2115 Spirited Away   
  
As Sunny and the mysterious archer clashed once again, both burning with unquenchable, ruthless, and chillingly cold killing intent, he instantly felt the difference.  
  
Well, of course he did.  
  
It was hard not to feel it, considering that both of them were severely debilitated now. Their very bodies were under tremendous strain, being pulled apart by forces so vast and alien as to be unfathomable. At the same time, their souls and minds were being gradually consumed by the divine will of Condemnation... not even through its conscious effort, but simply because that was its nature.  
  
Actually, it was not only the body, the mind, and the soul that the shadow of the cursed god was silently assimilating into itself.  
  
There was something else, the very essence of one's existence that was being subsumed by the essence of Condemnation. Sunny had no word for it, and only knew that his will was a manifestation of that elusive essence.  
  
Perhaps it was his spirit.  
  
Therefore, he could only resist being consumed by the shadow of the ancient, dead god if he rallied his spirit and tempered his will against the foreign force...  
  
But then again, at the moment, it was Sunny himself who was the foreign force within the body of Condemnation. So, if anything, he had to fight against the environment he had invaded in order to keep his self independent, if not intact.  
  
In any case, the dire need to constantly exert all of his willpower against the eerie, marauding nature of Condemnation had naturally made him weaker, slower, and less concentrated on the battle.  
  
Luckily, the archer was in the same situation. The damned maniac was in a worse situation, actually, because there were two unceasing assaults they had to endure — one by the will of Condemnation, the other by Sunny's own.  
  
After all, Sunny had no intention of abandoning his attempts to bring the archer down by using his authority as the Lord of Shadows. Before,his attention had been split because he had to wrestle with the enemy over the control of surrounding shadows — but the only shadows around him now were parts of Condemnation's nebulous body. So, there was no need to bother trying to control them.  
  
Sunny only had to resist the will of the dead god, but the archer had to resist both the will of the dead god and of Sunny himself.  
  
It was one hell of a predicament.  
  
Sunny would have felt some pity for the poor fool… if he was not in a terrible agony, and if every move he made did not feel like nightmarish torture. That was not only because his body was being slowly torn apart from the inside, but also because his soul had been shredded by the essence storm.  
  
He had experienced all kinds of pain, but the phantom pain of having received soul damage was in its own, exquisitely diabolical category. His soul had not crumbled due to Soul Weave, true, but it was still severely damaged — and, therefore, the suffering he felt was accordingly terrible.  
  
'This damned thing…'  
  
Grasping the slender wrist of the mysterious archer and driving the splinter of the ivory fang into their elbow, Sunny ground his teeth.  
  
'It all because of you! It's your fault, bastard!'  
  
Shadows were taciturn creatures, so Sunny did not receive the pleasure of hearing his enemy scream in pain when the sharp piece of bone pierced their elbow joint. However, he was holding the archer's wrist, so he felt the shudder that ran through the shadow's body.  
  
A vicious smile illuminated Sunny's pale face.  
  
…He did hear himself scream, however, when the archer's obsidian knife plunged into his side a moment later.  
  
Straining his abdominal muscles to grip the cold blade like a steel vice and prevent it from sliding deeper, he leaned forward and slammed his knee into the enemy's side, then pushed them away and followed up with a devastating kick, throwing the archer a dozen meters back.  
  
Sunny himself fell backwards and groaned,pressing a hand against the deep gash in his side. At the same time, the archer crashed onto the polished stone, rolled over their shoulder, and then stood up.  
  
This time, however, they swayed slightly while rising from the ground.  
  
Gritting his teeth, Sunny climbed to his feet, as well.  
  
Despite the terrible pain, the murderous glint in his eyes had only grown more unhinged.  
  
The two of them were like two cripples here, within the cold darkness of the shadow of Condemnation. But that did nothing to assuage their killing intent.  
  
If anything, it had only grown stronger.  
  
"Oh look. You lost your bow."  
  
The bow had been attached to the archer's back before, but it had disappeared at some point during their battle. Now, only the empty quiver remained, its straps frayed and barely keeping it in place.  
  
Considering that the mysterious shadow did not seem capable of owning Memories, all of their equipment must have been meticulously crafted by hand from the scarce resources that could be found here in the Shadow Realm. So, once the equipment was lost, it could not be dismissed and summoned back. It would remain lost forever.  
  
The loss of the bow was not a minuscule thing.  
  
The archer remained motionless for a moment, then raised one of their knives and tapped it lightly against their side.  
  
The meaning was pretty clear. If it was Sunny, he would have said something like...  
  
Does your side hurt? Goodness! How terrible.  
  
It won't hurt anymore when I kill you, though.  
  
Despite the fact that the archer's demeanor remained cold and aloof, Sunny couldn't help but feel a hint of seething anger in that last gesture.  
  
He grinned.  
  
"What, that? It's just a scratch. I can't even see my innards, ha. No big deal."  
  
It hurt like hell, though.  
  
His whole body hurt like hell. His soul hurt, too.  
  
Actually, this could very well be hell.  
  
If being inside the shadow of a cursed, dead god did not constitute being in hell, then what did?  
  
So, Sunny had to send the nebulous slayer into a deeper,darker hell.  
  
Cursing quietly, he pushed himself forward and sent his bone blade flying at the archer's throat.