1342 Nebulous Mantle

It didn't take a lot of effort to add the basic patterns of a Memory to the weave of the black mantle. That was what he had been doing over and over again to supply the Brilliant Emporium with inventory, after all. By now, weaving them was almost muscle memory.

They did not put a lot of pressure on a weave, either. Even Dormant Memories of the First Tier could bear the weight... the nexus of the mantle had been fashioned out of a Transcendent soul shard, so Sunny did not even have to integrate a second node into the ethereal tapestry.

It was a bit tricky to make the two different schools of weaving flow into each other, but since Sunny's method was the more intricate one and not the other way around, solving that problem proved to be trivial.

Just like that, he gained a new Memory at the cost of a few shadow strings.

Enjoying the view of the shimmering Great River, Sunny smiled tiredly. Studying hard was an exhausting process, but he welcomed the fatigue. It was a sign that he had made progress. He didn't regret turning the mantle into a Memory, either — even if it wasn't useful, he would have been reluctant to part with it.

All things that weren't stored within his soul would be lost at the end of the Nightmare. If he had been cognizant of that fact earlier, he would have had a better memento of Noctis than a luxurious chair.

...Although he had nothing really to complain about, considering that the Shadow Chair was actually one of his most valued Memories.

Sunny summoned the runes. Ananke's Mantle was there, at the end of the list.

Even though he more or less already knew what the runes would say, he still read them.

Memory: Ananke's Mantle. Memory Rank: Transcendent. Memory Tier: I.

Memory Type: Garment.

Sunny smiled faintly. Garments were a rare type of Memory, since the better ones were classified as armor by the Spell. Those that did not make the cut were generally less useful, but their benefit was that they could be worn in conjunction with an armor-type Memory. Like the Dark Wing, which he had been using ever since the Forgotten Shore.

He continued reading, feeling a pinching pain in his heart:

Memory Description: [This mantle once belonged to Ananke of Weave, Priestess of the Nightmare Spell. She met the Children of Weaver in a nightmare and guided them across the perilous currents of time. Her wisdom was radiant, and her kindness was a blessing.

May she rest in peace.]

The Spell had not written that description. Sunny had written it himself. He had tried to come up with the right words, but they all rang hollow. In the end, he had simply written a few awkward sentences, not knowing what else to do.

Unsatisfied, Sunny looked away from the description.

'No one else is going to see this description, anyway. Only Nephis and me.'

Eventually, he grimaced and concentrated on the enchantments. The runes read:

Memory Enchantments: [Enduring], [Conceiling], [Tasteless].

[Enduring] made the mantle durable, resistant against the elements, and capable of repairing itself. [Conceiling] masked the presence of its wearer — the mystical kind of presence powerful Awakened possessed.

[Tasteless], though... was a rather strange enchantment, if it could even be called that. From what Sunny could see, it didn't do anything. It was just there, containing nothing except for its name and description.

The description read:

[Tasteless] Enchantment Description: "Why did it have to be black?". 'Huh...'

Which was rather perplexing. The people wearing the mantle would not have been able to read the description unless they were sorcerers themselves, which most of the priests of the Nightmare Spell had not been. So, the mysterious creator of the enchanted garment seemed to have left that odd message for no one in particular.

Sunny shook his head.

'That person must have been a bit of a lunatic... also, what are they talking about? Everything looks better in black!'

Each rune of the description demanded essence strings to be wasted, after all. And weaving them took both effort and time. So, only a crazy person would go around weaving unnecessary runes...

Sunny coughed, remembering his own track record. Back in the Antarctic Center, he had once sent Nephis a message through a Memory called "I Am Stuck in an Endless Tunnel Full of True Darkness. How the Hell Do I Get Out? Ask Cassie".

Was there really a need to add "the hell" to the actual question? No. But did it feel good to add it?

Hell yes.

Looking down in embarrassment, he put on the tasteful black mantle and rose. Leaving the Shadow Chair by the ketch, Sunny rubbed his face and went to find Nephis.

He had gained a lot of insights from studying the weave left behind by an unknown sorcerer. It felt like his understanding of sorcery was on the precipice of taking a qualitative leap in the coming days... he would have to do a lot more work, of course, as well as digest all his gains.

However, Sunny already had a few ideas on how to proceed.

Right now, he lacks the soul shards to do anything significant. There were a few that Ananke had used while fishing, to lure the Nightmare Creatures, but those were of lesser Ranks. He was meaning to use them to create Memories for Nightmare to consume.

That said...

He still had the Supreme soul shard that they had scavenged from the Black Turtle. Which meant that he could potentially create a Supreme Memory.

Of course, it was not that simple. Scaling an enchantment was not as simple as replacing the nexus of a weave. Most of them could not be scaled at all, and those that could required the weave itself to be vastly modified and improved.

After all, strings made out of Awakened soul essence could not endure the flow of Transcendent energies. The patterns themselves had to be adjusted, as well, to account for the increased burden. Not to mention that enchantments were usually limited by their own nature... infusing them with more potent essence would simply be a waste.

It was a proper mess. However...

When Sunny asked himself how to empower the members of the cohort and make them capable of facing the perils of the Tomb of Ariel better, he couldn't help but think back to the Forgotten Shore, where they had also been forced to fight abominations one or even two Ranks above them.

How had they been able to survive that crucible?

There were a lot of reasons why they had, but one of the most significant ones... was a single Memory.

A Memory that could empower all other Memories, and which had been the primary goal of their lethal expedition across the Crimson Labyrinth, to the outskirts of the Hollow Mountains.

The Dawn Shard.

So... what if Sunny did not create a Supreme Memory, but instead elevated the Dawn Shard to the Supreme Rank?

Wouldn't that be the most efficient way of making the cohort stronger?