2118 Like a Beast  
  
Outside, the shadow of Condemnation continued to wade through the fury of the essence storm. The dark colossus took step after step, indomitable, unfeeling… the world quaked under its steps, and the raging ocean of silver essence had no choice but to part in front of it.  
  
The devastating winds were powerless to stop the titanic shadow, and the inescapable annihilation of the soul storm could not destroy it.  
  
The storm did damage it, however.  
  
Little by little, the dark mountain of Condemnation's nebulous body was being ground down by the infinitely small, intangible particles of soul essence. The great slabs of obsidian were slowly growing smaller, the cold expanse of frozen darkness was diminishing, and everything else that had been condemned to be a part of the dead god's shadow was gradually disappearing into the silver radiance.  
  
As it did, the inconceivably tall figure of the dark colossus was gradually shrinking.  
  
Already, its enormous height had been reduced by a few hundred meters. The girth of its titanic torso had diminished, the circumference of its gargantuan forearms had dwindled.  
  
The deeper into the storm Condemnation went, the faster its massive body was being ground by the raging torrents of essence.  
  
Like a shadow was slowly melting in light.  
  
Within the vast darkness of its body, meanwhile…  
  
Even Sunny had noticed that the nebulous sea of darkness around him was growing smaller, and that the outer edges of the dead god's shadow were drawing nearer. He had no way of knowing what was happening, however, since the very nature of space within Condemnation was strange and alien.  
  
Sunny had other matters to worry about, anyway.  
  
Namely, the damned archer.  
  
Just as he thought that he saw a glimmer of endless silver radiance somewhere far away, the obsidian knife flashed toward his heart, and as Sunny turned his torso to avoid it, a crushing kick came barreling at his ribs from the side.  
  
This time, however, he was ready for it.  
  
Not because of his intricate mastery of Shadow Dance or insight into the vicious shadow's ruthless battle style, though. It was simply because, considering the circumstances, this kick was the optimal and most damaging action his enemy could perform — in short, it was because Sunny would have done the same.  
  
So, he managed to catch the calf of the mysterious archer, feeling surprised for a moment by how slender it was despite packing such a devastating punch… well, devastating kick, really.  
  
The momentary surprise did not slow Sunny down, however. Holding the archer's leg in place, he instantly brought the splinter of the ivory fang down with dire force, piercing the base of their thigh and ruthlessly pulling the blade toward himself to slice the enemy's leg open to the very knee.  
  
The archer shuddered.  
  
It was a definite win for Sunny, but one that he knew would come at a cost — because by using both of his hands to deliver the terrible wound, he was leaving himself open to a fatal retaliation.  
  
The obsidian knife flashed toward his throat, but Sunny lowered his head and caught it with his teeth.  
  
As his lips were cut open…  
  
He grinned and tightened his jaw, biting through the black blade and shattering it completely.  
  
'My teeth are no joke, you fool…'  
  
They were altered into a deadly weapon in their own right by Bone Weave, after all.  
  
Finally, the archer seemed taken aback a little.  
  
But it only lasted a split second.  
  
Then, leaving one of their legs in Sunny's grasp, the vicious shadow jumped up and delivered an absolutely crushing kick to the side of Sunny's head with the other one.  
  
Sunny saw stars.  
  
Falling to the ground and choking on sharp shards of obsidian, he let out a stifled laugh.  
  
"Ouch. Ouch… that one really hurt…"  
  
The archer landed on their wounded leg, stumbled, and fell to one knee.  
  
A split second later, without any pause, they instantly unsheathed the discarded bone knife and lunged at Sunny, aiming to finally end his life.  
  
Raising a hand weakly,he tried to stop the enemy from landing on him.  
  
…Or so it seemed.  
  
Instead, as soon as Sunny's fingers touched the mysterious archer, he smiled wider… and pulled them both into the embrace of the shadows.  
  
Using Shadow Step was dangerous, but being killed by the damned maniac was, obviously, more dangerous.  
  
That was why he had conceived of this plan.  
  
Diving into the familiar darkness, Sunny found it not familiar at all. That was only to be expected, considering that the shadows he dove into were not the caring shadows he had known before. They were a part of Condemnation now, and therefore, their dark depths were a part of Condemnation, too.  
  
The eroding nature of the Shadow Realm affected Sunny even here, though. He had known that it would — the radiant trail of essence behind the dead god was proof, and the occasional motes of light that drifted both from himself and from the mysterious archer as they fought were, as well.  
  
Now that Sunny had abandoned his corporeal form — and forced his enemy into abandoning theirs — the Shadow Realm tore into them with a much more obliterating pace.  
  
Their dark souls were dissolving now at a much faster rate than before… which was a cause for concern, without a doubt.  
  
However, Sunny's soul, while damaged, was still empowered and held together by Soul Weave.  
  
And the murderous archer had not looked too solid and unscathed even before being plunged into the embrace of shadows.  
  
'Let's see which one of us lasts longer.'  
  
Sunny felt a sense of vicious glee.  
  
The archer, now a formless shadow, tried to escape from his grip and rush back to the material plane.  
  
But Sunny just held them tighter, now allowing the enemy to flee.  
  
'Where are you going now, bastard? Why, what happened?! Weren't you hellbent on killing me?!'  
  
Piercing him with arrows and cutting him with sharp knives... the wicked thing had to pay.  
  
The archer just struggled more desperately.  
  
Sunny, of course, did not let go.  
  
He wanted to laugh, but sadly,he had no mouth at the moment.  
  
'Die!'  
  
…Outside, the shadow of Condemnation had already shrunk to half its size under the assault of the annihilating torrents of silver essence.  
  
Finally, one of its legs grew too thin to support its prodigious weight.  
  
As the shadow colossus lowered its foot to take another step, its shin shattered and split apart.  
  
Condemnation fell.  
  
The entire world shuddered when its gargantuan, mountain-like body crashed heavily into the ground.  
  
…Deep within the body of the dead god, Sunny felt something changing. He was momentarily confused.  
  
'Huh?'  
  
Then, the darkness quaked, and both he and the murderous archer were thrown out of it, back into the harshness of the material world.  
  
Around them, the nebulous body of Condemnation was collapsing.