2247 Throne of Shadows  
Sunny had to die, but he could not allow himself to be killed.  
He had to be the one to end his own life...  
That was easier said than done, though.  
After all, he excelled at staying alive against all odds. His soul was vast and tenacious, while his body was like a fortress. He could endure an incredible amount of punishment and heal at breathtaking speed. Even if his heart stopped beating for some reason, there was a good chance that he could survive by simply forcing his blood to move on its own.  
That was why Sunny had pierced his chest with the dark stiletto… with Serpent. With the slaying blade that embodied Death itself.  
His eyes widened as the cold blade pierced his heart. That coldness spread in an instant, permeating his entire being… pulling him down and slowing down his thoughts.  
It was cruelly painful, but the pain was overshadowed by the terrifying realization of what he had done.  
'I…'  
He felt it. Death coming to claim what used to be a person — what used to be him. He felt his body growing weak, his soul collapsing, his vision turning dark. This was the end, and there was no escape from that end. No trick he could use, no clever strategy that could save him.  
The finality of it all — the eternal nothingness that lay in front of him — terrified Sunny at the last moment.  
At least death was swift and merciful.  
He did not even feel the agony of being burned alive by the blinding light… just saw his arms crumbling into ash, as if observing someone else ceasing to exist from a distance.  
'Ah…'  
The last breath escaped from his lips, which grew forever silent.  
The kneeling figure of the Lord of Shadows swayed, and then fell.  
However, his body never touched the ground, turning into a cloud of ash before it could. The ash was scattered by the wind.  
The last thing to crumble was the hand that still clung to Anvil's blade, stubbornly refusing to let go until the final moment.  
Soon,all that remained of the fearsome Lord of Shadows was the black mask that fell to the ground and lay there, forlorn, staring at the sky with empty dark eyes.  
…And his shadow.  
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There was a still, silent lake that bathed in the darkness оf seven lightless suns.  
A great temple of black marble towered above the dark water, full of emptiness.  
A legion of silent shadows surrounded the temple, standing on the surface of the still lake without motion, their lifeless gazes turned to the ancient edifice of the temple.  
As if waiting for something.  
Nothing disturbed the tranquil silence of the dark lake… until, suddenly, a cold wind blew above its surface.  
The still water rippled…  
Then, without morning, a bolt of black lightning tore the peaceful darkness apart, falling from above to strike the magnificent temple.  
It passed through the tiles of its roof, unobstructed, and disappeared inside.  
And by the time the black flames retreated, a new shadow stood alone in the impenetrable darkness of the empty great hall.  
It was the shadow of a slender young man, his beautiful features still and unmoving.  
His eyes were closed.  
As the cold winds raged above the surging lake and the seven suns burned with dark flames above it, the young man remained silent and motionless, just like the legion of shadows outside.  
But then, his eyelids trembled.  
As the young man slowly opened his tenebrous eyes, it was as if a wave of invisible force spread outward from the temple, passing through the silent shadows and making the vast lake surge. The seven lightless suns ignited with a dark radiance, and the still waters boiled.  
Something was happening to the black suns, to the dark lake… to the vast expanse of lightless silence itself. As if it was undergoing a profound metamorphosis, reaching unfathomable depths.  
The shadow of the young man seemed to break the chains that had kept it motionless, moving slightly… coming alive. He looked around slowly, gaining awareness,then inhaled deeply.  
Then, he walked across the great hall of the dark temple, and passed through its gates.  
Standing atop the steps of black marble, the stunning young man looked down at the legion shadows with his dark, cold, lightless eyes.  
And answering to his presence, the shadows, which had always been lifeless and motionless, finally moved.  
Those who possessed forms that resembled humans knelt. Those who possessed forms that resembled beasts lowered themselves to the surface of the water.  
All of them prostrated themselves before the young man, as if welcoming their lord... their monarch.  
Their Sovereign.  
The young man looked down at them, his face emotionless and cold…  
Then, a sinister smile twisted his alluring lips.  
'It worked.'  
Sunny wanted to laugh.  
He had done it. He had died, and returned from death.  
This time, without the help of powerful Memories or the endlessly flowing waters of the Great River.  
He had defeated death with nothing but his Will…  
Which was to say, he had defied an absolute law, and galvanized his soul into becoming Supreme in the process.  
Of course, there was a little trick involved.  
If Sunny had been killed, his shadow would have been sent to the Shadow Realm, and there, it would have been turned into pure essence by the world, thus erasing him from existence.  
But shadows of those creatures that Sunny himself killed never entered the Realm of Death. They entered his own Soul Sea instead, and joined the ranks of all his previous victims.  
So, by killing himself, Sunny had sent his shadow into his own Soul Sea. That was why he had to die by his own hand, and not by Anvil's blade… and that was how he had been able to will himself into coming back to life instead of being consumed by the Shadow Realm.  
When he did, the wall that prevented him from attaining Supremacy was broken.  
And his nascent Domain manifested itself into existence.  
Looking at the legion of prostrating shadows, Sunny exhaled slowly.'So this is what Eurys meant.'  
These silent shadows…  
They were his Domain.  
He had been building it all along without even knowing it.  
And what a powerful Domain it was!  
His sinister smile turned dark and murderous.  
'Now, then…'  
Sunny looked up.  
There was someone out there he had to kill.  
Back on the fractured battlefield, the fearsome black mask trembled.