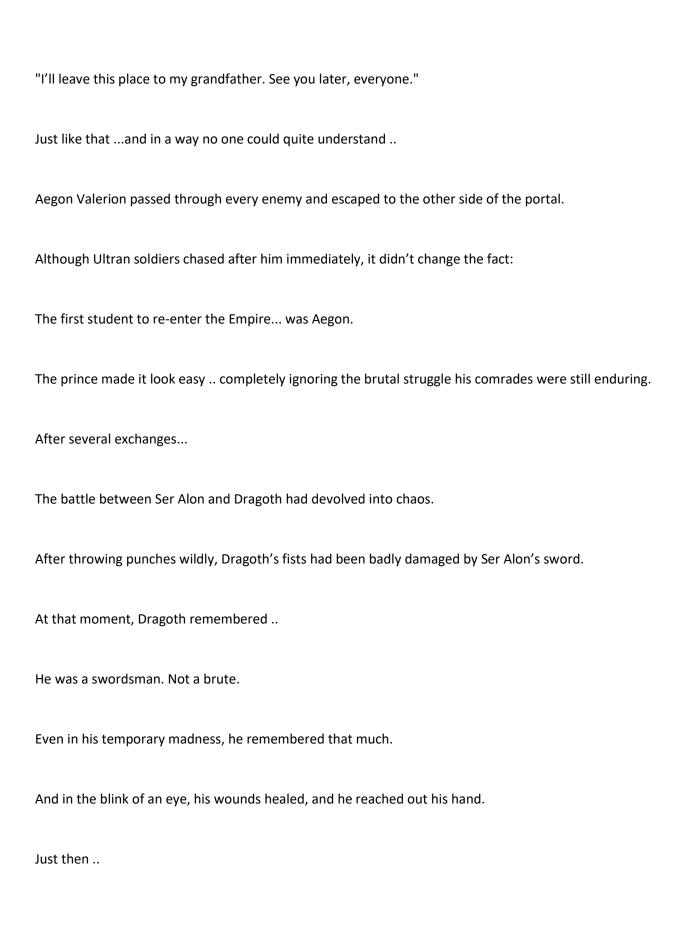


And with a deafening roar that shook the battlefield
He continued annihilating everything in his path.
But just as his power peaked—just as he was on the verge of surpassing his limits—
Everything around him twisted violently.
Without warning
Right at the climax of his rampage
Frey collapsed, blood bursting from his eyes, nose, mouth, and ears.
The blood wouldn't stop as he dropped to one knee, stunned, unable to comprehend what was happening.
"Frey!"
Driving back the remaining enemies, Ghost rushed to his side in shock.
Frey trembled uncontrollably, trying to stand once more through sheer force of will
But his body continued to shake, refusing to obey. The blood kept pouring from his face without pause.
Finally
Frey had reached his limit.

The battle in the Puppet City.
The clash against a thousand Ultran soldiers.
The fight with Mergo.
The renewed conflict against the Ultran army.
Even Frey's enhanced body—several times stronger than a normal human—had finally reached its breaking point.
How many times had he unleashed Ignition?
How many wounds had he forced his body to regenerate from?
Frey understood.
This was his limit.
He wasn't simply injured. It was more like a car engine overheating from excessive pressure shutting down entirely.
That's what had happened. He had pushed beyond his threshold.
"Move"
But Frey refused to accept it.



This was the power she had hidden .. meant for a future fight against Aegon Valerion. But now she had no choice. She was forced to defend the rear line by herself. Just like all the other main heroines who possessed absurdly overwhelming powers .. Selena was no exception. But even with her exceptional abilities, it was only a matter of time before she fell. Elsewhere, more Ultran soldiers continued flooding through the portal... Only to stop as a blade coated in black lightning sliced through their necks. Startled by his sudden appearance, the soldiers didn't even have time to react. He was too fast .. finishing them off before they could lift a finger. With a heavy sigh, standing at the gate... Aegon Valerion turned his gaze toward the chaotic battlefield behind him. "What a mess you've caused, Beatrice..." His sword still crackled with black lightning, but he no longer seemed interested in fighting. Glancing one last time at Ser Alon, Aegon chuckled before stepping through the portal and leaving the battlefield.



Ser Alon watched in surprise as a sword came flying toward Dragoth at incredible speed from afar.
Without warning, the Human Demon had summoned Moonlight Sword back into his hand.
And just like that the legendary weapon returned to its original master.
Once he grasped the Moonlight Sword, Dragoth's aura changed completely.
He was still insane
But he kept uttering one word—again and again—since the battle began.
"Abraham Abraham ABRAHAM!!"
Screaming his name without pause
Dragoth charged at Ser Alon in a blind fury, slamming into the Iron Emperor.
The old leader of the Ultrans had gone completely mad
Haunted by the ghost of a dead man.
It was total chaos.