2127 Act of Defiance  
  
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Seeing how twisted Sunny's face had become — one of his faces, at least, since the seventh incarnation did not deem it worthy to react in any way — Eurys let out a laugh.   
  
Those chuckles of his were seгiously starting to get on Sunny's nerves...  
  
The jovial voice resounded from the depths of the white skull a moment later:  
  
"Don't be too disheartened, boy. Everyone has to follow their own path to Supremacy, and the nature of the last step is different for each Supreme. However… there is some commonality between them. A shared principle that is revealed if one observes carefully. I can't tell you what exactly it is that you must do to become Suprеme, but I can share my observations with you."  
  
He paused for a moment.  
  
"After all, it is in my best interest to see you usurp the throne of shadows. You might actually manage to kill me then."  
  
Sunny let out a frustrated sigh.  
  
How wonderful would it have been if someone just handed him all the answers? But he was not that lucky, of course.  
  
Still, the mysterious skeleton's offer was better than nothing.  
  
Sunny gathered his thoughts, then asked somberly:  
  
"So? What have you observed?"  
  
Eurys remained silent for a while.  
  
"Well. Supremes have always been rare, even in my time. Supreme humans, at least — enough so that every time a new one appeared, the balance of power in the Mortal Realms was bound to change. Old kingdoms fell, and new ones rose. The emergence of a new Supreme was synonymous with great upheaval… which is to say that there are few examples that I am familiar with. And yet, I did notice a certain similarity in how those people attained Supremacy."  
  
He let out a wistful scoff.  
  
"A Supreme is someone who claims rulership over the world, or at least a part of the world. Their distinct trait is the authority they wield. Naturally, it takes a lot of audacity to lay claim to the world — after all, it already belongs to someone, and already submits to a higher authority. So, in my opinion, the very essence of Supremacy is defiance."  
  
Sunny raised an eyebrow.  
  
"Defiance?"  
  
There was the unpleasant scraping noise, and Eurys nodded.  
  
"Oh yes! It is a bit paradoxical, but the source of authority is defiance. After all, a ruler can hardly be ruled. Or at least ruled easily… there is a difference between authority and absolute authority, in the end. But that is beside the point. What I wanted to say is that if there is one common element between all the final acts of attaining Supremacy that I know оf, it is that they were acts of defiance."  
  
Sunny sighed and lowered his gaze.  
  
He really did not want to sound like a parrot, but had no choice except to reluctantly repeat the same question:  
  
"Defiance?"  
  
Come to think of it…  
  
'What the hell is a parrot, anyway?'  
  
Oblivious to his momentary distraction, Eurys nodded again.  
  
"Yes. And not just acts of defiance, but acts of supremе defiance. Authority and submission are antithetical to each other, are they not? You see… authority cannot exist in the void, since it is only revealed when imposed upon others. So, to claim authority and become Supreme, one has to defy some kind of authority imposed on them. That is what I think, at least."  
  
He chuckled.  
  
"That supreme defiance can take many forms, depending on the individual. Obviously, the more powerful you are, the less you are constrained by the chains of necessity, and therefore the greater your act of defiance has to be — because there are fewer forces great enough to impose themselves upon you, to begin with."  
  
The mysterious skeleton sighed.  
  
"So, some defy power by slaying an immensely powerful foe. Azarax only became the Plague of Steel after killing his Supreme father, for example. Others go against their own nature, defying themselves to gain enlightenment. Some use their will to twist the laws governing their Realm, gaining authority over it. There are many ways, but the surest one…"  
  
Eurys paused, prompting Sunny to utter a quiet curse.  
  
"Really? Do you really have to take a dramatic pause? Are you sure you were a slave, not an actor?!"  
  
The skeleton laughed.  
  
"Alright, alright… settle down! Is it not obvious, though? The surest way is to go against the greatest will of all… to break the will of gods. Well, they are dead now, so the next best thing would be to go against one of the absolute laws. If you manage to defy one of those, I am sure that you will become Supreme in no time."  
  
Sunny let out a long sigh.  
  
"Slaying an immensely powerful foe? Usurping a Realm? Breaking absolute laws and going against the will of gods? Bastard! Aren't you just goading me into finding a way to kill you?! All of those are ways to get around the curse placed on you by Shadow God!"  
  
Eurys coughed in embarrassment.  
  
