2242 Shining Depths  
  
As Nephis felt the indescribable agony of her soul cores shattering and the ocean of flame contained within them escaping like an incinerating white inferno, she opened her mouth to scream.  
  
However, what escaped it was not a scream, but a thunderous melody of True Names being evoked by a Shaper to bend the world to her will.  
  
The True Name of Fire, the True Name оf Destruction…  
  
Her own True Name, as well. The name of Changing Star, the Star of Ruin.  
  
And the name of the Queen.  
  
Ravensong.  
  
A brilliant star suddenly ignited in the dark sky above the snowy chasm.  
  
It was so bright and pure that even the soldiers in the distance could not help but turn their heads and look, her light reflecting in their frightened eyes.  
  
Then, a pillar of flame escaped the blade of the Blessing and plummeted into the vast expanse of swirling snow, burning a hole in it. The snow melted into water, the water evaporated, and the steam was overheated, turning into plasma. The air itself was burned away, creating an area of absolute vacuum.  
  
All of it happened in an instant.  
  
Then, the pillar of flame disappeared, extinguished by the darkness, and for a moment, everything was still.  
  
And then…  
  
It was as if a sun was born under the fractured battlefield.  
  
Suddenly, the billowing cloud of snow veiling the depths of the vast chasm shone with beautiful white light. The same soft light rose from the countless jagged cracks that marred the surface of the shattered bone plain, chasing away the darkness.  
  
The Hollows became a source of pure radiance. It was as the dark depths of Godgrave had somehow switched places with its blinding sky, with light pouring from below and darkness looming far above.  
  
Everything was still for a brief moment… and in that moment, the soft radiance pouring from the cracks in the ancient bone gradually turned more intense, and then more intense still, until it was almost violently bright.  
  
The world shuddered.  
  
A terrifying roar rose into the sky,making the Awakened soldiers stumble and press their hands against their ears. The Nightmare Creatures faltered. The swirling snow was instantly оbliterated, and towering walls of white flame shot from the jagged cracks into the black sky.  
  
The bone itself was blackened, entire swaths of it plummeting into the white inferno below.  
  
The abominable jungle, which had been frozen by the lethal snowstorm, was now set aflame and turned to ash. The great vertical bridges of twisting vines all collapsed into whirlwinds of embers, and countless Nightmare Creatures perished in the explosion, either annihilated by the obliterating shockwave or burned to death by ferocious flames.  
  
By the time the world stopped quaking, the Hollows were a radiant hell of white fire and incandescent embers. The snow was replaced by swirling ash, which rained down from above. Smoke veiled everything in sight.  
  
…And from that smoke, something rose, stretching its tendrils toward a small, radiant star burning in the black sky.  
  
\*\*\*  
  
Sunny had carried a Corrupted Titan through the shadows once. The weight of its vile soul had been both crushing and immense…  
  
But the weight of Anvil's soul was simply unbearable. Or rather, his soul seemed immovable.  
  
And yet, Sunny did move it.  
  
In that moment — for a moment — his will tramped that of a Supreme, perhaps because he had caught the King of Swords by surprise.  
  
As the two of them submerged into the embrace of shadows, though, Sunny did something that he had never done before, and had never been capable of doing before.  
  
Instead of stepping through the shadows while carrying another living being to emerge from them someplace else, he simply pulled both Anvil and himself into the familiar cold darkness.  
  
There, in the world of darkness, both of them were nothing more than intangible shadows themselves, their souls laid bare.  
  
And Sunny was quite familiar with battling other shadows in that lightless realm.  
  
…He was in for an unpleasant surprise, though.  
  
Shadows were usually shapeless and formless — unless they were guided by a conscious mind that shaped them into a particular form. It had taken him quite a while to learn how to shape himself into a form capable of battle, long before…  
  
But Anvil was not formless.  
  
His shadow was vast and terrifying, as deep as Sunny's own. What's more, it had maintained the very same form he wore in the tangible world, as if Anvil's sense of self was so absolute that nothing could change it.  
  
Out there in the world of lightless shapelessness, Sunny saw color for the first time in his life.  
  
There was a colossal figure of an armor-clad warrior in front of him, entirely black, wielding an impenetrably black sword. A vermilion cloak rested on his shoulders, and scarlet flames were burning in his eyes.  
  
Still…  
  
This was the land of shadows.  
  
And Sunny was their Lord.  
  
As his own shadow turned into a towering giant with six hands, he rushed at Anvil and clawed at his colossal form. Whatever armor the King of Swords wore must have granted him a great degree of protection against soul attacks, and yet, it parted in front of Sunny's claws like paper.  
  
For the first time since their battle started, he felt that his enemy was truly hurt.  
  
Anvil only wasted a split second to orient himself in the unfamiliar world of shadows… almost as if he had experienced fighting someone wielding power over shadows once, already… and coldly pushed his dreadful sword forward.  
  
The harrowing blade cut into Sunny's vast form, threatening to cut it in half.  
  
Anyone else would have probably been destroyed by that single attack, their souls collapsing like tattered cloth. But as soon as the black blade touched Sunny, an intricate weave of golden strings flashed for a moment in the dark depths of his giant form, almost like chainmail.  
  
That was Soul Weave, of course, which held his soul together and reinforced it against soul attacks.  
  
The pain was blinding, of course.  
  
Anvil's sword had been slowed by Soul Weave,preventing it from cutting Sunny in two, but it did not stop the cursed blade altogether — but in the next moment, his towering form simply parted in front of the sharp edge, allowing it to pass through him without dealing any damage whatsoever.  
  
He was not obliged to maintain the same form, after all. In fact, the very concept of shape was merely a crutch here in the embrace of shadows.  
  
The six-armed giant collapsed, turning into a formless mass that enveloped Anvil like a shroud. Countless clawed hands protruded from its surface, and countless fanged maws opened on it, ripping the Soverеign's soul to shreds.  
  
Anvil did not allow Sunny to attack him unpunished, of course. Just as Sunny was tearing him with claws and fangs, Anvil continued to stab and slice him with his sword…  
  
'Ah… argh… haaa!'  
  
Sunny wailed and laughed in dark glee as the two of them plummeted through the darkness, destroying each other.  
  
'No one else managed to make you bleed in a decade, huh? How about now?! Are you still amused, you wretched bastard?!'  
  
Anvil's soul might have been far more potent, it might have been empowered by his vastDomain…  
  
But he did not have Soul Weave, and therefore, the very structure of his soul was different.  
  
It was far more fragile, and far easier to destroy.  
  
'Let's see which one of us will last longer, King of Swords...'