

Divided They Stand!!

A single scroll slipped from Sinno's sleeve right into her right hand, one that was quickly thrown open to then reveal a picture of a scythe. Her left arm rose, her hand slamming straight into the paper; though rather than rip through, her hand simply vanished inside. The paper bled, black ink dripping onto the ground as she gave a heave. In seconds a metal pole was pulled out, a black one with a dark red rotating pattern spinning around the sides, five lines in total. The handle, made of a leather-like substance with foam grips. Another tug pulled out another length, revealing a slight arch in the middle with another grip just above, the pattern continuing.

One final tug and the head of a scythe ripped out, swinging to the left with her arm fully held out. The blade slammed down, as thick as a four-hundred page book. The blade work was painted, painted sapphire with black blade edges and the same red pattern on the top etched in. The heel arched itself, extending a certain point, bending back towards the snath at an arch of its own. At the bottom of the snath there was a click, a hidden blade launching out and quickly curving into a sickle-like end. A similar occurrence at once happened up top with a pike shooting out.

“Whoa-”

“Hoh? Blitzkrieg eh? You're getting vamped up for this now aren't you, Sinno. Heh heh, right right, I'm more than happy to get it on,” Satori chuckled.

“This girl is so cocky. Satori, shall we just annihilate this entire bloody team already? I'm so ready to just utterly rampage and slaughter them all.”

“Relax Carbon, it'll happen. Let 'em come at us first for the heck of it.”

Without another word Donavin stepped forward with weapon in hand, grumbling, “Ugh, they're just standing over there mocking us. Come on boss, let's just tear their freakin' heads off already eh?”

“Be careful Donavin. Satori by himself is a fairly skilled warrior. And as for that Carbon guy, I don't know a thing about him.”

“Which is why you'll need us as backup,” came the reply of Shurren who then stepped up alongside Sinno, Ellie approaching on the other side as well, both then stopping right in line.

“I'm pretty sure I told you both to help Shawn and the rest.”

“Sorry boss but come on, a mindless monster that’s strong or two probably just as powerful guys that can think. You threw us all on the monster so it’d go down fast so we could back you up, right? Or at the very least so you could take a peak at how strong that other guy is,” Ellie replied.

“Heh,” Sinno mumbled back with a smirk, “You noticed eh?”

“You have our support,” Shurren concluded, “With Shawn in charge that thing will die quick either way. It’d be stupid to take those guys on without proper backup.”

“HEY! We’re right here, dumbass!” Razor spat.

“Calm down Razor, we’re just Black Ops Soldiers. Without powers like them we can’t keep up if this turns ugly.” **Divided They Stand**

“Meh, I suppose you’re right.”

“Shawn, this alright with you then?” Sinno called back, her head turning just slightly to allow a glance back with her eyes.

“Hell, don’t worry about it. I’ve been devising a few new strategies that would go great with some of my new abilities. Just make sure you don’t lose before we wrap this beast up with a little bow tie and a little garlic butter sauce, eh?”

“Heh, of course of course.”

“Are you finished strategizing then?” came the call of Carbon, now on the approach.

“Sorry to have kept you waiting!” Sinno spat taking charge forward, the scythe slicing through the land behind as it was drug.

“So this is it then, the weapon you use to change everything. Tell me though, just another scythe? Heh... that last one snapped against the Emperor Mamba’s hide, what’ll this one do. Bend? Haha!”

“Heh, keep talking Satori, I’ll be happy to show you!”

With little wasted movement the blade ripped from the ground and was swung forward, slicing through the air swiftly right to the point where the two warriors stood. Both had shot back, the eyes visible behind Satori’s mask narrowed while those of Carbon were wide and wild. Behind and before Shawn’s group the Emperor Mamba shrieked out, its legs

carrying its charging girth. With the roar came acid spraying from the two side heads towards the group, coming down as a rain.

“Scatter!” Shawn shouted, his arms flailing out unleashing a gust of winds that immediately slapped the acid back.

Carbon chuckled, eyes locked to Sinno as she shot forward, “This would be about as good a time as any, wouldn’t you say Satori my friend?”

“Aiye, it most certainly would be. Time to end this farce,” he replied.

As Sinno shot through the air, as her backup pursued, a loud bang came from behind. Rock and debris rained down all around, a loud inhuman shriek penetrating the air. Flaps heard moving, claws heard scraping; Sinno’s eyes shot back to see yet another creature emerging from the ground that shot right at Shawn and the others.

A swishing spiked tail that ended with a large blade, a gator-like body with lengthy legs like a scorpion’s coated with metal. Three sets of claws per each back foot, five for the front, the claws metallic like blades. The body stood out as very machine, much like a metal Scorupi Mamba’s crossed with an alligator’s body. Large folded metal wings with thin flaps of some sort of material were visible, a large protruding neck, and then the head that perfectly resembled a cross between a crocodile and a crow though made out of mostly metal.

Sinno’s eyes widened, “{Ngh- a cyborg Scorupi Hybrid of some sort?!} Shawn watch out!”

Shawn’s motion stopped, his body quickly swiveling around just as the creature came down at him, its mouth wide open. Lightning at once surged up around Shawn, lightning that slammed straight into the creature. Its roar echoed, its body launching back at once though not for long. Across the ground it drug, its claws slamming into the ground striking hold, its mouth curving into a grin as it did so.

“Dammit, another noisy newcomer joins the party eh? Thanks Sinno!”

Ground crumbled behind Shawn this time, his back turning once more, “The Emperor! Sinno!” he barked out.

Sinno turned at once, her feet grinding to a halt. In the air moving straight over Shawn the Emperor Mamba had taken flight heading straight down at her now. Behind her now turned back came a chuckle from Satori, “Heh heh heh, as if I’d give you guys the time of day to carry out anything close to a plan. Our twin experiments are going to dance around your bones and devour your flesh, hahaha!”

