

Chapter 217: Priam vs. Necro Giant, feat. [Redacted] Part 2

Seated cross-legged, mere centimeters from an enchanted diamond, a man with obsidian hair sighed deeply.

"I despise those golden boys..."

"Stop grimacing," said a young boy beside him.

"You gave me the muscles for this morning," his brother countered.

"I should slap a smile on your face," the child muttered.

"I'd abandon this body right away."

Osiris grunted before returning his attention to the broadcast. Priam was locked in combat against a towering Tier 3. The battle was breathtaking, and though he didn't grasp every detail, the young Duatian relished in the explosions and shockwaves. He had cheered while witnessing Priam's Breath and then jeered at the opponent who had failed to succumb to such a remarkable attack.

Now, something was troubling the young boy. If Priam struggled against this Tier 3, how would he overcome the Necro Envoy controlling it? A furtive glance in his brother's direction didn't go unnoticed.

"Don't worry, she can't control me."

"...She commands the Tier 3."

"And I have access to the System."

Osiris nodded. His brother had unlocked the Legendary rank of **[Necro Resistance]** and used rewards from Tribulations, quests, and Merits to shield himself from the Necromoon's influence. It wasn't perfect, but he was convinced that not even a Necro Herald, a true Tier 5, could manipulate him.

"He's more powerful than I thought," grumbled Seth, focused on the combat projected in the diamond.

"He's Jasmine's boss," Osiris replied as if that explained everything.

"She's too old for you. Anyway, I was talking about the giant."

"You said 'he'."

"I can hear his soul screaming," Seth shivered. "Well, he's a Tier 3. Creating an instinct of that level is possible but complicated. The Necromoon prefers enslaving souls."

The bitter tone in his voice indicated Seth included himself in that group. The subject displeased Osiris, who diverted the conversation.

"You were saying it's... Hum, he's more powerful than you thought? I find him powerful enough as is."

"He's supposed to be weakened by Elysian laws. So early in the event, no corrupted should approach Tier 3. He's not on the level of a Tier 3 Viscount as stated in his description, but he's not a Tier 2 either."

"It makes no difference to Priam; if he kills him, he'll get the Achievement," commented Osiris.

"That's the tricky part."

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"A Tier 3's corruption is not trivial."

Priam froze upon hearing Mirscella's mental voice. *No, it's the Necro Envoy!*

"Do you feel so alone that you want to talk to me?" he spat.

"I sense... hatred within you? I haven't killed any of yours yet."

Priam clenched his teeth.

"Except Eiji."

"...The hoplite? I admit I forgot about him. The laws of your world limit my power; I have to make choices."

Priam had several insults ready, but he chose to remain silent. Allowing oneself to be disturbed during a fight was foolish. He couldn't resurrect Eiji, but he could avenge him.

Lvl Up: [Necromoon Resistance] lvl 9

VIT +3

WILL +3

META(Endurance) +3

A brief diagnosis confirmed that the Tier 3's corruption wouldn't pollute his body before the cooldown of **[He Who Eludes Death]** ended. Reassured, Priam focused on his Domain.

"The Necromoon spares the ego of those who willingly pledge allegiance to it. Think about it."

To communicate with him, the Necro Envoy had to establish a connection. His fine perception of the aether detected a link. A sort of thread connected to his body. If he could trace it back...

Lvl Up: [Ideal Aether Perception] lvl 7

META (Affinity) +3

META (Perception) +6

It took him less than two seconds to find its origin.

"*You're using the necro giant as a proxy,*" Priam understood as his system recorded the shape of the telepathic bridge. A useful trick.

"*Of course. But you haven't answered my proposal. Will you join me?*"

"*In exchange for the prerequisites of an ideal upgrade, I'll consider it,*" replied Priam.

"*The servants of the Necromoon don't have access to your heathen System.*"

The honesty he felt unsettled Priam. Either the Necro Envoy was an incredible actress, or she thought there was a chance he would accept joining her. If the latter was true, then her soul was so alien that she didn't even comprehend the stupidity of her request.

Using his newfound proficiency with the aether, Priam severed the connection. Maintaining a mental link with a Necro Envoy couldn't be a good idea. It wasn't impossible that the connection could allow reading his thoughts or influencing his subconscious.

The necro giant hadn't remained inactive during the brief conversation. The crimson ectoplasm covering its skeleton had condensed to replace the destroyed vertebra. Despite all of Priam's efforts, he was back to square one. As frustration brewed in his heart, he received a notification.

Announcement to Humanity:

***Prometheus slayed an Arkana Elite (Tier 2) while in Tier 0.
A Legendary feat!***

"... I suppose I'm not the only one making progress."

Priam was humanity's trailblazer, but how many geniuses and brave souls were fighting to rise alongside him? Many. The System itself acknowledged it: humans knew how to adapt. His competitive spirit ignited, and Priam refocused on the giant. *If I hurry, I should be able to reply to Prometheus before he cracks open the champagne.*

As Priam prepared to return to the fray, the giant turned towards him. Trapped in its jaws, a crimson nova was brewing. Priam's instinct screamed. Activating his wings, he narrowly dodged the bloody beam. The attack grazed him before igniting the atmosphere with the

power of a gigajoule laser. Three kilometers away, the flank of a hill collapsed, ravaged by the ray.

