2403 Forced Enlightinment  
  
On the slope above Sunny, Condemnation was absorbing the strands of silk into the vastness of its tenebrous body. The mighty black tendrils binding its limbs had already been assimilated, tearing as the towering giant broke free of their hold.  
  
So were the lower segments of the Puppeteer's legs - four of its legs, at least, which had been thrust into Condemnation's chest. The giant moth let out a peculiar clicking sound as its limbs snapped, rivers of eerie black ichor flowing out of the awful wounds like a tide. Everywhere the drops of dark liquid fell, the slope of the mountain itself seethed and boiled, giving birth to monstrous apparitions.  
  
Losing its purchase on the body of Condemnation, the detestable moth should have plummeted down from a great height. However, instead, it was flattened against the towering shade's titanic chest, slowly drowning in it, as if attracted by the pull of an irresistible force.  
  
For a moment, it seemed as if the Puppeteer was in a desperate situatiоn.  
  
But then, Sunny saw something that stunned and terrified him. Something that should not have been possible.  
  
Condemnation's huge head separated from its body in a harrowing fountain of obsidian shrapnel.  
  
The black moth had two legs left, after all - and using them, it had just finished brutally tearing the titanic shade's head off its neck.  
  
The Puppeteer glanced small and delicate in front of the mountain - sized shadow of Condemnation, and yet, it easily raised the enormous head with its two thin legs.  
  
Sunny was not sure if the giant black moth had a mouth. But he was entirely certain that the head of Condemnation was being devoured, somehow.  
  
It was rapidly reducing in size, torrents of darkness flowing down the towering shadow's beheaded body while pieces of obsidian rained down like dark meteors. Their impacts damaged the slope of the mountain even more, sending deep cracks running through it.  
  
Condemnation, meanwhile, was about to grasp the Puppeteer's wings. However, those wings moved at the last moment, the sharp edges slicing through the titanic shade's wrists like gigantic blades.  
  
In an instant, the towering giant lost both of its hands.  
  
Beheaded and mutilated, Condemnation swayed. And moved its arms to embrace the Puppeteer, seemingly unconcerned about the frightening state of its material vessel.  
  
Pieces of the slope, glacial ice, and vast tapеstries of black silk were already being absorbed into its body, turning into Condemnation's flesh.  
  
The titanic shade was going to offer the Puppeteer a distressing fight. But Sunny knew that it was going to lose.  
  
It could even be entirely destroyed - not sent back into his soul or the Shadow Realm itself, but simply annihilatеd, ceasing to exist forever or possibly becoming nourishment for the eerie black moth.  
  
Sunny had not known that shades could even be destroyed. But he should have known better. There were few absolutes in the world of the Nightmare Spell. The fact that none of his shades had been destroyed before simply meant that he had not met a creature capable of destroying them yet.  
  
As the Rank and Class of his enemies reached the peak of profane power, he was bound to meet one soon.  
  
In fact, he already had - Sunny was pretty sure that Condemnation would have been able to assimilate shades back when it was reigning the Hollows of Godgrave, making them another part of its nebulous body.  
  
So why would the Puppeteer be any different?  
  
That was why Sunny could not rely on the rogue shade of Condemnation. If he wanted to defeat the detestable moth and win the Death Game, he could only rely on himself.  
  
And for that.  
  
He had to become someone who could kill the Puppeteer.  
  
Sunny himself was incapable of that feat. He was a Supreme Titan, yes, albeit a severely weakened one. However, even if he had faced the corrupted Spirit of Doubt wielding all his harrowing power, the result still would have been the same.  
  
All his power was useless if he could not bring himself to use it, plagued by doubt and controlled by the strings of black silk.  
  
Sunny had no hope of overcoming the Puppeteer. So, what could he do?  
  
He could become someone else.  
  
He was a shadow, after all, and shadows were inherently formless. At the same time, they were adept at assuming any form they wished, or rather, the form of what was casting them.  
  
Sunny had learned to do the same with the help of Shadow Dance.  
  
And yet, he had been holding himself back from mastering the Fifth Step of Shadow Dance - the step that would allow him to shadow the Attributes and various traits of other beings - due to how perilous it was.  
  
He was afraid to losе himself in their forms forever. That fear was pointless at the moment, though, because becoming a marionette controlled by the Puppeteer was a far worse fate than becoming something he could not recognize.  
  
So, Sunny forcefully suppressed his murderous rage and brought the bleeding fragments of his frayed mind together, preparing to break through to a new level of mastery over Shadow Dance.  
  
He collected the insights and attainments he had glimpsed as a Saint and a Sovereign, plunging himself into a state of artificial enlightenment.  
  
The concepts and ideas he had brushed against, but chose to ignore, shone in the darkness of his mind and fused together.  
  
The experiences he had tried to forget surfaced in his memory, becoming revelations.  
  
Sunny felt a clear picture of what he had to do, and how to do it, assembling in his head - creating a path he had to follow in order to successfully perform the Fifth Step.  
  
All that was left to do was try. Succeed.  
  
And survive succeeding.  
  
'I must remain myself.'  
  
As the detestable moth and the headless giant tore each other apart in front of him, Sunny focused all his being on one impossible task.  
  
Become a creature capable of slaying the Puppeteer.  
  
But what creature could that be?  
  
Well.  
  
Wasn't that obvious?  
  
[Stalwart] Attribute Description: [The Stone Saint is highly resistant to all forms of damage, as well as fully immune to mind and soul attacks.]  
  
As the mystical stone like metal of the Jade Mantle encased the Shadow Colossus in a fearsome black carapace, Sunny extended his senses to perceive every little detail of the armor forged by Nether, the Prince of the Underworld.  
  
He had to become one of Nether's children.  
  
He had to become a Stone Saint.