“Heh I have to hand it to you Satori you brilliant madman, this is perfect. Now Sinno, be gone!”

“Suppose we should assist, Xerneas?”

“Perhaps Shiro, though this IS Shadow Squadron. I’d say they’ve got this handled.

Not far off from the battle stood two figures with flowing fabrics. The female, Shiro, stood in a white kimono with fur around the collar and at the ends of the sleeves near her hands. A katana rested at her side, a raven atop her shoulder, her white hair flowing before her sky blue eyes. The man beside her, Xerneas, stood in white pants and silver armor, gauntlets on both arms ending with claws, a large standard sword at his side. His hair black and waving, his eyes purple, shoulder guards in place with a black cape on his back.

“Let’s see how this goes, eh, Shiro?”

“If you insist.”

SLAM!!

The ground could be heard shattering, cracks spreading out in all directions.

“Sinno!”

“What?”

“What the hell-”

“WHAT!?”

“Did that just-”

A chatter of surprise flooded the area, the cyborg stopping in place before Shawn to turn back. Shawn stumbled back, Ellie and Shurren both leaping back and skidding, many of the soldiers looking on in awe. Carbon stood, his jaw hanging, Satori’s eyes enraged.

THUD!

KABAM!

Tails fell off in a variety of directions, seven flying passed into the group stationed around Frankie, some rolling towards Sinno's support, some even flipping up and over Carbon and Satori. Claws and arms dropped to the ground, blood gushing out everywhere. The lower half of the Scorupi Emperor fell to its side, organs and blood gushing out while just behind the upper torso fell straight back with arms and claws flailing in all directions. Screams left the two heads, the main one somersaulting through the air landing with a crash just behind Sinno.

Her scythe stuck into the ground, the blade dripping with blood, guts piling atop it and the snath. With little effort she quickly ripped it back with only one hand, the blade flipping around. The wide mouth of the back swung down, slamming straight into the back of the Emperor Scorupi through the middle. The two heads were cut off, both flopping down as did its remaining arms and claws. Without another word, her foot on the torso, the scythe was ripped from the back and flipped once more. Her steps echoed, turning back with eyes locked to the two assailants.

"It-it can't be. The Emperor's Hide is as tough as a plate of titanium!" Carbon spat out in shock.

"How the hell did she do that?!" Satori barked.

Behind Frankie stumbled back, head turning quickly, "Warrior Shawn, just- just what sort of weapon is that? What did she do?"

"Heh," Shawn chuckled, "I had forgotten how strong that thing is. Her scythe is special to order, made from Etonium."

"Etonium?" Nani mumbled, "I haven't heard of that before. How does it stack up to Titanium?"

"It's a super rare mineral valued at forty-seven point eight million credits for just under half a kilogram. Five times as durable as platinum with an even finer edge when made into a blade, and about half its weight. Her weapon in particular is probably worth just under a billion credits."

"How in the name of-"

"Supposedly it was left to her by her parents, which is why she hates using it. That weapon has so many hidden features and she can so effortlessly swing it around. It's remarkable considering the weight, almost as if it's part of her."

"Insane."

At a distance away the two assailants had become visible angered by stance alone. Carbon growled, his head turning to his side, "Grr- Satori, she just up and butchered the emperor with that thing-"

“Why haven’t I seen her use that thing before. Is it that she’s that determined to bring us down finally?”

“Well we’re now involved in a potential threat to the entire Celeste Empire so I’m sure she’s about as determined to capture or do away with us as we are determined to cut her down.”

“Dammit to hell!”

“Well guys, are you ready for this? Round two starts now!”

The Immortal

“Get back!” Shawn yelled, flipping backwards to which point he proceeded with constant back flips.

Where he had stood a large pike slammed down, that pike being the tail of the Cyborg Mamba. Its high pitched shrieking hiss came forth, the tail ripping from the ground at which point it launched ahead with a single bound. Down it crashed, the land beneath splintering, its shriek heard again with head zipping round and round looking upon each foe. Shawn with another flip landed atop both feet, twelve meters from the creature.

“Alright, let’s talk strategy, this thing is big and strong,” Frankie shouted at a distance away.

“Captain, I suggest you and your men go get the others out of trouble, that’s the plan,” Shawn shouted back.

“All due respect C-Class Shawn, I can’t just leave a soldier alone in battle!”

“Hey if I get into the drink there are others who can bail me out right now. Just go on, I’ve got a plan that’ll work better with quicker people!”

“Copy that,” Frankie mumbled, nodding to his soldiers.

Without word they turned, bolting off leaving Shawn now alone to face off against the creature. With another shriek it turned its head, eyes locked to him. A simple grin spread, his mouth moving, “Alright. Sinno, Shurren, Ellie, Donovan, Nani, and Razor are dealing with those two. I’ve just sent my *backup* away so I can cut loose. I should probably gain a little distance from the others before going all in though, my abilities are a little freaky at close distance to others.”

His arms crossed before him, the left pulling back allowing him to take a Tai-chi Stance, that grin growing sharper, “{That said, if I just aim it the other way it should be of little consequence. Alright, go time!}”

A final shriek left it, its legs sending it forward, tail thrusting over from behind its head. The tail buckled then blew, stretching forward with chains attached, spike headed straight for Shawn. As before his expression was present with humor, the grin and sharp eyes. Without another word his right arm drew back with hand forming into a fist, “Sonic Blast!”

His fist flew forward, the air rupturing around, rings spreading forward at speeds well over one hundred and twenty kilometers per hour. The rings, rings of pulsing air, slammed straight into the tail with such force that it blew back. The tail slapped the creature in the face, at which point it too began to tumble back from the force. A roar left it as it traveled back into the rocks, an avalanche of rubble falling down right upon and burying it.

