2335 Changing Shadow  
After that, the conversation fizzled out. Sunny focused on weaving, while Kai tactfully gave him some space.  
  
'This is a bit tricky.' Sunny had done quite a bit of weaving in his life, but he could not remember ever having to enchant something on such a strict deadline. One day was really not enough to create something worthy, but he put great effort into arming Kai as best he could.  
  
He also decided to design a set of enchantments for the bow that could be implemented in stages. That was a new approach for him and required a different way of creating a weave. But if Sunny succeeded here, he could potentially save himself a lot of trouble in the future.  
After all, up until now, he always had to complete the entire weave in one go - otherwise, the unfinished pattern of shadow strings would quickly collapse as soon as Sunny released his hold on it. If he could come up with a way to рrevent that from happening, he would have far fewer headaches while tackling truly complicated enchantments.  
Necessity was truly the mother of invention.  
Still, Sunny felt hurried and tense while working on the bow.  
'I miss my shadows…' Having one paltry body to work with felt stifling. It was really quite frustrating… how did people even manage to live their entire lives in such an inconvenient way?  
'Poor mortals… they must be struggling every day…' Unthinkable!  
Sunny scoffed, remembering his own struggles vaguely. He had grown accustomed to controlling several bodies at the same time a while ago, so the very idea of only possessing one seemed strange now. Not to mention the idea of only perceiving the world through one vessel…  
Sunny had been experiencing the world through many points of view for the past year. Suddenly finding himself all alone in his own head felt both comforting and disconcerting.  
…It was through this feeling of strangeness that he realized how far from being a human he had strayed without ever fully realizing it. Sunny knew that he was a shadow now, not a human being - but that was merely a difference of form.  
Here in Ariel's Game, however, he had no choice but to admit that his very mind was growing further and further apart from that of a human. It had nothing to do with becoming numb to human emotions, like what Nephis had experienced due to the agony of her Flaw, and more with… the nature of his consciousness itself.  
  
But then again, maybe it was not that different after all, on the fundamental level.  
Was it merely a matter of repetition? Sunny remembered how vivid and horrifying his first encounter with an Abomination had been. But after facing and slaying a myriad of them, he barely felt anything when encountering yet another ghastly horror. He had grown calloused to their presence.  
The same held true for human experiences. People naturally changed as they grew older and accumulated calluses on their hearts… the emotions of a wisened old man were deeply different from the feelings of a child, for whom every occasion was new and exciting.  
At the same time, there was a natural limit to a human's lifespan, as well as to the number of events they could experience at any given time.  
But what if that limit was removed?  
What if a human could live for a thousand years while experiencing a thousand different perspectives? How different would the mind of such a being become, and would it still be even remotely human?  
Sunny sighed.  
'I'm changing.' He was still young, and he had already changed so much. What kind of person would he become in a decade?  
The fact that his consciousness was slowly transforming to resemble that of a deity was both a promising sign and an eerie omen. It was good to know that he was well on his way to Apotheosis, but still…  
Sunny had already seen Supreme humans who had lost most, if not all, of their humanity. The example of Anvil and Ki Song was right in front of his eyes, and they were both hateful. He hoped that he would never become callous and indifferent to human suffering like they had. That he would not change that much.  
'Ah. I miss my True Name, as well.' A True Name was meant to serve as an anchor of one's self. Without it, the promise of unending change seemed frightening.  
That said… even in the throes of unease, Sunny knew that some things about him would never change.  
For example, his love for Nephis.  
The two of them had been separated numerous times - by the conflicting nature of their values and beliefs, by the boundaries separating different worlds, by the fatal depths of political strife, and even by fate itself.  
And yet, despite it all, they still always ended up together. Nothing had been able to pull them apart yet, and he knew that nothing would ever be able to pull them apart in the future, either.  
That was one constant in his tumultuous life.  
'Funny.'  
Sunny thought of himself as an anchor that kept Nephis tethered to humanity.  
Maybe she was his anchor, as well.  
Taking a deep sigh, he forced his six hands to move even faster.  
In the end, he succeeded in placing the first enchantment on Kai's bow, as well as crafting two powerful arrows from the crystal shards. He even managed to enchant the charming archer's quiver.  
It was a good start…  
And there was still some time left before sunset.  
Turning his head, Sunny glanced at the altar standing at the heart of the Ash Castle.  
And at the jade figure of a Snow Beast laying on it.  
His eyes narrowed.  
'Shall I?'  
Letting Kai experiment with his improved bow and new arrows, Sunny rose from the ash and walked over to the altar. Slayer followed behind, her steps soft and quiet.  
Picking up the figure of the Snow Beast, Sunny hesitated for a while.  
'I wonder what truth I will learn this time.'  
How about learning why the world had ended?  
Taking a deep breath, he focused on what he wanted to learn and tossed the jade beast into the billowing smoke.