2114 Switching Locations  
  
Having found safety from the essence storm within the shadow of Condemnation, Sunny ended up in a different, but equally dreadful peril.  
  
The dead deity subsumed everything around it to construct its gargantuan vessel. The great, nebulous body of Condemnation was built from things that had been torn from the fabric of the world to become parts of the colossal shadow instead.  
  
And so, Sunny was currently being torn apart and subsumed, as well.  
  
His body, his soul, his mind… everything was slowly being swallowed by Condemnation.  
  
'That is… not good.'  
  
He fell into the cold darkness, losing his sense of self as he did.  
  
Then, his hand moved, slashing the darkness with the splinter of the ivory fang.  
  
That bought him a few moments of respite.  
  
Regaining some clarity of mind, Sunny pivoted in the air and crashed into a giant slab of polished obsidian that drifted in the vast expanse of the colossal shadow.  
  
He still did not feel like himself, and there was still an invisible force pulling at his body.  
  
But he could at least think for himself, for a moment or two.  
  
'Right.'  
  
Sunny tried to remain calm... as calm as he could be, considering the circumstances.  
  
The situation was bad, but it was not hopeless.  
  
How did he know that? Because the mysterious archer had plunged into the depths of Condemnation first. That maniac had survived thousands of years of obliteration in the Shadow Realm, so their will to live was not in question. The archer would not have jumped into this cold darkness if it meant committing suicide.  
  
There had to be a way to survive.  
  
Sunny just had to find it.  
  
'...Isn't it all too simple, then?'  
  
Someone else might have succumbed to the irresistible pull of the sinister force easily, becoming condemned to be a part of Condemnation forever. In fact, maybe that was how the cursed deity had received its eerie name, in the first place… but Sunny was different.  
  
That was because he had crossed the Hollow Mountains once,and was well-versed in maintaining his sense of self against all odds. Even without a True Name, his will to exist was far more cohesive and powerful than that of most of his peers — of all his peers, perhaps.  
  
It had been trained and sharpened arduously in the white mist of nothingness, and so, destroying his sense of self was not an easy task. Even with the shadow of Condemnation trying to assimilate Sunny, his natural defense mechanisms were resisting the assimilation furiously.  
  
'What if I resisted consciously, then?'  
  
Focusing on his sense of self, Sunny poured all of his fierce will into maintaining its independence.  
  
'Becoming a part of some dead god? In your dreams! How ridiculous… being killed by a measly Sovereign, I could never…'  
  
Slowly, Sunny managed to regain control of his body.  
  
A dreadful force was still trying to pull it apart, and an insidious influence was still trying to steal his thoughts, but he could at least maintain this measure of control over himself.  
  
His will to exist clashed against the will of the shadow of Condemnation, and pushed it back a little.  
  
Of course, Sunny had far less willpower than the shadow of a dead deity. But he was merely a tiny speck for the shadow of Condemnation, so it did not use more than a tiny fraction of its will to consume him — even then, what little will it did use was not used consciously.  
  
Sunny, however, was using all of his will to stay alive… to stay himself, rather. And he was doing it with all the focus and discipline of a seasoned explorer of the most dreadful corners of the Dream Realm.  
  
So, he was able to maintain a fragile balance and keep himself from being consumed.  
  
For now.  
  
Which meant…  
  
Groaning, Sunny stumbled to his left and rolled. In the next moment, an obsidian knife pierced the polished obsidian in the spot where he had been a split second before, sending a net of cracks running through the glossy stone.  
  
If Sunny could maintain his sense of self within the shadow of Condemnation,then the damned archer would be able, too.  
  
Which meant that their battle was not over.  
  
It had merely switched locations.  
  
Smiling darkly, Sunny pushed himself off the cold stone and lunged himself at the enemy. Battering the bone knife aside with the splinter of the ivory fang, he crashed into the nebulous slayer and pushed them both off the slab of obsidian.  
  
"How does your side feel, huh, bastard?!"  
  
As they fell, Sunny slammed his fist into the wounded side of the mysterious shadow, hoping that it would hurt like hell.  
  
At the same time, he spread his wings and directed their fall, intending to slam the damned maniac into the closest piece of obsidian with enough force to shatter the entire thing.  
  
The archer had already driven one of his knives into the base of one of his wings, though, severing it entirely.  
  
Sunny cursed as he lost control over the trajectory of their fall.  
  
"You!"  
  
A moment later, they both crashed into the slab of obsidian with terrible force.  
  
Even as the impact threw them away from each other, the obsidian knife flashed, and the splinter of the ivory fang blocked its blade.  
  
Sunny and the mysterious archer rolled on the polished stone, then rose slowly and faced each other once again.  
  
He grinned.  
  
"Hey, little shadow… you don't look too good."  
  
The dark silhouette of the mysterious archer was more vague and unclear than ever, black smoke still flowing from the deep wound on their side. Their strength and speed had reduced quite a bit, as well, hinting that the murderous shadow was struggling to resist the will of Condemnation.  
  
Well, then again…  
  
Sunny did not look too hot either.  
  
"How about you kneel before your Lord and die peacefully? I promise, my Soul Sea is far more pleasant than this damned place. You'll even have great company…"  
  
Instead of answering, the archer simply attacked.  
  
Sunny had not expected anything less.