2113 Condemned   
  
The essence storm was still some distance away, but the wind was growing turbulent at an unnatural rate. It had been merely strong a few moments ago, but now, its force was already as violent as that of a hurricane.  
  
The wind crashed furiously into the colossal figure of the shadow of Condemnation, shattering against its dark nebulous bulwark in a litany of chilling wails. The radiant trail of essence shrouding the colossal shadow was torn apart and scattered, submerging the world in impenetrable darkness once again.  
  
For now.  
  
A powerful gust slammed into Sunny's back, almost making him stagger. As it did, a few more sparks of light shot past him.  
  
The particles of pure essence were being carried by the wind, moving at astonishing speed. Even more shocking was the fact that they were somehow able to affect the material plane — otherwise, there would not have been a new scratch on his vambrace.  
  
Far below, countless such particles were striking the body of Condemnation, producing tiny sparks when colliding with cold stone. The body of the Cursed Tyrant was too vast to notice it yet, but when the swirling mass of the essence storm arrived…  
  
Sunny shuddered.  
  
No wonder the mysterious archer had rushed to seek shelter. Having survived in the Shadow Realm for thousands of years, they must have known how to survive the passing of a storm well. It was just that this time, they had been caught in the open, riding a colossal shadow far above ground — that was why the archer chose to dive into the depths of Condemnation despite how perilous it seemed.  
  
'No, that's not quite right…'  
  
The radiant storm clouds were still some distance away, so was there really a need to act so decisively?  
  
Suddenly, Sunny felt a chilling sense of urgent danger.  
  
Spinning around…  
  
He just barely had time to see a swirling torrent of silver sparks rushing at him on the wind currents.  
  
A split second later, the light had already reached Sunny and passed through him,disappearing into the darkness of the distant sky.  
  
Sunny let out an inhuman shriek and fell, clutching desperately at his chest. The claws of the Mantle's armored gauntlet dug into his skin, leaving deep cuts on its surface.  
  
"Aaaargh!"  
  
He almost bit off his tongue from the harrowing pain.  
  
The particles of soul essence had pierced his body, entering his chest and exiting from his back… however, they were so infinitely small that even being pierced by a hundred of them did not deal his body any lasting damage.  
  
But…  
  
The same could not be said about his soul. It was shredded and ravaged by hundreds of radiant blades, torn asunder and mangled terribly, whole swaths of it being utterly destroyed.  
  
It was as if his soul was hit by a wave of explosive shrapnel.  
  
At this point, most beings would have simply died, their souls crumbling due to the scope of sustained damage. However, Sunny's soul was held together by Soul Weave — it could maintain its integrity no matter how much of it was destroyed, as long as at least a small part of it remained.  
  
So, despite writing in terrible pain, he was still alive.  
  
'Curse it all…'  
  
Sunny had to escape. This first torrent of pure essence was merely a harbinger of what was to come… soon, there would be more and more such swirling flashes of light being carried by the hurricane wind, and before too long, the shadow of Condemnation would plunge into the storm clouds. Then, nothing would be able to survive on its surface.  
  
Groaning, Sunny rolled onto his stomach, then pushed his body to the edge of the obsidian island. As he crawled, a few more sparks of essence pierced his arms and legs, bringing with them more pain.  
  
'Curse it all!'  
  
Finally, he reached the edge and pushed himself over it without hesitating even for a moment.  
  
'Thank the gods…'  
  
As Sunny fell into the depths of Condemnation, a cold darkness enveloped him.  
  
He could only vaguely see and sense the outside world. Out there,powerful gusts of wind crashed into the body of the colossal shadow, striking rains of sparks from its surface.  
  
But here inside…  
  
Everything was silent and at peace.  
  
Everything was strange and alien.  
  
Everything was…  
  
Beholden to a single foreign force.  
  
That force was the shadow of Condemnation, and nothing, not even laws of reality, could exist within it without being subjugated and subsumed by that force.  
  
The islands of glossy obsidian were now part of Condemnation. The vast expanse of ancient shadows was, as well. So were the pale light of the distant essence storms, the clouds of black dust, the fragments of broken winds, and the pieces of the silent sky… time and space themselves were consumed by the shadow of the dead deity, becoming parts of it.  
  
And naturally, now that Sunny was here… that invisible force had started to make him a part of itself, as well.  
  
He was suddenly filled with horror.  
  
That was because Sunny suddenly felt that his own body did not belong to him anymore.  
  
His hands were not his. Even though they were attached to him, they were not a part of him.  
  
His eyes belonged to someone else, gazing at the world with a cold and unfamiliar indifference.  
  
The heart beating in his chest was a foreign object. His chest, as well, was merely an external vessel.  
  
His wounded soul was a small part of a much greater being, and he did not feel pain anymore, since even that pain did not belong to him.  
  
Even his mind was not his anymore, the thoughts entering it becoming alien one by one.  
  
His body shifted strangely, bending at unnatural angles. The invisible force was pulling it apart, the flesh straining on the verge of ripping, to better fit into the great structure of the shadow of Condemnation. His bones groaned, ready to break.  
  
'D—damn it…'  
  
Someone else's eyes widened in horror.  
  
Someone else's mouth opened to let out a terrified scream.