2234 Darkness Falls

Far away, one of Sunny's incarnations was sitting on the steps of the Nameless Temple.

The small camp the soldiers sent to him by the Sword Army had built was empty now. They had been recalled and left for Vanishing Lake to participate in the clandestine attack on the Lesser Crossing Stronghold… which never took place, in the end.

By now, they were out there on the battlefield, trying to survive in the cataclysm caused by the Sovereigns. Many of them were probably dead, torn apart or turned into puppets.

The Nameless Temple was eerily quiet.

Sunny had spent a long time alone here, but he usually had the company of his Shadows. Saint, Fiend, Serpent, Nightmare… they were on the battlefield too, helping him hold back the tide of abominations.

He felt strangely lonesome despite the sleeping army of Great Nightmare Creatures hidden in the darkness behind him, and the invisible presence of the Temple Guardian.

Of course, his solitude was not destined to last. His shadow sense spread far and wide, encompassing the dark expanse of the Shadow Realm's Fragment. That was why he could already feel it… the ragged force of the Song soldiers approaching him from the north.

And their commanders, of course.

Lonesome Howl, Death Singer…

He could not sense Silent Stalker, though, which meant that she was already somewhere close, aiming her arrows at him.

Sunny did not move.

Finally, the soldiers entered the empty camp, shivering as the eerie silence enveloped them.

The daughters of Ki Song were the first to reach the dark edifice of the temple. They stopped, staring at him with tense expressions.

In the end, it was Lonesome Howl who spoke:

"Lord of Shadows… we meet again."

Her voice was boisterous, but he could feel a hint of fear hidden deep within it.

Sunny tilted his head a little.

"You were sent to take the Nameless Temple, then?"

She smiled.

"Sure. It's a bit funny, though… oxymoron, or what have you.Your Citadel is called the Nameless Temple — that's its name. So it's not very nameless, is it?"

He hesitated for a moment, amused.

"Perhaps. So, tell me, what's the logic? Last time, I beat thirteen of you. Now there's only three. Are you that impatient to die?"

Lonesome Howl's smile faltered for a moment, then brightened again.

"Ah… but most of you is far away. So, I like our chances."

Her bravado was ruined by Death Singer, though, who chose that exact moment to yell:

"Death! Oh, death! We're all going to die! I sense it!"

Sunny stared at her for a moment, smiling, then shook his head.

"Well… naturally. Everyone dies one day. Only the Void is everlasting — so, I guess you are right."

Death Singer fell silent and looked back at him with wide eyes.

"I'm… right? Me? Uh… can you repeat that, Sir Lord of Shadows? Louder?"

With that, she turned her head and glanced at Lonesome Howl vindictively.

Sunny chuckled.

"...Sorгy to disappoint, though. You're not dying today."

It was time.

The Nameless Temple had long accumulated enough essence to travel, and the stage was set for the Lord of Shadows to make his entrance.

As Sunny rose to his feet, he saw the daughters of Ki Song, and the soldiers behind them, flinch.

He smiled behind the visor of his helmet.

"Oh, but you might become orphans..."

With that, he activated the Component of his Citadel and envisioned the calamitous battlefield.

As the warriors of Song watched him warily, readying themselves for the lethal battle against the terrifying Saint of Godgrave…

The ancient edifice of the dark temple turned hard to focus on.

And then, they were suddenly blinded by bright light.

"Argh!"

Lonesome Howl raised a hand to cover her eyes and swayed.

A way of familiar heat washed over her.

When she could see again, an expression of shock appeared on her face.

The Nameless Temple… was gone, as if it had never existed at all.

And with it,the unnatural darkness that veiled this entire region of Godgrave had disappeared as well.

In front of them, there was nothing but a white expanse of bone, ending in an abyssal drop to the distant spine of the dead deity.

Above them was the radiant veil of clouds.

"W—what the hell?"

The Lord of Shadows and his Citadel… were gone like a mirage.

And almost at the same time as they disappeared from the southern edge of the Breastbone Reach, they appeared on the northern edge, in the middle of the battlefield, right below the Ivory Island.

The Fragment of the Shadow Realm traveled with the Nameless Temple, as well. Sunny had not been able to move it before, and he could not do it now either — however, he wagered his hopes on a trick. By anchoring the Fragment to his Citadel, he had hoped that moving the Citadel would result in the vast shroud of darkness moving with it, too.

Luckily, it had worked. The fractured bone plain was suddenly enveloped by deep shadows, obscuring the distant sky. The shadows swallowed it all — the shattered bone, the scarlet jungle, the sea of puppets, the storm of swords, the flood of Nightmare Creatures... and the drowning army.

And the Sovereigns, as well.

Now, their trap was complete.

Serpent was rаging below the Sovereigns, hidden in the heart of a profane snowstorm.

The Ivory Island hung in the sky above them, pressing the two into the ground with the obliterating power of the Crushing.

The Fragment of Shadow Realm was all around them. As a piece of a Divine Domain — albeit one belonging to a dead god — it possessed a power of its own, and that power was suppressing the Domains of the two Supremes.

And they had lost a lot of that power already — both during the war and when the three Great Citadels were stolen from them.

There was the Nameless Temple itself, too, its invisible guardian, and the Great Nightmare Creatures slumbering in the cool darkness of its great hall.Sunny and Nephis had done all they could to give themselves a chance to defeat the King and the Queen... to vanquish the Sovereigns.

Now, all they could do was fight.

Standing on the steps of the Nameless Temple, no more than a dozen meters away, Sunny looked at Anvil with cold arrogance.

His voice sounded aloof...

"She's talking about me, by the way. I'm the better smith."