Another rise of the fist and another thrust, this time down into the ground. Rock tore free and flew through the air, cracks blasting forward towards the burial site. Another slide of rock and another mighty rumble followed by the wail of the cyborganic creature. With another grin and a nod, Shawn turned his back to the collapsing pile to face the battle of Specter and Shadow Squadron.

With the clang of metal and the gash of electricity through the air, the battle was well underway. Carbon held a standard knight sword, double handed right down against Sinno's scythe. Off to their left Shurren & Ellie moved against Satori with joint attacks of electricity and fire. The two elements were spread across metal blades, standard, clashing against the twirling double ended Halberd held by Satori.

Shurren swung his crystal blade down upon Satori's twirling weapon, the weapon moved to block the slash. With another spin clockwise the sword buckled down, leaving Shurren vulnerable to the approaching second blade aimed right for his neck. At once Ellie entered the picture with her katana and a thrust, blocking the dropping blade of the Halberd to which Satori simply pulled back. With a back flip and a somersault, he moved away and landed with one end of the Halberd faced towards both enemies.

"You two have some skill working as a team. I'll have to break that if I hope to land a hit," Satori chuckled.

"Meanwhile you just keep dancing with yourself trying to look bad ass you bloody bastard," Shurren growled holding his flaming weapon out.

"A good defense makes for a legendary offense. My double bladed weapon is designed to parry and strike a blow with the spin. With my speed, one misstep is instant death upon its blades. But enough about me, let's kill you!" Satori laughed.

At that exact moment robed figures dropped down behind the two warriors, daggers being held out immediately. Following, the steps of Satori became very audible as he made his way forward with the sheathed sword clanking at his side.

CLANG!!

The very top of Sinno's scythe was struck, a knight sword pressed down against it. Carbon stood, both hands upon his weapon while only one of Sinno's hands was placed upon hers. Slight scratching, the struggle of metal being forced

against itself with a rattle with scraping on the ground. Her feet dug back through the earth while Carbon's slowly advanced with mini steps.

"Heh, two handed and you still block me with just a single-. Not bad, not bad at all. I have to say Sinno- that your talents are wasted with Celeste. Playing soldier for a fake good just- heh, you could be putting your all into something far grander," he chuckled with slight stuttering.

"Tch, I've told your guys before-" she growled back pressing her feet firmer, second hand grabbing hold of the snath, "I am a warrior for justice, I will not join a rag tag group of murderers."

"Murderers? Is it murder to rid the planet of corrupted disease? Ha!"

Carbon's right foot raised up, his leg arching at which point it slammed down.

CLANG!

CLATTER!!

Sinno stumbled back, her scythe flying high into the air with small rocks flying all over. Her arms up and hands open, her eyes opening a bit more. Between the two warriors rested a newly risen pillar of earth stretched four meters high, cracks splintered from where Carbon's foot slammed down right to the pillar. A grin spread across his face of vile intent.

His sword swung, the earth flying aside cut at the middle while Carbon shot ahead with his sword aimed right at Sinno's gut, "Too bad, you lose!"

Blood splattered the ground, a spray misting through the air. A deep groan and a crackle of what sounded like glass. The scythe struck the ground off to the side with the front of its main blade carving in. The two stood motionless, though only for a moment. Carbon's eyes shook, his head lurching forward with blood blowing out of his mouth.

With teeth stained red and eyes shaking he looked to her eyes, "H-how?!"

His sword's blade rested in Sinno's hand, glowing ruby red. The aura coated the hand much like a glove, this glove being what held the sword tight with fragments of its edge falling to the ground. Cracks spread along it, a slight flick of the wrist breaking off a chunk of it that rested in her hand. Just to the side of it Sinno's hand held itself just before Carbon's chest with a thick coating of the aura present in the shape of a blade.

A relatively large piece stuck out of Carbon's middle back, the entry wound filled with a standard sword-sized portion of the aura right through the middle of the chest. Sinno quickly pulled her arm back, the aura blade ripping itself out.

A few steps back and then a drop, Carbon fell down to his knees with the sword leaving his hands, both now resting in front of the wound, "My heart-"

"The texts call this Energy Manipulation of the Celestial River. Those with capable minds can transform it into a physical force such as this, perfect for surprise attacks and barriers. Sorry Carbon but this is where your game ends."

Carbon fell forward, his eyes rolling into the back of his head. Flopping right down into the ground, Carbon no longer moved as blood continued to pour out of him. Sinno looked down momentarily before turning away. With a stroll away from the body, she motioned towards her scythe to collect it.

"Holy crap, she got him good," Razor laughed.

"Razor, there's still one of them, that puppet guy, remember? Settle the fuck down," Nani growled.

"Haha, who gives a fuck. Shawn just dropped the monster and Sinno dropped a guy. That leaves just one sorry loser we can gang up on. Ready your weapons, we're going to back the other A Warriors up so we can get this over with," Donavin laughed pulling his weapon up onto his shoulder, "Huh?"

Rock tumbled just a touch, metal grinding against it. Sinno stopped in place with her own eyes shaking, her body being then pressed to the left. Her feet lifted off the ground the weapon she had come so close to falling to its side. A sword slammed into Sinno's side, blood flying from the striking point just below her right arm pit right into the ribs.

"Sinno!" Donavin yelled out, the wind blowing out around her.

Her body flew and crashed, crashed right against a tree with blood flying out of her own mouth. A huge gash rested on her side, relatively deep with bone and flesh from the inside now showing on the outside. A wail of pain, high pitched like nails to a chalkboard left with her voice quivering.

"Heh heh, ah sorry about that mate," came the voice of Carbon.

The three Black Ops looked with eyes big and mouths dropped, Razor shaking a tad in his boots. Standing right behind a puddle of Sinno's blood with his damaged sword held like a bat was Carbon. His grin revealed his blood stained teeth. Off multiple meters Sinno thrashed, her legs stamping down with force raising her just a touch to no avail, letting her drop down with flopping arms. Another high pitch scream left just as she tilted to her right, catching herself with her right arm quivering.

