

THE LIGHTNING QUEEN

by Daniel Avril

The faint scent of fine silk wafted into my nostrils, giving me a brief moment of nostalgia. Even though it had already withered, the blue rose in my hands, belonging to the Queen of Creation, still managed to calm my senses.

“Rest easy, sister,” I whispered as I placed the flower on top of a wooden plaque. “Once you return, we will take our revenge together.” I mouthed an incantation, and a violet rune painted itself in front of the tombstone I erected. Its glow was bright enough to light up the desert oasis that I took refuge in. I snapped my fingers, and the sky was filled with thunderclouds. They gathered around as if to mourn with me. “Bring it out.”

The clouds obeyed. Lightning coalesced, then came down on the rune like a divine hammer, forging a sword out of pure electricity.

I knelt down and lowered my head as I gripped the sword; my palms tingled from the sparks it released. “Return with haste; our war with the Sirius Clan is far from over. They’re the ones greedy to steal our godly power and must be struck down.”

The flower glowed for barely a second as if in response.

I glanced at the patch of blood staining the bandage that covered my abdomen, then shook my head. “I’ll be fine. You on the other hand—”

“There she is! Soldiers, finish her before her sister can revive! A man’s voice called out behind me, cutting off my moment of respite. The awful taste of bile welled up in my throat.

I faced the man with gritted teeth. Beads of sweat dotted his pale skin. Emblazoned on his suit was a golden emblem that I recognized.

“You’re out of time, devil!” He was so out of breath he'd nearly collapsed onto the bedrock, but his confidence still shown through as he grinned. An entourage of armored escorts trailed behind him, their runed helmets concealing their faces. Tanks snailed their way into view, their barrels trained on me.

I sneered at the man in front, saying, “So, after slaying my sister’s mortal body, you've come for me? Don’t be foolish.” Thunder boomed throughout the desert, serving as a warning.

The pale man wiped his face and scoffed. “Foolish? This is our chance to steal thunder from the gods. The cycle of life *and* death will be ours to control!” He made a gesture and his escorts stepped forth. Using my sister’s stolen power of creation, they manifested cannons out of thin air and opened fire.

Unsheathing the sword, I released an electric wave that vaporized the incoming barrage. “They’re surrounding us!”

The tanks moved in and unloaded heavy shells. I could barely deflect them with my sword before fatigue slurred my movements. Instinctively, I fired a bolt of lightning with my free hand at the last shell – the explosion knocked me to the ground and my sword dissipated.

Through the smoke, the tanks’ headlights encroached ever closer. I struggled to get up, but the wound in my stomach had flared up. Pain flooded my body and I cursed under my breath.

A strong gust kicked up and a pair of transparent hands hugged me from behind and I knew I was safe. Her hands passed over my abdomen and the fatigue started to fade, giving me enough strength to retaliate.

Reforming my electric sword, I got to my feet and whispered my last incantation. Destruction magic churned in the thunderclouds. They spun into a funnel, transforming into a hurricane that hovered over me. Arcs of lightning leaped to the center of the hurricane's eye, forming a ball that outshined the moon. As the tanks loaded shells meant to end me, I raised my sword into the air, and the ball crashed down, setting off an electric nuke that fried everything in the area. Silence choked the oasis once more as I collapsed in exhaustion.

She pierced the deafening silence to whisper, "Rest easy, sister."