VILLAIN 471

Chapter 471: The Starlight Requiem (1)
—Frey Starlight's POV—
There are only a few fragile threads separating life from death.
In this cruel world we live in a world that rewards the strong with greater violence and dominance while crushing the weak into misery encounters with life-and-death moments are all too frequent.
In a land where the strong devour the weak, one often finds themselves thrown into the jaws of fate—forced to endure trials of sheer existence.
I don't know how many times the average person is supposed to face such situations in their short life
But unlike most, I've encountered them more times than I can count more than anyone else, perhaps.
And the one I found myself in now was definitely one of them.
Gvardiol, the most enigmatic half-demon of his kind, had finally unleashed his full power.
I had pushed him to that point forced him to reveal his true nature to the world.
His body had transformed in a strange and terrifying way. That dark, foreign metal that once partially covered him now wrapped around his form completely.
No it's more accurate to say that his entire body had become that unknown black metal.
I had torn his previous form apart, reduced it to shreds yet somehow, he rose again, reformed, reborn in a shell of unbreakable darkness.

Dark aura pure shadow coiled around the frame of that metallic body, enhancing his strikes and unveiling the raw brutality of an SS+ class.
In that monstrous form, he was far stronger than the previous Lord, Godfrey.
"Frey Starlight do you know what drives an enemy more than anything else?"
Having completely cornered me, Gvardiol kept up the pressure, his voice deeper more monstrous than before.
His blows were impossibly fast, frequently bypassing my defenses. The sparks that erupted from our collisions spread like wildfire, igniting waves of magical flame around us.
Flames burned atop the ocean itself, unnaturally and beautifully.
This version of Gvardiol was nothing like the one I'd fought before
"After fighting humans countless times, I've come to one conclusion
The enemy driven by vengeance is always the most relentless."
BOOM!!
With a rocket-like punch that made my bones tremble, Gvardiyol drove me further back.
"An enemy fighting for vengeance always puts on the best show before I kill them in cold blood."
"That has always been my greatest thrill here on planet Earth
But you, Lord Starlight

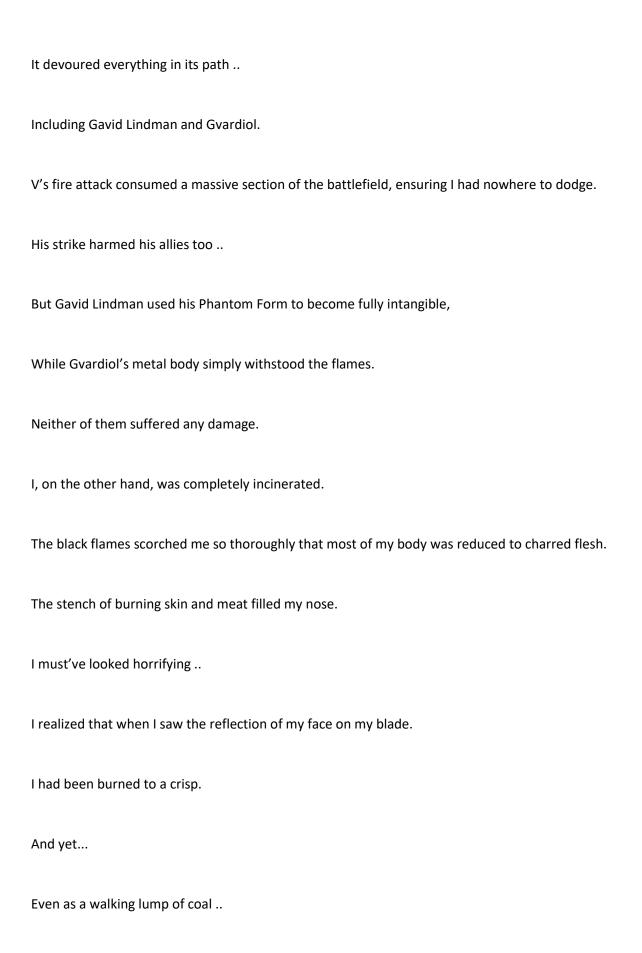
You're the first enemy who's ever made me truly want to kill." His smile had vanished, replaced by an overwhelming wrath. Shadow aura swirled violently around his arms, each punch causing a massive explosion that shook the battlefield to its core. They struck me like bolts of lightning, so fast I could barely track them. Though I blocked most of his blows, my bones quivered with each impact. In raw physical power... Gvardiol was on an entirely different level. But I had expected at least this much from the beginning. "I see... So you're angry, aren't you, half-demon?" Accelerating my steps, I gathered more and more dark aura around my blades and began striking back ..slashing into Gvardiol and delivering a staggering wave of damage with each blow. Yet no matter how hard I struck him, I couldn't make him bleed. His metal shell absorbed the damage with disturbing ease. Meanwhile, his attacks kept wounding me over and over ..until my blood pooled beneath my feet in a massive crimson lake. Even so, every injury I suffered regenerated instantly. I didn't care much for the damage.

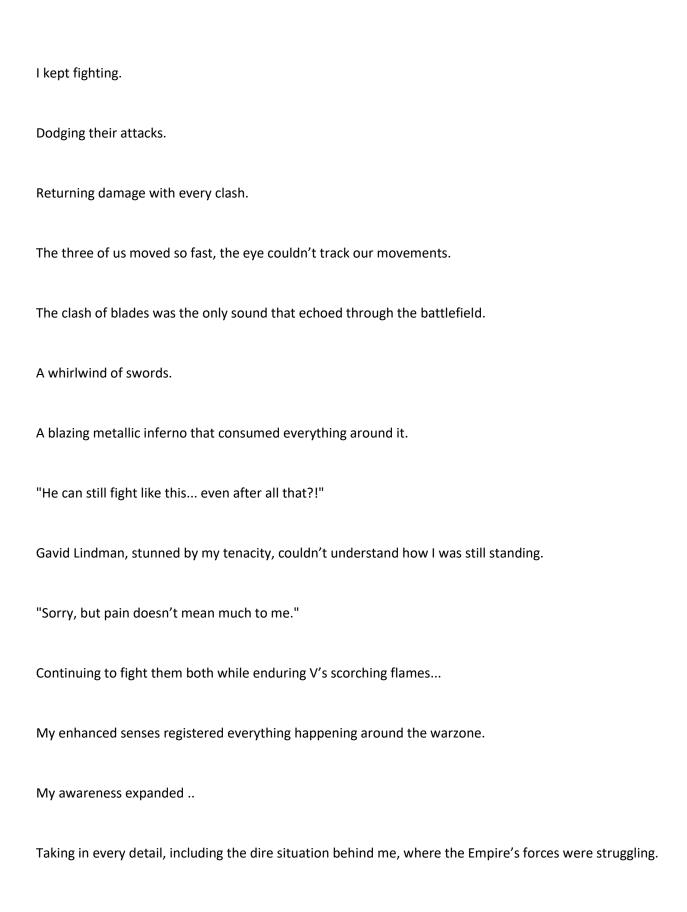
Despite Gvardiol revealing everything he had, I never once felt like I was truly losing.
His power was overwhelming, yes—but I blocked most of what he threw at me.
Level 3 Shadow Adaptation.
Max-level Swordsmanship.
These two together elevated my sword art to heights I never thought possible.
Even while locked in combat with Gvardiol, I kept one eye on both Gavid Lindman and V and I realized something important.
I wasn't the same person anymore.
"To be honest, I used to think that when I finally saw you again, I'd be overwhelmed with rage That I'd try to kill you on sight."
BOOOOM!
"For Danzo."
The hatred had been festering in me for some time ever since my training began, I envisioned this moment over and over again.
I wanted to use that rage as fuel to destroy you.
"That was my only wish for so long. And truth be told I expected to feel that way when I saw you standing beside Gavid Lindman and V."

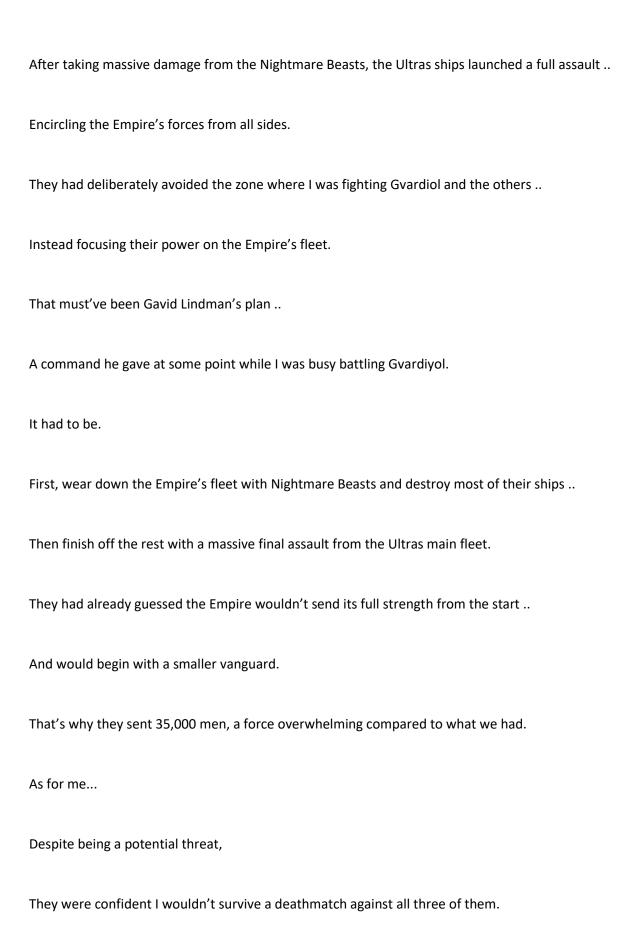
I retreated from Gvardiol, bombarding him from a distance with a torrent of shadow slashes.
His armored body absorbed them all without effort.
At first glance, the fight seemed to have hit a stalemate: I couldn't hurt him, and he couldn't stop my regeneration.
But reality was far more nuanced than that.
"I thought I'd hate you even more, Gvardiol
But when I look at you now, somehow those feelings have faded replaced by something else entirely."
Raising my blade toward him, I offered one final smile.
"Unfortunately for you I now see nothing but another enemy that must be killed.
A nuisance whose very existence taints this world.
It'll be a far better place once people like you are dead."
Standing there, surrounded by enemies
As fire raged around me, and the thunder of war roared in my ears
I felt nothing toward my opponent.
Nothing at all.

I didn't even feel the urge to avenge Danzo anymore
I simply wanted to kill him like any other Ultras warrior.
And to do that
To bring down monsters of his caliber
I needed to unleash a single overwhelming attack.
One blow with enough destructive force to bypass his defense and bring him down.
But landing such a strike wasn't easy
Especially in my current state.
Without warning, Gavid Lindman reappeared behind me with terrifying speed.
I instantly responded parrying his sword with the Dark Sister, then slashing through him with Balerion
But my blade passed right through his body.
"Phantom Form, huh"
I exchanged blows rapidly with Gavid Lindman, who used that ghostly state to phase through everything I threw at him.