“Ah shit, looks like I didn’t go deep enough. Sorry about that Sinno, now you’ll have to bleed out!” Carbon laughed, his body positioned facing her with his back to the three.

Slowly he side stepped around to the right, his head tilting with eyes drifting letting one eye catch sight of the soldiers, “Hello new friends, do you play about as well as her?”

“How the fuck is this guy still standing!?” Razor spat.

“Hahaha! How? I’ll tell you how, hell I’ll spell it out. I’m immortal dipshit, one of the first that this mudball has genuinely seen. Not fake like a Vampire that has eternal youth, no, I’m talking full fledged tear my head off and I’ll keep walking immortal.”

“Gah! Dammit!” Donavin spat raising his weapon completely while taking aim, “Dust this bastard!”

Black Lightning flew forward with laser blasts, all traveling right at the unguarded Carbon who simply continued to grin taking the hits, “AHHHHH!!!!” Nani yelled out firing with twin guns.

“Sinno! Dammit!” Shawn yelled out bracing himself to dash forward.

A rumble occurred just behind, rock splintering and blowing apart. The tail of the cyborg launched itself up, narrowly missing by a few centimeters between his left arm and side. Rolling off to the right he quickly spun to turn, watching the creature rip its way straight out of the ground, “Dammit to hell, I buried this bastard!”

Behind many meters away Satori grinned, his mask’s lower half gone to reveal his mouth and part of his nose. To his front left were Ellie and Shurren back to back, breathing heavily surrounded by several dozen of the dolls. They swung out, Shurren’s sword cutting down one and then a second while behind Ellie dual wielded twin daggers that she plunged into the throats of many to little effect regardless of the electricity around them.

Satori took a step forward, glancing off to see the soldiers fire on Carbon, to then view Shawn dodging the strikes of the cyborg, and finally to the badly wounded Sinno, “Alright then. I suppose it’s about time to wrap this up. Any longer and Ghost will have our necks.”

The Unknown

“GAH!”

“Donavin!”

Donvain flew back, his weapon smashing to the ground in half. The soldier himself collapsed to the ground with a wide gash across his torso and with multiple cuts across his limbs. A grunt left him as slowly he stood up again, “Ugh, oof, shit! This guy is too much!”

With the words spoken he fell back. Standing before him, battered and bleeding, was Carbon. Despite the injuries and his heavy breathing he stood with a smirk, looking at the three around him, “Heh, heh heh. Oh this is great! I haven’t been hit like this by normal people in a long damn time. What else can you three do, eh?”

“Dammit, Donavin, get up!” came the yell of Razor.

“Let’s see, who goes next eh? Mmm, I pick-” Carbon began, stopping mid-sentence with eyes going back and forth between Razor and Nani.

“Me!” Donavin yelled, his hand in his pocket.

In a mere second Donavin pulled out a small handgun and opened fire. Carbon laughed as the bullets hit him, “Oh please, heh ha ha. You soldiers are so persistent. Haven’t you learned though that I can’t be killed?”

“Fucker!” Nani yelled, her hand pulling from her own pocket with a grenade in hand, “Donavin!”

The grenade was then tossed straight at a turning Carbon, his sword held up ready to swing. Donavin held his gun out, “Fucker, drop dead!”

KAPOW!

“Shit, my eyes!” Carbon bellowed, swinging the sword in the process, “Do you know how long it’ll take for those to heal!?”

BANG!!!

Just as it touched his chest it went, the blast blowing Carbon straight back with his sword flying from his hands. Back he crashed, slamming straight into the ground with the entire front of his body blown open. Blood and guts flew out, spraying all over the ground with bones tossed through the air to crash. His throat rested spewed blood, torn open along with

the torso. His jaw mangled, painted red with splatters of red straight up his whole face to the forehead nearly. On his back he remained, eyes shut.

“Oh my,” he gurgled, blood washing right out of his mouth, “That stings.”

His back arched, legs bending at the knee, hobbling onto his upper back as if he were somersaulting before his whole body sprung forward. Landing atop his feet the remainder of his organs fell, flesh hanging. His clothes flopped down leaving just his shoes and underwear on, “My my, what’s with you people?”

“H-how is he-”

“Here, let me show you,” Carbon mumble pulling from his pants pocket a pistol.

Carbon’s arm extended, the gun cocked ready to fire and aimed at Donavin. Donavin slumped back with quivering eyes, Nani’s voice heard, “Donavin!”

“Bastard!” Razor spat pulling the triggers on his gun to no avail as it was now out of ammo.

KAPOW!

“Uyahh!” Donavin yelped, falling backwards flat to the ground bleeding at the right ear.

The ear itself flopped to the ground, blown right off right beside Donavin. Both Razor and Nani took charge at once, their weapons dropped to the ground and simple combat knives then pulled out.

“Ah shit, sorry I have terrible aim with this thing!” Carbon laughed stumbling forward towards Donavin, gun held forward with a quiver, “Let me try again.”

The ground behind crunched, Carbon stopping. Slowly his head began to turn at which point the sound of something sharp flying through the air came forward.

“FWAHHH- the flying fu?”

A loud clang was then heard just behind Carbon’s body, the latter of which dropped to its knees. A thud could be heard, then the kicking of rock and a roll. The body slumped forward, collapsing straight to the ground with another thud. Behind stood Sinno, the grip and snath of the weapon in hand. Her wound continued to bleed, her breath heavy as she looked down upon it.

“Captain!” Razor yelled.

“N-Nani, help Donavin. R-R-Razor, them!” she groaned pointing with a slight quiver towards the fight with Satori and the others of Shadow Squadron.

