1419 Mother of Learning

Looking into the swirling mist, Sunny let out a long sigh. He suddenly felt tired.

Or rather, not so suddenly. Time was repeating itself inside the loop, and while his body was restored to its initial condition at the start of each revolution, mental exhaustion remained. The Chain Breaker had just landed on the shore of Wind Flower, but Sunny himself... he had already spent an entire day on highest alert, in constant tension, playing a lethal game of cat and mouse with dreadful abominations. And that was after dying miserably several times in a row.

Of course, he felt tired.

Frowning, Sunny went about the usual routine of asking Cassie and Nephis to wait, then riding Nightmare into the mist to find Jet. Then, he brought her back to the Chain Breaker and explained the nature of Wind Flower to the members of the cohort once again.

Things were getting... repetitive.

If there was one constantly changing thing about the time loop, though, it was the Sin of Solace. The sword wraith had all kinds of hateful comments to whip him with, coming up with new ones in every revolution. Sunny was almost glad to have some variety, even if it was both infuriating and hurtful.

After settling the matters on the beached ship, Sunny ventured to find Effie for the second time.

However, he failed again.

Sunny did not even make it to the dark chasm... he was killed by Undying Slaughter while searching for Jet.

The next time, he fell prey to a horrid creature that resembled an unholy hybrid between a centipede, a scorpion, a human, and a praying mantis. That happened soon after leaving the bone garden.

Then, he managed to reach the chasm once again. Instead of climbing down into its perilous darkness, Sunny tried to fly to the other side by turning into a crow. Halfway across, he heard a quiet rustle, and something dove at him from above. The next moment, he was back on the deck of the Chain Breaker again.

During the attempt after that, he was caught by the enormous abomination that Devouring Beast had consumed near the tower in one of the previous revolutions... dissolving in the viscous acid, Sunny only managed to growl a hoarse curse. Then, his words were replaced by agonized screams.

Back on the Chain Breaker, Sunny grabbed the railing and lowered his head. His expression was dim.

'Ah...'

This island was starting to get on his nerves.

While Nephis and Cassie were talking about the Guiding Light, he stood still, trying to throw the ghastly memories of his latest death out of his mind. Even though Sunny was not a stranger to pain, and even dying, it was not that easy to do.

Suddenly, he was not sure that his previous boasts were substantiated. A

few years of this? The Sin of Solace might have been closer to the truth...

Shaking his head, Sunny sighed and looked at his companions. After hesitating for a while, he still convinced them to hide and wait for his return.

He was confident in his ability to bring Jet to the Chain Breaker, at least. Sunny knew where exactly she would be at what time, by now. He also knew where approximately Undying Slaughter would be... it was not too hard to time his actions correctly.

'I only have one day...'

Timing was not an issue just yet, but he would need to find the fastest and most efficient way of going through the motions of escaping Wind Flower eventually. For now, Sunny still needed to observe, discover, and memorize more details.

But... he was getting tired.

'If we don't manage to flee this hell soon, I'll have to start seriously considering my mental wellness.'

It was funny to even think about mental wellness, considering where he was and what was happening to him, but it was a serious issue. Sunny had to care for his mind. Right now, he was enduring blow after blow without giving himself time to rest and recover. Eventually, he would have to slow down and give himself a chance to catch his breath.

In order to last longer before going insane. 'Not yet, though.'

Sunny found Jet and whisked her away before Undying Slaughter had a chance to catch up to her past self. Returning to the Chain Breaker, he gave his usual speech and departed once again in search of Effie.

He reached the bone garden and turned inland. He avoided the horrid mantis. He gave the slip to the giant octopus-like monstrosity, and even escaped from Devouring Beast without being noticed. Riding past the lonesome tower, he dove back into the misty forest and successfully avoided being killed by the Nightmare Creatures waiting for him there.

Eventually, Sunny reached the chasm again.

Hiding beneath a tree, he looked somberly at the mist above. He still had no idea what kind of flying horror killed him the last time he tried to cross the chasm... the creature had never attacked him in the forest, but since there was nothing to hide him while traversing the chasm by air, the risk was too great.

Climbing down again was also a bad idea. The legion of black millipedes hiding at the bottom of the deep canyon was too dreadful of a foe... knowing what to expect, Sunny might be able to escape from them. But then again, he might also be either eaten or chased into the caves.

'Well, they can all go to hell.'

Summoning Morgan's Warbow, he wrapped one of his shadows around the arrow and sent it flying across the chasm. The arrow pierced the mist, as fast as lightning, and sank into the trunk of a tall pine tree on the other side.

...Actually, it cut a few of those trees down, and only stopped after piercing the fourth or fifth one.

The shadow glided down the trunk and reached the ground. Dismissing Nightmare, Sunny used Shadow Step and appeared on the other side of the chasm, unharmed.

'There. Eat that, bastards.'

It was not the strongest creature that survived, but the most adaptable. And although Sunny was not that strong among the prisoners of Wind Flower... he was nothing if not resourceful.

Grinning darkly, he summoned Nightmare and jumped into the saddle.

Did it only seem that way, or had the radiance of the Guiding Light became a little brighter?

'Stay alive, Effie...'