At the same time, Gvardiol rushed in to join the fray.
Left and right
They bombarded me with a barrage of deadly strikes, all aimed to finish me off.
The Aether Blade carved illusions in the air, slashing through me, while Gvardiol's punches shattered my body again and again.
I was completely surrounded.
I fought back with all I had, managing to block and counter several times—but the limits of what I could achieve in this state were painfully clear.
Both of them had reached SS+ rank.
The longer the battle dragged on, the more my Shadow Adaptation gave me a growing edge but I would be long dead before it fully took effect.
I already knew that
Which meant I couldn't afford a war of attrition.
I had no idea what hidden tricks they still had under their belts.
And just when I thought things couldn't get worse
A volcanic eruption of black fire fell from the sky.
Chapter 472: The Starlight Requiem (2)



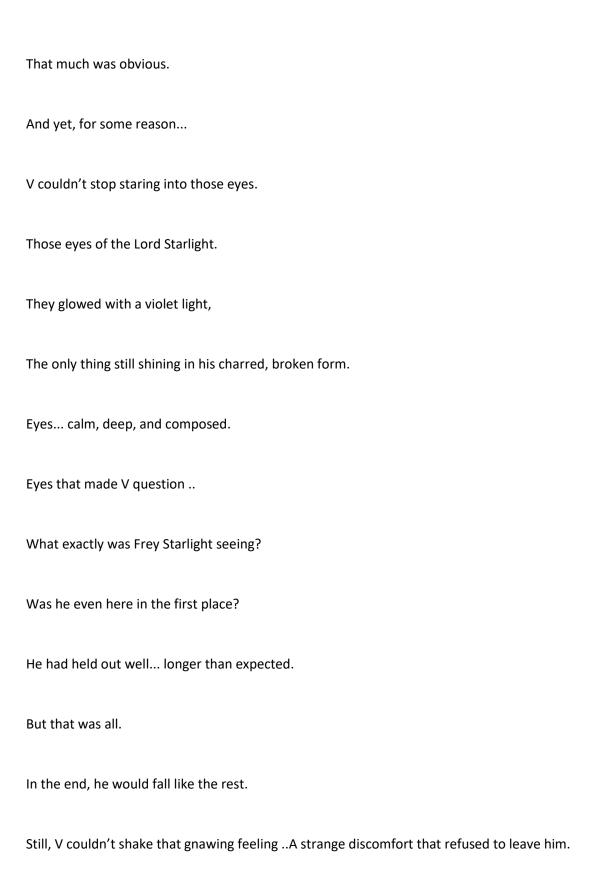


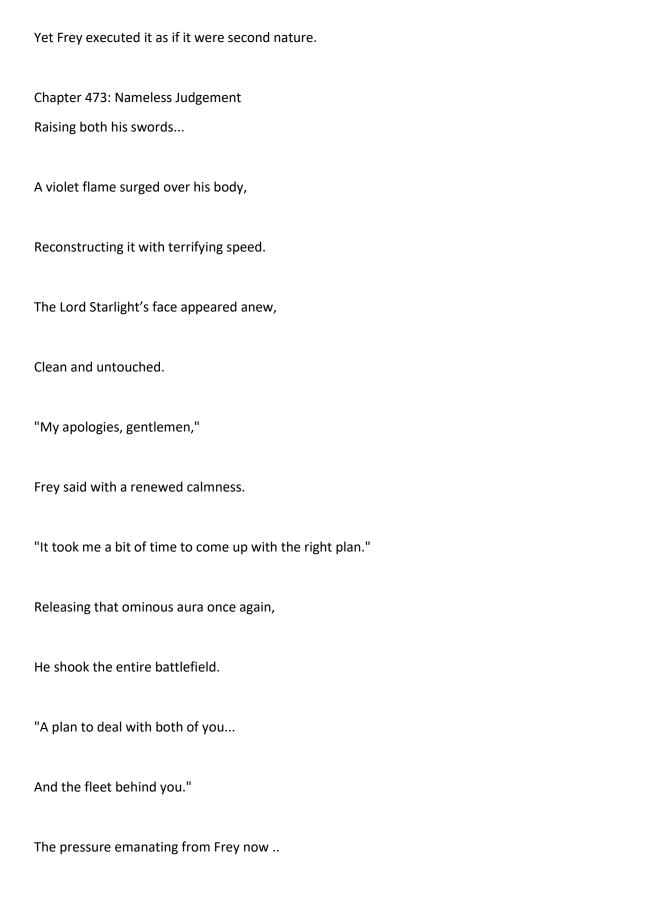


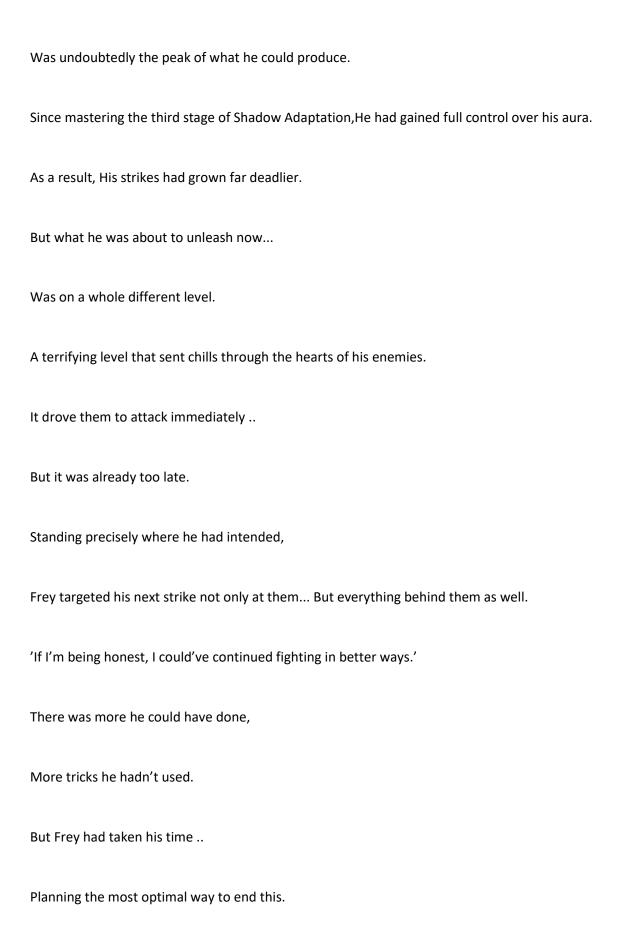
And what was happening now only proved them right
I had become a charred corpse, covered in dozens of horrific wounds.
Gavid Lindman and Gvardiol had beaten me to pulp, While V burned me again and again in perfect coordination.
Even though I kept resisting until the bitter end, It was becoming clear how this battle would end.
This was what it meant to face three warriors each beyond SS rank.
Even if I managed to unleash SS+ level power myself
3 vs 1 was still nearly impossible.
'He's going to fall soon.'
That was probably what Gavid Lindman thought.
The fact I'd lasted this long was already a miracle in itself.
"In the end how dull.
So this is all you've got?"
Gvardiol spoke, his voice tinged with disappointment as he began to lose interest in me.

He had expected to fight some kind of monstrous legend But his opponent had fallen faster than he ever imagined.
It made him realize that he had overestimated me
Using one of his trump cards against a mere boy.
The battle was already over.
Abraham Starlight had been a special case And it was a mistake to compare his son, Frey, to him.
Miracles only happen once.
And the Starlight family had already used up theirs.
Frey Starlight had been completely defeated. The young man whose very name struck terror into the hearts of the Ultras
was now on the verge of collapse.
"Your death will mark the beginning of the end for the Empire, and everything it stands for."

As they ripped his body apart,
Gavid and Gvardiol continued to spit poison into Frey's ears.
"If this were Abraham Starlight, he would've handled the situation with ease.
But the son is nothing like the father."
From the very beginning, comparing him to the Starlight family's greatest star had been nothing but a fantasy.
The Black Death?
A meaningless title earned only by killing a handful of the weak.
Frey Starlight built his reputation on a lie.
And that lie was finally about to collapse.
With his features burned beyond recognition, The so-called Lord Starlight had never looked more pathetic.
'Time to end this.'
Readying his blade once more,
The masked V prepared to deliver the final blow watching Frey from afar.
His opponent looked utterly defeated,