With nods the two splintered off, leaving Sinno to drop to her knees. Just ahead of her rested Carbon’s head looking right at her, the eyes now open, “How did you move so fast with a fucking tear in your side? I cut you deep!”

With a huff and a slight grin she looked right to the head, “E-easily the four- fourth worst wound I’ve had. Not the worst.”

“What?”

“Satori didn’t say much, did he? Heh, been following me for years and he doesn’t share about me. Wh-when The Church found me I-I had an arm torn off and had my side torn wide open. My jaw and legs were broken... and to this day, I have no memory of how that happened or what happened before it. That, that was the worst.”

“The hell was the second or third?!”

“I got stabbed in the gut by a guy with a big fist and spiked gloves. Went right through me as if I were wet toilet paper. That was third. Second was when a bomb went off in my face. Nearly killed me.”

“Tch, only fourth worst compared to all that? I’ll have to work on my aim,” Carbon chuckled.

Sinno’s eyes shook, a figure rising before her. Carbon’s body had begun to rise, hands pressed to the ground pushing the whole back to its knees. With a slightly loft to the side it then stood, balance shifting until finally it stood stationary. Carbon chuckled, his head still on the ground, “Suffice to say, I told you earlier what won’t kill me. Take my brain off and I can still respond accordingly. Heh, really I can control my body like a wireless remote.”

“Y-you know, funny thing about immortals. Can you survive being turned to ash? If you don’t have a body to regenerate from, aren’t you dead?”

“I uh, well... shit. You there, kill her!”

The body stiffened, whirling quickly around on both feet with a firm stomp, arms out and hands at the ready to grab. Sinno simply grinned. Carbon raised an eye, the other half shut. Sinno then looked to the body and then to the head before going back to the body, “Seriously? Not sure if the command was just a trick or not but, heh. A body without a head is still not much of a threat.”

“Still enough to kill a blabber mouthed bass!”

Ripples of air punched forward, visible as rings of distortion. These rings slammed straight into the armor of the Cyborg Mamba, enough force behind those ripples to blow it back yet again. With but a flip though it landed, claws dragging across the land.

“Damn this thing has some tough armor. I can’t even get near it to use my technique on its body. Ugh, if I could just touch it,” Shawn mumbled.

A shriek left the creature, its left back leg scrapping at the ground, the beast sent lunging forward once more. Shawn rolled right, narrowly evading as it skimmed on by, chomping through the air. It rolled, tumbling before collapsing back on its feet. Shawn on the other hand simply tumbled onto his side, “Blast it, there has to be a way! Tch. Oh?”

The creature let forth a hiss, its throat inflating and deflating more than just a bit, a heavy breathing audible. Shawn blinked, looking right to it, “It’s... tired? How in the heck? Oh wait, could it be that its cybernetic pieces don’t help its stamina? Heck, why not, maybe they even slow it down more!”

Shawn took stance again, standing at the ready holding his breath while the creature let out a low growl. Shawn grinned, “{Add in the rocks, the blows, heh. This tank isn’t so tanky after all!}”

Another roar then left the beast, its jaw snapping as it once more shot at Shawn.

Satori’s head shifted, looking off at the individual fights. At present Carbon’s head was still on, at present Shawn was still flipping around, and at present Ellie & Shurren were still fighting many dolls.

“HA, HYA, HRRRAAA!” Ellie yelled, her twin blades flinging around wildly.

The blades had turned black and grown longer, slamming straight into the dolls and carrying on to impale others. Behind Shurren shot around, slashing and burning away the enemy.

“What’s your count at Shurren?”

“Eh, you know, twenty-six.”

“HA! Twenty-seven.”

“You suck!”

Both moved back to back again, their weapons held out as dozens of cloaked figures stood around them a fair distance out to avoid being struck down early.

“That said, I think we’re in trouble. These things are multiplying Ellie.”

“Tell me something I don’t know Shurren. That masked bastard keeps spawning in more of them.”

“At this rate we’re the ones who’ll be cut down Ellie. Your sword skills are getting sloppy and I’m about out of fire and stamina.”

“Damn. These guys caught us off guard and tore half of Shadow Squadron away. They planned this perfectly. What are they, A-Class in level?”

“Class has nothing to do with it, they’re just that damn skilled. On your right!”

Two of the dolls moved at Ellie’s side, two that were quickly slammed down with blades at the tops of their skulls, Ellie’s body turning with a swing decapitating them at once. As those two fell, more came in, the crowd around the two warriors growing with Satori off to the side watching with a cocked head, “Well, they’re persistent I’ll give them that. Heh heh heh,” his voice echoed, “Things are going well for them.”

Glancing again he watched Satori’s body flip back up, watched as his dolls ran at the charging Razor and the downed Donavin with Nani at his side, watched as Shawn fumbled dodging the tail of the Cyborg Scorupi, “Heh, but at this rate, it hardly matters.”

Power of the C-Class

“You’re a fool Satori,” came the call of another.

Standing just behind Satori at a glance away was a soldier dressed like the three Black Ops with Shadow Squadron. Satori turned, head moving so that his eyes might rest upon the individual, “Oh? Another one? Heh, like cockroaches you people just keep on coming. Alright, humor me, how am I a fool?”

“You people just don’t get it,” the individual said raising a rifle with one hand, held with the barrel lined up with Satori’s head, “Shadow Squadron isn’t your typical squad. You think Sinno is so weak that she’d fall to tricks like those that the immortal guy is using? Yeah he got a clean shot on her due to a ridiculous power but she’s more than that. And what about Shawn? The man has the potential to lead a squad of his own due to his cunning, if he just weren’t so lax in Sinno’s squad it’d have been arranged. Heh, and those two fighting your dolls? Please. Surely you see that they both could go a lot further than what we’re seeing, eh?”

