1315 Steel Devil

Sunny had grown accustomed to calling his youngest Shadow an imp... however, now the Ravenous Fiend was finally worthy of his fearsome name.

The creature in front of Sunny could not be called little, nor could it be called scrawny. It was almost as tall as Saint, towering above him like a demonic warrior whose body had been forged out of dark steel in the infernal flames of hell.

There were a lot of similarities with how Imp had looked during their last battle in Falcon Scott... but there were also differences.

The original Ravenous Fiend had been tall, but gaunt. His body had been covered in thick plates of black bone armor, and he was as ferocious as he was stealthy, like a vengeful wraith born out of hungry darkness.

The new and improved Imp, however, was not gaunt. Instead, he seemed like a knight clad in a suit of plate armor. That armor was not made out of bone, either — it was made out of a strange dark metal.

The ravenous Shadow had seemed like he was forged out of black steel before, but the look of his metallic body was changed now. It acquired a dark sheen and a glossy quality, as though the Transcendent Devil had been cast out of black silver or covered in a layer of dull chrome.

There were changes in the... desigh of his armor, too.

It was as though Fiend had been forged out of countless broken swords. There were curved blades growing from his elbows and knees, as well as ferocious spikes rising here and there from his dark armor.

His face was hidden behind the visor of a fearsome helmet, with twisting horns rising from it and a jagged line breaking its surface where the fiend's terrible mouth was hidden, brimming with dagger-like teeth.

His claws were like short swords, and in his ferocious eyes, infernal flames burned with intense heat.

'C—crap...'

And that demonic monstrosity... was currently staring at Sunny with an extremely nasty expression in its glowing orange-red eyes.

Sunny awkwardly cleared his throat.

"Ah... hey there, buddy."

Imp's mouth split in a sinister grin, releasing more heat and infernal glow. Sunny forced out a smile.

"Wow! You... look great! I guess all that delicious magical steel I found and fed you... out of nothing but pure kindness, maybe... really did you some good, huh?"

He coughed.

"Say... you wouldn't be remembering all the times I kicked and berated you, would you? Or, you know... thinking about strange things like revenge... would you?"

Imp took a step forward, the glow of his demonic eyes and incinerating maw falling on Sunny's face. His grin widened, the sharp steel teeth glinting in the darkness.

His voice sounded like a roaring flame:

"Like... revenge..."

With that, Imp raised his hand.

In that moment, Sunny expression changed, and he added evenly:

"Because if you do... you master will have a good reason to find out just how sturdy this new body of yours is."

Imp's grin froze for a moment, and his hand did too.

He hesitated for a moment... and then carefully fixed a crease on Sunny's tunic. The steel fiend growled politely:

"Master... good..."

Then, he backed away, stared at Sunny for a bit, and hurriedly left the room. Sunny let out a relieved sigh, then smiled.

"Ah. They grow up so fast..."

One of his shadows followed Imp into the corridor to see what the little... the big guy was up to.

Moving too silently for a creature of his size and weight, the steel devil approached Saint and stopped next to her, as if to join her in guarding the rooms.

There they stood, Saint and Fiend.

...Imp was acting as nonchalantly as the taciturn knight was, but Sunny did not miss the fact that the bastard was puffing out his chest and secretly throwing glances at Saint, as if waiting for her reaction.

After a while, the stone knight finally turned her head and stared at the steel fiend indifferently. Imp seemed to have secretly held his breath.

Saint remained motionless for a while, then raised her hand and casually flicked the fiend's chest with a finger. After hearing a melodious ring, she tilted her head a little.

Finally, the graceful knight nodded curtly and turned away. ...Imp looked beyond himself.

Maintaining a stoic facade worthy of his ferocious appearance, he also looked away and returned to silently guarding the corridor.

However, the flames in his eyes were dancing jubilantly. Sunny scoffed.

'This ugly idiot... ah, he's seriously cute...'

He shook his head, then summoned the runes to leaen exactly what had changed about Ravenous Fiend, except for appearance.

The runes read:

Shadow: Ravenous Fiend.

Shadow Rank: Transcendent.

Shadow Class: Devil.

Shadow Description: [A pitiful little creature traveled through a nightmarish land...]

Shadow Attributes: [Lucky], [Marvel], [Ravenous], [Shadow Sworn], [Complete Steel body].

The [Greater Steel Body] had become [Complete Steel body]. Its description read:

Attribute Description: [This Shadow's body is forged out of sublime blessed steel and is without a flaw].

It seemed that consuming the silver armor of the Black Turtle had not only improved the quality of the alloy from which Imp's body was made, but also removed all the remaining imperfections from it.

Granted, Sunny was inclined to take its supposed flawlessness with a grain of salt. After all, he had recently learned that flaws were one of the universal laws of the world.

Still, if the Spell deemed it necessary to call Imp's newly evolved body flawless, he had to be very close to having no physical vulnerabilities.

It seemed... that Sunny finally had another powerful Shadow to face the most dire enemies side by side with.

Imp was now perfectly capable of participating in battles alongside Saint and Nightmare, reaching the fearsome level of power that a Transcendent Devil was supposed to possess.

With his indestructible steel body, which was a weapon in and of itself, as well as his dual affinity for shadows and flame, the ferocious fiend would be a terror on the battlefield.

'Good... just in time.'

Sunny's face grew somber.

Things had been calm for a while, ever since Ananke had found them.

But he knew that there were plenty of harrowing battles waiting for them in the depths of the Tomb of Ariel.