1340 New Perspective

Sunny remained motionless for a while, thinking. After a few moments, he unconsciously began to fiddle with the hems of the black mantle's sleeves. The smooth fabric glided across his fingertips, making them tingle a little.

Eventually, his gaze settled on it. Sunny tilted his head.

Abandoning his previous plans, he stood up and took off the mantle instead. Then, he sat back down and laid it across his lap.

'I wonder...'

He doubted that it was a simple piece of clothing. It was the attire of a Nightmare Spell priest, after all, most likely passed down to Ananke from her mother — the original priestess who had entered the Tomb of Ariel with the first wave of Outsiders. The corpse under the cathedral in the Dark City had been wearing the same dark garment.

So, it had to have some secrets.

Sunny hesitated for a few moments. Unlike Weaver's Mask, the black mantle was not a Memory — otherwise, it would have disappeared with Ananke. There were some Memories that persisted after the death of their owners, of course, like the Dawn Shard that Nephis had found on the remains of the First Lord of the Bright Castle.

But the nebulous mantle was not one of those, either. Otherwise, it would have bound itself to Sunny the moment he picked it up.

It seemed to be a perfectly mundane robe, albeit sewn from some mystical material. Nevertheless, he shifted his perception and tried to look within the mantle, just in case.

He was not disappointed. 'Huh?'

There was indeed a spellweave hidden within Ananke's mantle. And it was... a strange one.

'How... odd.'

Sunny studied the weave of ethereal strings with a perplexed expression.

There were all the elements that a spellweave was supposed to be made of — a radiant nexus and an intricate tapestry of essence threads. However, the pattern of the ethereal strings was very different from what Sunny was accustomed to.

It was elegant and vast, but... how could he put it... the weave of the dark mantle was infinitely less labyrinthine than that of every Memory in his possession. It was by no means crude, but also not nearly as complicated as them.

He studied the strange spellweave for a few minutes, then leaned back, bewildered.

'...It's not there!'

When Sunny studied the weave of a new Memory, he always searched for the familiar patterns first, to use as a starting point — the universal patterns that all Memories shared, and which were the first sorcery he himself had woven. The connection to the soul of the owner, the ability to manifest from and dissipate into soul essence, the ability to self-repair in the Soul Sea...

But the weave of Ananke's mantle lacked these fundamental patterns. He blinked a couple of times.

'What...'

Suddenly, Sunny realized a simple fact. Although all the Memories he had seen shared these traits... that was simply because they had all come from only two sources.

One source was the Nightmare Spell, and the other source was Sunny himself. More than that, his knowledge of weaving had mostly come from studying the weaves created by the Nightmare Spell.

The Memories created by the enchanters of Valor weren't different, either. That was because while they forged enchanted weapons using unique Aspects, the Spell served as an intermediary in the process —crafting Memories was an innate ability of the Valor family, not a learned skill like their knowledge of runic sorcery or Sunny's knowledge of weaving.

So, in the end, both sources were one and the same.

But that was not the only way of going about weaving enchanted items... only the ultimate way.

The weave he was looking at right now, though, had been created by someone else. Perhaps by the High Priest of the Nightmare Spell Ananke had spoken about, or by one of his students...

Which was why it was a sorcerous item enchanted through weaving, but not technically Memory.

Sunny scratched his head.

'So something like that can exist, too...'

Of course, it could! The fact seemed so obvious in hindsight, and yet, he had never considered such a possibility before. Mostly because it was really hard for a human mind to think outside a familiar framework. Every Memory Sunny had known was an item enchanted through weaving, and so, he subconsciously assumed that all items enchanted through weaving were Memories.

But they didn't have to be, like the mantle in front of him. ...Which was a curious detail, but not exactly useful.

Who wouldn't want to turn their weapon or attire into a Memory? The traits of Memories that everyone took for granted were supremely useful. The ability to carry a whole arsenal inside your soul alone was a boon any warrior would kill for. Swords that sharpened themselves, suits of armor that repaired any damage done to them and adjusted themselves to perfectly fit the body of the wearer... there were too many benefits to Memories to count.

By all accounts, they were the culmination of weaving. Well, technically, the Nightmare Spell itself was the culmination of weaving — but for all those who weren't inconceivable deities like the Demon of Fate, Memories were the absolute peak of enchantment.

However, Sunny's heart still skipped a beat, and his eyes glistened with dark excitement.

Ananke's mantle might not have been superior to the powerful Memories he possessed. At a cursory glance, its enchantments were nothing special. Its Rank and Tier were also not that stunning.

But to him, it was a priceless treasure... for a single reason.

It was because its weave was different from every weave he knew, and much simpler than them at that.

Sunny's whole skill as a sorcerer had come from comparing the patterns of different enchantments to each other and trying to deduce the common logic behind them. But all those enchantments followed the principles set by a single creator — the Nightmare Spell.

Now that he had an enchanted mantle that had come from an entirely different school of weaving, his ability to compare and deduce the fundamental principles of sorcery could take a qualitative leap. It was like witnessing an entirely different framework, and gaining a deeper understanding of your own by studying the differences and commonalities between them.

It didn't matter how simple the spellweave of Ananke's mantle was. What mattered was that it could not only teach Sunny the unfamiliar ways of its creator, but also help him push his own skill forward... by a lot.

Just when he needed it.

Sunny gripped the smooth fabric in his fists, staring at it intently. After a while, he said quietly:

"Thank you, Ananke."

With that, he cut out all distractions and concentrated on studying the odd weave.