2135 Food Delivery  
  
Sunny strained his tired body and turned his head toward the stairs, wondering who it was that had entered the Brilliant Emporium. Although the Ivory Island was not as desolate as before with the Fire Keepers back, few would come unannounced… let alone manage to get past the jaws of the Marvelous Mimic unharmed.  
  
So, there were only a handful of candidates.  
  
Cassie was far away, in the Hollows, while Aiko usually floated down the stairs instead of walking. So...  
  
His question was answered shortly when he saw Nephis descending the steps carefully, her way illuminated softly by a floating Memory.  
  
The graceful lines of her slender figure were a wondrous sight for sore eyes.  
  
Sunny was so engrossed in marveling at the view that he momentarily forgot to greet her.  
  
'...But what is she carrying?'  
  
Indeed, Nephis held something in her hands. From his position below the stairs, that something… looked suspiciously like a tray.  
  
A few moments later, a delectable aroma reached his nose.  
  
Sunny blinked a couple of times.  
  
'Food?'  
  
At this moment, the soft light of the luminous Memory chased away the darkness and shone upon his sprawled figure. Noticing him staring at her from the floor, Nephis froze for a moment, then turned аway a little with a hint of embarrassment in her posture.  
  
As if trying to shield the tray with her body.  
  
"You… you are already back."  
  
Her voice was sounded confident and even, like always, but he could tell that she was a little startled.  
  
She remained silent for a moment, and then added in her usual impassive tone:  
  
"I just thought you'd be hungry when you come back. So, I brought some food over, to leave it… just in case."  
  
Sunny stared at her for a bit, then smiled, feeling a strange and warm feeling soothe his aching heart.  
  
"...Did you cook a meal for me?"  
  
Nephis cleared her throat.  
  
"Why? Did you assume that I can't cook, Master Sunless? Naturally, I can. I received an extensive education as a scion of a Legacy clan, after all,including advanced courses on meal preparation and nutrition. So, I am quite skilled in these matters as well."  
  
Sunny laughed quietly, then grimaced due to pain.  
  
'I'd better not make any sudden movements...'  
  
At the same time, he thought back to their shared past. One that only he remembered, and treasured dearly.  
  
His smile turned a little wistful.  
  
"Oh, no… I know that you can cook, Lady Nephis. In fact, I even considered employing you as a chef in the Brilliant Emporium once."  
  
These days, it was Sunny who аlways fed Nephis. He was happy to, and really, watching her enjoy the food he prepared brought him great joy. But in the early days of their tumultuous relationship, back on the Forgotten Shore, it had been her who always prepared food for the cohort.  
  
Smelling the delicious aroma now, Sunny suddenly realized how much he had missed the taste of Neph's cooking.  
  
'Those Legacy teachers are no joke...'  
  
She tilted her head a little and gave him a dubious look, sparks of amusement igniting in her eyes.  
  
"Me? Employed as a chef?"  
  
Sunny raised an eyebrow and grinned.  
  
"Why? The Lord of Shadow can work in the kitchen, but Changing Star can't?"  
  
Nephis remained silent for a few moments, then smiled subtly.  
  
"...Maybe one day in the future. I am a bit preoccupied, for now."  
  
Then, her smile slowly disappeared, and as her gaze explored Sunny's sprawled figure, her expression darkened.  
  
"But why are you on… you're wounded?"  
  
Sunny coughed and hesitated for a few moments.  
  
"Yes, I am a bit wounded. In fact, I am so wounded that I can't even hold up a spoon…"  
  
Hurrying her steps, Nephis hastily descended from the stair and placed the tray on a display table.  
  
"Hold on, I'll heal you."  
  
Sunny gave her a pitiful look.  
  
"Or, you know… you can hold me while you feed me…"  
  
Her expression hardened.  
  
"I'll heal you."  
  
As Sunny chuckled, she knelt in front of him and placed her hands on his chest. Soon, his pain receded, chased away by the warm wave of purifying flame.  
  
His battered bоdy was healed, and even his hurt soul was soothed, repairing itself with much greater speed.  
  
This time, it took Nephis much longer than usual to mend his wounds.  
  
Eventually, though, she was done… even if her complexion had become a little pale.  
  
Knowing the price that it entailed, Sunny disliked being healed by her quite a bit. But he was not immature enough to voice his reluctance.  
  
After all, seeing him wounded and suffering must have been just as painful for her as seeing her in agony was for him… well, maybe a bit less so. In any case, it was a gift she gave freely and willingly, and he would not answer her grace with bitter words of regret.  
  
So, Sunny just smiled and said with relief written clearly on his face:  
  
"Thank you."  
  
Nephis remained silent for a few moments, then answered in a slightly subdued tone:  
  
"If you are grateful, don't get hurt so easily. I… don't like it when you get hurt."  
  
Sunny let out a quiet laugh.  
  
"...It wasn't easy to get hurt this badly, you know? In fact, I worked really hard to receive each wound."  
  
She gave him a reproachful look.  
  
"So, what happened?"  
  
He sat up, then glanced at the tray of food that remained forgotten on the table.  
  
"Oh… I went to the Shadow Realm, killed a dead god, became a Titan, learned a few ancient secrets from a talkative corpse, and cut the throat of a shadow who had once been his companion."  
  
Sunny smiled, then pointed to the food.  
  
"I'll tell you everything in more detail, but… can I eat, first? I'm sure I'll enjoy the meal more while it's still hot… even if you refuse to feed me…"  
  
Nephis blinked a couple of times.  
  
"Sure. Go ahead, if you wish."  
  
Then, as Sunny rose to pick up the tray, she suddenly spoke again:  
  
"Wait. Did you say that you killed a dead god?"  
  
Fully concentrated on the alluring view of a meal prepared by Nephis, Sunny nodded absentmindedly.  
  
"Yes. I was just a minor god, though! Nothing to worry about…"