1338 On the Importance of Needlework and Carpentry

There was a lot of work to be done, and not enough time. The night was already approaching. Sunny and Nephis hastily cleared one of the compartments — the one that corresponded to the captain's cabin on the actual Chain Breaker — intending to use it as shelter.

Too tired to cook, they ate a a cold supper and went to sleep. Sunny did not forget to summon Saint and Fiend to guard them, while Nightmare protected their dreams.

In the morning, both felt more refreshed. Their bodies had mostly recovered from the terrible strain put on them by the storm. Most Ascended would have been rendered weak and helpless by the savage cataclysm for weeks, but Sunny and Nephis each possessed astonishing vitality — he because of Blood Weave, she due to the restorative power of her Aspect.

They got to work as the seven suns slowly rose from the gleaming waters.

On the first day, they planned to clear the main deck of debris. With Sunny, Nephis, Saint, Fiend, and Nightmare all working together, the arduous task of moving terribly heavy pieces of wreckage was not too hard. It took longer to sift through them, separating the things that had to be disposed of from those that could be of use later.

Even though neither Sunny nor Nephis knew how to repair the siege

engines, there was a weak hope that someone in Fallen Grace would.

The pieces of splintered wood seemed useless at first glance, but it was still the mystical wood that the Chain Breaker had been built of... simply tossing something like that into the water did not sit right with either of them, not even mentioning how precious of a resource wood was in the Tomb of Ariel.

There were bent and torn pieces of a strange, supremely durable metal as well. Those were also worth keeping.

In the end, they abandoned the upper deck and started clearing the main cargo hold instead. By the time they were done, it was night again, and both were tired.

...That night, they made a fire under the branches of the sacred tree, and Nephis cooked them food. Her cooking was as delicious as ever, and the quiet rustling of leaves made for a tranquil atmosphere.

However, this was the first time since the dark island that they shared a proper meal with just the two of them enjoying it.

It was so strange... Ananke had not been with them for long, but her absence felt like a gaping hole. Perhaps it was because Sunny and Nephis had witnessed her as a frail old woman, a vigorous matron, a charming young lady, and an innocent child that their time together felt like a lifetime.

That lifetime was now behind them, and new hardships awaited ahead. Time was relentless, washing away all things — both inconsequential and those they held dear.

On the second day, their efforts to prepare the ship for the voyage were more fruitful. With the cargo hold free of debris, they could neatly store everything that was valuable enough to hold on to there. The main deck was soon cleared. Sunny even washed it, trying to get rid of the soot, grime, and something that resembled dried blood.

...Or rather, he made Fiend do it while resting in the shade of the sacred tree and sipping on cold water from the Endless Spring.

On the third day, they cleared one of the two mess halls. After that, however, Sunny and Nephis stopped — they decided to leave the rest of the inner compartments alone, at least until reaching Fallen Grace. They briefly considered cleaning one of the other cabins to have separate sleeping quarters, but eventually dropped that idea.

It was not like they were unaccustomed to spending the nights in close proximity to each other, anyway. Plus, it was safer — neither of them knew when a sudden attack could come, so staying together was a more pragmatic choice.

And more familiar.

Finally, on the fourth day, they started to work on the sails.

Repairing them was much more arduous of a task than Sunny had imagined... but, unexpectedly, he turned out to be excellent at it. Who would have thought?

Being good with thread and needle was the last thing Sunny had expected when starting to learn the mysterious sorcery of the Demon of Fate, but that was exactly the side effect he was benefiting from right now.

Still, the progress was slow because of just how damaged the sails of the Chain Breaker were. Not to mention that they had to take them down, patch them up, and then fasten the sails back up.

The masts, booms, and spores required some repairs to be done, too. That task was accomplished by Nephis with the help of the materials they had brought from Weave or salvaged from the debris of the ghost ship and the Dark Shaper.

...One the seventh day, they were done with everything they could accomplish in a short amount of time.

The Chain Breaker had transformed. There were still burn marks and scars on its hull, and the main deck still gaped with wide holes... however, the largest of them were now covered with wooden boards, and it was clear of debris.

Saint was standing on the front of the ship with a bow in her hands, serving as their vanguard. Nightmare was hiding in the shadows nearby, while Fiend was protecting the sacred tree.

Nephis stepped into the runic circle at the stern of the ancient vessel —the circle itself was inactive, but it was still the natural position to take if one wanted to hold the two steering oars of the flying ship. Granted, one of those oars would be useless for now, since it controlled ascent and descent, and the Chain Breaker was unable to fly.

Sunny was standing by her side.

He looked at Nephis and asked, his voice full of anticipation — which was hard not to feel after a whole week of hard labor to prepare for this moment.

"Are you ready?"

Placing her hand on the steering oars, she nodded. "Let's go. We wasted enough time in the future already."

Turning away, he inhaled deeply and looked at the length of the graceful vessel.

When Noctis had owned it, there was a crew of wooden sailor dolls to work the ship. When the Fire Keepers claimed it, there were Awakened to do the same.

Now, however, there were only Sunny and Nephis... and Nephis had to remain at the stern to guide the Chain Breaker. So, it was his job to work the sails.

Since Sunny had no intention of jumping from mast to mast like a monkey... whatever a monkey was... he concentrated and called upon the shadows.

A few moments later, tenebrous arms manifested themselves into existence all over the ship, pulling on the ropes. It took some concentration to control them all at once, but after the gruelling education of the Antarctic Campaign, Sunny was more than proficient in using Shadow Manifestation. The sails slowly rose, and then filled with wind.

Coming back to life, the ancient ship turned to face downstream, and then slowly started accelerating.

'It's moving...'

They were finally on their way to Fallen Grace.