

Mora looked down at the spot where her clone had only just disappeared. She had only had a few minutes to mourn, a show of respect to a warrior worth remembering. Afterwards, she felt something was wrong in the world. The wind began blowing in the opposite direction, and she tried to lift her head to the sky. However, she found her head sinking further down instead.

*One crisis ends, and another immediately begins?* She asked herself in alarm, trying to get an understanding on what she was able to do. Trying to take a step forward made her fall backwards. Trying to mobilize her ki instead caused her mana to leave her body.

Mora spent nearly fifteen minutes adjusting to what she could only compare to the most sadistic version of 'inverted controls' anyone had ever heard of. The worst part was when she *did* manage to get her body to move how she wanted it to, and opened her mouth to speak. "This is normal." She said, though that was certainly not what she meant to say.

*Even what I say is reversed?* She tried to grumble, but only let out a brief chuckle instead. "This is wonderful."

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I crossed my arms behind my back, closing my eyes and counting the seconds after Dana left. I had told myself that if it took her longer than ten minutes to fight this enemy, I would have to send someone else as backup, regardless of Dana's wishes. This wasn't an invasion that we could afford to draw out. Every minute that it lasted, countless lives were lost.

After roughly six minutes, a void gate opened, and everyone immediately took a defensive stance, preparing for a monster to emerge. Instead, Dana stumbled through, her health bar appearing over her head and almost entirely bottomed out. Tsubaki's eyes widened, rushing over to support Dana, while I looked at Leowynn.

"She's clean." Leowynn responded, causing me to sigh faintly in relief before walking over myself.

"Are you alright, Dana?" I asked in a soft tone, to which Dana chuckled, her face pale. It was clear that she was drastically lacking in energy at the moment, barely holding her body together.

"You should see the other guy. Don't worry, the 'void god' won't be a problem anymore. I think he was the only one like that, too. At least, nobody else like him came to get involved or stop me from leaving."

I gave a small nod at her explanation, my eyes flicking up to her health bar again. "But... are you alright?" I asked again, causing Dana to hesitate.

"To be honest... I've been better. Hey, did you know that the World's Shadow has a life protecting ability? If you die, it sacrifices one of your shadows, and gives you their energy... this

was a fun way to discover that. Though, wish it would have picked a better sacrifice... I don't think that I'll be able to join the fight for the rest of this invasion."

I nodded my head, having learned about that aspect of the energy thanks to Thelsa's advancement to the Perfect Self. "Clara and Sienna?"

"They're users of the World Shadow like me. When they died, I put them in my shadow world to let them recover. They don't have any combat power right now, either." Dana explained while shaking her head. "Sorry, boss. You'll have to handle the rest of this without us."

"Don't be sorry." I said with a smile. "You may have just given us the chance to win this. Tsubaki, can you take Dana to her room?"

Tsubaki hesitated for a moment, before nodding her head and picking up Dana, who promptly complained. "Hey, I can still walk, you know?"

Tsubaki simply smiled down at Dana. "Just rest. Leave the rest of this to us."

Once they were gone, I turned to look at Leowynn. "Now that he's dealt with, we need to immediately arrange for another team to go out."

Leowynn had a grave look on her face, clearly agreeing with me. "Don't worry. I'll lead the team myself this time." She said, turning to leave before I had the chance to argue. With her gone, I simply let out a long sigh, looking at Lifre.

"If the Last Gasp is still ready to mobilize, you can have it meet the team in the void. There shouldn't be any other super powerhouses in the enemy team, aside from some more troublesome void monsters."

"Leave it to me, chief!" Lifre said, giving a quick salute and running off. I was just about to let out a long sigh when Aurivy, or rather, Aurivy's incarnation appeared. "Aurivy... I really hope that you're not here with more bad news... We finally got a win."

Aurivy hesitated, before shaking her head. "No, not like that. I wanted to let you know that I think the problem in Lorek has changed. Previously, I had been getting prayers requesting to evacuate, but I had to ignore them because of the quarantine."

I paused, turning to fully face Aurivy. "The prayers... haven't stopped, have they?" In a situation like this, receiving no prayers for salvation would essentially mean the death of the world.

Thankfully, that didn't seem to be the case. "No, they've not stopped." Aurivy said, her face turning complicated. "Rather... they're now praying to be left alone."

"Left alone?" My eyes went wide, unsure why anyone would pray to be left alone by a goddess that could get them out of a hopeless situation.

"That's right." Aurivy confirmed again. "Again, I haven't been answering the prayers to prevent any connections that could be traced. However, right around the time that Dana went out to fight, every prayer I was receiving from Lorek was suddenly reversed."