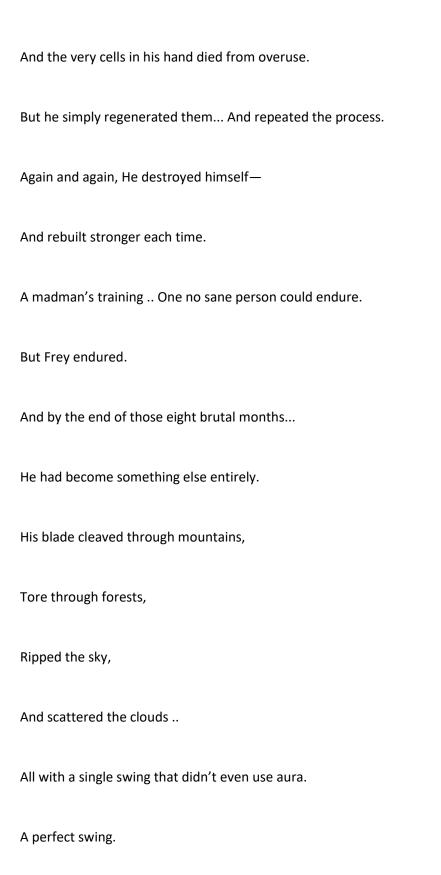


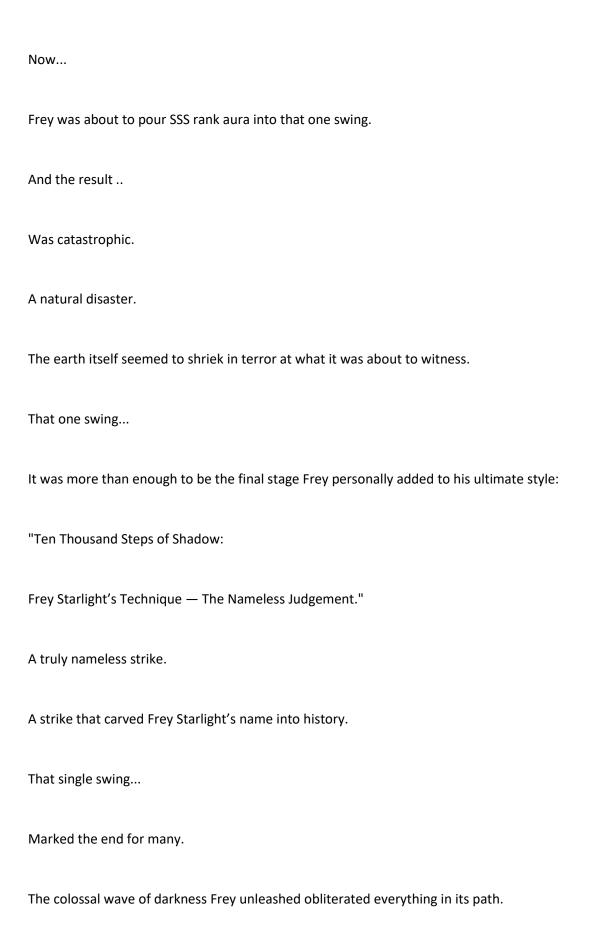


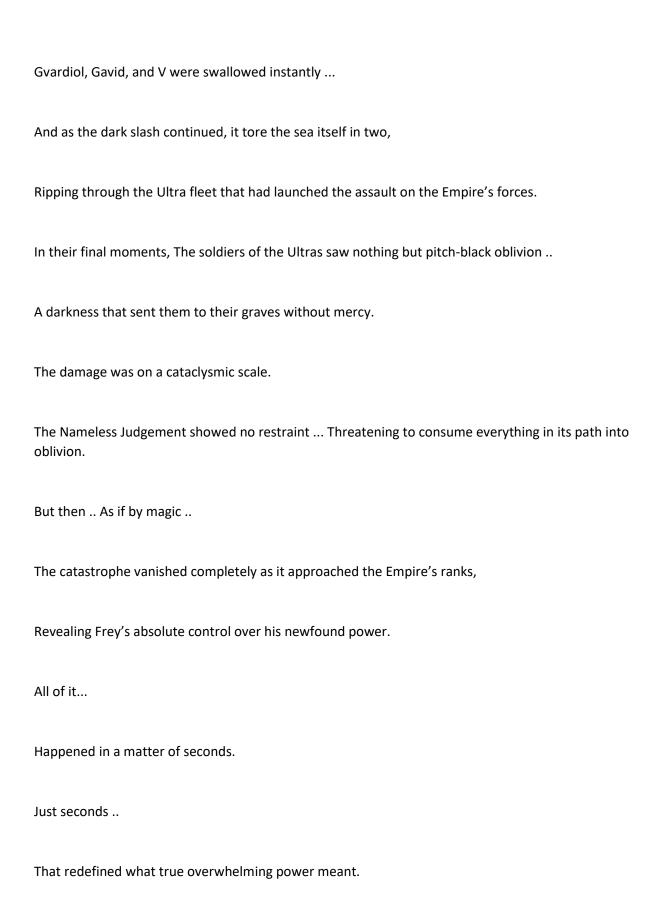


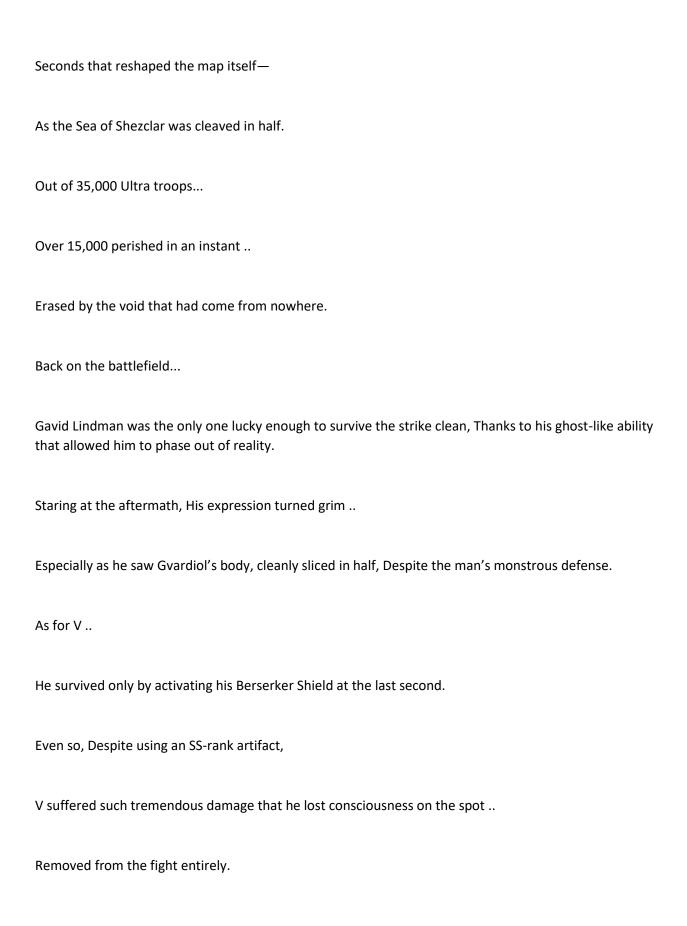
Understanding the dire position of his allies, He didn't have the luxury to prolong the battle any longer.
He also wanted to know exactly
How his current power measured up against his strongest enemies.
From deep within him, A dark aura fused with shadows exploded outward
A twisted, cursed energy wrapped in black flame.
That power coiled violently around Frey's twin blades, Like furious serpents ready to strike.
The pressure it radiated
Was unmistakably within the SSS rank.
"The idea first came to me during my fifth month of training."
As his body surged with energy, drowning the world in darkness, Frey's mind drifted back to his days in the Eastern Nightmare Lands.
"Ignition had always been my strongest attack But it was never efficientjust a massive explosion that destroyed everything indiscriminately."
Ignition was powerful, yes,
But it was meant for large-scale battles

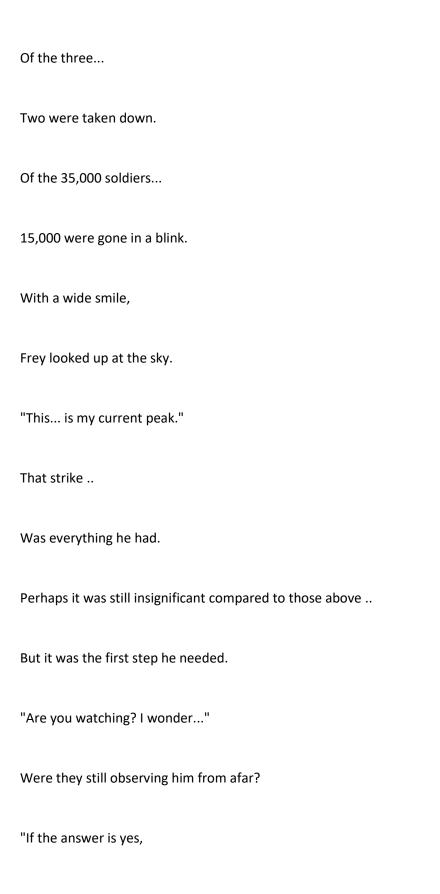


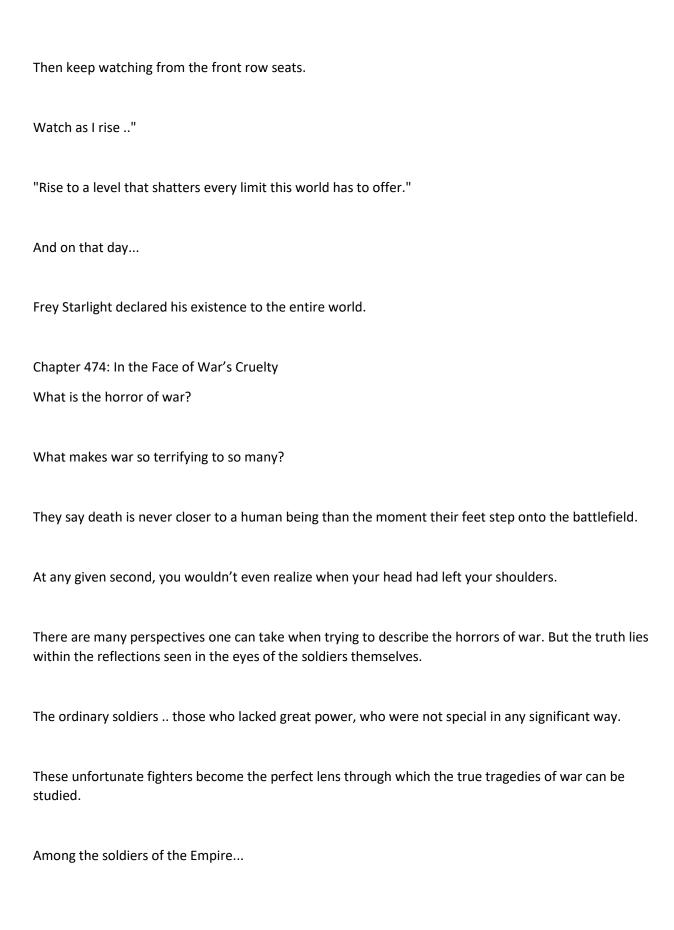












After their ship had been destroyed by the enemy, a girl crawled out from beneath the wreckage, trying to survive before the ruins of her doomed vessel swallowed her whole.

Her sky-blue hair was disheveled, and her pale skin stained red with blood.

She was in unbearable pain .. crushed by the debris that had fallen mercilessly upon her, threatening to bury her alive.

She was a Wave Controller. That meant her body lacked any significant physical strength to survive such a collapse unscathed.

As she pulled the upper half of her body free, the searing pain was unlike anything she had ever felt before.

When she looked down to identify the source of the agony, she found her legs horrifyingly mangled under the rubble of the broken ship.

Seeing the lower half of her body completely flattened .. accompanied by the steady pool of blood leaking from beneath her ..made her heart sink deeper into her chest.

She was beginning to realize, with growing dread, that she might have become crippled for life.

In that moment, she couldn't stop the panic attack from overtaking her. She screamed at the top of her lungs ..

but her cries were drowned out by the deafening roar of war around her, making her suffering invisible to the world.

She screamed for a long time, trying to shove the heavy wreckage off her legs.

But as the panic and blood loss took over, her vision of the surrounding massacre became blurred. The world she knew seemed to collapse around her.



Taking a deep breath, she focused her remaining strength, conjuring celestial orbs that formed into violent spirals of wind.

Channeling the last of her power as a Wave Controller, she hurled the storms at the debris crushing her.

Her winds succeeded .. blasting away the wreckage and finally revealing the lower half of her body.

But what she saw made her grit her teeth in agony.

The bones in her right leg had been completely shattered—bent at an unnatural angle.

The left had been impaled clean through by a thick iron rod.

Blood gushed continuously, and she was on the brink of losing consciousness.

Explosions shook the area around her. She knew she had to move somehow or she'd die here.

The ship she was on could sink at any moment.

But her legs could no longer support her. She had no choice but to crawl.

Crawl across the blood-soaked deck, over the corpses of her fallen comrades...

Dragging herself along the floor, she left behind two long crimson trails. The only thing keeping her conscious was her primal instinct to survive.

The Nightmare Sea monsters were true catastrophes .. colossal beasts that had already claimed countless lives and sunk many of the Empire's ships.

After crawling a surprising distance without passing out, the girl clung to the edge of the ship, pulling herself up just enough to get a better view of the battlefield .. hoping to find a way to survive. But the scene before her only deepened her despair. Ships were being dragged down into the depths by massive tentacled creatures ... abominations seemingly pulled straight from hell. Flames raged atop others, the result of unrelenting bombardment from the Ultras. The fires were so intense that soldiers hurled themselves into the cursed sea, desperate to extinguish the flames consuming their bodies. But diving into the ocean now was suicide. The Nightmare creatures devoured anything that touched those waters. Those who escaped the flames weren't much better off ..many died from fatal injuries, while others, like her, survived only with devastating wounds that left their faces twisted in pain. Severed limbs, spilled intestines, and scattered human organs covered the ground... Endless screams and the terrifying roar of bombardment that refused to stop... The girl who had lived a peaceful life until now couldn't help but ask herself .. "Is this... war?" Was this what they had come for? Was this truly the first round? The first round of a war destined to last far too long?

If that was the answer then what kind of hell had she thrown herself into?
For a moment she completely lost hope.
Then, in the next breath, a third sound rose—one that wasn't death or bombardment.
A boy's voice. Shouting a single name.
"Selene!!"
He looked to be around her age, with short black hair, a handsome face, and striking crimson eyes.
The boy appeared genuinely frantic, gripping his sword as he leapt from ship to ship, clearly searching for someone.
The sight of him reignited a faint spark of hope in the girl's chest the one whose name he kept shouting.
"Max!"
With all the strength she could muster, she called out his name.
At that moment, the boy became her last glimmer of hope in the abyss of this hell.
And it seemed her voice had reached him because his eyes widened the moment he saw her.
When Max saw Selene alive, his expression finally broke, revealing immense relief as if a crushing weight had just been lifted from his heart.

