

The rain of meteors continues unabated. Atlantis continues to pour mana into the spell long past the point any mortal [Archmage] could endure. Yet Darius, the Unbroken Bulwark, stands firm, unharmed and unfazed by the unending onslaught.

“How long do you think he can keep this up?” Franky asks Calidi.

The named woman bites her lip. “Not forever. Elementals cost a lot to create and sustain. Once his mana runs out, we’re dead.”

“So what do we need? A distraction?”

She nods “Yeah, a good distraction, something to stop the meteors long enough for me to get to the skies. I don't suppose you have a skill or something that can make an opening.”

Franky scowls, “Nothing that can be used in the current situation. Maybe my capstone, but that skill comes with a permanent cost and I’ve yet to see what it even does.”

“What’s the cost? Money? Blood? Gems?”

“I don’t know,” he answers, “could be a memory, could be an arm, could be pretty much anything but my life.

He takes a moment and calls up the skill

[Legacy of the Hero][Legendary]

To gain something precious comes at a cost. Borrow the power of [Heroes] past, for a price.

“I also don’t have any idea what the effect will be. I’m assuming it’s strong since it’s a [Legendary] skill.”

“LEGENDARY!” Calidi blurts out in surprise, “Do you have any idea how powerful those skills are, especially ones that require a sacrifice?”

He grimaces “Well no, but I’d rather not pay the cost to find out,” he answers and Calidi quickly goes silent.

“I’m sorry,” she apologizes.

Franky waves, “It’s fine. If we’re desperate, then I’ll use it. For now, I don’t think we’re there yet.” he shifts his head to a lamppost, “Jessa, see anything up there?”

Jessa, sitting on a lamppost, starts to shake her head, but stops as, at the edge of her vision, a red blur rushes over the roofs towards Atlantis. “Actually, something is attacking the golem.”

Franky and Calidi instantly perk up. This could be their chance.

“What's attacking? How long until it does?”

Jessa frowns, then her eyes widen as the blur disappears and reappears next to the golem. A massive glowing red scythe twirls in the air before slashing at the golem's crystal head. The golem moves its free arm to cover its face. The scythe slashes into the metal but penetrates only halfway through. A woman pulls the weapon free and jumps off the damaged arm before the golem's other hand can grab her, the same hand that had been powering the spell.

“It's distracted!” she yells, “this is your chance!”

The last meteor punctuates her yell and everyone leaps into action. The Earth Elemental lowers its arms and its shields fold into rams before it sprints towards Atlantis. At the same time, Franky summons a floating sword and takes flight while Calidi does the same with wings of fire.

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*“That attack should have severed the arm completely!”* Ambrosia thinks as she dodges a much too fast grab from the golem. With a spin of her scythe, she activates [Sanguine Shift]. Her body disperses into a fine red mist and reappears right behind the golem's head. She slashes forward, aiming for the neck. Her scythe strikes an unseen barrier and bounces off to her surprise. The golem twists its body and swings its other fist directly at her airborne self.

Cursing her overconfidence, she raises her scythe to block. The massive fist connects and in the instant of impact an electric shock rips through her. She screams in pain as her flaming body is sent hurtling through several high-rises, and would have smashed through several more had not Garn caught her. They crash into the next skyscraper and Garn spends the fury of Ambrosia's momentum shredding the carpeted floor of an upper story penthouse. They come to rest against a king size bed and fall back onto the mattress, crushing the bones of the prior occupants.

“My [Lady], are you alright?” Garn asks, worried.

“Y-yes,” Ambrosia croaks as her body starts repairing itself. Her bones pop and crack as they shift into place, her muscles regenerate, and her wounds heal within seconds. [Vampiric Regeneration], similar to [Greater Regeneration], gives unparalleled self-healing, except she pays the cost with blood instead of flesh. After this battle, she will have to feast.

With her body restored, Garn stands up and allows her to stand on her own. She extends her hand and a bloody mist flies through the broken window and reforms into her scythe in her grasp. Weapon in hand, she walks up to a nearby window and looks out.

The Earth Elemental had followed up on her attack and engaged the metal golem in hand to hand combat. Ambrosia watches the brawl in awe. Both golems move with speed and precision nobody would have ever expected possible for such massive beings. The ground shakes with their footwork and the sky thunders with their fists.

She watches as the Earth Golem weaves under a fist then reprises with an uppercut aimed for the Metal Golems head. A barrier sprouts a meter from the crystal eye and cracks, but doesn't break. Unhurt, the golem knees the elemental in the face. Chunks of earth shatter and fly from the strike and more follow as the Golem lands a five punch combo. Cracks riddle the ailing elemental's body.

