1387 Divine, Unholy

As they moved deeper and deeper into the flooded temple, Sunny couldn't help but think about the eerie story told by the ancient murals. It seemed as though he had learned something important...

But, of course, there were a dozen questions for every answer he had received. Like always.

'Divine, unholy...'

Knowing that the very fabric of the world was like a cage for the abyssal void that dwelled beneath made him feel uneasy — understandably so. However, Sunny did not dwell on that fact for too long.

There was no point, anyway. Matters like these were too distant and inconceivable for a mere mortal to think about. Even if the seals created by the gods were slowly crumbling, what was a human like him supposed to do? Even if Sunny was a Sovereign, he would have been like an ant compared to the powers involved in this process.

The seals had existed for eons, anyway. Despite their supposed weakened state, they would keep existing for just as long. By the time the void broke free of its prison and destroyed everything, he would be long dead, with not even dust left of his bones.

...Probably.

In any case, he was more interested in something else. The true source of the Corruption... Sunny had a vague suspicion that it was the void before, but now, he was almost certain.

'How does it work, though?'

The timeline of the Dream Realm civilizations was not very clear, but one thing he did know was that the Corrupted — the Nightmare Creatures —had always existed, even when the seals of the void were new and pristine.

The first era Sunny knew of was the era of the void... he decided to call it the Age of Chaos. During the Age of Chaos, the gods had been born, waged war against the elder abyssal beings, and eventually defeated them, thus creating the world.

What followed was the Age of Heroes. Noctis and the other Chain Lords had been born during that period. Back then, at the dawn of time, humans were not a dominant force in the world yet. Their nascent civilization was growing and spreading, but the continuation of its existence was not at all guaranteed.

Instead, those ancient humans had to fight against the Corrupted to conquer new lands, protect their cities, and avoid extinction. They needed powerful champions to battle the dreadful beings who populated the young world, and therefore that time was remembered as the Age of Heroes.

More importantly... the Nightmare Creatures already existed back then, when the gods were alive and the seals of the void were undamaged. How?

'Huh...'

Sunny frowned.

'I guess the gods did not imprison all of the void and every void being when creating the prison.'

It was easy to imagine that some remnants of the abyss slipped through their fingers and came to exist in the newly created world. Noctis had told him once that the gods and the daemons fought side by side as allies in the battles of the ancient past... therefore, it was easy to conclude that the war against the abyss did not end as soon as the abyss itself was sealed.

There had to have been dire battles at the dawn of the new world, resulting in these abyssal remnants being exterminated. Come to think of it, Nephis had told him that a terrible creature was slain by the gods once, at the dawn of time, and that its blood seeped into the ground, becoming true darkness.

The place where the creature fell was now known as the Hollow Mountains, beneath which lay the darkness of the Underworld. That creature had to have been a void being. That proved that at least some of them had walked the world of the gods after its creation.

'What are void beings, though?'

Sunny felt as though he was on the precipice of an important discovery.

The gods... he had thought once that they were simply divine titans. Now, however, Sunny was inclined to believe that the gods were beyond Ranks and Classes altogether. Similarly, void creatures would not have been unholy titans — just like the gods, they had to have been creatures of an entirely different order.

More importantly, they were simply different. These abyssal horrors were beings from before time, space, death, and every other law that comprised the fabric of reality. These existences were completely alien to the reality familiar to Sunny... opposed to it, even.

And if Sunny knew one thing about creatures of great power, it was that they exerted influence on the world.

Saints and powerful Masters had a mystical presence to them. Nightmare Creatures of higher Classes spread their influence across vast territories. Sovereigns ruled over grand Domains.

Void beings were without a doubt immensely powerful, so what kind of influence would they exert on a world that was inherently alien to their nature? Would the fabric of reality and the very laws comprising it start to rot and come undone around them?

Sunny felt his heart skipping a beat.

Was that... was that the true nature of the Corruption?

Was it a rot caused by the influence of the primordial void, simply because of its alien nature?

...That would explain why the creatures infected by that rot possessed an insatiable desire to destroy those who were not. Why they all seemed mad, revolting, and alien... appallingly wrong in some strange and sinister way. The divine and the unholy were inherently opposed to each other, after all. It was in their very nature to strive to obliterate each other.

'I... I feel like I'm not far from the truth.'

Sunny remained silent for a while, walking behind Cassie with a distant expression on his face. The world he lived in — the world of the Spell, the constant battle against the abominations, and the ruined realm of dreams and nightmares — suddenly made much more sense.

It was not understanding, exactly. The conclusions Sunny made were too vast and had too many consequences to be understood in just a few minutes. But the feeling of it all was somehow more clear now.

He lingered for a bit, then threw a furtive glance at Nephis.

'What about Neph, then?'

Her Ascended Ability, [Longing], made her immune to the Corruption. Knowing what he knew now, that seemingly weak Ability seemed even more impossible.

More than that, one of her Attributes was called "Nephilim". Its description read:

'There once were terrible creatures born of an unholy union between the divine and the profane. Nephilim were the most beautiful, and the most harrowing of them all.'

If the divine and the unholy were inherently opposed to each other, then how could there have been creatures born from their union? How terrible had they been, really, and what had happened to them?

Shaking his head slightly, Sunny sighed and looked away from Neph's slender figure.

'I take it back. Nothing makes sense. I'm just confused even more!'

Taking a step forward, he suppressed a groan and covered his face with a palm.