2282 Dark Explorer  
  
Far away, a mountain of shattered black stone towered above the sea of dust like a titanic gravestone. The ground around the gravestone was littered with the bones of myriad Nightmare Creatures that had perished here. The humаn bones were buried some distance away, protected from the elements by a barrow.  
  
A stone colossus was kneeling on the ground, unmoving, holding its severed head gently in two titanic hands.  
  
These were the ruins of the Crimson Spire.  
  
Sunny - another one of his incarnations - was in the very heart of the ruins, sitting on the edge of a deep well with a thoughtful expression on his face.  
  
At the bottom of the deep well was a vast pool of black water. Its surface was perfectly still and flat, like that of a dreadful mirror made from pure darkness. Subtle ripples spread across the surface of the imprisoned ocean of darkness from time to time, as though it was straining to spill over the edges of the pool and break free.  
  
It was the Dark Sea.  
  
Once, a long time ago, the Dark Sea had seemed like a force of nature - as in something so inconceivably vast and overwhelmingly devastating that Sunny could not even fathom confronting it. He could barely survive battles with scavengers that hid from the sea and fed on the morbid gifts it left behind, while facing the beings that actually dwelled in the dark waters was a death sentence.  
  
But things were different now.  
  
Now, Sunny knew that the Dark Sea was a Great Titan - a profane being born from the darkness that once dwelled in the radiant figure who had fallen to this land… before this land was called the Forgotten Shore.  
  
That radiant figuгe had most likely been a nephilim - or perhaps an angel - wounded in one of the battles of the great war between the gods and the daemons. The inhabitants of the land where it had fallen killed the radiant being and unleashed the curse of darkness onto their entire realm. That curse later became the Dark Sea.  
  
In any case, the Dark Sea was a Great Titan now… and Sunny himself was a Supreme Titan.  
  
Peculiarly enough, they were equals.  
  
It was a peculiar thought.  
  
But no matter how odd being equal to the Dark Sea, which had once been like a symbol of inevitable and inescapable death, was… Sunny knew that he could kill it.  
  
He was just not sure how to go about it.  
  
There were the myriad Nightmare Creatures dwelling in the sealed sea - slaughtering them would greatly enhance Shadow Legion's capacity to participate in naval battles. But those abominations were not the Great Titan itself.  
  
In truth, Sunny could sense that there were seven great masses of darkness hiding somewhere in the impenetrable depths. He did not know what they were, but finding and destroying them would probably result in the death of the Dark Sea.  
  
He was contemplating if he wanted to dive into the black water and try his luck.  
  
One thing was stopping him, though.  
  
'Curses.'  
  
The problem was not the Dark Sea itself. The problem… was the seal that imprisoned it below the ruined Crimson Spire.  
  
Even if Sunny managed to destroy the Great Titan, he would just end up being sealed in the bottomless well instead of it - one incarnation of his would, at least.  
  
So, he had to either be willing to sacrifice an incarnation or solve the sorcery of the seven heroes of the Forgotten Shore before diving into the depths of the Dark Sea to destroy it.  
  
'Argh. Damnation.'  
  
Even after studying the well for a year, he still did not have the slightest idea about how the seal had been created. It was neither weaving nor runic sorcery… and he was pretty sure that it was not Shaping, either - Shaping was a sorcery of the moment, after all. It never lasted, or at least it was not supposed to.  
  
There were exceptions to everything, naturally. His own sister was one such exception. But Sunny still did not believe that the Seven Heroes had been Shapers.  
  
He went through everything he knew about the creation of the Crimson Spire… which was not a lot, to be honest.  
  
All he knew was that an enormous human sacrifice had been involved in its creation, thus giving birth to an artificial sun. At the same time, the curse of darkness had been sealed below the Spire.  
  
He also believed that one of the Seven Heroes - the Builder - had been a big fan of Nether. There were signs of him trying to emulate the Demon of Destiny all over the Dark City. The Black Knight of the ruined cathedral had been one such pale imitation, for example - Sunny was quite sure that the damn Devil was the result of the Builder's attempts to create his own version of the Stone Saints.  
  
The titanic statue of the Builder which was now kneeling behind him was another attempt, albeit a far more ambitious one.  
  
Which was why Saint had treated both the Black Knight and the walking colossus with scorn.  
  
'So… what kind of sorcery did they use to create the seal?'  
  
There was no answer, for now.  
  
Which meant that Sunny could not kill the Dark Sea, for now.  
  
'How frustrating.'  
  
Why was killing one measly Great Titan so difficult? If Sunny were still [Fated], he would have probably tripped and fell face-first directly into the solution of the mystery.  
  
He could not even ask for Cassie's help, because there were no runes for her to study.  
  
Shaking his hеad, Sunny threw one last look into the depths of the well and stood up.  
  
'Count yourself lucky. I'll come get you one day.'  
  
The Dark Sea did not answer.  
  
Scoffing, Sunny took a step back… and disappeared.  
  
A moment later, he was somewhere far away. To be exact, he was far east, in the heart of the great crater that lay between the Dark City and the Ashe Barrow.  
  
The ruins of the Crimson Spire, meanwhile, were west of the Dark City. Back when the Dreamer Army had set out to besiege it, it took them a whole week to reach the ominous tower - but now, he could cover that distance in an instant, without even spending much essence.  
  
'Alright. Next on the agenda…'  
  
Here and there on the bottom of the gigantic crater, bones of hideous sea creatures lay like mountains of dirty ivory. Closer to the center of the crater, though, the ground had turned into black glass, and at its very heart, an ominous round hole led into the depths of the earth.  
  
That was where the Dark Sea had once come from at night, and where it had retreated to at dawn. There were vast caverns below the Forgotten Shore, accessible through several such gaping wounds on its surface.  
  
Sunny had a theory that there was at least one entrance to the Underworld hidden somewhere in these caverns.  
  
So, he had been exploring them leisurely as of late.  
  
Turning into a shadow, Sunny plummeted into the darkness.