

Interlude - Field of Battle

Her spear cut another monster, opening up a wound in its side. It roared and turned in her direction, but before Kri could react, another warrior that she didn't recognize stabbed it in the back. She wasn't even sure if he was part of her Sect. Everything had turned chaotic. She had been stationed near the center of the sect formation, watching the front lines fighting and fighting only when a breach happened, which was seldom. A few stragglers managed to get through as well, and she fought them too.

Now, though, more and more monsters were coming through to the middle of the formation. The lines were buckling, they had already been forced to escort the healer back toward the city and there was fighting there too. The defenders were firing from their walls, they were getting pinned, and the monsters had gotten stronger.

Kri had gotten separated from her team in the fighting. Had probably moved to the area held by another sect as not only did she not recognize anyone, but there were warriors wearing colors that were different from each other too—which meant that they too had probably gotten lost in the fighting. She fell in with a mixed group of Lords, Monarchs, and a single Heavenly Realm Cultivator. And together they fought. They tried to fight as best as they could, buying time for the ranged warriors behind them to do some damage. But Kri could tell that they were losing ground. People were dying all around her, and she didn't even have the time to think. Just fight, swinging her spear and throwing her techniques out.

The sky to the side flashed with a flaming light, and Kri saw a large Phoenix fly down on the enemy forces in the distance, straight at an enemy General that was the size of a hill. It fired at the Phoenix, a beam coming out of a large single eye at the front of its pyramid body. The flaming bird flashed with even brighter yellow flames that wrapped around it and it pushed through the beam, then hit the General's eye and

entered its body. A moment later the General bulged and exploded in a blast of yellow fire that decimated the enemy around it. The blast reached Kri a moment later, the heat and the shockwave made her take a step back. The frozen layers around her and on her body evaporated. Kri turned her head to protect herself from it, but after a moment it was done. She turned her head back and stabbed another monster as the Phoenix rose in the air to fight a large swarm of flying monsters that led her further away in the distance.

Then, Kri felt the ground shake, and raised her head toward the new threat. A large monster, much stronger than what she could handle alone rammed through the team in front of Kri's, its horns bisected and carried a warrior with it before it shook its head and threw the person aside. It charged, a four-legged monster with six large horns growing out of its head, pointed straight at them. Kri channeled her technique and ran forward, she rolled beneath the monster and unleashed her **{Freezing Breath}**. She caught one of its legs with Absolute Cold Qi just as its foot stomped on the ground. It sunk into the earth, and she froze it and its leg. It stumbled, but broke out of her technique, but its hide cracked. The others took advantage to attack it from the sides. Green colored weapons stabbed into its side, and she saw its hide sizzle, then the undead Heavenly Cultivator got close his hammer flashed with symbols and then he smashed it across the monster's head, breaking two horns and sending it to the ground.

Kri got close then charged and as it got back to its feet she rolled beneath it, then hit her palm against its stomach, unleashing **{Absolute Dominion}**. Her Qi spread into the monster, freezing its flesh and blood. A moment later she stabbed through with her spear, breaking the frozen parts of its body. She barely had enough time to get out from beneath it with **|Enhanced Dodge|** before it fell on top of her.

She breathed quickly, mist leaving her mouth. She looked around, seeing more monsters coming. And then, she saw people running among

them, attacking other people. It took her a moment to realize that those were the mindless taken, charging along with the monsters.

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Hitor watched as everything turned to shit. The enemy taken had joined with the monsters behind them, the mindless ones with a couple of the smart ones supporting. The city was a shitshow. Karya and her daughter had been caught and hadn't been seen since, and Yirrel Annsi had joined the fight. Her defensive powers along with the Elder King had made their enemies far more durable.

Hitor was throwing his techniques at the Elder King, but after Yirrel used his attack to destroy the flying fortress of the Starlight Call Sect, he had restrained himself. He hadn't heard or seen Henna Rai Tarun, and was hoping that she hadn't died in that attack. They hadn't thought that the enemy had this many troops. They were very nearly matched with the Sect armies. And they had outmaneuvered them. The teleporter move was brilliant, even he had to admit it. From high above, he could see some of the enemy Generals wade into the Sect armies and kill many before they were taken down or just forced back. Their monsters were also far more terrifying. The Sects had made sure that everyone knew the doctrine for this fight. If someone died near you, the goal was to kill the monster that killed them as soon as possible, preventing them from pulling the soul from the Ethereal and devouring it. He cursed whatever thing had happened with the Ethereal Realm and why it didn't seem to be affecting the dome monsters. Still, even with that in place, many people had died a True Death today.

