1261 A Butterfly Flapping Its Wings

There was a black dot in the sky, far in the distance, slowly moving in the direction of the dark island. At first, Sunny felt a glimmer of hope ignite in his heart as he remembered a similar situation from the past.

That time, it had turned out to be Kai. But, this time...

This time, his intuition was ringing alarm bells, and a cold feeling of dread crept from somewhere to grip him with icy claws.

Sitting on the Shadow Chair with his legs crossed, Sunny leaned back and sighed. "...Crap."

With that, he exploded with a flurry of activity.

First, Sunny dismissed his precious chair and dashed toward the middle of the island. At the same time, he sent a mental command to Saint.

Nephis and she were currently engaged in a furious sword fight. Light and darkness were intertwined in a shimmering whirlpool of sharp steel, and the graceful knight's onyx figure was starkly contrasted against the rippling white tunic and alabaster skin of her slender opponent.

Following Sunny's order, Saint froze. The tip of Neph's sword stopped a split second later, hovering millimeters away from the slit of her visor.

Nephis frowned, then retracted her sword and looked around.

There was a shadow on a rock outcropping that protruded from the ground a few meters away. It seemed to belong to a young man, and was currently waving its arms in the air while pointing at the sky.

She swiftly turned around and looked up, then dashed away a moment later. 'That's done...'

Running as fast as he could, Sunny leaped over a murky puddle of water and landed near a half-eaten fragment of tarnished silver. The scrawny figure of Imp could be seen nearby, laying on the ground with a blissful smile on his fiendish face. His hands were rubbing his ballooning belly with delight.

"Stand up, buddy!"

The gluttonous goblin opened his eyes and stared at Sunny in confusion, then awkwardly tried to rise to his feet. However, outweighed by his full stomach, Imp lost his balance and promptly plopped back down.

"Ah, we don't have time for this!"

Sunny leaned down, grabbed the weakly struggling fiend, and hoisted him on his shoulder.

'What... the hell...'

Just how much had the little bastard swallowed up?!

Even with the strength of an Ascended Tyrant, Sunny was struggling to carry Imp. His veins swelled, and a befuddled expression appeared on his face. Commanding the shadows to wrap themselves around his body, he grunted and continued to run.

A dozen seconds later, Sunny reached the edge of the familiar fissure and unceremoniously tossed the little fiend down. Then, he threw one more look at the sky and, noticing that the black dot had already drawn nearer, jumped into the deep ravine himself.

Before too long, Nephis and he were side by side, pressing themselves into the weathered slope of the fissure as they desperately tried to calm down their breathing. Saint and Fiend were nearby, the former standing calmly, the latter hugging Sunny's thigh.

Nightmare was there as well, hiding within the deep darkness enveloping the bottom of the gorge in his shadow form.

Lastly, a beautiful amphora of white clay was standing on the ground in front of them, its surface decorated with mesmerizing patterns. It was another one of the Memories Summer Knight had given to Nephis, and its purpose was to mask their presence.

...Gods only knew if the amphora was going to work or not.

Out of Sunny's five shadows, one had to volunteer to leave its area of effect and serve as a scout, though.

Well... perhaps "volunteer" was the wrong word.

Since the gloomy shadow had performed a few dangerous tasks recently, and the happy fool was not someone Sunny would ever entrust an important matter to, the next in seniority had to go. So, the creepy guy was currently hiding a few meters away from the edge of the fissure, staring creepily at the sky.

The Sin of Solace was keeping it company with a bored expression on his face.

The sparks swirling around Sunny's hand formed into an emerald flute, and he covered them with a dome of silence. Then, he let out a shaky breath.

"I... I see it."

Nephis looked at him intently, then asked in a low voice:

"What is it?"

Sunny lingered for a few moments.

Slowly, his expression turned grim.

"It's a... butterfly."

Indeed, a butterfly was descending toward the island. From afar, it seemed like an ethereal and beautiful creature. But as it drew closer, Sunny couldn't help but shiver.

The butterfly's wings and back were black, but its body and underbelly were the color of white bone. It had six long, seemingly fragile legs that ended in sharp points, and two enormous, faceted eyes that were like orbs of pure darkness. Between them was a disturbingly long, oily-black beak, which was currently bent into a spiral like an elephant's trunk. Two antennae rose from its head, pushed back by the current of the wind.

...Apart from that, the butterfly was at least a hundred meters in size.

It was both exquisitely beautiful and deeply revolting. But, most of all, it was deeply frightening.

Sunny gritted his teeth.

"It's another Great Monster."

His heart was beating rapidly in his chest, and his back was covered with cold sweat. 'Great. This is just great! Great... ha, it literally is...'

By his side, Nephis scowled.

"What about..."

The monstrous butterfly was obviously intending to land on the island, but at that moment, the crimson water parted, and the Azure Serpent's scaled snout rose into the air. Pierced by a mad gaze of its cloudy eyes, the Great Monster suddenly seemed wary.

It moved its wings and altered the direction of its flight, circling the corpse of the Black Turtle from above instead of diving down to land on the black rock. The butterfly's huge eyes were aimed at the ancient serpent, and its antennae twitched rhythmically.

The great beast of the river bared its bloodied fangs and let out a furious roar, as if announcing its claim of the remains of the titanic turtle.

'This demented old snake...'

Did the serpent not want to live? Why was it going around challenging Great Monsters?'

'Am I really such a delicacy?!'

Sunny did not know what the giant butterfly was thinking, but one thing was certain. It did not like that serpent's challenge. It did not like it at all...