2238 Unassailable  
Anvil of Valor was perhaps the most brilliant warrior of his generation… the most brilliant warrior of those who were still alive, at least.  
He had been born and bred to be the epitome of martial prowess, spent decades fighting bloody battles on countless battlefields, led glorious conquests of numerous vast regions of the Dream Realm, and solidified the rule of the Great Clan Valor over the world with his sword and his hammer.  
In some sense, he was the personification of the Second Generation. He was powerful, he was fearsome… he was tyrannical and domineering.  
But Sunny was a terrifying presence on the battlefield himself. And, as one of the most powerful Awakened warriors in history, he was more than worthy enough to represent his own generation.  
The Third Generation was harder to describe than the previous two. The members of the First Generation had survived the descent of the Nightmare Spell and built the foundation of a new world order. The Second Generation, having been the first to be born into the ruthless world of the Nightmare Spell, grew up to subjugate it and build upon that foundation.  
The Third Generation had not been shaped by such distinct events, and neither had it achieved anything as noteworthy. Perhaps what had truly shaped it was the fall of North America — and the previous two generations of Awakened, as well.  
So, today, the members of the Third Generation were going to distinguish it by vanquishing the very people who had shаped it. The future was fighting against the past, longing to escape its iron grasp.  
…As Sunny attacked, his Transcendent Battle Art fully revealed itself. His movements were swift and flowing, guided by his shadow sense instead of vision. His sword was fierce and vicious, carrying the weight of a mountain or turning light as a feather the next moment. Each attack was ruthlessly lethal and imbued with dreadful power, causing devastating shockwaves to shake the world after each strike.  
Sunny himself was sinister and elusive, freely moving between the shadows. It was as if he was in several places at the same time… even if he wasn't, the shadows themselves moved and flowed, turning tangible and deadly at times. Sadly, the manifested shadows could not compare with his titanic power, and were easily destroyed by Anvil without managing to even slow him down.  
Anvil was stronger, faster, more resilient…  
But not by much.  
Sunny grinned as he felt it. Sure, he was inferior to the tyrannical Sovereign in terms of raw physical power, but the gap between them was not that vast — it was quite narrow, in fact. As if the true advantage the Supremes possessed lay mostly in their connection to their Domains, and since the Shadow Realm Fragment was suppressing that connection, Anvil was devoid of his usual strength.  
And yet…  
Despite being narrow, the gap seemed impossible to bridge.  
'Damn it!'  
Every single one of Sunny's strikes was either blocked, deflected, or calmly evaded. Every single movement, no matter how fast or forceful, was predicted and turned against him. Despite his ferocious power and titanic strength, Sunny was struggling with all his might, while Anvil remained seemingly unbothered.  
Full of disdain, even.  
"This style… did she teach you this style? It seems that the two of you had known each other for much longer than you let on."  
Sunny gritted his teeth behind Weaver's Mask.  
"She wasn't the one who taught me, and we don't know each other at all..."  
Anvil smiled coldly.  
"No matter."  
Pushing Sunny's sword aside, he moved forward. Sunny fled into the shadows, but by the time he escaped them, Anvil's fist was still poised to strike him in the chest.  
A terrifying blow sent a shockwave running through Sunny's body and threw him back. The breastplate of the Onyx Mantle cracked, only to mend itself a moment later — augmented by seven shadows, the [Living Stone] trait of his stonelike carapace had grown immensely potent.Anvil looked at Sunny darkly, then shook his head.  
"Not metal, but not stone either… an Underworld armament, then. Did you think it would save you?"  
Sunny suppressed a groan, raising his sword to attack.  
"I might have entertained such a thought, yes…"  
Anvil possessed the ability to control metal, and that power was not limited to his own swords and armor. He could just as easily control the weapons of his enemies, as well — fortunately, Sunny's armor was made from the strange material that was closer to stone than to metal while inheriting traits of both. His weapons, meanwhile, were made from shadows.  
Nephis wore no armor at all, and the Blessing was like a blade forged from furious flame. So, both of them were immune to Anvil's power.  
That was not something Sunny had relied on to save him, though. It was just one of the measures he had to take to give himself a chance.  
'But why is he so strong? It doesn't make sense!'  
As Sunny attacked and Anvil defended, unbothered, almost as if entertaining himself, they moved across the shattered battlefield. Sunny lunged forward to deliver a deadly thrust, but Anvil simply moved out of the way. The two of them crashed into a crowd of puppets, and carried by momentum, Sunny tore through them like a beast made of pure darkness.  
The bodies of the puppets were too fragile to offer any resistance to his dreadful might. As he arrested his forward momentum and turned on the ball of his foot, he saw clouds of crimson haze and tiny pieces of torn bodies spreading outward in the air slowly, as if suspended in water.  
Before the first drop of blood even hit the ground, Sunny and Anvil had already exchanged a hundred more blows, moving away like a rolling disaster.  
'I think... I can sense it.'  
All this time, Sunny had been learning how Anvil fought through Shadow Dance. The Sovereign's battle art was deep and complicated... strange, even, impossible to fathom in a short amount of time. But now,he was starting to realize why the King of Swords seemed so unassailable despite not being that much stronger.  
There, in the very essence of his battle art, being used as a weapon…  
Was the Will.  
And while the two of them fought, Sunny was learning how to wield the Will as a weapon, himself.