I hesitated, giving a small nod. "Either their apocalypse has evolved, or it was replaced for some reason. Is it possible that the inhabitants of Lorek managed to defeat the void beast attacking their world on their own?"

"It's certainly possible." Aurivy spoke in a serious tone. "Lorek has had twenty times as long as any other world to work on it. If anyone was going to be able to come up with a solution, it would be them or Spica. Unfortunately, there haven't been any changes in the prayers from Spica's side."

"Got it, thanks." I smiled to Aurivy, before focusing on sending a message to Leowynn. *Lorek's immediate crisis has been dealt with. You can lower its priority for the time being, and focus on Spica and Earth primarily, and then the others as stated before.*

Hopefully, that message would ease the pressure on the others slightly, though this was still an urgent situation. At this point, there would have been another round or two of murder games on Earth, so the population would be starting to fall faster and faster.

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When Leowynn received the message, it did indeed bring her a small feeling of relief, though she was far more concerned with the worlds that she *did* still need to support. She arrived in front of her temple, where an army of Fallen Gods had gathered. Some of those from the first team still appeared shaken by the death of one of the oldest Fallen Gods in the world, and someone that Leowynn had personally trained.

"Everyone." Leowynn spoke up, attention snapping to her. The Fallen Gods tried their best to straighten their backs, showing the utmost respect for the daughter of the Keeper. "Time is short, so I'll keep this brief. The enemy that defeated my disciple has been slain. Now is the time for us to strike, before they are able to strengthen their forces, and before they are able to kill even more of our people."

No sooner did Leowynn say this before she tore open a portal into the void. "This time, I will personally lead the charge."

After saying so, she immediately stepped through the portal, the other Fallen Gods rushing to follow behind her. This was a mission led by the Greater Pantheon themselves. Although they

had their reservations due to the crushing defeat that they had previously suffered, there was no time to think about that.

When they stepped through the gate, Leowynn's pupils shrank into pinpricks, seeing what she considered to be the worst case scenario. Dana's earlier report that there was only one void beast per world was now wrong. Without their general guiding them, they were on a blind rampage. There were more than six void beasts attacking Deckan alone, and its defensive barrier was showing signs of cracking.

*Change of plans!* She announced, projecting the message to the Keeper as well as every Fallen God in her church. *All forces, prepare for the final battle! I repeat, this is an urgent message! All troops to war!*

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Tsubaki and I looked at one another in alarm when we received Leowynn's message. The two of us had been saving ourselves for the final battle, expecting it to be after the first wave of void beasts had been destroyed, and the others angered into action. We had hoped to whittle away at their numbers first, making the battle more favorable to us.

"Let's go." I said in a firm tone, Tsubaki nodding her head. If Leowynn was calling for the final battle to begin immediately, the situation had to have changed for the worse. Tsubaki tore open a barrier to the void, and the two of us stepped through.

The moment that we did, I realized why the situation had gotten to the point that it had. Aside from the beasts that were pacified by the pasture within the void, every monster was now targeting a world. Worse yet, even beasts that did not come from the invasion were drawn by the chaos, participating in the assaults on the barriers.

It was regrettable that Dana wasn't here, so I couldn't summon the shadow hound. However, my eyes flashed as the other ten Beasts of the End appeared. "All of you, enter battle!" I called out, pointing at Deckan's world barrier. Originally, I had considered Deckan to only be medium priority, because the damage to that world had largely already been done. However, if the void barrier breaks, the power of that apocalypse would increase several fold. It would not be a surprise if the entire universe was instantly destroyed.

The ten Beasts of the End charged forward, the Bodhisattva clapping its hands together. "Void Shattering!" It announced, ripples radiating through the void and pushing back the void beasts attacking Deckan, forcing them to sustain minor injuries in the process.

"Tsubaki, you and I will take care of Earth. Let Leowynn's troops deal with Spica." I said, though a rift opened up next to us a moment later. Just as I was preparing to strike, I heard a serene laugh spreading through the void.

“Hahah! The battle’s started without us?! That’s not very hospitable of you lot! All hands to cannons. Hoist the colors, and wake the dragon!” A massive ship made of golden wood emerged from the rift, a humanoid woman standing atop it and holding a black rapier. “No soul shall retreat from this fight, men! This is the day that we were made for! Open the sail, and chart a course to battle!”

*Looks like the Last Gasp had their transition prepared since earlier, and were just waiting for Lifre’s signal to execute it.* I thought in relief, glad to have another group fighting alongside us. In the current situation, we had no information on the vast majority of the enemies, so we had to hope for the best, and try our hardest to avoid the worst.