2240 Flawless Blade  
Sunny's sword parted the air, creating a wind blade dozens of meters tall. It slammed into the surface of the weathered bone with a thunderous roar, sending a cloud of debris flying up…  
However, the wind blade was a mere side effect of the black odachi falling upon Anvil. Held in place by Nightmare and Saint, he had nowhere to escape — two of his seven swords bounced off Saint's shield, too, creating a breach in the sphere of rustling steel.  
Sunny's sword plummeted into that breach, and for a moment, he allowed himself to believe that it would strike down a Sovereign.  
No… not really.  
Taught by countless bitter experiences, Sunny knew that victory never came so easy.  
And indeed, against all reason, Anvil managed to survive.  
At the last moment, he shook off Nightmare, sent Saint staggered back, and turned his torso.  
As a result, the black odachi failed to end his life…  
It did, however, bite into his breastplate.  
Anvil's dark armor seemed impregnable before, but this time, it was actually breached. The glancing blow did not penetrate deep, but Sunny felt it cutting flesh.  
As his sword scraped against the surface of the ancient bone, a drop of blood fell off its serpentine blade.  
Anvil took a few steps back and looked down, at the long cut on his armor. A moment later, the black metal repaired itself — but the shallow laceration beneath remained.  
Looking up, he studied Sunny for a few moments, then smiled coldly.  
"You actually made me bleed. No one else has managed in a decade."  
Sunny smiled behind Weaver's Mask, hiding his discomfort.  
"Bleeding? Bah. How pedestrian."  
The King of Swords chuckled.  
"That sword of yours is curious, too. Soul serpents are supposed to have gone extinct thousands of years ago, and yet here it is… the last survivor of its species. I wonder how the Nightmare Spell preserved it."  
Sunnу, Saint, and Nightmare surrounded Anvil from three sides, but he did not seem concerned. Instead, he looked… almost elated."You are not as big of a disappointment as I thought."  
His cold voice turned darker then, sending a chill running down Sunny's spine.  
"You still have to die, though."  
Sunny smiled darkly.  
"Oh? Why, pray tell?"  
Dismissing four of his seven swords so that only three remained, Anvil lingered for a few moments, then said evenly:  
"Because you are a threat to my greatest masterpiece, of course."  
With that, something changed subtly about the world.  
In the next moment, Sunny gasped.  
Two of Anvil's swords shot at Saint and Nightmare, while the Sovereign himself was suddenly near Sunny. His cursed blade lashed out, bypassing the black odachi and piercing the Onyx Mantle.  
A flash of pain washed over Sunny's right arm.  
Anvil avoided his counterattack with chilling ease and looked at him coldly.  
"I spent decades forging that sword, you know…"  
Sunny dove into the shadows, but Anvil's sword reached him in their dark embrace, as well, gifting him another wave of blinding pain.  
Rolling out of the shadows, Sunny staggered to his feet and raised his odachi in a desperate attempt to defend himself.   
"Crazy bastard… you are not talking about Nephis, are you?"  
The corner of Anvil's mouth moved slightly.  
"Who else? I will admit, I was late to realize her potential… but after she returned from the Second Nightmare alive, I saw it clearly. It was like a revelation. Everything fell into place, and I knew what I had been waiting for all these years."  
Sunny was suddenly overcome by an insatiable desire to rip that man apart. He had only been aiming to kill Anvil before — but now, he wanted to kill him slowly, and viscerally, with his bare hands.  
But Anvil did not give Sunny a chance to bask in that fury, battering Serpent aside and leaving a deep cut on his left shoulder. The cursed blade scraped against the bone, making Sunny growl in pain.  
"In hindsight, it was me who had tempered her into the flawless blade that she became.From a lost little girl to the radiant star she is now… it was me who had shaped her, sharpened her, guided her. It was me who had forged Changing Star into what she is today."  
Sunny was too appalled to process every word Anvil was speaking, so he simply tried to stop the next blow. However, Anvil simply crushed his block, leaving a deep gouge on his right thigh.  
"And now, finally… the perfect sword I forged is close to being complete. It is just that you, disgusting thing, are blemishing its blade. But that is alright. A small stain can be easily removed."  
Sunny let out a stifled scream as Anvil's blade bit into his side.  
And at the same time, he realized something important…  
'He's completely insane.'  
The King of Sword had always been reserved and taciturn, so it was hard to see. But his severe and cold personality went beyond simple strangeness — what hid behind it was true, utter madness. Sunny did not know if it was the result of becoming Supreme or simply Anvil's own mental disfigurement, but his enemy was far removed from sanity.  
Sunny also understood something else — it was that Anvil truly did not care about anything, including winning this battle. All he cared about was creating a flawless sword... or a flawless being that was no different from a sword, it seemed.  
So, in a perverse way, he even hoped to lose.  
Because after failing to forge his own children into perfect weapons, he had fixated on Nephis, the daughter of Smile of Heaven, as his best and last hope of creating a flawless… sword.  
He had said that Nephis was almost complete, which meant that she had not proven herself flawless yet — there was one last act that remained for her to achieve completion, in his twisted mind.  
The act of killing him, no doubt.  
'He's completely insane and suicidal.'  
And all of it was the result of Anvil's debilitating Flaw. A chilling, but reasonable conclusion of his ruthless pursuit to rid himself of all attachments.A lot of things that seemed odd before suddenly made sense.  
Sunny groaned mentally.  
'That's great, but…'  
Sadly enough, Sunny himself was not part of Anvil's plan to give Nephis one last, deadly trial — whether she could prove herself worthy аnd survive or not. In fact, as far as the King of Swords was concerned, Sunny stood in his way.  
Marring the pure beauty of the nearly flawless blade with his vile presence.  
So, Sunny had to be purged.  
Staggering back, he forced out a pale smile.  
"Your Majesty, King Anvil… I want to say something. You are clearly, definitely not a complete damn lunatic…"