The necro giant closed its mouth, growling its dissatisfaction before continuing toward Oasis. Its target was now just a hundred meters away.

"*Priam...*"

"*I know.*"

The laser could have easily pierced Oasis's defenses. The Necro Envoy was sending a message: she didn't just want to kill them; she wanted to convert them.

The realization awakened Priam. He had to stop the necro giant, and he had to do it now.

Emerging from the mist, Priam attacked the second vertebra. Using **[High-frequency Barrage]**, he struck dozens of times per second, pushing back the ectoplasm and fracturing the bone. A punch forced him to dodge, but Priam didn't give up. He attacked from another angle, exploiting the weakness until the bone yielded. Rotating Promesse, Priam prevented new shards from penetrating his skin.

Lvl Up: [Unrelenting Thrust] lvl 25, 26

STR +6

Lvl Up: [High-frequency Barrage] lvl 5, 6

AGI +6

Furious, the Tier 3 tried to grab him, but failed. Its strength lay in its constitution, not its agility. Priam's wings and kinetic mastery ensured exceptional mobility. A dozen bloody tentacles born from the ectoplasm sought to reach him, but Priam dodged them all. Occasionally, Pyro burned an appendage, punishing the skeleton's audacity.

Taking advantage of his speed and agility, Priam played with his opponent, creating weaknesses in every bone. A third vertebra exploded, followed by two ribs. Dodging between the giant's legs, Priam attacked everywhere, accumulating damage before delivering a final blow.

After two minutes of driving the corrupted crazy, he succeeded in shattering its humerus. The skeletal right arm detached and fell to the ground with a loud crash. No ectoplasm came to replace it.

Lvl Up: [Unrelenting Thrust] lvl 27, 28

STR +6

Lvl Up: [High-frequency Barrage] lvl 7, 8

AGI +6

The smile on Priam's lips died as the titan roared before running towards Oasis. The Necro Envoy had had enough.

Priam rushed, attacking the creature's legs without restraint. Promesse's tip gleamed, striking again and again on the nearly indestructible bones. Cracks appeared, but it would take several minutes to exploit them. Priam had only a few seconds.

Fifty meters from Oasis, Promesse pierced the viscous liquid and struck the bone twice before an ectoplasmic spine attempted to pierce Priam. With only one life at his disposal, he had to retreat as the giant advanced a step. Oasis was only forty meters away.

An explosion sounded at the giant's skull, and shadow vines wrapped around its femur. The skeleton struggled, tearing the shadows and ignoring the hoplites' attacks. It was now so close that its gleaming eyes lit up the defenders.

"Priam, we have to send one of the Tier 3s," said Hyshana.

"If we do that, the Necro Envoy will flee!"

Damn it!

Gritting his teeth, Priam rode the mist, reappearing just in front of the titan. Risking it all, he plunged a flame-gloved hand into the ectoplasm. Pyro burned the substance, allowing his palm to touch the bone. **[Kinetic Control]**.

A terrifying amount of energy rushed into his meridians. Breathless, Priam trembled in pain, a torrent of fire coursing through his veins. Clenching his teeth, he endured. Less than twenty meters from Oasis, a twenty-meter-tall colossus stopped, frozen by the tiny human at its feet.

The David versus Goliath reenactment shocked the forest, giving rise to a brief moment of silence.

"Fire!" shouted Priam. In response, each defender struck, burning their aether to bring down the titan.

The flurry of attacks seemed to awaken the ectoplasm. It pulsed, sending a dozen spikes to impale Priam. Turning his cloak into a fiery nova, he intercepted the attack. The corrupted thorns slowed as they penetrated the protection. Deep in the incandescent storm, Pyro waited. The Concept carried on the work of the flames, devouring the intruders.

The burning appendages didn't stop their progress: the Tier 3 produced them faster than they were consumed.

The sight of the approaching tentacles disgusted Priam. From his desire to repel them emerged an idea. His draconic vivacity split his attention. One part continued to freeze his opponent, while the other recycled the kinetic energy absorbed. **[Echolocation]**, **[Kinetic Control]**.

A sonic shockwave was ejected from his body outward. The disturbance spread through the air, pushing the tentacles back and creating a crater under Priam. Nearby trees shattered, and the Oasis barrier trembled.

Lvl Up: [Echolocation] lvl 6, 7, 8

PERC +6

DEXT +3

Lvl Up: [Adaptive Golden Meridians] lvl 4

META (Focus) +3

META (Endurance) +6

A second wave of spikes approached, and Priam emitted a new mechanical wave. The necro giant lacked imagination and repeated its assault. In the following seconds, the two adversaries clashed in a stalemate.

