2257 Mercy of Shadow  
'Must never be known. Must never be loved. Must never be worshiped.'  
Sunny stared at Anvil, no emotion showing itself on his face.  
A deep, boundless darkness nestled in his eyes.  
Far above them, all around them, numerous flying swords rustled as they slowly assembled into a gargantuan dome…  
Sunny looked up, then sighed deeply.  
'...Good thing I became fateless, then.'  
The world had forgotten him, after all.  
Nobody could love him…  
Because nobody could know him.  
Not truly, anyway.  
As the full weight of that realization settled on his heart, he raised his head and looked into the distance. There, the titanic vessel of the Queen was being consumed by fire.  
The distant radiance of the stunning white flames illuminated his face, but failed to dispel the shadow drowning his eyes.  
Sunny remained motionless for a few moments, then lowered his gaze to the ground.  
'And good thing I had always shied away from the spotlight.'  
He had been pushed tо hide the full extent of his power by the very nature of his Aspect, staying in the shadows and avoiding being noticed, let alone known. Unlike Broken Sword, who had been the most renowned and revered warrior of humanity, Sunny used to be seen as merely a supporting character of someone else's story.  
It was as if fate had been guiding him to this moment from the very first day. It had both led him to the forbidden lineage of Weaver and given him the necessary tools to escape its curse.  
Even without knowing the reason why the Weave had been forbidden, Sunny mostly managed to avoid paying the price for receiving its incredible boons.  
Earning a True Name in the First Nightmare, possessing a Divine Aspect, finding a Lineage Memory, and accomplishing all his astonishing feats... anyone else would have become a venerated champion of humanity, but Sunny had hidden himself well. He detested the idea of being called a hero, anyway, so staying in the shadows suited his tastes far more.Nephis could stay in the spotlight for both of them.  
There was a small problem, though…  
Sunny had done well in the past, but currently, he was not doing that great as far as remaining unnoticed went. In fact, he really messed up.  
Sleeper Sunless, Awakened Sunless, and Master Sunless were all obscure and seemingly insignificant figures.  
The Lord of Shadows, however, was quite infamous. Worse than that, he was poised to become a Sovereign. His renown would explode аnd spread throughout both worlds, surpassing even that of Broken Sword…  
Because Broken Sword, despite all his accomplishments, had been a mere Saint in the public's eye — the first and the most powerful of all human Saints at the time, but still only a Transcendent. Sunny, however, was a demigod now.  
Not only was he a demigod, but he was also the only equal Nephis, the shining star of humanity, had. Her counterpart, most powerful ally, and rumored lover as well.  
In other words, he had entered the stage — and the spotlight — in a manner that was impossible to conceal. Once the war was over, billions of people would come to know him, and although it was doubtful that he would be beloved by many, he would definitely be feared, revered, and worshiped by all.  
The soldiers of the two great armies would return home to spread the tales of his terrifying power and merciless blade. They would also be full of gratitude since he had saved countless lives.  
And his fame would only grow from there.  
'Ah. How troublesome.'  
The future was not entirely grim, though. There was a silver lining, as well… it was that Sunny's Domain did not depend on people. He only needed shadows, and shadows — unlike humans — did not carry the sparks of the original Desire in their souls. Shadows did not even have souls, really, so being worshipped by them would not bring about the end of the world.  
So, Sunny did not have to cripple his power if he wished to avoid disturbing the slumber of the Forgotten God, who would swallow all of existence if awakened. Which was good, because they were going to need all the power they could get.  
He only needed to disappear into the shadows again, somehow.  
"...Hypocrite."  
Shaking off his reverie, Sunny looked at Anvil with a calm, cold expression and said in a measured tone:  
"I really hate hypocrites like you the most, Anvil. You say that Broken Sword had to be killed to prevent humanity from worshiping him… and yet, you Sovereigns managed to hide your own existence for almost two decades, all in order to contain Asterion. Why was it that you could hide, but Broken Sword had to die?"  
He shook his head in contempt.  
"No... just admit it. Be honest for once. You killed him because you hated him. As simple as that."  
Anvil smiled coldly as Sunny raised a hand, having removed it from the hilt of his odachi.  
