2437 Abjuration  
  
Nephis had grown vastly more powerful after attaining Supremacy. However, there was nuance to that newfound power - not all of it came easily, and not all of it could be used freely in any situation.  
  
Take her Supreme Aspect Ability, for example. Sunny had gained the Ability to summon the shades that rested within him into existence, thus becoming a walking army, an army of indestructible shadows that grew with each living being he slayed, no less, which made him a truly frightening existence.  
  
Nephis had gained an immensely powerful Ability, as well. However, her Supreme Ability did nothing to strengthen Nephis herself - instead, it strengthened the subjects of her Domain, allowing her to heal and strengthen them with her flames from a distance.  
  
Which was why it was truly unfortunate that she had to face the Cursed Demon alone. Not that there were numerous people out there who could have assisted her in а battle against a Cursed Nightmare Creature.  
  
But, naturally, she was never alone - not really. Her Domain encompassed all of humanity, after all.  
  
Not every mundane human was a part of it, but most were. Among the Awakened, meanwhile, only those of the Shadow Clan or those exiled to the penitentiary Citadel in Godgrave did not belong to her Domain - the rest of them were tied to Nephis, either by their own longing or by being anchored to the Gateways her Transcendent vassals controlled.  
  
Or possibly it was her who was tied to them.  
  
She could feel them all, always. The flames of their yearning were like innumerable stars shining in an abyss of boundless darkness, all connected to her soul by strings of starlight. Some stars were distant and cold, so small that as to almost be non-existent - the others were like enormous bonfires, burning so brightly that their radiance was blinding, and their passion filled the abyss with warmth.  
  
There were numerous stars in her Domain for Nephis to fathom them all individually, but drowning in their collective enormity was all too easy. Sometimes, she struggled to remember where her own identity ended and their vastness started. In those seconds, the same things that had helped her sustain her humanity helped her maintain her sense of self.  
  
Her True Name. The precious bonds she had forged with other people. The affection she held in her heart.  
  
And most importantly, her own ardent desire. Her own longing.  
  
Her goal.  
  
It was peculiar, really - before, Nephis had been wary of losing her humanity. But now, she was wary of experiencing too much of humanity, all of it, possibly. Of dissolving into the immensity of her Domain completely, becoming an elemental force as opposed to a person.  
  
Possibly that was how the gods had felt. Possibly that was what being a god meant.  
  
A true Apotheosis.  
  
If so, Nephis wanted nothing to do with it.  
  
An element was mighty like a force of nature, but it did not have direction. It did not have conviction. It did not have will.  
  
It did not have what it took to achieve what she desired.  
  
Walking toward the Cursed Demon, she infused her will with her desire, forging an unbreakable armor out of it.  
  
'I am not alone. This creature, though, this creature is alone, and it will die alone, cut down by my sword and burned by my flame.'  
  
Every day, new stars ignited in the starlit vastness of her Domain.  
  
And every day, some of them were extinguished forever.  
  
Nephis felt the loss of these stars faintly. There were numerous of them to mourn the loss of each individual flame, but she was always aware of how numerous fates were being broken and ground into dust by the ruthless world of the Nightmare Spell.  
  
How numerous hopes and dreams were doomed to stay forever unfulfilled.  
  
She suffered the pain of their passing personally.  
  
As the Cursed Demon stirred and surged forward, its long limbs pulling the monstrous mountain of grey flesh across the rubble with breathtaking speed, Nephis took that pain and infused it into her Will, forging an uncompromising sword out of it.  
  
She felt the Cursed Demon's own Will reshaping the world around them. Trying to reshape Nephis herself, as well.  
  
By then, she already knew what this fallen god was, and what power it wielded.  
  
There were clues for her to piece together, already. The Cursed Demon came from the Hollows of Godgrave, where it had hidden from the destructive sun for thousands of years. There were hints in what the creature had told her, too - its memories of a gentle sun, of having wings, it scorched, skeletal limbs.  
  
But Nephis did not have to guess what her adversary was.  
  
Because one of the brightest stars in her Domain was Cassie, and while the two of them were far apart, her friend was still with her, seeing things that no other human could.  
  
The Cursed Demon could be called Abjuration.  
  
It wielded the power of rejection, renouncement, and negation.  
  
Anything it denied had no choice but to cease, and everything it refused was doomed to be erased from existence.  
  
Its malignant Will was frightening, vast as an ocean, and oppressively firm in its insidious malevоlence.  
  
No wonder Mordret had fled when faced with this distressing creature. If anything, it was a miracle that Sunny's Shadow had managed to lull Abjuration to sleep.  
  
As the mass of grey flesh and charred limbs rushed at her, Nephis channeled her flames into the Blessing. The former shadowbound sword focused them into an destructive ray of pure white light, and that light tore the distance between her and the huge Nightmare Creature in an instant, threatening to cut the grotesque mountain of flesh in half.  
  
However, instead, it was simply extinguished, negated by the fallen god's profane authority.  
  
Nephis frowned.  
  
Her attack had not been resisted, and neither had it been deflected. Instead, it was simply denied, canceled before ever getting a chance to do damage, as if the very concept of being hurt by her flames had been proclaimed a falsehood by the sinister fiend.  
  
And since the Cursed Demon had proclaimed so, it became the truth.  
  
Her hand faltered for a split second.  
  
'How am I supposed to kill a deity who denies my ability to kill it?'  
  
The Cursed Demon was a god, a fallen, corrupted god.  
  
And that god did not believe in Nephis.  
  
Luckily, she believed in herself.