Ambrosia realizes that the Earth Elemental is structurally outclassed and will eventually lose.

"Garn, we need to attack the golem now, while we have help. That thing is too strong to be taken down alone." she says and prepares to rush back into the fight. A paw raised in front of her stays her motion.

"Wait," Garn exclaims. He points at the sky.

Ambrosia follows his finger and her eyes widen as a comet streaks through the firmament.

She shoves mana into her eyes to improve her vision.

"Thats-"

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Calidi rises above the clouds, her [Wings of Flame] beat desperately for elevation. She climbs above the aurora, above the highest nearby summits, till the air chills her despite her wings, till her vision narrows in the thin air. She hovers for a moment, looks down, and spends a moment impressed. Herself, her comrades, and their conflicts seem petty before the immensity of Orbis. Then she steels herself and prepares her descent.

She points her spear at the tiny silver speck of Atlantis and sets it alight. She spreads her domain and tucks her wings.

"[Comet's Descent]"

Her wings burn white and all the air within a mile radius ignites, turning her world into fire and flame. She smiles as she dives, the heat and flame follow her, growing hotter and hotter. Her

spear, fortified with a legendary enchantment, heats up far beyond its mundane melting point, but her clothes are a different story. Her clothes disintegrate as the [Greater Fire Resist] enchantments are overwhelmed. She feels no pity for it, for her eyes are on an enemy that requires her full control.

The raging battle below comes to a halt as both sides notice her descent. She watches as Darius creates distance from the golem. Franky arrives and forms a barrier of light around the Earth elemental. She hopes the barrier will hold, but that is unlikely. The blast radius of her skill is quite potent on its own.

The golem raises up both its arms to block her. The arms glow and a barrier forms above it. She smirks at the futile defense, then sobers when another layer of barrier forms.

Then another.

And another.

The number passes ten and they still keep forming.

Frowning, she hastens her descent, pushing herself faster than gravity, and raises the temperature. The fire around her concentrates into her weapon's form, the comet changes from a ball to a spear, the air howls violently with her passing as she breaks the speed of sound.

Impact.

The barriers shatter one after the other, each one slowing her incrementally, but they're not enough. She breaks through the last barrier with a quarter of her attack's original energy. Her spear plunges into the golem and then her skill detonates. Her world goes white as everything is obliterated.

For a moment, she goes blind from the light, and then her body falls on the molten ground. She's not sure how much time passes, but it can't have been long. She feels hands pick her up off the molten lava. She blinks to restore her sight and sees Franky cradling her in a princess carry.

She smirks.

"You're quite the [Prince], aren't you?" she teases, but Franky doesn't smile. His eyes aren't on her. She follows his gaze to find out why and nearly chokes.

"No way."

The golem, flung far from the explosion, stands with its entire body above the abdomen destroyed. Then she notices it. The crystal core is on its crotch, glinting with mana. She watches

in dread as the metal of its body reforms, the crystal rising back up to its head. In a matter of seconds, Atlantis fully reforms.

“I don’t suppose you can do that again?” Franky asks.

She shakes her head, “Nope. Not till I get some more mana. And clothes.”

“Damn.”

Calidi looks around for Darius’ earth elemental and finds it, singed, somewhat molten, but somehow still standing. She’d expected it to have taken far more damage.

“He’s out of mana and can’t move anymore. He was barely able to hold on long enough for your skill.”

Cursing herself for using all her mana, she leans forward to stand, which Franky obliges by lowering her legs. Her bare feet land on the floating light sword and she stabilizes her wobbly legs with an arm around Franky’s neck.

The distant golem stands there, its crystal eye focused on them. It isn’t moving, but she expects that will not last for long.

“Put me somewhere safe and activate that skill. I don’t think it’ll give us time to rest.”

Seeming to answer her words, the Golem raises an arm toward them. The arm starts to glow.

“Shit,” Franky curses. He wraps an arm around Calidi’s waist and accelerates away on his sword, moving erratically towards cover. They fly quickly, but the charging arm follows their movements, keeping the duo locked on as targets.

Then, as its charge is full, the metal arm is jerked to the side where it releases a massive beam at a nearby mountain, boring a hole through the granite.

The beam stops. The golem rips apart the string holding its arm and turns to the new threat.

The city quakes as the monstrous spider roars in challenge.