

Chapter 216: Priam vs Necro Giant. Part 1

The necro giant's roar ceased as Promesse collided between its eyes. Priam briefly wondered how the creature could howl without vocal cords or lungs, but **[Focus]** pushed aside such pointless musings.

No damage, he noted mentally as his opponent was rocking. As a Tier 3 giant skeleton, its bones were exceptionally sturdy. *But how much?* he pondered as Promesse returned to his hand.

Reaching the Fire Concept spark in his soul, Priam summoned a blazing nova into his Domain. The temperature soared, and he began absorbing the thermal energy from the overheated air molecules.

In about ten seconds, his kinetic reserves were full. To store more energy, Priam would need to increase his meta-endurance or upgrade **[Kinetic Control]**.

Arming Promesse, Priam aimed again at the giant skull and channeled the accumulated energy. His body tensed like a bow ready to snap, before he launched the projectile with the force of a ballista.

[Kinetic Control] supplied kinetic energy to Promesse until it left his Domain. His reinforced arteries trembled under the unleashed power, but none burst. Feeling the supersonic bang, Priam believed he heard his spear roar in defiance.

[Promesse's velocity upon exiting your Domain: approximately 3500 m/s; ten times the speed of sound.

Kinetic Energy: approximately 30 MJ.

Note: A strike comparable to that of a small military railgun.]

*Lvl Up: **[Adaptive Golden Meridians]** lvl 2*

META (Focus) +3

META (Endurance) +6

*Lvl Up: **[Spear Throw]** lvl 28, 29*

DEXT +6

[Tribulation]: Six attributes above 600 were detected in Tier 0.

A Tribulation is coming.

Time: 162 days 3 hours 47 minutes 30 seconds.

Dexterity had crossed a critical threshold, triggering a new Tribulation. *It was bound to happen someday...* Rather than lamenting over the future trials, Priam focused on the outcome of his throw.

The Tier 3 necro was thrown to the ground as if struck by a railgun. The shockwave uprooted some trees and swept away the nearest corrupted beings. Less than two seconds later, the explosion's blast reached Priam, tousling his hair. His raw throw was powerful enough to obliterate any Tier 2.

However, his opponent was a Tier 3.

Priam wasn't surprised to see the giant flinch. Promesse returned to his hand as the enemy began to rise. The warrior's eyes sparkled as he saw his wounded adversary.

A crack on its forehead threatened to split its skull in two. The wound was terrible, and a second attack would have shattered the giant's head.

The fight's opening was to Priam's advantage, hence his grunt when he saw a cascade of light falling from the sky. As if blessing a chosen one, the Necromoon's beams were mending the skeleton's bone. Priam had progressed since their last duel, but the giant had the advantage of terrain. *Not for long. [Moon Mist].*

An opaque cloud formed around Priam before creeping towards the skeleton. As a Mist Sage with Harmony and a maxed-out epic skill, the creation cost was laughable. The thick fog eventually covered the entire area, engulfing the necro giant and absorbing the crimson light. The Necromoon wasn't so easily masked, but the giant's regeneration speed was halved.

Taking advantage of his opponent's confusion, Priam rode the mist, reappearing outside the corrupted's Domain. He dashed toward the colossus, skillfully circumvented the massive knee, and aimed for the space between the tibia and femur. Promesse's tip plunged into the gap. Placing his hands at the end of the shaft, Priam leveraged the weapon to dislocate the joint.

Defeating the corrupted was secondary; his main objective was to prevent it from reaching the reformed barrier. With half a leg missing, the colossus would move slower.

Muscles tensed under the effort, Priam activated **[Kinetic Control]**, drawing thermal energy from his Domain to transmit it to Promesse in a kinetic form. The ambient temperature dropped, causing ice crystals to appear. The tibia and femur began to grind.

As the two bones threatened to separate, the connecting joint manifested physically. A crimson ectoplasm covered the giant's skeleton in a fraction of a second. Before Priam could comprehend what was happening, a titanic force struck him, and the world spun. The corrupted titan had just slapped him.

Sky, ground, sky, tree, sky, earth.

His add-on activated **[Kinetic Control]** to cushion the impact. The forest shook as a cloud of dust concealed his fall.

Suppressing a groan, Priam rose as quickly as his injuries allowed. His Domain seized a necro squirrel approaching stealthily, and his spear decapitated it. No other attack followed. The giant—and certainly the Necro Envoy through its eyes—was trying to orient itself in the thick fog.

Part of Priam's attention was focused on diagnosing his injuries while the other observed his opponent. A kind of fluid ectoplasm covered the skeleton, a manifestation of the Necro Concept that gave it life. The spiritual substance functioned like a multitude of muscles and sinews, articulating the bones and allowing the corrupted to move. Unlike Tier 0s and 1s, the ectoplasm seemed impervious to the Conquest Mist.