Hitor couldn't allow this to continue for much longer. They had to end the fight. Already he was seeing the breaking of order. Strong people were spending their aces to hurt their enemy, on both sides. They had to take advantage.

Down, below, he watched as Yirrel fought in the city streets along with a small team that were all of High Ranker strength. The Reges Ahn Sect and Weir Fo Fol were holding her down, pinning her in place, but they were in a stalemate. The Elder King was a greater threat. His ideal had armed every single one of the taken with superior gear. They were too hard to take down by people of equivalent tier now. And his oath had made them far more durable. The Sects were paying in aces or lives for everyone that they took down. And he had been using his Edicts to make everything harder for them. The storm above was tying up many of their fliers and elementalists, and he had also issued another Edict that made Class powers of the Sects less effective while not affecting those from his side. It wasn't quite a silencing power, but a suppression. It also didn't affect them as much as it would've a Class faction, but many of the Sects had secondary Class focuses.

Suddenly, one of the walls on the other side of Emaros exploded, stone and earth were thrown in all directions as a massive golden tree grew and sprung branches and white leaves. It seemed that Velorn Thorntail and the World Tree Sect had decided to fully commit. He saw the taken burn their own aces in response on that side of the battlefield. The city erupted and entire blocks were erased.

Everything had gotten out of control.

Hitor took a deep breath, then stepped on the railing of his fortress, he spread his wings and locked his eyes on the Elder King's position. Then he jumped, heading straight for his enemy.

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Tali slapped another flying monster out of the sky, pulverizing its entire front body and splashing its blood and gore across the face of another monster that screeched as it got in its eyes, blinding it. Tali flew through the air, running from a giant General that dwarfed the largest of

the sect flying fortresses. It was long and sinuous, like a flying serpent. One that could swallow buildings. Its hide was thick and powerful, rivaling even the Worldstone Worm that she and Ryun killed. At least it was slower and weaker. Though it had hundreds of smaller flying monsters around it, which leveled the playing field a bit.

The General had come out of the thunder cloud above, swallowed an Immortal Realm Storm Cultivator, and demolished a fortress that then fell on the army below. Tali had intercepted it before it managed to demolish another. She had smashed into it and gouged its eye out, then proceeded to run from it. She could kill it, probably, but she wouldn't. They were over the army and the fighting, if she killed it, it would flatten anyone unlucky enough to be directly below them. She was trying to lead it away from the fighting, or at least over the enemy army.

She felt the power building up behind her and twisted to see the General's mouth open and light gathering in it. She cursed and used her **Evolved Form**, turning into the **Grand Minokawa**. She sped away, the wind around her under her control sending her flying even faster. The General fired and Tali twisted away out of the way of the ball of energy that it fired. She saw it flash through the air incredibly fast, then hit a mountain in the distance and sheer away a piece of it.

A group of monster fliers came at her from the side, and she swatted them with her tail, turning them to gore with strength alone. The General was pushing hard now, getting faster. They were above the enemy army now, so she figured that it was time.

She turned intent to attack when a shape swooped in from the side. A massive bone dragon strafed the side of the General and blew a plume of pale blue fire that scorched its side and made it scream. Tali headed for the General's face, she smashed into it and clawed one of its eyes out with her legs while charging a technique in her wings. With a beat of her wings, she released a point blank and fully charged **{Empty World}** technique directly into its eye cavity. The top of its head exploded in a shower of black blood and the flying serpent started its fall to the ground.

Tali turned as the undead dragon came up near her, Eratemus firing a dozen bolts of blue energy from a wand that tracked and burned through the monsters flying around them.

“Tali!” He yelled, then pointed at the ground.

Tali looked and saw what he was pointing at. She cursed as she saw two fronts failing and the enemy pushing through, pinning the sect army against the walls of Emaros that were currently burning and had new rivers of molten stone running through it by the looks of it, and the Citadel which still had its shields active.

Before she could say anything. A bolt of thunder flashed from above, hitting the ground. She looked up and saw their forces there retreating, three more flying Generals had broken their defense against the thunderstorm. The wind picked up and the rain turned into a hail, lightning flashed all around them.

“You go!” Tali yelled and pointed at the ground. Eratemus glanced up, then nodded. His dragon whirled and he started his descent. Tali looked up at the Generals and the storm, then started her ascent.