They had known each other for a long time. Max had always lingered near her, hopelessly in love. Even if she didn't return his feelings, it didn't change the fact that he had always been close enough to be her final beacon of light. "Hang in there! I'm coming!" Surrounded by a dazzling aura of radiant light, Max charged toward her at full speed. He too was a first-year student at the temple .. strong enough to have earned a spot in the elite class. He was undeniably a capable fighter, with a bright future ahead. Selene sighed in relief, thankful that it was Max who had come for her amidst this circle of hell... But that relief .. and the soft smile that came with it .. turned into utter horror the moment a bolt fell from the sky. No... it wasn't a lightning bolt. It was a magical shell .. fired from one of the Ultras' cannons. A random blast. She didn't even know who fired it. But that random shot came crashing down without mercy...right on Max, who didn't even know what hit him. The impact obliterated him completely, hurling his once-radiant body deep into the ocean. "MAX!!!" Selene screamed, trying to summon her winds to save him...

But it was too late. The moment his body touched the demonic waters, nightmare creatures swarmed him, tearing him apart.
The last expression on his face was a smile.
A smile that showed how happy he had been to see her still alive.
Chapter 475: The Ones He Saw (1) But one second. Just a single second that was all it took to erase that smile forever.
The line between life and death was razor-thin.
So thin in that cursed place
"What now?"
Selene asked, her face frozen in shock.
What was she supposed to do, when she barely had the strength to remain conscious, let alone stop her bleeding?
As she tried to make sense of the chaos flooding her mind, the war around her only raged harder.
More brutal. More violent. Stronger.
The Ultras' shells fell like rain hellish rain.
The nightmare creatures continued their assault from below, threatening to drag them all into the abyss.

Then, amidst the chaos... A blazing comet streaked through the sky, hurling molten flames so intense they resembled volcanic eruptions from the heavens. That fire instantly incinerated the nightmare creatures, annihilating them without mercy. The comet... was just one man. A man who appeared, destroyed the monsters, and vanished as soon as his task was done. But while his attack killed the enemy, the collateral damage caused the ship carrying Selene to catch fire, worsening her predicament. Selene collapsed as the burning vessel beneath her began to sink. Right after that fiery blast, a barrage of lightning struck .. followed by brilliant blue flames and chilling ice that froze everything it touched. Someone was manipulating the elements as if they were nothing... destroying everything around them. His strikes were so overwhelming, they showed no mercy .. neither to friend nor foe. Trying to endure it, Selene watched it all with her own eyes. Many were in her shoes... people trapped beneath the wreckage. People who drowned in the sea. People who fought for their lives until the bitter end.

But some were killed not by the enemy but by the reckless attacks of the very titans they had relied on to protect them.
Sure, those attacks killed the enemy too but at what cost?
In the end, the ones who killed them were their own allies
It was total chaos. And the death toll soared every passing second, reaching astronomical levels.
From the Empire's side, the elite squad held their ground fiercely, annihilating most of the nightmare creatures on their own
Especially that woman who tore everything around her apart with her shadow blades.
The enemy was strong.
But their allies were just as strong.
Watching all of this with her own eyes, Selene couldn't help but grasp the painful truth
The law that ruled this world.
"The strong will always survive and the weak will have no choice but to die. Die as if their lives meant nothing."
Realizing the worthlessness of her own life, Selene once again began to lose the will to live.
Because even if she survived now, what awaited her was nothing but death later.



If the vanguard, led by monsters like Snow Lionheart, held such overwhelming power then why bring them?
Why didn't they just handle everything on their own?
Why
"Why did they play with our lives like this?"
Many of the soldiers who died weren't killed by the enemy's brutality but by reckless strikes that didn't distinguish between friend and foe.
Be it the Ultras or the Empire's elite squad
They were nothing but monsters. Monsters clashing above an anthill.
And they were the ants.
Ordinary soldiers. Cannon fodder. Slaughtered in the first clash.
Pitiful souls doomed to die in the most horrific way imaginable.
It broke her.
How her life had been priced so cheaply condemned to die in a hell like this, without anyone even knowing she existed.
And just when Selene thought she had seen the worst horrors war could offer

More horns of war sounded in her ears.

Warhorns that marked judgment day... for her and every wretched soul caught in the titans' war.

After Snow Lionheart's team dealt with most of the nightmare creatures, they suddenly found themselves surrounded by Ultras forces emerging from the shadows.

It seemed the Ultras had used the monster attack and ongoing bombardment as cover... to sneak their ships into the heart of the Empire's army.

From the start, the Ultras outnumbered the Empire three to one. And now, after the nightmare creatures had decimated many of the Empire's ships...

The situation had grown even worse.

Fifteen thousand Ultras launched a frontal assault with their warships, while twenty thousand more flanked them from the east and west.

A perfect pincer move .. trapping the Empire completely.

Their pressure was overwhelming, threatening to wipe out Selene and everyone else to the last soul.

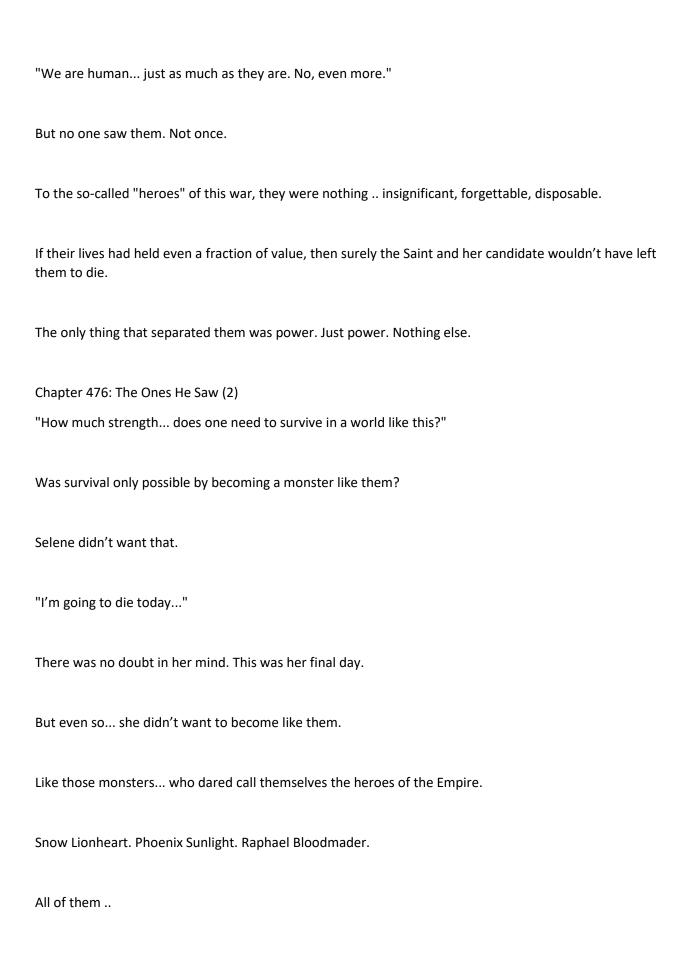
Collapsed where she lay...

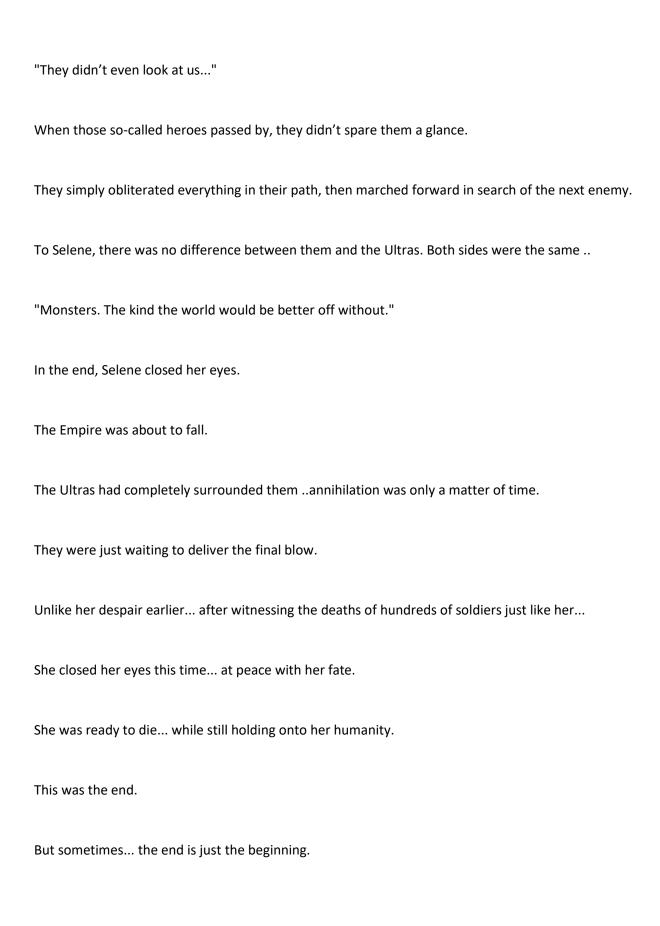
Selene could only sit there, bearing witness to the final horror of war ..trying to be a witness to it all.

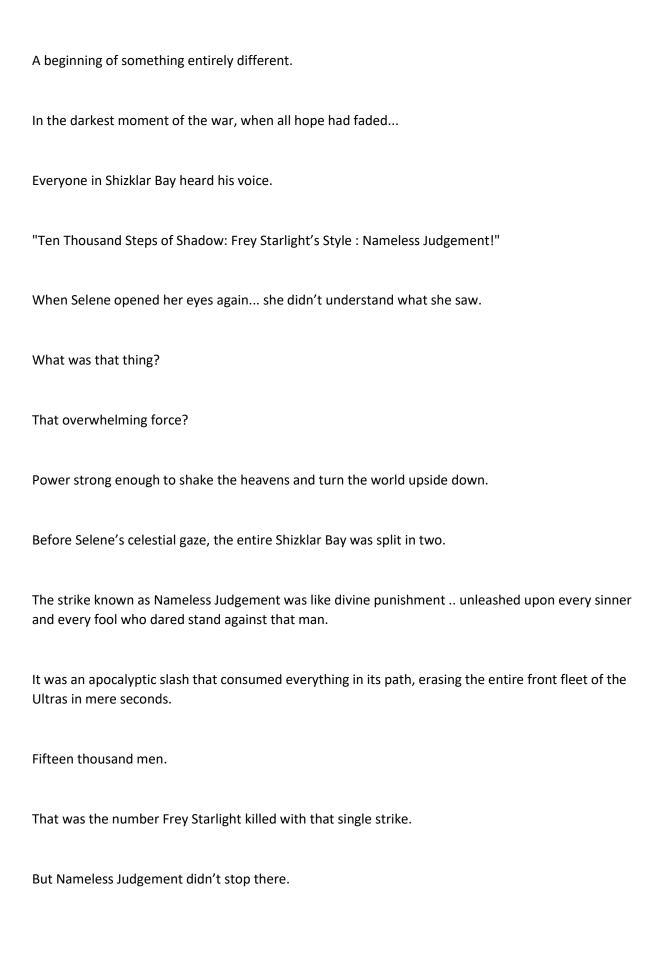
Her small, blurred eyes couldn't see much .. but she tried, at the very least, to record the final moments of those who had suffered like her.