“Surprised with a near fatal strike, worn out due to being too lax up front, and fighting tooth and nail against a bunch of my dolls. You sure that’s me being a fool, judging them for that?”

“Really I’m just surprised that you can’t see through what’s right before you, buddy. They’re C-Class Warriors and you think they’ll be taken so easily? Ha! I’ve worked with this unit since Sinno founded it. It’s full of prodigy.”

“I’m sorry but who are you?”

“I’m Sapphra, a Black Ops unit of Shadow Squadron.”

“Well the name isn’t all that important since you’re about to die but ok, I can go with that,” Satori chuckled turning around.

“Let me ask you something before we begin this dance.”

“Oh? And what’s that?”

“Do you even know what a C-Class Warrior looks like in battle?”

“Am I supposed to care when we’re dominating four of them? No, what I’m more so curious about is how easily we can vanquish your S-Class Warriors. They might put up a proper challenge.”

“Funny you should mention that when really they’ve just been going easy so you wouldn’t run off until the rest of Shadow Squadron surrounded the place.”

Satori’s head fully turned, his eyes visible and rather big, “What?”

“Yeah, and that’s why I’m here, to give the signal,” Sapphra giggled aiming her gun up.

BANG!

Satori whipped around at once, his eyes first locking to Shurren and Ellie, both of which let their heads perk up.

“Finally, I’m tired of this crap!” Ellie spat.

“Tear them up!” Shurren laughed.

Ellie flickered in place and vanished, all at once followed by five of the dolls flying high up into the air being smashed to pieces. Ellie became visible among the five and dropped down into the cluster with a tornado spin. Her blades cut clean through multiple as she at once began to step around, practically dancing with one sword flying down slicing one doll in half, the other blade going horizontal cutting it at the waistline.

Shurren on the other hand shot forward, his sword bursting with flames as it then slammed straight into one, then two, then three, then upwards of eight dolls at once. Four in a row, two rows, smashed in half at the waistline with fire roasting them to bits. Shurren shot forward with a leap into the air and swung down, “Dancing Ash!”

Thrusting the blade’s tip down into the ground, five streams of fire fanned out to become walls of traveling fire that quickly engulfed the dolls nearest his position. Many collapsed as Shurren heaved his sword out of the ground and swung again, this time smashing through the heads of those before him. The two warriors shot left and right of each other, swirling around with their blades swinging. Fire left Shurren’s mouth in a cloud, slamming and blowing well over a dozen dolls away which began to turn to ash.

Shawn’s arms spread as the creature charged him, howling out. Ducking down he narrowly avoided the tail’s strike at his head, his arms bending and wrapping around the tail, “Here goes, Splicing Echo Wave!”

The creature let out a sudden wail of pain, its tail sparking out with electricity surging everywhere along with cracks. In just a few seconds pieces blew off at one section, then at another, and lastly the tip shattered. At the tail end of the

assault the tail fell right off, blood and oil spewing out of the base where it had been attached, the shriek piercing the air with pain for once. Twirling the remainder of the beast's appendage, Shawn at once sent it flying off before turning back to face the creature's stumbling physique.

His arms flew out, his fingers bent around the palm though still out exposing just the bare part of his hands to the beast, "Rippling Sound Tsunami!"

The ground beneath him shattered, waves more than visible as a stream of misty white clouds launching forward. A sonic boom. The beast howled as it was caught up in the strike, blown far back back into the rock that blew apart and shattered all around; more and more of the rock in turn falling straight down upon the impact site further burying the cyborg.

Carbon's right arm swung forward at Sinno, the latter of whom grinned in full with a bit of blood to her teeth. Blood flew into the air along with Sinno, her scythe flying up with the butt of the blade having just cleaved through Carbon's arm in one strike. She hovered, two meters off the ground with both hands on the weapon, bringing it straight down on the body with a solid strike. Slamming into the ground, the remaining blood sprayed from Carbon's body off in all directions as it then split in half down the middle.

With a crunch and groan, the oozing drip of blood, it fell, the left half going left and the right half going right. Carbon's head rested just beyond, his eyes full of shock, "What the flying fuck!?"

"Flying fuck indeed," Sinno chuckled.

At once she stood behind Carbon's head, her foot flying forward straight into the back of his skull. A shock wave blew through the air with a light cloud of dust, the head flying straight off at Satori.

Satori turned just as the head of Carbon slammed into the ground at his right, "What?!"

"Guhhhhhh," Carbon groaned as the dust cleared.

"Oh come now Satori, did you think I hadn't changed since our last encounter all that time ago?" Sinno's laugh came forth, heard with the question.

Just six meters away she landed following a leap, landing right down with her scythe held reverse grip behind with the tip of the main blade facing the air. She stood tall, the wound at her side glowing ruby red, “Will admit that Carbon’s immortality surprised me, definitely hurt like hell and still does. But you know what’s worse? Letting you body my team.”

“How are you even still moving?! That hit your bones, it dug deep!” Carbon spat.

“She fastened herself a little cast around the wound by shoving her energy in it,” Satori growled.

“Right you are. See, it still hurts a lot but when you plug the hole it isn’t anywhere near as bad. Takes a bit of time though to solidify the energy into physical form like that, a good temporary fix. Oh and in case you couldn’t tell from Sapphra’s comment,” Sinno began.

As she spoke Shawn landed right beside her, at which point Ellie and Shurren began to approach by walking with other Black Ops soldiers coming into view. In fact, the whole of Shadow Squadron had arrived again, its near thirty members. Finally multiple normal soldiers came into view, Frankie at the head just behind Satori with a pistol held out.

“We played you,” Sinno concluded.

“Grr, but why?!”

“Isn’t it obvious? Need I repeat myself?”

“Wha-” Satori murmured, eyes shaking a bit.

“Quote, *Satori knows what we want to know about these mountains, I guarantee it. If we capture him, we’ll bring this operation to a swifter end and save countless lives in the process.* Ring any bells?”