Worse, the outer part of the ectoplasm seemed solid. A kind of semi-transparent spectral armor now clad the giant. *Looks like Susanoo in Naruto...*

"Rahhh..."

After a growl, the titan turned towards Oasis and resumed walking. Its orders were more important than their duel.

Priam gritted his teeth before touching his right shoulder. The colossus's attack had been violent—without his boosted constitution, it would have killed him instantly. According to Micro and **[Diagnostic]**, his shoulder was dislocated, and several ribs were cracked. Listening to **[Humanoïde Anatomy]**, Priam relocated his shoulder and used **[Kinetic Control]** to petrify his damaged ribs.

Lvl Up: [Diagnostic] lvl 11
PERC +1

Without further delay, Priam dashed toward the corrupted giant. It was now less than three hundred meters from Oasis.

Coming from behind, Priam attacked the knee again. Even with Spear Mastery and Conquest Aura, Promesse struggled to pierce the armor and was then stopped by the viscous liquid inside.

From the corner of his eye, Priam spotted a new attack. He turned, parried, and allowed himself to be pushed aside. The giant did not pursue the offensive, and Priam took the opportunity to analyze the battle. His usual attacks would not be enough to breach the tank's double defense.

"Time to bring out the big guns."

Taking a deep breath, Priam began to fill his draconic lung. The ambient aether rushed towards him, and the Tier 3 turned as it sensed the phenomenon. Levitating over fifty meters high, Priam challenged it with his gaze.

Growling, the titan knelt on one knee and raised an arm in front of him. It was preparing to tank the Draconic Breath.

Thirty seconds later, Priam felt his third lung full. A mixture of condensed aether and flames formed a veritable inferno inside him. In a final effort, Priam activated Pyro's new ability.

[Pyro - Concept]

Harmony - Allows you to infuse your aether into your flames to increase their tenacity. Nothing can withstand your flames.

The spark transformed into a blazing flame, delivering a stream of liquid fire into Priam's arteries. The conceptual energy was guided to his mouth, and Priam unleashed the Breath.

A bolt of flame descended from the sky like the herald of Armageddon. The Pyro Breath struck the giant head-on, turning the air into plasma and the ground into lava. The conflagration pushed back the cloud of mist and painted red and orange hues in the sky.

The inferno raged for ten seconds, horrifying everyone witnessing the carnage.

When the ground stopped trembling and Priam caught his breath, he checked the consequences of his ultimate. The spectral armor had disappeared, and less than ten percent of the ectoplasm remained. The skeleton, however, was unscathed.

Tough motherfucker...

As the titan plunged its bony hand into the lava, using the ground to rise, Priam noticed flames still gnawing at its defenses. If fire needed fuel and some combustibles to exist, Pyro transcended these constraints. The flames catalyzed by Priam's aether were devouring the ectoplasm. The giant tried for a bit to extinguish the fire by striking it—in vain. Despite the success, no smile lit the warrior's face.

[Aether Reserve: 42/391

Pyro - Harmony consumes 10 units of aether per second.]

One glance was enough for Priam to understand that his fire wouldn't finish off his opponent in four seconds. Pyro wasn't the right way to continue this fight, but the warrior had other cards to play.

Exhausted by his ultimate attack, Priam canceled Pyro and raised Promesse. Guiding the remaining aether within him, he began to create an energetic drill around the spear's tip. The mastery of aether he had acquired through Esmée's exercises helped him to overload **[Tribulation Piercing Spear]**. Priam smiled as he felt his original heart produce pure energy, which, shaped by his skill and Domain, covered his spear like a rotating sheath.

As the giant resumed its march through the cloud, Priam rode the mist and attacked from a blind spot. The aether drill was barely slowed by the ectoplasm before striking one of the giant's cervical vertebrae.

For the first time in its existence, the skill was blocked. The sheath crashed against the bone, but instead of shattering, it persisted. Like a drill, **[Tribulation Piercing Spear]** was trying to perforate the bone. Promesse began to vibrate, and Priam growled as he tightened his grip.

Lvl Up: *[Tribulation Piercing Spear]* lvl 13

STR +1

AGI +1

DEX +1

The Tier 3 roared as a dozen spectral tentacles sprouted from the ectoplasm before melting towards Priam.

Overclocking his **[Phoenix Wings]**, Priam dodged the attack. The duel against Eleha had taught him that merging with his flames or mist wouldn't protect him from all attacks. Breaking the sound barrier, he growled under the acceleration and then deceleration. The two opponents exchanged a glance before the giant resumed his march.

As the giant advanced through the mist, Priam observed its neck. His sight was blurry from the aftermath of the Hecate New Moon's activation, but squinting his eyes, Priam spotted a thin crack in the titan's vertebra. A slight smile lit his face. The piercing attack had overcome the Tier 3's constitution.

