2392 Snow Castle  
  
When the morning came, the sight of endless webs enveloping the entire world became even more eerie. The billowing, frayed tapestries of ghоstly black silk covered everything in sight, disappearing behind the horizon. The mountains were buried under them entirely, like gravestones overgrown by mold.  
  
Come to think of it, the mountain they had left yesterday must have been infected by the black silk as well - that was why it had seemed peculiar to Sunny from the Axis Tree. The webs had just burned away when the mountain erupted - but here, there was too much mystical silk for it to be consumed by ash and lava.  
  
Sunny observed the nightmarish landscape silently, slowly clenching and unclenching his right fist. 'I don't like it at all.'  
  
There were less than two days left before the battle against the Snow Tyrant, which meant that he had to start preparing himself mentally… for whatever it was he would face.  
  
Before that, however, he had to finish the Memory he was creating from the golden amber of the Axis Tree and the three Sacred soul shards in his possession. This time, he wanted to create a charm.  
  
The design of the enchantment had already come together in his mind, and he had already created enough strings of shadow essence to weave it. Now, Sunny was simply going over the mental image of the sorcerous tapestry while patiently carving the piece of amber into form with a knife made of shadows. The golden amber was impossibly tough, but it slowly gave in under the sharp blade. The form Sunny was carving was both gorgeous and easy - it was a star.  
  
That star was going to help him kill the Snow Tyrant, whatever the Snow Tyrant was. After that… he was going to give it to Saint. She had gone without a powerful charm to fit her Underworld Armament for too long, so he really had to make sure that the Evening Star glanced worthy оf its future owner.  
  
'I'll be able to build on the initial enchantment later, as well. These Sacred soul shards are truly remarkable… the weight of the spellweave they can support is simply crazy. This еnchantment I envisioned is already more intricate and sophisticated than most of what I have done in the past, and it is nowhere near exhausting their potential.'  
  
Sunny was pressed for time, so he had to be truly ingenious with the design of the enchantment. The solutions he had come up with to simplify the elaborate patterns, and therefore hasten the process of weaving, were nothing short of inspired.  
  
He had even given the Evening Star a conditional limitation to greatly strengthen its effect when the proper conditions were met… that was actually an idea he stole from the Sin of Solace, that damn cursed sword. The Crown of Twilight relied on something similar as well, only replenishing his essence in the twilight of dusk and dawn… Come to think of it, numerous if not most of his most powerful Memories had been limited in some way or another. That was what gave them true power. Sunny had always subconsciously understood that principle, but he only fully realized how to make use of it now.  
  
There was probably some deep lesson about people and their Flaws somewhere in there, but he was too engrossed in his task to go on a philosoρhical tangent. 'Two days, one night.' That was all the time he had left before facing the Snow Tyrant.  
  
The first day passed in the blink of an eye, and soon, it was dusk once more. The obsidian bridge…  
  
Failed to come into existence.  
  
The plumes of ash stretched toward the distant mountain and commenced to solidify, but got tangled in the billowing webs and crumbled without ever taking form. Sunny and Kai observed the eerily gorgeous scene in stunned silence, then glanced at each other warily. There was no bridge, but the Ash Domain could still move. So, Sunny manifested a pair of black wings, and the two of them flew across the sea of fluttering black silk, landing carefully atop the northern mountain. From there, they could finally see the Snow Castle.  
  
And the source of black silk, the Snow Tyrant itself, as well. 'W - what?'  
  
The creature was so immense that even Sunny could see it with a naked eye. He forgot to breathe, looking at the peak of the final mountain with a pale face.  
  
Out there, in the distance…  
  
A huge black moth was perched atop the silken peak, its tenebrous wings covering the slope. Its legs were like obsidian pillars, and its antennae extended far into the sky, swaying lightly in the wind. The block moth was distantly similar to the Nightmare Butterflies of Ariel's Tomb, but also much more gigantic and dreadful than them. It was not even its outer appearance that was so horrible… instead, simply looking at it filled Sunny with a dreadful, eerie feeling of hopelessness. Something about the titanic moth was so malevolent, frightening, and deeply wrong that he felt the desire to give up and cease his senseless resistance. He was already doomed, after all.  
  
But that was not why Sunny was so stunned. Rather, it was because the sinister black moth felt, peculiarly familiar. Come to think of it… The black silk felt familiar as well.  
  
Sunny shivered, and then whispered quietly: "I… I know it."  
  
Kai looked in surprise. "What?"  
  
Sunny raised his right hand and pointed at the horrible creature perching atop the Snow Castle. "I know that creature… or at least its kind."  
  
He had never met the Snow Tyrant, but he knew it well. It was the Puppeteer. It was a Puppeteer Worm, who had become the Puppеteer Moth after escaping from the chrysalis of human minds it had twisted, used as nourishment, and then destroyed.  
  
Sunny remembered the description of the Puppeteer's Shroud.  
  
[A worm of doubt once found its way into a righteous king's heart. With time, the king was devoured from the inside and became its puppet. A lifetime later, the Puppeteer Worm escaped from the king's dead body, leaving behind a cocoon of black silk. No one knows where it went; however, once people dared to approach the silent castle, they found the silk among the mountains of gnawed bones and fashioned it into an armor.]  
  
…He did not know whether the creature he was facing was the same Puppeteer Worm who had been responsible for the birth of the Mountain King, or simply the most accomplished member of their harrowing kind. All he knew was that the description of his old armour failed to mention what a larva evolved to after leaving its chrysalis. He was looking at what it had become right now.