Finally, the attacks ceased. Priam gritted his teeth, continuing to absorb the titanic energy of the Tier 3. As long as he held on, his loved ones would be safe.

Lvl Up: [Echolocation] lvl 9

PERC +2

DEXT +1

Lvl Up: [Adaptive Golden Meridians] lvl 5

META (Focus) +3

META (Endurance) +6

The titan was struggling, deploying its formidable strength to overcome the suppression. Focused on **[Kinetic Control]**, Priam barely noticed the moment when his second set of meridians began to erode. Even an epic ideal resistance couldn't fight forever against a Tier 3.

"I give your circulatory system less than a minute to explode."

The Necro Envoy's voice returned, and Priam paid her no attention. Half of his consciousness imprisoned the Tier 3, and the other fought against the increasing pain. His body was falling apart, and the damage was reflected in his soul. Micro alleviated physical suffering but could do nothing against spiritual agony.

"You have only one word to say, and Laepa will come to help you," said Hyshana.

Priam remained silent. He didn't need help. **[Three-Headed Hydra]**'s Merit could save him at any moment, but his instinct whispered that he should endure.

Seconds ticked by, and he began to taste a metallic tang in his mouth. His veins burst one after another, and his entire body weakened.

Lvl Up: [Adaptive Golden Meridians] lvl 6

META (Focus) +3

META (Endurance) +6

Lvl Up: [Necromoon Resistance] lvl 10

VIT +3

WILL +3

META(Endurance) +3

"A word, just one, and you'll be free." Wracked with spasms, Priam briefly wondered if the message came from Hyshana or the Necro Envoy.

As his body fell apart and his soul crumbled, Priam felt the call of his second racial Talent. Half-conscious, he realized that the Talent was active. It had prevented Eleha from taking him seriously, and now it was influencing the Necro Envoy.

[Homo Elysian Predation] manipulated the instincts of his enemies to lead them to their demise. The fusion of Jasmine and Esmée's Talents could overturn the chessboard, offering a chance of victory to its bearer.

Ignoring the calls of the Necro Envoy, Priam listened to the whispers of his Talent. Something was brewing. All he had to do was appear weak. If the Necro Envoy underestimated him, the roles of hunter and prey would be reversed.

Time passed, and Priam continued to paralyze the giant. A black veil appeared before his eyes, robbing him of his vision. The screams of the corrupted who perished as they approached vanished. The smell of ash and decay faded. He hadn't been this close to death since his Tutorial.

This thought made him smile. If **[He Who Eludes Death]** were made public, many would think that was why Priam wasn't afraid of death. It was false. His Patron had chosen him above all because Priam didn't flinch in the face of the reaper. He dared to dance with her, to endure her attention, without ever accepting her kiss.

Priam never gave up.

"So this is how Priam Azura will die."

"You can't kill me," murmured Priam, unable to hear his own voice. "Neither you nor anyone else. There's a reason They named me Death's Obsession."

Priam still didn't know if the title bestowed by his Patron was serious, but the word of such a powerful being carried weight.

"If you're not dying, what are you doing?"

"I'm waiting."

"For whom?"

"... I think the First is talking about me," said a third voice.

When his add-on confirmed to him that the pain hadn't driven him insane, Priam breathed a sigh of relief and traded his lifespan for a hydra's regeneration. In mere moments, his body and soul were restored. Only his vision remained slightly blurred—the curse of Hecate New Moon not so easily dispelled.

Raising his eyes, he spotted the one-armed necro giant. Half his skull was gone, the defenders' work. On its shoulder, Mirscella's possessed body glared at him with eyes ablaze with hatred. The Necro Envoy had revealed herself, believing in her victory. She finally understood that Priam had held onto his cards all this time. The Homo Elysian flashed her a mocking smile.

Priam turned to the newcomer. Just outside his Domain, a humanoid with synthetic skin observed him. Standing two meters tall, his high stature was less remarkable than his gaze. Inhuman, intelligent, and intensely focused, the eyes of the Var Elegis judged the world at every moment.

Priam looked at the homunculus who had killed him a few hours after his arrival in Elysium and smiled.

"You took your time."

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Status:

PHYSICAL:

Strength 611 (+18)

Constitution 979

Agility 599 (+18)

Vitality 870 (+10)

Perception 730 (+10)

MENTAL:

Vivacity (D) 516

Dexterity 610 (+4)

Memory 471

Willpower 1 044 (+8)

Charisma 631

META:

Meta-affinity 566 (+3)

Meta-focus 387 (+9)

Meta-endurance 428 (+31)

Meta-perception 267 (+7)

Meta-chance 230

Meta-authority 66

Potential: 8 784 (+22)

Tier 0

Sun points: 37 505 (+0)

[He Who Eludes Death] charge: OFF. Reloaded in 3 hours 10 minutes 39 seconds.

[Tribulation]: Four Tribulations pending.

Future Tribulations delayed until:

Time: 162 days 3 hours 43 minutes 52 seconds.

Next thresholds: 12 attributes > 600 / 3 attributes > 900