A dozen cries diverted Priam's attention. Looking up, he saw birds diving towards him. With a wave of his hand, Priam summoned a dozen fireballs that greeted the creatures. Several explosions shook the mist.

Dodging a rain of decomposed bones and flesh, Priam frowned. His attack had annihilated the assailants, but a second wave of enemies was already approaching. Worse, the giant had taken advantage of the exchange to progress towards Oasis. The Necro Envoy wasn't stupid and didn't intend to grant Priam a duel. *Fuck.*

Charging his system to detect the birds and snipe them using the Fire Concept, Priam dashed to catch up with his adversary.

"Our seismographs indicate that the colossus is less than two hundred meters away. Do you need a cover?" Hyshana worried as the giant approached Oasis.

"Your attacks won't pierce that monster's defense. Look for the Necro Envoy instead."

"Got it."

Priam observed the fissure already beginning to regenerate before making a decision. The aether forest had been a great idea, but Priam wanted to destroy solid bone, not dig a hole in it. He didn't need a drill; he required a jackhammer.

Raising Promesse, Priam launched another attack. Conquest Aura and Spear Supremacy merged within the weapon as Priam aimed for the crack. Upon impact, he activated **[Kinetic Control]**. His spear surged forward, struck the crack, and bounced back.

All fighters experienced a recoil when striking a wall, a punching bag, or an opponent. Sometimes, it was so violent that it was possible to break a bone by hitting an object hard.

Priam's idea was to absorb this recoil. By doing so, he would waste no kinetic energy and could launch another strike without delay.

Activating **[Kinetic Control]** again, Priam propelled Promesse forward. As the weapon struck the vertebra, he absorbed its kinetic energy. Rather than recoiling from the attack's backlash, the spear simply stopped. With a smile on his lips, Priam reused the recycled energy to propel Promesse forward, then absorbed the returning impact.

*Lvl Up: **[Unrelenting Thrust]** lvl 23
STR +3*

Faster!

Stealing heat from his Domain, Priam struck, absorbed the recoil, then struck again and again. His second set of meridians—his own arteries and veins—began to heat up as Priam pumped and unleashed a colossal amount of energy every instant.

*Lvl Up: **[Adaptive Golden Meridians]** lvl 3
META (Focus) +3
META (Endurance) +6*

The rhythm accelerated, and Promesse's back-and-forth became an increasingly rapid cycle. Soon, the spear's tip struck the corrupted bone dozens of times per second, mimicking a jackhammer.

*Lvl Up: **[Unrelenting Thrust]** lvl 24
STR +3*

*You have gained the skill: **[High-frequency Barrage - Rare]**.*

***[High-frequency Barrage]** - When a single attack isn't enough, you strike ten times. When ten assaults are insufficient, you launch a hundred more. Your enemies crumble under the intensity of your blows.*

This skill is based on a multitude of rapid and recoilless strikes.

To fail a thousand times and try again without changing a thing. Some call it perseverance; others call it stupidity. You must have an excellent affinity with this Concept.

AGI +3

*Lvl Up: **[High-frequency Barrage]** lvl 2, 3, 4
AGI +9*

Under the extreme percussion, the crack widened until it covered the vertebra. The giant roared and turned around. Too late.

The bone exploded, showering Priam with hundreds of shards, some of which pierced his skin. Grimacing, he hastily expelled the cursed shards from his body and stepped back. A slight dizziness signaled that **[Necro Resistance]** was working to fight the corruption.

Assuming a defensive stance, Priam looked at the frozen skeleton. The ectoplasm supporting it writhed, as if trying to replace the missing vertebra. Even if it succeeded, it would still be a weak point.

Priam wondered how many bones he'd have to crush to the dust to vanquish his adversary. Whatever the number, Priam could finally aspire to defeat a Tier 3. One bone at a time if necessary.

"*This changes nothing*," said Mirscella's voice.

*

Status:

PHYSICAL:

Strength 593 (+11)

Constitution 979

Agility 581 (+20)

Vitality 860

Perception 720 (+1)

MENTAL:

Vivacity (D) 516

Dexterity 606 (+7)

Memory 471

Willpower 1 036

Charisma 631

META:

Meta-affinity 563

Meta-focus 378 (+6)

Meta-endurance 397 (+16)

Meta-perception 260

Meta-chance 230

Meta-authority 66

Potential: 8 762 (+25)

Tier 0

Sun points: 37 505 (+325)

[He Who Eludes Death] charge: OFF. Reloaded in 3 hours 13 minutes 26 seconds.

[Tribulation]: Four Tribulations pending.

Future Tribulations delayed until:

Time: 162 days 3 hours 46 minutes 39 seconds.

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