1441 Let's Split Up

Although the Seeker's Tower was right in front of them, Sunny had little hope that they would be able to reach its entrance this time. Not only was the tower protected by the eerie enchantment, but the revolution was also close to its end — it had taken them a lot of time to find Effie and get

back to the heart of the island.

He did not know how much longer they had, exactly, but it might have been mere minutes.

In the end... they never found out.

The black cliff was surrounded by a wide open space where there were no trees. Not long after the members of the cohort cautiously abandoned the forest, a gentle wind caressed Sunny's face, forcing him to look up.

Wind Flower was shrouded in impenetrable darkness, so no one except for Sunny could see... but there was something there, above them, hiding in the black expanse of the misty sky.

Frozen in terror, he watched dozens of twisting tendrils descending from the turbulent black fog, each hundreds of meters long.

Then, he was dead.

...Coming back to his senses on the deck of the Chain Breaker, Sunny could not help but shudder.

This was the first time he had caught a glimpse of the being that dwelled in the mist above the island. Sunny had thought that Wind Flower had no horrors left to surprise him with... but he had been wrong.

'What is... what even is... that thing?'

Hiding how disturbed he was, Sunny turned and looked at Cassie. By now, he was if not accustomed, then at least familiar with the terrible trauma of dying. The blind girl had only recently become aware of the loop, though. For her, it must have been a harrowing experience.

But, contrary to his expectations, Cassie seemed perfectly fine —nonchalant, even. It was as though she had experienced countless deaths already.

Sunny lingered for a moment.

'Right. Considering her Aspect... she probably has.'

Nevertheless, he walked over to her, hesitated for a moment, and tried to make his voice sound soft:

"Are you alright?"

A brief, pale smile appeared on Cassie's face. She nodded. "Yes. I'm fine. It's just... it was sobering."

Nephis stared at them silently, a hint of confusion appearing in her tired grey eyes. She was once again suffering from the symptoms of essence exhaustion. Sunny sighed and gestured to Cassie, imploring her to take care of the explanations.

A moment later, he was off to retrieve Jet. 'I am... definitely not avoiding Neph.'

He could have sent Cassie, Nightmare, and one of his shadows into the mist and remain on the Chain Breaker with Nephis instead. However, Sunny was not quite sure how to act around her now, after what the Sin of Solace had said... and what he himself had admitted. Especially not if they were left alone.

'I'll just think about how to get into the terrifying ancient tower. That is much less daunting...'

He explained the situation to Jet on the way back to the Chain Breaker. At the same time, Cassie explained it to Nephis. So, by the time the four of them reunited, everyone was already aware of what was going on.

But the usual routine had to change from now on.

If they wanted to enter the tower, they couldn't waste time going to the far side of the island and back. There was simply not enough hours in the loop... nevertheless, Sunny hesitated.

How could he leave Effie alone in the cold mist and darkness? He was not sure what had happened to her in the previous revolutions, without them. But knowing what he knew about the island... he doubted that it was something he would want to know.

Sunny remained silent for a while, agonizing over the choice. Then, Nephis suddenly spoke:

"Jet and I can handle that."

He looked at her in confusion.

"What do you mean?"

She leaned over and pointed to them map he had drawn:

"You and Cassie can go to the tower. The two of us will enter the caverns, kill the Terror, find Effie, and hide ourselves away until the end of the loop. Soul Reaper is the key to slaying that thing, anyway, so... we'll manage without you."

Sunny listened to her with a grim expression and shook his head.

"But you know close to nothing about the island. The two of you alone won't be enough, especially with how low on essence you are."

Nephis smiled.

"Who says that we'll be alone? We can take your Onyx Saint and Ravenous Fiend with us. You can also send one of your shadows to tag along. Once you unleash the Shadow Realm Fragment, you'll be able to extend your senses to almost anywhere on the island, right? You can observe where we are and guide us with the help of the shadow. That will be enough."

Sunny hesitated for a few moments.

Neph's suggestion had merit. He was still not convinced that they would be able to survive the dread of Wind Flower on their own, but... there was a chance, no matter how small. Sunny would most likely be able to guide them through the forest remotely. Cassie could share senses with either Nephis or Jet, too, to warn him should anything unexpected happen.

In any case, there was not much of a choice. Even though he did not like the idea of sending both members of the cohort who could not remember the past events of the loop blindly into the mist, it was worth trying at least once.

Cassie and Sunny, meanwhile, had the best chance of actually making it inside the tower.

'Ah... I hate it.'

He shifted slightly, then nodded

"Right... you two go and kill the Cavern Terror, then. If you give it half of the beating you gave me, it might just run away and hide in fear."

Both Nephis and Jet stared at him incredulously. After a few moments of silence, Jet asked:

"...When did we give you a beating?" Nephis nodded and raised an eyebrow. "And why?"

Sunny coughed and looked away.

"Oh, that... don't worry about it... it was just a small misunderstanding, a couple revolutions ago... anyway, there's no time to waste! We should hurry if we don't want to be discovered by Undying Slaughter... come on, let's move!"

Soon, they left the Chain Breaker and separated.

Accompanied by Saint and Fiend, Nephis and Jet headed east toward the bone orchard.

Sunny and Cassie, meanwhile, hurried north. Toward the Seeker's Tower.