2373 Walls of the Trap  
'The Nine, the Nine… what do I know about the Nine?'  
  
Auro had been an imperial soldier as a young man. Eurys had been an imperial slave, but he also claimed to have slit a god's throat… now that Sunny knew more, he could guess that it had been the mortal vessel of War God, most likely. The one watching over the Empire.  
  
'It had to be, right?'  
  
Aletheia, meanwhile, ventured into the Tomb of Ariel.  
Sunny's eyes widened.  
'Wait.'  
What was it that the Oracle had said?  
"You simply have to find the beast's weakness. You have to lure it into a trap. You have to sink your blade into its weak spot."  
He remained silent for a while.  
'Aletheia…'  
The sorceress and philosopher, Aletheia, had been tasked with revealing the lies of the gods and teaching the truth to the rest of the Nine.  
So, she had gone to the Tomb of Ariel and became the First Seeker. She was the only Seeker of Truth to have successfully entered the Estuary, and learned the secrets hidden there by Ariel, the Demon of Dread.  
  
And among those secrets… was the truth of the Forgotten God and his children. Who were the Flaw of the gods.  
'Wait…'  
  
Aletheia had paid for learning the secrets of the Estuary by becoming the source of the Defilement. But that did not mean that she had failed to teach the truth of the Forgotten God to the rest of the Nine before succumbing to Corruption. She must have endured the knowledge of the Void and only passed that one secret along, considering that they seem to have succeeded in their plot at least partially.  
But wasn't it peculiar?  
  
The gods were indeed dead, but they had fallen in the war against the daemons… not against the Nine. The great war that had brought doom upon all of existence. So what had the Nine really achieved?  
  
Sunny took a step back, biting his lips.  
'Wait!'  
The sculptor, Aemedon… what was the task the Oracle had given him?  
"You will build the trap for the gods… you will herald the truth that Aletheia learns, and bring it to those who must listen. To form their hearts into gravestones, and build the walls of the trap from that stone."  
  
This, this was the answer!  
Aletheia had learned the weakness of the beast, but it was Aemedon who had been tasked with building the trap. It was a trap meant to bring about the death of the gods, though, so it would be peculiar to assume that the Oracle meant a literal contraption. Instead… it was a trap built from the hearts of living beings.  
And who could it have been whose heart was supposed to become a gravestone for the gods?  
"Bring it to those who must listen…"  
To whom was Aemedon meant to deliver the truth Aletheia learned? Who had to listen?  
Sunny's eyes glistened darkly.  
  
Why, it was quite obvious, wasn't it? Considering what had happened next.  
It was Nether, the Prince of the Underworld. The Demon of Destiny, the Demon of Choice. He suddenly clenched his fists and shook them in the air.  
"You damn Spell!"  
  
The description of the Mantle of the Underworld clearly said this about Nether:  
[,He wasn't the first to lead his army against the gods. However, he was the first to shed their blood, as well as learn the secrets of his own.]  
  
But it was a blatant lie! Well… perhaps it wasn't. But it was entirely misleading.  
  
There were runes written by Nether on the walls of the Ebony Tower, which had been constructed after Hope was imprisoned by the gods. He had been wondering if the daemons were forbidden from siring offspring because they were of the Forgotten One, who slumbered in the Void.  
That indicated that he had known about the connection between the seven daemons and the Forgotten God. However, he must not have known the whole truth. Otherwise, he would not have been asking the question.  
  
Weaver knew… probably because Weaver had ventured into the Void and beheld the Forgotten God in person. Ariel knew, as well, because he knew everyone's fears - including that of the gods. But he chose to bury that knowledge in the Tomb, Where Aletheia found it.  
And then…  
Aemedon delivered that truth to the Underworld, and gave it to Nether.  
And Nether made his choice.  
'Hell.'  
That… that was the inception of the Doom War.  
  
Aemedon of the Nine had indeed built a trap for the gods. The walls of thе trap were the hearts of the daemons, and he was the one who had shown them the way.  
Sunny let out a laugh of disbelief.  
"How do you kill а beast that is stronger than you?"  
You cоuld, for example, sick another harrowing beast upon it.  
  
The Nine were not powerful enough to kill the gods, so they gave Nether the last push he needed to rally his siblings into rebelling against the heavens. That was how the world had ended.  
Or rather, that was how its end had begun.  
  
…Naturally, the Nine did more than just give the world the initial push to send it rolling into the abyss. After all, Sunny had only considered the horrible and, quite honestly, unbelievable feats of two. There were seven of them left.  
The blind poet… had probably gone to the Demon of Imagination. The seasoned sea captain, the vision had not revealed his task, but Sunny could easily imagine him having something to do with the Demon of Repose and Night Garden.  
  
Euris had been a spy in the heart of the Empire, most likely, eventually ending up in the Demon Army. Auro… his task had apparently been the most distressing of them all, even if Sunny had no idea what it was. There was also the courtesan and the tall warrior. They were quite mysterious, and he was not sure what their role had been.  
And Slayer, naturally…  
That one, he was not ready to contemplate yet.  
But what had they done? What had their endgame been?  
Sunny took a deep breath.  
  
'Find a weakness. Build a trap. Sink your blade into the weak spot of the adversary.'  
  
The weakness of the gods was the existence of the Forgotten God, and therefore the daemons. The trap itself was the Doom War.  
But what was the blade of the Nine? How had intended to deliver the lethal strike to the gods? Had they simply supported the daemons in the Doom War, or had there been more to their machinations?  
Sunny exhaled slowly.  
Then, a different set of runes surfaced in his memory…  
His eyes shook.