"...What do you even know about hatred, boy?"  
With that, his presence exploded with tyrannical power, and the storm of swords around them froze, numerous blades assembled into gargantuan runes. The runes ignited with vermilion radiance, and Sunny suddenly found himself awash in a blood-red glow.  
As Anvil movеd his hand, a single harrowing blade fell from the sky, and the sky itself seemed to follow. A hurricane rose, the wind howling deafeningly as it swirled around them, and as the falling sword plummeted from the heights, its dreadful sharpness seemed to grow exponentially keener with each glowing ring of runes that it pierced...  
Until it seemed sharp enough to cut the fractured bone plain, sever the floor of the burning Hollows, and part the sea of ash below.  
…Of course, first, it would pierce Sunny first.  
Looking up, Sunny grasped the Memory that he had summoned a moment before and raised his hand higher.  
The severing sword fell on him in a furious maelstrom of wind. The powerful gale raised a cloud of ash into the air, and by the time the ash settled…  
Sunny was still standing in the same spot, unmoved,and entirely unscathed.  
There was a small stone lantern in his hand, its gate wide open.  
Lowering it, he slowly closed the gate with his thumb.  
Anvil's eyes widened.  
"How… did you withstand that attack?"  
Above them, the runes lost their glow, and countless flying swords crumbled into a river of scarlet sparks.  
Sunny smiled.  
"I did not withstand it. I simply sent your sword into the Shadow Realm. Why should I overcome your great power when I can escape it with a little trick, instead?"  
The smile drained slowly from his face.  
"Now, then…"  
The black odachi lashed out, sinking into Anvil's flesh.  
Sunny's expression turned dark and chilling.  
"This is for the soldiers of the First Evacuation Army and the people of Falcon Scott, whom you abandoned to death. Samara, Dorn, Belle… and countless others. Remember their names, bastard."  
The King of Swords managed to avoid a fatal blow, but Sunny was already delivering another slash. Anvil tried to deflect it with his vambrace, but failed. Red blood flowed onto the white bone, and a severed hand fell onto the ground.  
"This is for the soldiers who died here in Godgrave, fighting in your senseless war. Each and every one of them was a person, Anvil, not a statistic. None of them had to die. Though I doubt that a monster like you would care."  
Anvil did not react to losing a hand and instead staggered back in an attempt to retreat.  
But there was no escape from Sunny.  
The black odachi bit deep into Anvil's thigh, leaving a dreadful wound on it. More blood splattered onto the surface of the ancient bone.  
"This is for Nephis, whose childhood you destroyed. You cruel, vicious thug… did you have fun tormenting a child? Taste some torment from me, then."  
Gritting his teeth, Sunny kicked Anvil in the wounded thigh and watched him fall to his knees.  
A rain of swords plummeted from the sky to destroy Sunny, but a great wave of shadows rose from the ground and turned into an impregnable wall,preventing them from interrupting him.  
He took a deep breath.  
"And this… this is for me. This is for all the suffering I had to go through because of you, and others like you."  
Manу things hand changed about him, but one of them remained the same. Sunny... Sunny never forgot his grudges.  
Looking at the kneeling King with cold contempt, he raised his odachi and prepared to deliver the final strike.  
For the first time, a clear emotion ignited in Anvil's eyes.  
Anger... reluctance... despair…  
He struggled to stand up, blood flowing down his mangled armor.  
"You… you can't kill me… Nephis, she is the one who…"  
Sunny struck down without waiting to hear the rest.  
The black blade of his serpentine odachi passed through the King's neck without meeting much resistance, and a severed head rolled to the ground.  
The iron crown slipped off and fell onto the bloodied bone with a rattle.  
Anvil's body swayed, and then toppled heavily in the clangor of steel.  
Far above, all of the remaining swords dissolved into a storm of sparks, and for a moment, it seemed as if the sky was aflame with scarlet light.  
It was really a breathtaking sight.  
Looking at it, Sunny could not help by remember the crimson tapestry of polar lights above Antarctica.  
As the sparks disappeared, he took a deep sigh and closed his eyes.  
A few moments later, Sunny said quietly:  
"Find peace within me… even if it's more than you deserve, bastard."  
This was the mercy of Shadow.