“Ah shit,” Satori chuckled.

“And I believe you said that that’s if you let us capture you, right? Well, we had to buy time for everyone to circle back. Truthfully, that was Shawn’s and Dawn’s idea from the start so a big thank you to them.”

“Well, heh, I’ll hand it to you. In any other circumstance, you’d have just won but as is now-”

“As is no- wait what?!”

The color of their skin had instantaneously left the two, replaced by only the color of wood. Below Satori, Carbon’s head had turned to that of a doll just like those that Ellie and Shurren fought off prior. Satori’s body itself collapsed backwards and fell to pieces, the mask falling off to reveal a wooden carved face with a movable mouth joint.

Shawn at once stepped back in shock, “Gh- Decoys?”

“Much more than that,” Dawn mumbled, “They had no chance to pull out and swap.”

“Then this must be one of Satori’s abilities?” Shurren mumbled.

“Hahaha!” the Satori doll laughed, “Even at only forty percent of our power, you people still can’t catch up. This was good and fun but time is ticking down. We have far too much to accomplish before the next moon. Ta-ta, ahahahahahaaaaa!”

The mouth piece fell, rolling from the head of Satori’s body. Frankie stepped ahead, brushing by Shawn and Sinno. At the edge of the Satori body he kneeled down, looking it over, “This was, yeah. No doubt a technique that let him graph his and his partner’s forms onto mannequins. They then likely gave them some of their power. Tch- you guys got beat up for nothing.”

“Dammit, for real?” Donavin groaned limping forward, supported by both Razor and Nani.

Sinno dropped to a knee, her scythe clanging down with her left hand over the wound caused by Carbon, “Sinno-” Sapphra called out.

“I’m fine. Geh... s-still. We prevailed. Shawn, is the cyborg down?”

“Out cold, I made sure to not kill it completely.”

“Good, maybe we can learn from it. Captain Frankie, call in an Air Ship for pickup. After taking that mess on and dealing with the Scorupi for so long, I think we need to be pulled out for some rest. Not going to lie, this wound is starting to kill me.”

“Figuratively or literally.”

“Yes,” Sinno laughed.

“My my,” Shawn mumbled, “What a pain this whole thing has been. Still, we did good. We did real good everyone.”

The Campaign

“What I fail to understand is why we let a band of children lead the initial charge. Yes, Shadow Squadron is legendary despite being mostly C and D Rank warriors but they are still only children. This can not be ignored,” came the grumbling of an old man, echoing as if through an old mic and out dying speakers.

“Priest Merek, with all due respect, Shadow Squadron is a powerful group led by a prodigy child. Sinno Murasame is beyond exceptional and has the makings of a future S-Class. In fact, the majority of her squad has that potential to become at the very least A-Class,” came the reply of a slightly elder female.

“Your Revelations bums are nothing short of exceptional Miss Victoria but they are still naive. Though Shadow Squadron’s reputation is, as you state, strong and exceptional... they are but kids yet you see, easily folded in the face of raw experience,” Captain Damerick grumbled.

He stood at the foot of a large table, glowing and full of color. Life glowed right off the top, holographic images present. Towards Damerick there were trees and flats, while at the other end by Victoria and several others there were mountains.

“My soldiers have seen battle, they’ve stared death right in the face. This pack of rats is nothing. They are some of the lower rated agents as well, C’s and D’s. You even added Black Ops to keep them in line it would seem,” he continued.

“Experience with what? They’re fighting mere monsters when they’ve trained to fight Darkling. I would say they are more than ready for what is ahead of them,” the woman replied once more.

“Black Ops is stuck with them as backup in face of certain situations. We do not need our stars fighting off every little thing they come across when they should be reserved for the bigger dangers,” another man spoke.

“All due respect Priest Merek but at this point we have gone far without deploying S-Class into the field,” came the reply of General Taido, “As you can see by these graphs-”

All at once the table flashed, displaying multiple new images. The table had divided its colors into three, a blue section, a red section, and a green section. Both displayed sectors of mountain, each complete with sections of displayed soldiers. Red was massive, green had few, and blue sat in the middle. The soldiers charged ahead, crashing through images of Scorupi Mamba.

The colors flashed, changing again. Yellow, pink, and purple. Yellow displayed Shadow Squadron against the Mamba. Pink displayed five individuals unleashing a barrage, the Mamba being torn apart by hand with minimal effort as soldiers stormed by. Purple displayed twenty of various shapes and sizes flooding into a flood of Mamba in the mountainous terrain.

“As you can see, A-Class with just five are sufficient at opening a path, B-Class have taken on a nest’s worth of Scorupi Mamba, and Shadow Squadron has done their fair share. And with the information brought back by Sinno’s team, we can now save more lives and better prepare ourselves for battle.”

“And what information is that?” came the response of an ordinary looking man, present via hologram like many of the rest at the table.

“That the Specter Organization is involved Representative Hadin,” Taido concluded.

“Specter? I am not aware of this order. Do explain.”

“Specter is a terrorist cell comprised of multiple C-Class and B-Class operatives that appears to be testing technology to control and mutate Scorupi Mamba. Sinno’s Shadow Squadron all reported their findings, a super beast of some sort that proved to be quite a match for whoever went up against it.”

“Fascinating that some would attempt to control the Mamba or any monster for that matter. Must be some pretty hefty technology,” Merek mumbled.

“Quite. I wonder where they are getting such a bounty from.”

“We are uncertain of that information at this point Representative; though their supplier must be as advanced as us. An enemy empire perhaps?” Damerick questioned.

“Specter’s agents are strong as well. Some of them appear to even be immortal or raisers of the undead. Sinno has encountered them a multitude of times according to our information and her own reports. So at present, it is hard to say how this might go. If they are involved in the Monster Mountains then this operation will be lengthy once we truly get underway,” Taido concluded.