Even if only for a while... she wanted to remember them.

She wanted to remember them at least until her own life was lost.
"We're not cannon fodder."
As the second round began while the titans of the Empire and the Ultras clashed
Selene remained where she was, holding on using her wind to keep her ship afloat as long as possible.
The battle had reached a new level of brutality. Among the Ultras forces were monsterssome were Hollows, others even Lords.
The battles between them and the Empire's elite unleashed terrifying destruction
And as a result the soldiers continued to die, one after another, at a horrifying rate
Selene saw them all.
A seasoned warrior lost his life to a sudden ambush.
A young duelist died after recklessly charging into the front lines, only to be caught in the crossfire of a battle between two monstrous beings.
Wounded soldiers bled out simply because the holy light cast by Saint Yorasha and Uriel never reached them.
"We are human."
As tears and blood streamed down her face, Selene kept watchinguntil the very end.

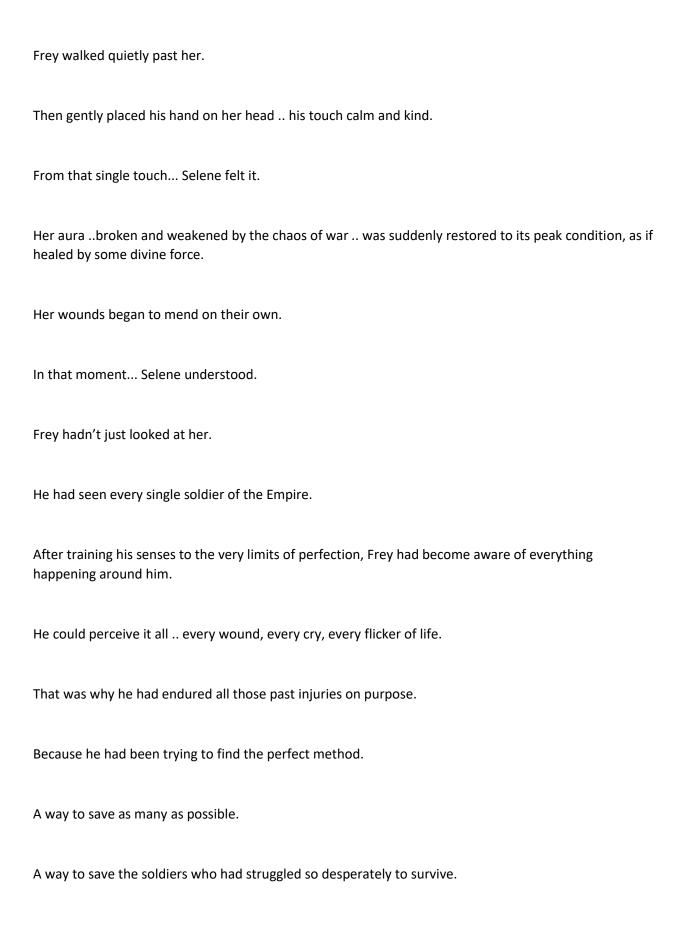


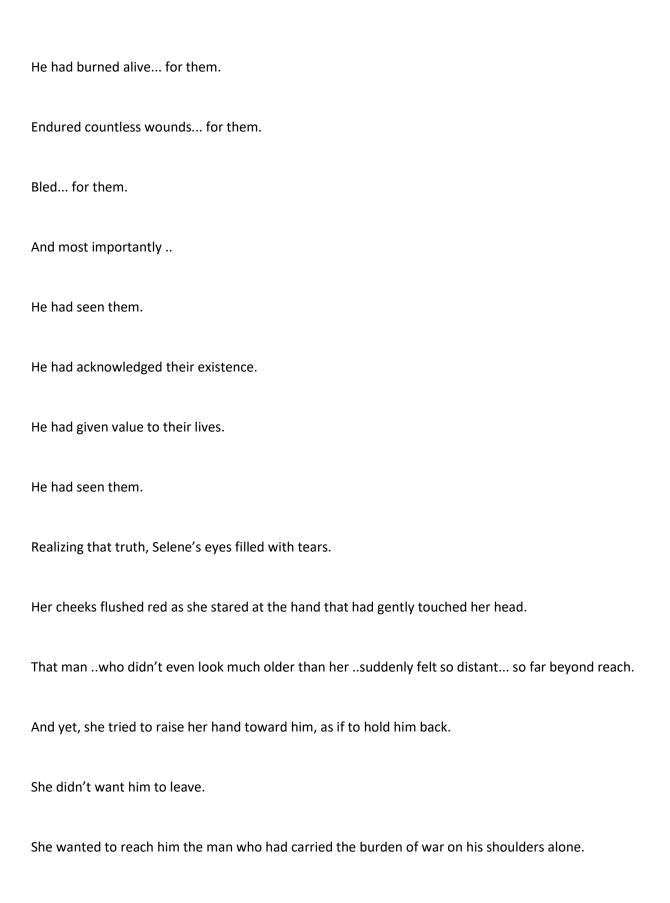


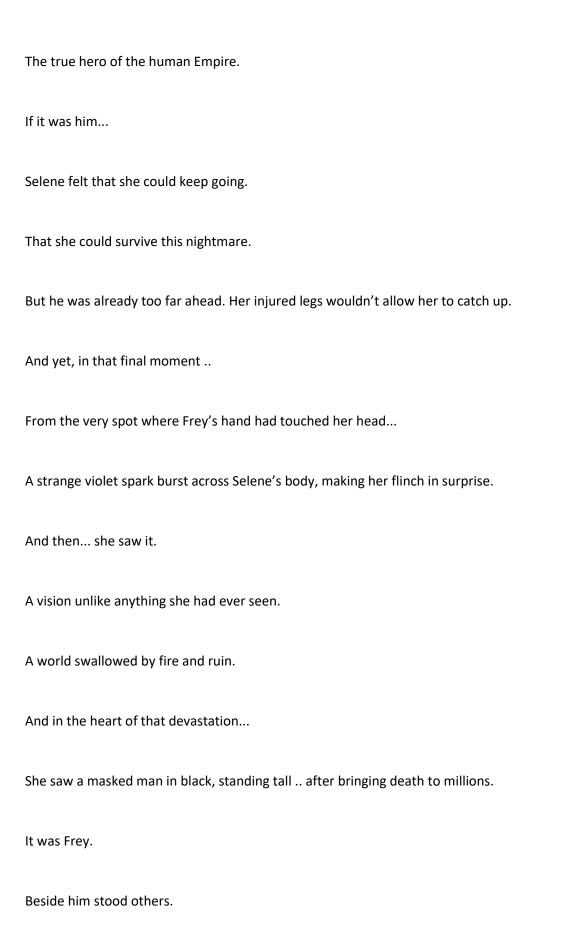


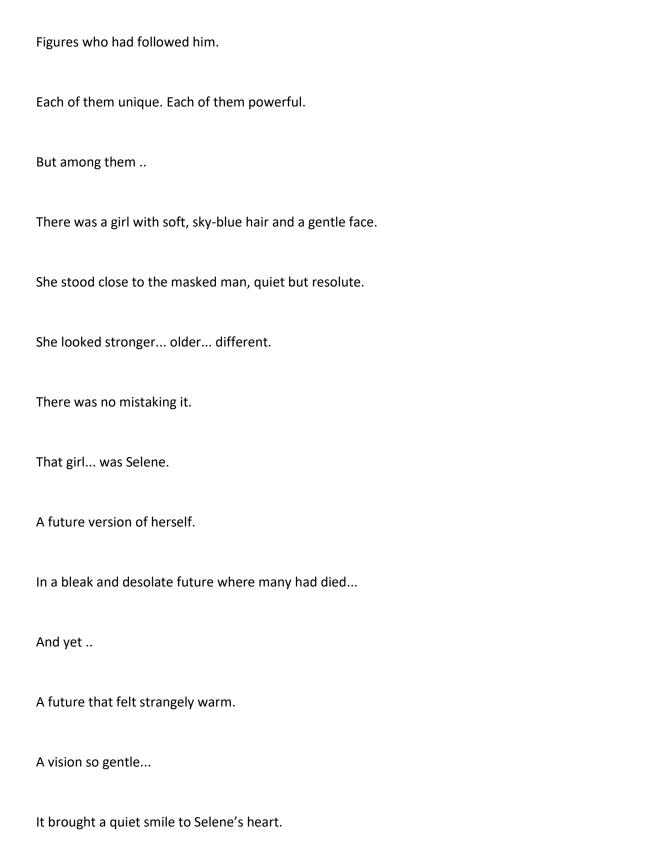
It kept going its path of destruction threatening to engulf the Empire's forces as well.
Faced with such power, Selene could only stare in awe, silently awaiting the divine judgment to claim her life too.
And the violet flames did reach her.
They engulfed her and every other Imperial soldier nearby.
Every last one of them.
But somehowmiraculously despite being caught in the very heart of the blast that had destroyed Gavid Lindman, Gvardiol, V, and fifteen thousand Ultras
Those violet flames didn't harm the Empire's side at all.
Not a single wound.
Not a hint of pain.
Instead they felt cool.
Gentle.
So strangely comforting that Selene could only sit in disbelief, waiting for a death that never came.
And then he appeared.

The man who caused that calamity.
The man who split a space the size of a nation in two.
She had heard him clearly when he called out his name.
That was Frey Starlight . the most terrifying being on the battlefield.
And yet Frey Starlight didn't frighten her at all.
His eyes glowed with a violet light. Selene didn't know what exactly he saw in her.
But she knew one thing
He was looking at her.
He didn't ignore her.
He saw her.
The same terrifying power that had wiped out thousands in an instant now felt warm and kind.
That young man possessed a strength unmatched by any of the monsters who had ignored her and the others all this time.
And yet, despite all of that
He did not ignore her.









Chapter 477: The Man Who Turned the Tide (1) Shizkclar Bay... The place that witnessed the first round of the War of Darkness .. those cursed waters that became the grave for countless wretched souls. A battlefield of misfortune where the Empire had lost much. Whether in the past, when Maekar launched his assault on the Ultras and was utterly defeated by Beatrice... Or now, as war began anew and the Imperial forces found themselves trapped in a masterfully laid ambush set by the Lord of the Ultras, Gavid Lindman. But unlike the previous time... this battle did not end in a complete defeat for the Empire. Because by the end of it, the entire world witnessed an overwhelming display of raw power .. when Frey Starlight split the entire bay in half with a single strike. Allies and enemies alike could hardly comprehend what they had just seen. After bringing down Gavid Lindman and his allies, Frey Starlight immediately returned to the Empire's fleet using his teleportation. Standing among the crumbling soldiers of the Empire, he passed through them one by one, channeling his power to transfer aura to each of them. Thanks to his SSS-rank aura reserves, Frey possessed more than enough strength to support them all.

With every touch, a gentle violet glow flowed calmly, refreshing those who had been moments away

That violet glow was strange. Though it carried an ominous, cold, and deadly nature...

from death.

It brought a completely different effect to the Imperial forces.

He wasn't just transferring aura .. he was giving them much more.

With each pulse of that strange energy, the soldiers of the Empire began to understand him...

They began to understand the young man who had declared his name to the world before his devastating attack—Frey Starlight.

Unlike those monstrous warlords who fought blindly, treating the soldiers as cannon fodder... as worthless lives ..

He saw them. He acknowledged their existence. He gave meaning to their lives.

He was a mystery. Once known as the filthy Lord Starlight, the disgrace who should've died long ago...