Considering that he had no lungs, that cough was not at all convincing.  
  
"My, oh my! What a coincidence."  
  
Sunny let out another growl, prompting the mysterious skeleton to shake his skull.  
  
"No, listen… I might have a selfish motive in sharing this knowledge, but what I've told you is true. Those are indeed valid ways of taking the final step to Supremacy. You just need to find one uniquely suited for you… and then come back to try and kill me."  
  
Sunny stared at Eurys for a while, unsure if he should trust him.  
  
For what it was worth… the skeleton seemed to be sincere. He had no reason to lie to Sunny, anyway, since it was indeed in his best interest to help Sunny gain more power.  
  
So, if Sunny was to take his words seriously…  
  
'An act of supreme defiance?'  
  
And not just any act, but one that suited Sunny best — one intimately tied to the very nature of his Aspect, his nature, and his forming Domain.  
  
He grumbled:  
  
"I've killed countless beings that were way more powerful than me, you know? How come I am not Supreme yet?"  
  
The skeleton stared at him for a while, then offered helpfully:  
  
"I guess they weren't powerful enough?"  
  
A quiet groan escaped from Sunny's mouth.  
  
"What are you talking about? I am a mere Transcendent, and yet I go around routinely killing Great Nightmare Creatures. I killed my first Sovereign back when I was an Ascended, in fact… granted, he was already consumed by Corruption and no different from a beast by then. Hell, I killed a Great Devil as a Dreamer!"  
  
Eurys was seemingly taken aback.  
  
He remained silent for a few moments, then mumbled in a puzzled tone:  
  
"My, oh my…"  
  
Then, the skeleton stared at him with reproach.  
  
"Things are worse than I expected, then. You see, boy… since you are such an overachiever… since you are a damn lunatic who goes around slaying immensely powerful beings routinely, then slaying one more won't be much of an act of defiance, will it?!"  
  
Sunny blinked.  
  
"Hey, now…"  
  
Eurys clicked his jaw a few times.  
  
"No, really, who kills a Great Devil as a Dreamer?! You know what… I take it back. Why wait? Come kill me right now! There's no reason to wait, so do it now!"  
  
Sunny tilted his head and stared at Eurys darkly. After a while, he said:  
  
"You know what, I'm in no mood for your antics. In fact, I am tired, spent, and in pain. My soul is damaged, and my body is full of holes. How about you get over your indignation and give me actual advice?"  
  
Eurys laughed.  
  
"Well, I don't know. Have you tried… not killing something?"  
  
Sunny frowned.  
  
"I did. In fact, I was attacкed by thirteen Saints recently, and I only killed six... wait, was it six? I think it was..."  
  
Eurys lowered his skull in dejection.  
  
'What is that bastard so dejected about?'  
  
In any case, it seemed like he had exhausted the mysterious skeleton's usefulness — at least as far as attaining Supremacy was concerned.  
  
Eurys had indeed shared his earnest observations… and they were helpful.  
  
Although he had not provided Sunny with a definitive answer, he had at least shown him the right direction.  
  
'One final step… an act of supreme defiance…'  
  
Sunny fell into deep thought.  
  
Breaking the will of gods and going against the absolute laws of existence was definitely out of the question.  
  
…Wasn't it?  
  
Noctis had broken the will of Sun God by liberating Hope.  
  
Something had defied death by breaking free of the Shadow Realm, which was how its Fragment came to be.  
  
In a way, Cassie had defied an even higher authority by conspiring to liberate Sunny from fate… even though the actual perpetrator of that liberation was the Thieving Bird.   
  
He sighed.   
  
'I don't need to be so grand in my ambitions.'  
  
Eurys had said that defying the greatest authority was the surest way, not the only way.  
  
Most Supremes had attained their Supremacy with less drastic acts, no doubt. Azarax had killed a Supreme, but even that was not a necessity.   
  
Simply defying the authority of a Supreme could also work.   
  
Perhaps that was the way…  
  
While Sunny was contemplating, Eurys suddenly spoke once again:  
  
"Oh, by the way…"  
  
Sunny looked at him somberly.   
  
"What?"  
  
The skeleton stared back at him for a moment.  
  
"Nothing much. I just wanted to say... that you should probably hurry and leave this place, for now."  
  
He chuckled.  
  
"Well, if you want to stay alive, of course…"  
  
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