“Remember General, this operation is costly and important. If you can’t accomplish it, then we will find someone who will,” a young male growled.

“I am aware Representative Zamora. I accept full responsibility for the success and or failure of Operation Avalanche. With the present number of assets, failure is not an option,” Taido stated.

His head turned and his eyes locked with those of Hadin’s hologram, “That said Representative Hadin, I have a favor to ask of you and the Northern Army.”

“And that would be?”

“My plans are of course to nail the center of the Monster Mountains right in the North East and spread. The problem is that my army is only designated for the Eastern Regions. I need General Revan’s Northern Forces to assist as this operation heads North, since this overlaps with his sector.”

“Very well General, I will have your request granted and update General Revan of the situation. For sake of this pacification I will also deploy more agents of the Revelations Project,” Hadin said as his hologram’s eyes danced over to the sight of Victoria, “Provided the head of the project is fine with such a request.”

Victoria nodded, “Of course sir. I will pass this along to my superiors at once.”

“Very good. Well Taido, there you have it.”

“I thank you for the support Representatives, Directors. With that though I must adjourn this meeting. I have other matters I must discuss with my teams in regards to Operation Avalanche,” Taido concluded, once more.

Nods followed his words and one by one the many figures around the table would begin fading out. The Representatives and Victoria would all depart, then other operation leaders. All that remained were the General and two behind him. Those behind stood with crossed arms, silver hair dangling before blue eyes, a set icy and the other deep.

Taido turned to the left, pausing momentarily with his face facing the floor before him. Slowly it shifted as he continued, “So... Xerneas, Shiro, that good?”

“Of course General. We wouldn’t have it any other way,” a female replied.

“Good, good. Then with that I suppose we had best get back to Shadow Squadron and tell them of our own decision in regards to Specter based on their report.”

“Roger!”

Specter

The table sat with not a glow, yet surrounded by many bodies. Shadow Squadron, Black Ops included, stood at attention before General Taido across said table. Several others stood in place in addition with the General, all Commanders and Captains for the most part. Holograms were present displaying many others around the table; though the bulk were still in person. In addition to them, there stood Sinno right alongside the General.

Several broke way from the General, taking up places around the table. Sinno looked out from the head across the slew of individuals, scythe bound to her back. She stepped ahead, stopping front and center at the table, looking out across to the many faces present. With a nod, she began.

“Alright. As stated by General Taido, I am going to give my knowledge on the Organization known as Specter,” she began.

“Cut the formal crap,” one of the Commanders before her barked, “Dunno bout most of you but with this situation, who cares. Being formal is just time consuming.”

“Thank you for the input Commander Forrest. Well Sinno, you heard him,” Taido yawned.

“Er, alright uh, thanks. So, Specter is a group of terrorists like General Taido said made up of some strong guys. I’ve encountered them many times since becoming a D-Rank, especially since becoming part of Shadow Squadron. The two we ran into earlier, Carbon and Satori, they are some of Specter’s strongest.”

“If that’s the case then why are we worried?” came a bark from another standing woman, “We B-Class should suffice if you C-Class were only struggling a little bit.”

“Sorry to disappoint but they are much stronger than that. I’ve seen Satori fight far harder than what he did with us. I suspect it was both as a test for his new creature and to not attract stronger people who are able to sense power,” Sinno growled back.

“Pft, whatever.”

“I’m not joking to make us look better, I mean it. Satori is capable of reducing villages to ash or worse. I’ve never seen him at his max. Carbon didn’t seem too far off either, plus he’s immortal. Specter is mostly comprised of C-Rank and B-Rank, but they definitely have A-Rank in their upper echelon. I also know that their leader is known as Ghost and he’s supposedly able to bring the dead back to life.”

“Impossible. Immortals are one thing but reviving the dead!” that same woman barked.

“Trisha, no one knows for sure except the members of Specter. Supposedly there are twenty-one of them. Specter’s goals as of now are unknown, so it is hard to say in reality what they’re up to. What I do know is that they are dangerous. If they could mass produce that Mamba my team fought, the soldiers would be pulverized.”

“And just what exactly would be the purpose in mutating an army of monsters?” came the question of a Captain.

“From what I’ve gathered, to create weapons to use against us for themselves and enemies of Celeste. Again, I don’t know why they’re doing what they’re doing or who they serve. This is just what I’ve gathered.”

“With forces like that, the entire Eastern Army could be reduced to ash without us even knowing what we face!”

“Which is why we’re not going to make any moves until we have a proper understanding of the threat and of our enemy. With creatures like that present we can’t risk sending in our ships or weaponry by ground. Even our own soldiers would have risk at handling that. That is why I am going to bring in more troops from the southern part of the Eastern Sector, including R-Humans. At the same time, I am sending Shadow Squadron back in to tend to Specter and their laboratory.”

“What?!” Trisha barked.

“Are you serious?” a Captain spluttered.

“But like Sinno said, they could be-”

“Silence, all of you!” Taído barked, “Fact of the matter is that this is a war against the monsters and we need to do what we can to win it. Shadow Squadron will know the enemy better than anyone else, and I am fairly confident that as a unit they could handle even just a couple A-Class level fighters. Any B-Class would be no problem for certain.”

“Sir, I think you’re overestimating their ability,” a man commented from the rear of the room.

“Mutarenga, I am confident. They are all sharp and strong. It won’t be long until they are classified as B-Rank you know, the current C’s that is. And then the D’s will become the new C’s. That said though, Sinno.”

“Yes sir?”

“Should you run into trouble, you are to fall back as soon as possible. Your squadron is valuable you understand, yes?”

“Understood.”

“Your mission is to find Specter’s lab and destroy it, to capture any operatives of that order that you can and lay waste to the rest. You leave at dawn!”

End of Prologue