The odd champion of the Victoriad, who was blamed for countless deaths the very day after his victory... the man who publicly insulted Emperor Maekar Valerion during his trial.

One of the vanguard squad's fighters .. Frey Starlight.

Until now, he was nothing more than a monster in their eyes... a small monster with far too much potential.

A criminal who should have perished, but was kept alive by the Empire's rulers, to exploit his power... to act as a shield .. and die when the time came.

Every single Imperial soldier present had their own negative view of him.

But strangely enough... all of it vanished in mere seconds.

The hatred, the resentment, the disdain—it all transformed into something entirely different.

With teary eyes .. some bleeding tears ..

The soldiers of the Empire stood one by one, their bodies lifted by the sheer force of Frey Starlight's aura.

Even if their limbs had been torn off... their guts spilled... even if they were burned alive...

Even if the pain was so unbearable it made them long for death...

They forced themselves to stand ..and followed him.

Through wreckage and ruin, they could not look away from him... as if bewitched by some unknown magic.

Even Selene was among them, trying to stay with them until the very end, even though she could no longer walk.

All she could do was push herself forward using her wind aura, dragging her body along the ground without a care for how she looked.

If that's what it took to stay near him .. then that much, she was more than willing to endure.

Out of 10,000 Imperial warriors, after the grueling battle they had fought against both the Nightmare Beasts and the Ultras ..

Only 4,000 barely remained.

Out of the 121 ships that formed their war fleet, 64 were lost.

Some were dragged under by nightmare creatures, others destroyed by enemy artillery.

The surviving vessels were in no better shape, and the waters they now sailed were no longer the cursed sea...

But had turned deep crimson from the horrifying amount of blood spilled by both allies and enemies alike.

Among corpses and devastation, the Imperial forces stood .. all behind Frey Starlight, following him blindly, entranced by a kind of sorcery none of them could understand.

Frey had his back to them... but then he suddenly turned around, his black eyes still glowing with that terrifying violet light.

"Soldiers of the Empire, the war is still raging. It is far from over."

Gripping his swords, Frey pointed Dark Sister to the right... and Balerion to the left.

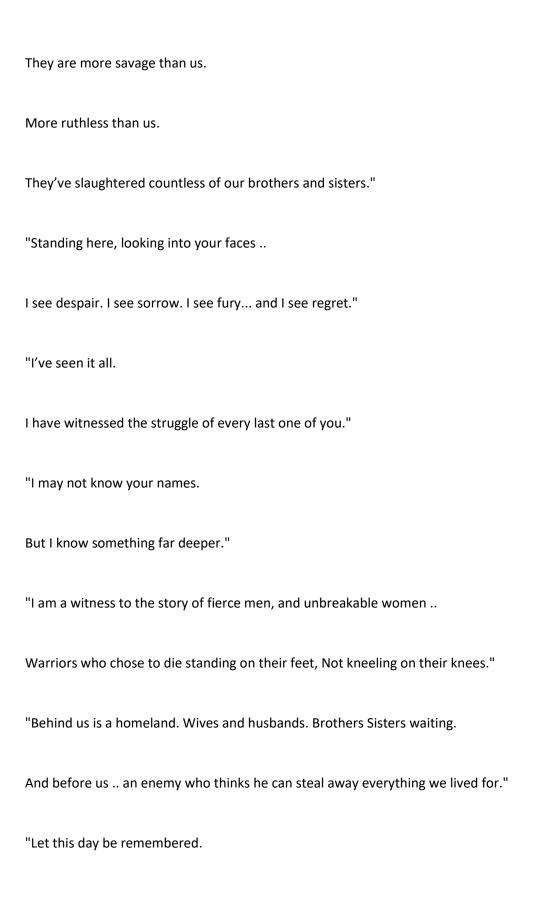
Surrounding what remained of the Imperial forces .. the enemy was still there.

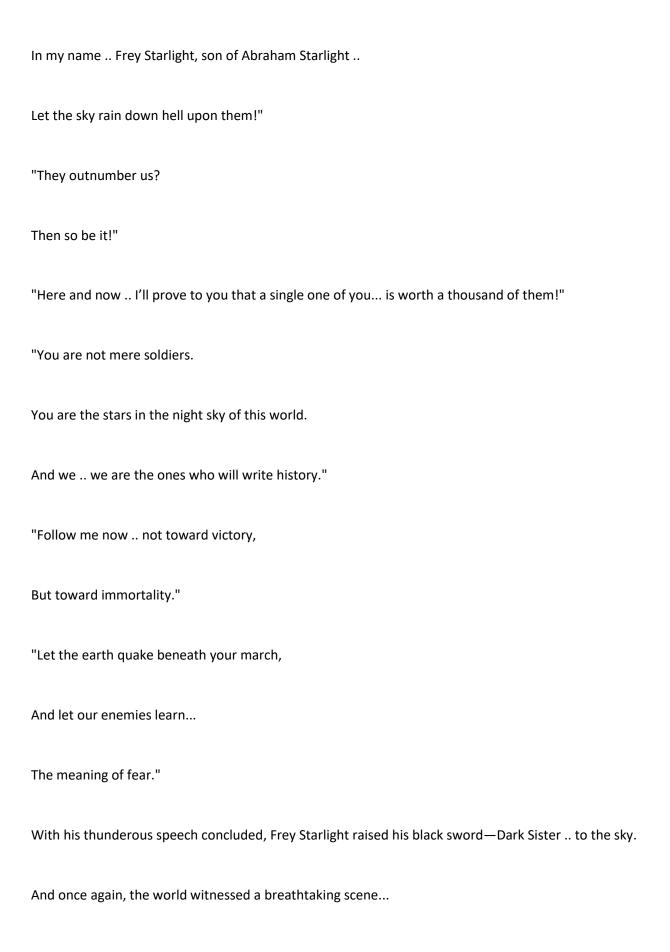
Frey's attack had only wiped out the forces positioned in front of them. He hadn't touched those to the left and right.

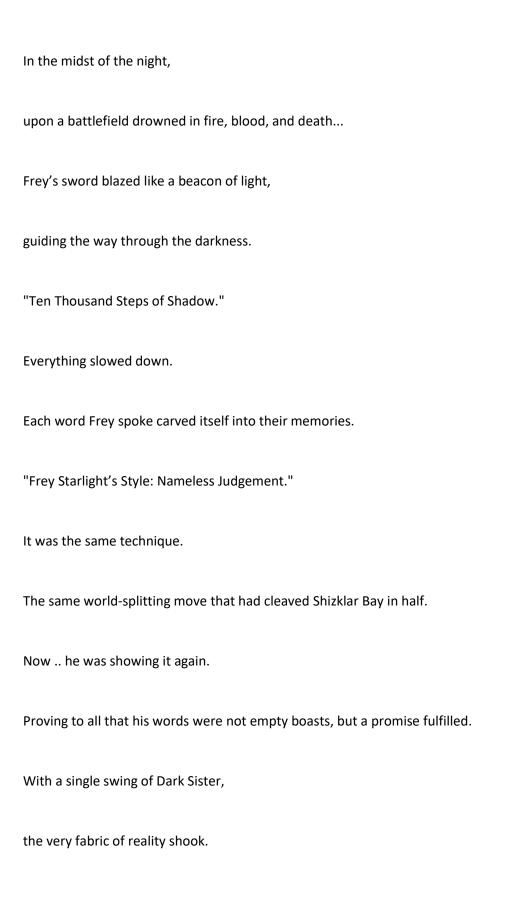
In other words, even though he had annihilated 15,000 enemies...

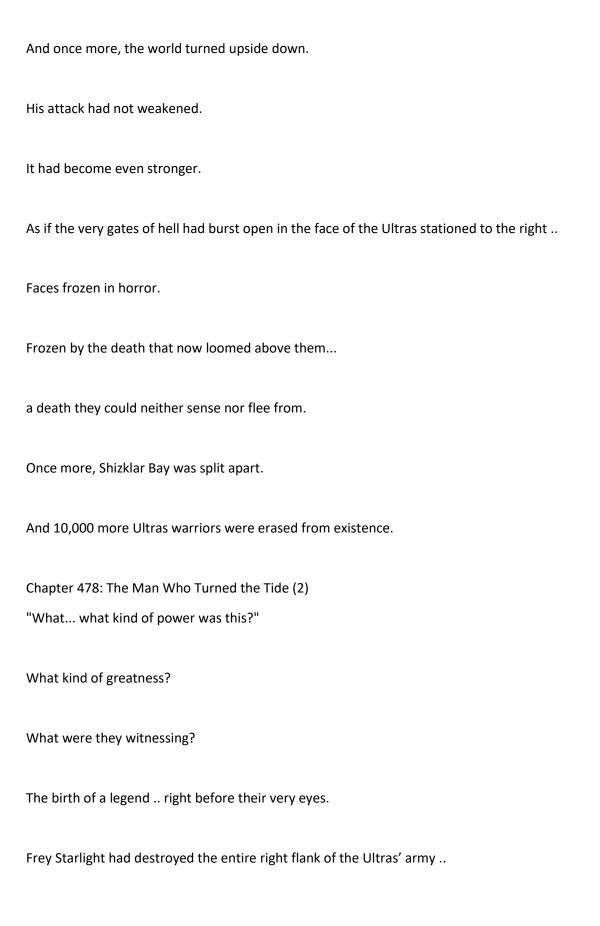
The Ultras still had 20,000 troops lying in wait.

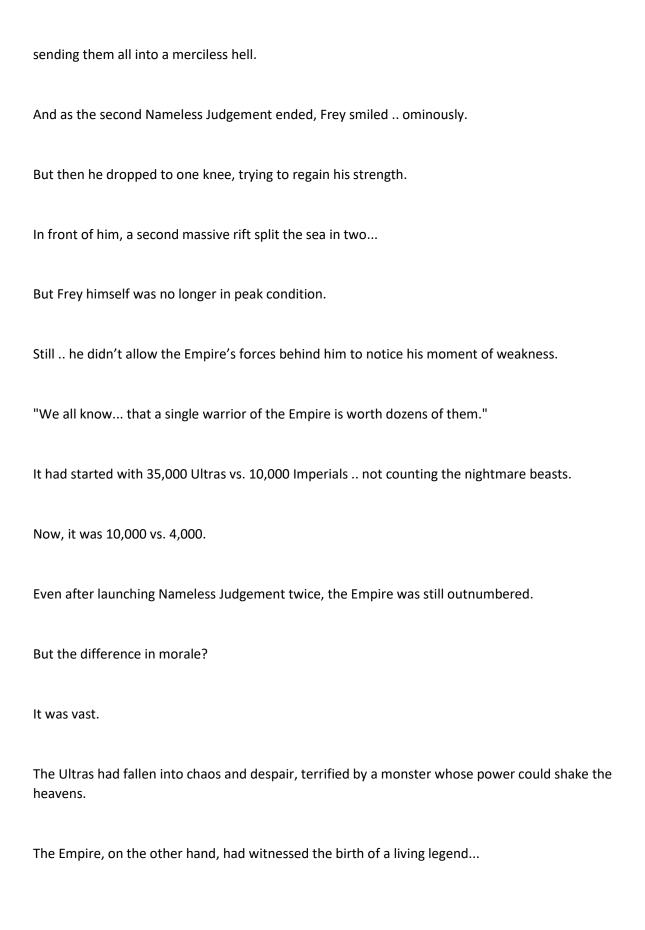
10,000 to the right and 10,000 to the left.
In short, the enemy still had twice the forces of the Empire.
Not to mention, the Empire had already lost 6,000 men
The Ultras had merely stopped attacking for the moment likely because they hadn't yet recovered from the shock of what just happened.
They had witnessed it with their own eyes
A moment in history so awe-inspiring, it would one day be passed down not in reports or books, but in legends.
Only a rare few in this world could annihilate 15,000 enemies with a single strike.
And unfortunately for the Ultras
one of them stood with the Empire.
A monster of the same caliber as Abraham Starlight himself once was.
Standing at the front, the man seemed capable of marching forward for eternity.
"Soldiers of the Empire,"
"I stand before you now as someone who's endured the same hell each and every one of you has faced."
"The enemy outnumbers us.

