2130 Inviting a Killer Into Your Soul  
  
Sunny said that he would take the risk — but really, he was quite concerned. He did not know what would happen next.  
  
The first part was not at all surprising…  
  
[Your shadow grows stronger.]  
  
The Handy Bracelet might not have been enchanted to react when Sunny killed a shadow, but a Shadow Creature was different. He had some experience with that.  
  
As soon as the voice spoke into his ear, Sunny fely a torrent of fragments rush into his soul — quite a bit less than what he had received after slaying the shadow of Condemnation, but still an amazing amount.  
  
'Ah…'  
  
He could feel subtle changes happening to his body, making him a little bit stronger. Even though he had already formed all seven cores, there was still one final feat left to perform — it was to saturate them fully once and for all. Before that, the familiar hunt for shadow fragments would still hold some meaning for him, albeit less than before.  
  
Unless he found some other way to use them, of course… Nephis could burn her cores to unleash annihilating flames, for example, while Mordret could tear out pieces of his soul to create Reflections.   
  
It was unknown, and quite doubtful really, that Sunny's Aspect possessed such a facet. If not… one day soon, he would lose an integral reason to hunt down Nightmare Creatures and seek more power.   
  
Sunny found the very idea of having no motive to kill unfamiliar. He had spent so much time being pushed to endlessly seek out battle — against beings who were his equals or possessed greater power than him, at that — that it had become his second nature. How would it even feel, to not have that need?  
  
'Well… I'm sure I'll find some other reason to kill things.'  
  
Or it would find him. When had the world ever allowed him peace and tranquility?  
  
In any case, fully saturating his cores would most likely have to wait until his next visit to the Shadow Realm, wherever that might be.  
  
Receiving a flood of shadow fragments was what he had expected.  
  
The next part was shrouded in doubt.  
  
As the ghostly body of the shadow archer convulsed and dissolved into black smoke under him, soon disappearing entirely, Sunny closed his eyes for a moment.  
  
Two things could happen.  
  
The first one… was that the vicious slayer would join the ranks of the still and silent shadows that populated his Soul Sea.  
  
It was just that Sunny doubted that she would remain still and silent for long.  
  
Eurys was right. This strange shadow had maintained self-awareness and lucidity — a form of them, at least — even after coming to the Shadow Realm after the death of the woman casting it. So, she would most likely remain rebellious in his Soul Sea, as well, either going on a massacre or simply endeavoring to destroy his soul from the inside.  
  
Maybe both.  
  
The second possibility was just as troubling, if not more so.  
  
The slayer of the Shadow Realm was a Shadow Creature, after all… just like Nightmare had been.  
  
And unlike the rest of his Shadows — with the exception of Serpent, who had been handed down to Sunny as a Legacy Relic by the Spell — Nightmare was not created by combining the silent shadow of a slain creature with their Echo.  
  
Instead, as soon as Sunny killed the tenebrous stеed, Nightmare had become his Shadow directly.  
  
The same could happen with the nebulous slayer, which would root her essence in one of his Shadow Cores.  
  
What would happen then?  
  
…Sunny had no idea.  
  
She would definitely not recognize him as a master, though.  
  
And what would happen if a shadow that spent thousands of years hunting down other shadows got rooted in one of her killer's Shadow Cores?  
  
Sunny shuddered to imagine.  
  
He had a vain hope that the silent shadows in his Soul Sea would come to life again to protect him, like they had when Mordret challenged him to a soul duel.  
  
But these situations were different. Sunny was still unsure how that facet of his Aspect functioned, and what had stirred the silent shadows into action. But if he had to guess, it would be that Mordret was an invader to his soul… a foreign body that had to be purged.  
  
The shadow slayer, however, would not be. Rather, she would be a part of his soul, no different from the vast sea of still water, the seven suns of his cores, the Shadows that dwelled within them, the replica of the Nameless Temple, and the legion of lifeless shadows that now stood around it, watching the dark edifice silently.  
  
So… he would decide what to do after learning which of the two possibilities had come true.  
  
Feeling a subtle change happening to his soul, Sunny glanced at Eurys.  
  
"Well… I'll be going, then."  
  
The ancient skeleton did not move, but the creaky voice resounded from the depths of its white skull once again.  
  
"...Godspeed."  
  
Sunny hesitated for a moment.  
  
"You know, it would be much more convenient if I took you with me. Then, you would not have to wait for me to come all the way back here after becoming a Supreme."  
  
Eurys chucκled.  
  
"It took me so much effort to get to the Shadow Realm, and now you want me to leave. No thanks. What happens if you die before becoming Supreme? Your shadow will just waltz down here naturally, but I'll have to walk all the way back. And…"  
  
He took a pause, then added wistfully:  
  
"...I don't have feet anymore."  
  
Sunny smiled.  
  
"You also only have one arm. So… if I decided to take you with me аnyway, you wouldn't be able to put up much of a fight, would you?"  
  
The white skull stared at him expressionlessly for a few moments.  
  
"My, oh my! Do try."  
  
The tone was friendly, but somehow, Sunny felt a shiver run down his back.  
  
He decided against it.  
  
"Until we meet again, then. I'll give your regards to Nephis… oh, and by the way..."  
  
His tone was friendly, as well.  
  
"If I hear you call her an abomination again, I'll break your remaining arm."  
  
Hearing that, Eurys almost seemed perplexed.  
  
As Sunny rose to his feet, he mumbled quietly:  
  
"What a bizarre thing to say. The world has gone insane…"  
  
Turning around, Sunny took the first step.  
  
It was then that he finally heard the words he had been waiting for:  
  
[...You have received a Shadow.]