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In the end, Sunny did not punch Kai into unconsciousness. The charming archer did, however, put himself into a state of deep slumber by commanding himself to sleep without seeing any dreams - Sunny remained nearby, standing guard above his sleeping figure while focusing completely on weaving.  
  
When the sun rose and an ethereal bridge of glistening glass formed between the Snow Castle and the fuming volcano, a terrifying mental attack did, indeed, descend upon him like divine punishment. Sunny winced as his hands faltered, a sudden discord introduced into the vast tapestry of essence strings he was weaving.  
'Is it playing with me?'  
  
Shaking his head, he corrected the flawed pattern and continued with his work. The Puppeteer seemed to be probing his mental defenses. Even then, that single distressing attack easily pierced his resistances and the invisible armor of Will he had forged around himself, forcing its way into his mind. Sunny felt himself reeling, an insidious presence taking root in his head. His sense of reality started to fall apart.  
  
Grumbling under his breath, Sunny partitioned the compromised part of his mind and isolated it from the rest of him. It helped to cope with the insidious, irresistible mental invasion of the Puppeteer… but only for a short while.  
Soon enough, the tendrils of mind - altering corruption spread beyond the walls Sunny had erected, infecting more of him. Luckily, it was not the capital letter Corruption, but simply the mental plague summoned into existence by a Cursed Tyrant instead…  
'Luckily? Does that word really apply here?'  
Sunny smiled darkly.  
'Just a fallen god taking over my mind. No big deal,'  
He isolated the newly compromised parts of his mind too.  
'Let's see who'll last longer, bastard.'  
  
Sunny had dеveloped quite a breathtaking ability to split his mind into innumerable streams over the years, after all. From perceiving the world through his shadows, to controlling seven incarnations, to commanding the vast Shadow Legion and watching over the members of the Shadow Clan… he was quite adept at compartmentalization by now. As the sun was rising from beyond the horizon, he and the Puppeteer played an eerie game.  
  
The giant black moth slowly conquered more and more of Sunny's mind, while Sunny calmly quarantined the contaminated parts and went on weaving. It grew more and more difficult as time went on, however. His hands slowed down, and the vision of the vast pattern of essence strings he held in his mind turned blurry. By the end of it all, Sunny halted completely, staring into the distance with an absent expгession. He was uncomfortably close to starting to drool.  
  
Then, the sun separated from the sea of molten gold it had turned the clouds into and hovered above the horizon, slowly climbing up. The ethereal glass bridge evaporated, and at the same time, the foreign presence that had been slowly consuming his mind retreated in an instant. Sunny let out a shaky breath and reassembled his mind into a single whole, swaying lightly as he did. He rеmained motionless for a few seconds, then resumed weaving with a concerned expression. His lips were pursed, and his voice was subdued:  
"Ah… that was quite unpleasant."  
And it had been merely a probing attack, at that. Experiencing the full brunt of the Puppeteer's might would be a far more appalling experience. Sunny grimaced.  
  
Throughout the day, as the weave of the Evening Star came together, the things he had been waiting for happened one after another. Kai woke up from his deep slumber. The Wolf and its pack were fully mended. Slayer recovered from her wounds almost at the very last moment and rose from his shadow, just as full of malice and malevolence as she had been before.  
  
The murderous Shadow had been absent for a few days, so he had to fulfill the conditions of their deal and make a blood sacrifice to her once more. Slayer drank deeply of his blood, and once again, her obsidian eyes seemed to ignite with a hint of remembrance for a few fleeting seconds. But then, they slowly reverted to being cold and unfeeling, devoid of their splendid luster.  
  
This time, for the first time, Sunny felt disturbed by the subtle change that had briefly happened to his Shadow. He could not help but ask himself once again…  
'Did she? Did she really kill Weaver?'  
  
The graceful Shadow stood motionlessly by his side, her hollow eyes betraying no emotion. In the end, Sunny had no choice but to look away and concentrate on finishing the last patterns of the vast spellweave he was creating. It was coming together well.  
The Evening Star was the first Sacred Memory he would create. And although it was not entirely finished, still, he could already tell how different it was from all the other Memories he had created.  
  
That was because of its very nature. A Sacred Memory was an immensely powerful thing - powerful enough to interfere with causality and bend the laws of existence, even, just like deities could. However, it was just that, a thing. It possessed neither will nor intent, and therefore, it lacked the authority to achieve what it was designed to do.  
How could it function, then?  
The same way the lesser Memories functioned, naturally - since Memories did not have souls, they strengthened by the soul essence of their master. Similarly, a Sacred Memory had to strengthened by the soul essence, the spirit essence, and, most importantly, the Will of its master to realize its potential.  
Not just anyone would be able to use the Evening Star to its full extent.  
  
Sunny sighed.  
'I still have ways to go…'  
Weaver's Mask and the Shadow Lantern did not have the same problem, after all. They were Divine Memories that even a mere Awakened could use, which meant that whoever had created them infinitely more proficient at weaving than Sunny was. Well, naturally, they were. After all, Weaver's Mask had been created by none other than the Demon of Fate, while the Shadow Lantern was a replica of Shadow God's relic created by the Nightmare Spell.  
'I'll get there, someday. Maybe,'  
  
The sun was already rolling toward the horizon by the time Sunny completed his sorcery. The breathtaking star carved out of golden amber lay on his palm, its intricately engraved surface glistening in the eventide glow. He sighed, then manifested the Jade Mantle and brought the Evening Star to the center of his polished black breastplate. Ther armor swallowed it, and as the Sacred charm drowned in the dark stonelike metal, disappearing without a trace, it was slotted into the Underworld Armament.  
Pouring his essence and Will into Evening Star, Sunny felt a subtle power flow into his limbs.  
'Works as a charm…'  
He smiled darkly, deactivated the enchantment, and rose to his feet.  
The sun would soon touch the sea of clouds.  
  
The battle against the Puppeteer was about to commence. Throwing a look at Kai, Sunny lingered for a few moments and asked:  
"How about it? Are you ready to get the hell out of this dreadful place?"  
Kai nodded calmly.  
"Oh, I am. I've been dreaming of taking a proper shower for a week straight."  
'Of course he has.'  
Sunny sighed, then glanced at Slayer.  
"What about you? Have something to say to me?"  
Slayer did not deem it worthy to give him an answer. Instead, she simply checked if her swords slid out of their sheathes smoothly.  
Sunny shook his quietly and glanced north.  
  
The sea of clouds was drowning in darkness in the east while burning with a fiery crimson glow in the west. The plumes of ash were stretching toward the Snow Castle like black tendrils.  
Soon, they turned into an obsidian bridge, its surface glowing as if illuminated by innumerable embers. Taking a step forward, Sunny called upon the shadows and ash. As he stepped оnto the bridge, a tide of darkness followed him like a boundless mantle.