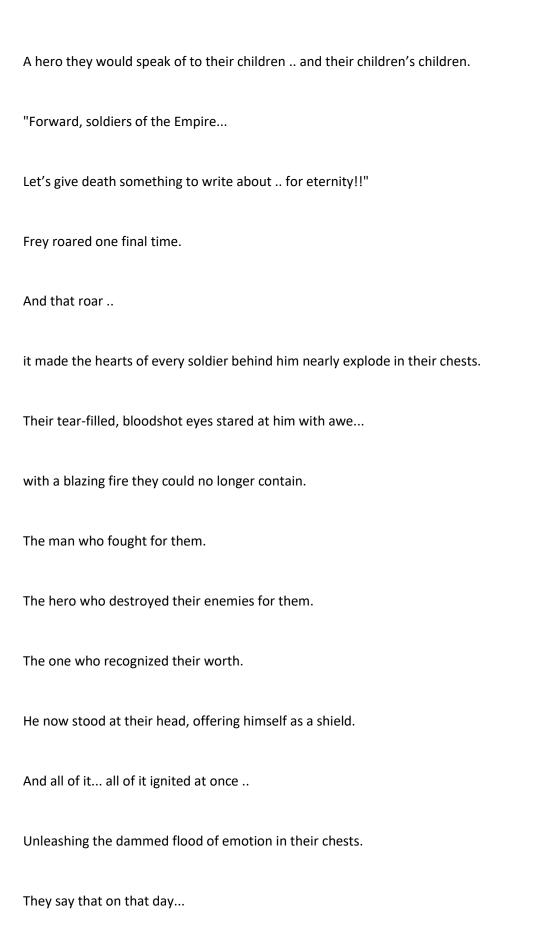












the scream of the Empire's soldiers was heard for thousands of kilometers.
It was as if they had all become monsters,
driven by a power beyond human comprehension.
They ran, ignoring their injuries.
They fought, unshackled from pain.
And as they did they shook the world
With a war cry that would echo through time.
Before the eyes of the Imperial Vanguard, led by Bloodmader
Snow and the others could only stand in silence, watching the breathtaking display unfold before them.
From beginning to end, they didn't understand a thing about what just happened.
The Imperial soldiers had charged forward, ignoring them entirely, following Frey and targeting the left flank what remained of the Ultras' forces.
Those weak soldiers who once had no significant role suddenly transformed into terrifying beasts that shook both land and sea alike.
At that moment, they looked ready to follow Frey to the deepest pits of hell if need be.

Even their own allies felt a chill run down their spines.
Let alone the enemies
Enemies who had just endured two consecutive Nameless Judgement strikes merciless and absolute.
"This is terrifying who would've thought a monster like that existed on the Empire's side?"
Standing at the bow of one of the ships, Emperine Maria gazed at the Imperial forces mercilessly slaughtering the Ultras so brutally that they made the Ultras seem gentle in comparison.
In that moment, Maria remembered something Mergo once said
That perhaps the answer they had long searched for lay on the other side.
Now, the Ultras were in total disarray. They had no idea when the next Nameless Judgement might descend and end their lives.
That fear and despair made them easy prey for the Imperial army, now burning with unshakable morale.
The Ultras suffered massive losses the moment the two sides clashed.
Magical artillery shells never stopped raining down from start to finish.
The Imperial soldiers poured out their strength until the very last drop, fighting no matter the condition of their bodies.
As long as Frey stood before themthey would keep moving forward.
No matter the obstacle. No matter the enemy. No matter the danger.

Many died in that madness.

But one thing was certain: the number of Ultras who died at their hands far exceeded that.

Within the Ultras' command, their leaders could do nothing but watch as the first round of war ended in total catastrophe for their side.

"How terrifying... that boy .. I'm not sure I could even defeat him if I faced him."

Positioned on one of the command ships, the Hollow Smough spoke grimly. His appearance was ragged ..torn clothing, scattered wounds across his body.

Unfortunately for him, Smough had been positioned on the right flank, which took the Nameless Judgement head-on.

Thanks to his resilience, he survived.

But even though the attack wasn't directly aimed at him and was launched from afar, he ended up severely wounded.

"He's worse than his father... I can't believe one man managed to completely flip the tide of battle so easily..."

Seated nearby was Baylor Moonlight, the new Lord of the Ultras, witnessing the rise of a new star within the Starlight bloodline.

In this critical moment of the war, even Lords and Hollows were hesitant.

They feared facing that merciless sword... and the overwhelming power unlike anything they'd seen before.

But what the Ultras didn't know... was that Frey had already reached his limit for using Nameless Judgement.

It was truly a transcendental attack .. Frey's current pinnacle.

But it wasn't something he could repeat, not even with his SSS-rank aura reserves.

After countless hours of ruthless training, Frey had confirmed: he could only unleash that attack once per hand.

Once with the left. Once with the right.

Any further attempt would cause his arms to explode from the sheer strain.

But his enemies didn't know that .. and that ignorance was what made Frey smile darkly as he continued fighting the Ultras head-on, with the entire Imperial army at his back.

He alone had turned the war upside down, saving the Empire from a catastrophic defeat.

The vanguard squad, led by Bloodmader, also joined Frey without hesitation, taking on the strongest of the Ultras.

Although the Ultras had superior numbers in the beginning, their forces were utterly annihilated.

Their soldiers fell one after another like flies before the fury of Frey and his allies.

Witnessing this dramatic shift in the tide—and calculating the staggering losses—the supreme commander of the Ultras, Gavid Lindman, found himself issuing an order he never imagined he'd utter:

"Retreat!!!"
With a roar infused with aura, Gavid Lindman declared the end of the first round of the War of Darknesswith a crushing defeat for the Ultras.
As if they'd been waiting for that order, the Ultras began retreating instantlyfleeing from the monsters that had devoured them alive.
But the Imperial soldiers gave chase for hours, without pause, without concern for their condition.
As long as Frey pursued the enemy, the Empire's warriors ran with him, relentless.
The magnitude of Frey's impact was immeasurablebut undoubtedly immense.
"Kill them!"
"Wipe them out and avenge all those who left this world because of them."
"Tear them apart!"
"Spill their blood, rip them to shreds in the most brutal way imaginable just like they did to your loved ones!"
"Destroy them!"
"Show them what true terror means make them feel what it's like to be hunted."
"No mercy! Show them none!"
Every word Frey shouted became an absolute command to every single Imperial soldier.

And that was what drove them to madness devouring everything in their path.
That night, countless lives were lost.
Too many souls drowned the Devil's Sea in red.
The death toll was insane, and the slaughter went on for hours.
In the end, after a long and relentless chase
The Imperial soldiers finally reached their limit, having burned their very souls dry in that battle.
Even Frey himself had pushed past his limits but none of it showed on his face.
Once they no longer had to fight, many soldiers collapsed on the spot, unconscious
Some dropped into sleep where they stood, overwhelmed by exhaustionothers simply died where they stood, their strength gone after forcing themselves to keep going for so long.
The final battle and the pursuit lasted eight full hours.
The first round of the war had lasted twelve.
Half a day in which the world witnessed unfathomable destruction and even more death.
Surrounded by piles of corpses, shipwreck debris, and the remnants of war
Only 21 ships remained from the Empire's once-majestic fleet.

The number of survivors barely reached 2000. Out of 10,000 proud Imperial warriors, 8,000 were dead. As for the 2,000 who survived ..most had suffered horrifying injuries, with many left in states between life and death. It could be said that the Imperial vanguard would no longer be able to fight in any battles anytime soon. On the other hand, out of the 35,000 soldiers brought by the Ultras, along with 3,000 nightmare sea creatures... Every single nightmare creature was slain .. and 29,000 men were exterminated. Lord Gvardiol had suffered a fatal blow, cleaved in half, and whether he would survive or not remained completely unknown. Although both sides suffered heavy losses, the difference between them was crystal clear. The Empire had won the first round. And it was all thanks to him .. The man who single-handedly turned the tide of war... Frey Starlight. Chapter 479: The Cost of Victory The first round had ended in a hard-fought victory for the Empire, but the war was far from over.

After securing that victory, Frey wandered among the remaining imperial ships.

Lord Starlight .. despite carrying the entire battle on his own shoulders .. had not wavered, not even once.

With steady steps, he walked like a king among what was left of the imperial forces.

This was the worst phase of the war: the aftermath.

After they had won... after the fire that had kept their bodies standing burned out...

The soldiers of the Empire collapsed, one after another, unable to go on.

Some broke down from the pain and sheer exhaustion.

Others wept bitterly for the souls they'd lost .. loved ones who would never return.

They had paid a terrible price.

Even though they had won, they could not rejoice in their victory.

All that could be heard across the waters of the Shizclar Bay... was the sound of sobbing, of silent mourning... and the caws of crows descending from the sky, as they always did, ready to feast on the banquet mankind had prepared for them.

Above it all, the giant birds that had once appeared from nowhere were now circling silently overhead, their eyes ..galactic orbs .. gazing down at the blood-soaked land of men.

The Chaos Eaters seemed to be thoroughly enjoying the sight.

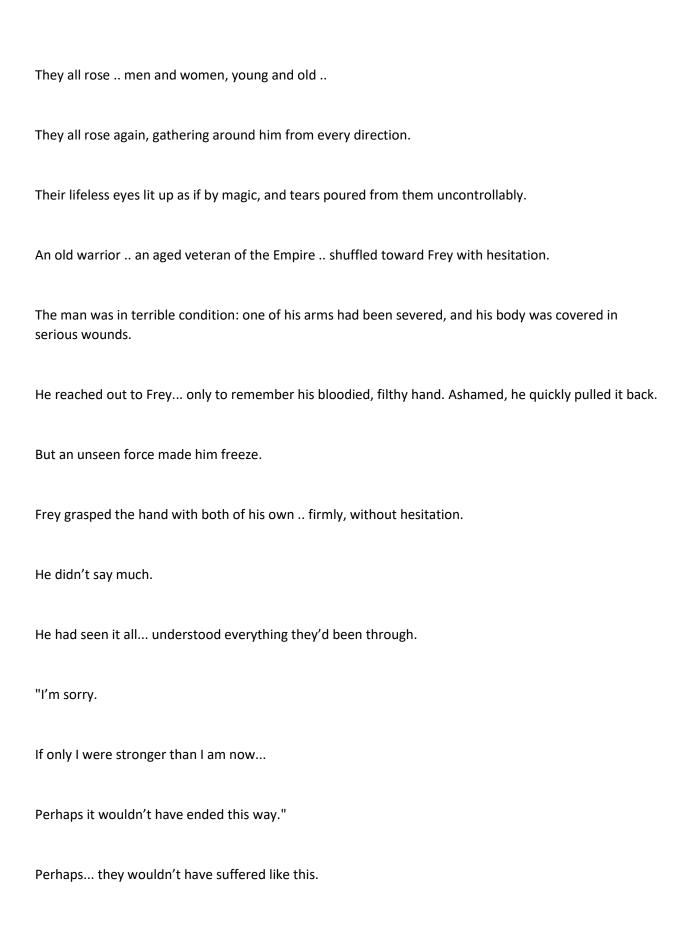
The eyes of the imperial soldiers looked lifeless... void of all spark. They resembled hollow souls .. mere bodies that had nothing left to move them forward. At the frontlines stood the special squad, still trying to process what had happened. Snow Lionheart and the Saintesses, Eurasha and Uriel, went from ship to ship, healing soldier after soldier with the sacred power granted to them by the Lord of Light. That blessed power saved many from the brink of death. Yet, even though their wounds were treated... The soldiers showed no reaction to Snow or the others. They didn't even look at them. Their hollow eyes simply stared into the void. Snow Lionheart hadn't said much since the start of the battle. He had fought relentlessly, cutting down both Nightmare Beasts and Ultras alike. It was his first true war .. and the impact it left on him was undeniable. He had never seen so much death and blood gathered in one place before.

"We would've been annihilated out there..."

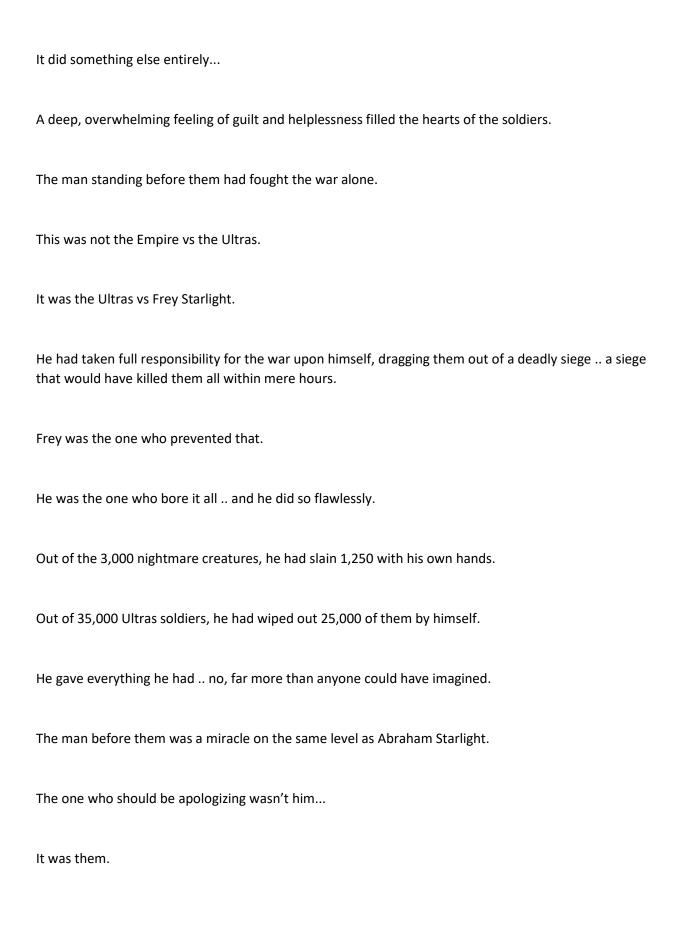
So many had died... and so many more would die in the future.

He had known that... and still, he couldn't help but curse under his breath.

Aegon Valerion's plan had put them in this impossible situation. The first round was bound to end in disaster for the Empire .. the enemy had outnumbered them three to one, not to mention the nightmare creatures they had unleashed during the battle. No matter how he looked at it, it had been a one-sided fight. Even if they gave it everything they had, they would've been surrounded and killed—helpless to do anything. That's what would've happened... if not for one person. In that moment, Snow turned his head and looked at the man who had changed the tide of history. Frey Starlight. The man was moving from ship to ship, checking on each and every soldier. The warriors of the Empire had endured far too much... so much that the light had vanished from their eyes. But the moment they saw him .. The moment they laid eyes on him approaching .. Snow witnessed something strange. The wounded knights, the Wave Controllers, the seasoned veterans .. even the lowly assistants whose names no one remembered.

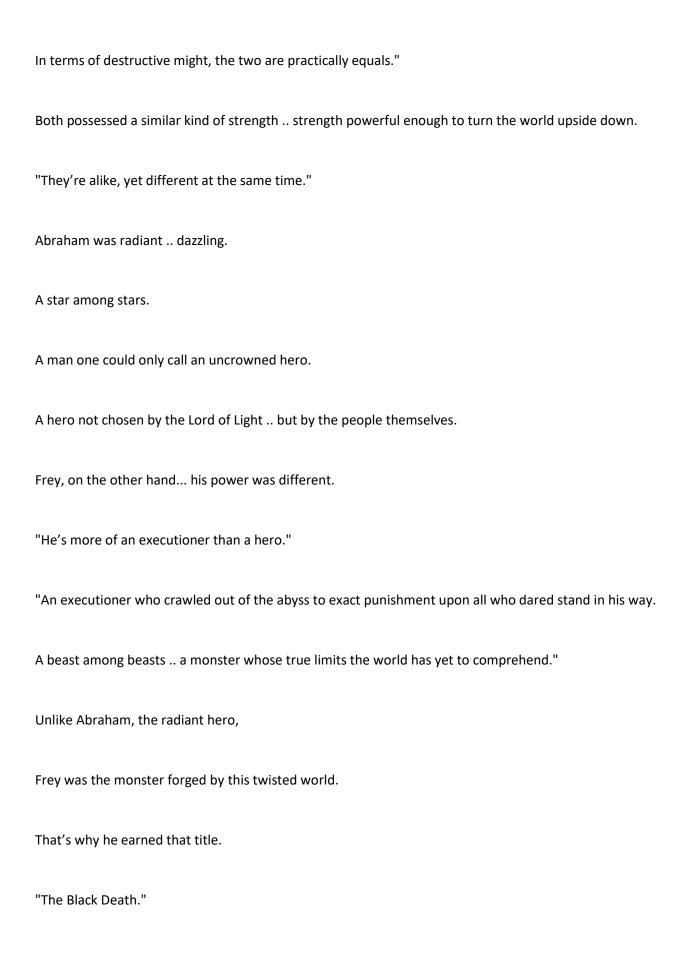


Perhaps they wouldn't have lost their loved ones and comrades to war.
Frey apologizedgenuinely.
He didn't blame them for being weak.
He didn't scorn their helplessness.
He didn't seek glory or recognition.
He blamed only himself.
And that hit them harder than anything else.
The soldiers all heard it clearly.
And all of them thought the same thing:
'What is this man saying?'
'He's apologizing?
Him, of all people?'
His apology brought them no comfort.
No



"Raise your head, hero," said the old man with tears in his eyes and a trembling smile.
"There is nothing to apologize for."
"It was an honor to fight by your side, Lord Starlight. I followed your back through this war, and I'll continue to follow you until the day I die I don't think I could ask for a better end."
Even if the world seemed to collapse before them
Even if their enemies were a hundred no, a thousand times stronger than them
As long as Frey Starlight was the one leading them they would follow him to the very end.
"We'll fight by your side, Lord Starlight!"
"We'll follow you to the end, Lord Starlight!"
"We'll die for you, Lord Starlight!"
Suddenly even though exhaustion had long since consumed them the soldiers began to shout once more, shaking the entire Bay of Shezclar with their cries .
Chapter 480: Echoes of the Battlefield
They surrounded Frey from all directions, chanting and roaring until their throats ran dry and they could shout no more.
Through it all Frey never said a word.
He simply walked among them a faint smile on his face.





A calamity that brings death and destruction wherever he goes. Staring at the wreckage left behind by Frey's ultimate attack, Phoenix stood in silence, his thoughts still caught on the lingering echoes of what he had witnessed. He had seen The Nameless Judgement before .. the second time it was unleashed. Even though it wasn't aimed at him... even though they were on the same side... He couldn't help but feel a creeping terror from the aura it released. It was unlike anything Frey usually emitted .. as if it belonged to someone else entirely. The soldiers couldn't understand it .. their level was too low to even sense such a thing. But Phoenix had glimpsed a part of it. It was... Strange. Cold. Dark. Ominous. No matter how hard Phoenix tried to find the right word to describe it... he couldn't. And who could blame him? He had never witnessed anything like it before.

But one thing was clear .. it had left its mark on him. It made him ask himself a question he never thought he'd ask. What exactly is Frey Starlight? He was a comrade .. a student Phoenix had personally trained. A great warrior fighting by his side .. for now. But what kind of future awaited them? Phoenix didn't know the answer. Frey possessed a magic of his own. He had made all the soldiers loyal to him. There was no longer any trace of the hated Frey. He had become the idol of hundreds... Without a doubt, they were now under his mercy. Whatever he decided from this point on would determine the fate of the vanguard unit. The war wasn't over yet, and their mission was still far from complete. After chasing the Ultras deep into enemy waters, the imperial fleet had stopped the pursuit some time ago. And yet, they were now closer than ever... Closer to the lands of the Ultras, lying just beyond the Devil's Sea. In other words... the second round was about to begin .. a round that would surely bring even greater horrors.

From the start, ten thousand soldiers were never enough, and they were never given the power they needed. This raised more than a few questions about Crown Prince Aegon Valerion's so-called plan.
It all seemed as if he had sent them to be slaughtered.
But they had survived — even won — which made it look like Aegon had succeeded.
A great victory with minimal forces.
But that wasn't the truth. Their triumph today was the result of one man's effort alone.
And yet, life had never been fair. In the end, the credit still went to Aegon.
Now, with barely 2,000 survivors, the Imperial forces continued their slow advance toward the continent of the Ultras awaiting the start of the second round.

Time passed quickly, and the first night since the battle of the Shizclar Gulf came to an end.
The Imperial fleet was still sailing slowly, but steadily, toward enemy soil.
Aboard the vanguard's ship, beneath a night sky studded with stars

Frey Starlight staggered down the steps of the vessel, one hand gripping the wall for support, heading toward his private quarters.

The Lord of Starlight had kept himself composed until now. He had fought the war, led the soldiers, stood at the frontlines... and won.

Even after that, he stayed among the troops. He walked through every corner of the fleet, shared his aura with the injured, helped them, gave them everything he could offer.

Then came a long meeting with Bloodmader and the others, where they discussed their current state... and whether they should continue forward.

That meeting lasted hours .. and ended with a decisive conclusion.

After such a victory, they couldn't afford to waste their efforts and return to the Empire, giving their enemies time to recover.

And so, the decision was made...

They would risk everything .. all 2,000 men .. to try and establish a foothold for the Empire on the land of the Ultras.

If they succeeded, the Empire's real army could follow, and the true war would finally begin.

Their role, therefore, was crucial... pivotal.

Frey had given everything until the very end. He hadn't wavered once.

But now, alone and away from all eyes... those shoulders finally collapsed as he opened the door to his room, stumbling inside with the last bit of strength he had left.

With clumsy steps, he entered the small cabin nothing but a bed and a plain desk inside.
He tried to throw himself onto the bed, but his legs gave out before he could, sending him crashing toward the floor.
Yet at the last second just before his head hit the hard surface
Frey found himself landing on something far softer than expected.
Then, when he saw the slender white arms catching him, he realized he wasn't alone.
With a hollow chuckle, he muttered weakly,
"Nice catch."