1494 The Edge

Standing on the deck of the Chain Breaker as it barreled through the empty darkness, Sunny felt a strange mix of horror and exhilaration. That was because the distance they had to cover could only be called... cosmic.

He did not know how far the Great River was from the walls of the pyramid, exactly, but it had to be an astronomical number of kilometers — perhaps not as immense as the distance between Earth and the Moon, but of a similar proportion.

If so, logically, it would take them years to return... however, space itself was acting strange in the interior of the Tomb of Ariel. Judging by how fast the Great River was drawing closer, they were going to reach it in a matter of days, or weeks at most.

In any case, it didn't stop Sunny from imagining that he was on a spaceship.

'Come to think of it... can the Chain Breaker travel through space?'

It probably could, considering that the force propelling the flying vessel was sorcerous in nature. However, that didn't mean that the helmsman and the passengers would survive space. So, this was probably as close as Sunny would ever get to being a taikonaut... a cosmonaut? Astronaut? Whatever the word was.

Not the least because, according to Jet, Earth's orbit hid dangers that even she wasn't qualified to know about.

With a sigh, he looked away from the Great River and went to sit beneath the branches of the sacred tree. He preferred to spend his time leaning on Ananke's ketch, but the Sin of Solace was less likely to bother him here. Therefore, Sunny reluctantly abandoned his previous spot.

With only a few precious days left before they returned, he wanted to concentrate on weaving. There were five Supreme soul shards inside the Covetous Coffer, and Sunny still remembered his sincere desire to make the cohort as strong as possible.

Sadly, even after studying the soul arsenals of his companions, he didn't find a Memory that could be easily elevated to the Supreme Rank. There were a number of Transcendent Memories between the five of them, but very few that were both suitable and within his ability to modify.

The only real exception was the Sin of Solace. Sunny felt that he could elevate the Rank of the cursed jian rather swiftly... however, he was wary of making it any stronger.

Before, Sunny had only been concerned about making the sword wraith more powerful. Now, he also had to worry about the relationship between the Sin of Solace and the Estuary Key.

The Sin of Solace was a Transcendent Memory of the Fifth Tier, while the Estuary Key was a Supreme Memory of the Sixth Tier. Was it really a coincidence that the Key was exactly one Rank and one Tier above the Memory it was meant to suppress?

If not, what would happen if this balance was broken by his meddling?

Considering that the consequence of failure was becoming infected by the Defilement, Sunny did not wish to take unnecessary risks. The jade jian was already capable of cutting through Great Nightmare Creatures with the help of the Crown of Dawn, anyway.

So, Sunny was forced to leave the Supreme soul shards to gather dust in the Covetous Coffer, and turned his attention to the Covetous Coffer itself, instead.

He was still researching a way to turn this unique Memory of his into half of an Echo, which would most likely allow him to make a perfectly fine Shadow.

Why would he want to turn the Covetous Coffer into a Shadow?

Well, for one... both the storage space, the physical size, and the flexibility of what the Coffer could be turned into depended on the potency of Sunny's soul. The peculiar Memory was already far greater than the small, toothy box it had been once. If Sunny became a Transcendent Terror, who knew what form the Coffer would be able to assume?

Apart from that, even after all these years and the countless horrors Sunny had experienced during them, he still remembered the Mordant Mimic as one of the most vile and troublesome creatures he had ever killed. Plus, the bastard had once belonged to Noctis, and could produce soul coins.

Who wouldn't want to have a Shadow like that?

Entertaining himself with such thoughts, Sunny spent a few days blissfully pouring over his plans to create an artificial Echo — no matter how dysfunctional.

They were getting closer and closer to the Great River.

The distant ribbon slowly grew larger. Soon, it was already covering half of the horizon. The seven tiny motes of lights turned into furiously radiant spheres, painting the bow of the Chain Breaker with stark light.

Then, the Great River completely obscured the darkness beyond.

At that point, they were not blindly flying forward, but instead aiming for a particular stretch of it. The winds surrounding them were growing stronger, and the light of the seven suns suffused the air, making it seem as though they were sailing through the sky once again.

Finally, after slightly more than a week, they reached the Edge.

Sunny knew that they had arrived because a flood of essence suddenly entered his soul. Of course, in reality, it was not coming from an outside source — rather, it was the innate replenishment rate of his cores that had been enhanced by the Crown of Twilight.

In any case, the Crown had recognized dawn, and so, its mystical enchantment activated.

Sighing, Sunny left what he was doing and climbed to the upper deck. There, the members of the cohort had already gathered, looking forward. There, in front of them...

A colossal waterfall was plummeting into the abyss, stretching in both directions as far as the eye could see. Painted in the hues of beautiful pink and lilac by the pale light of dawn, the dreamlike clouds of water vapor flowed into the darkness, sparking with reflected sunlight.

The distant roar of the impossible waterfall was like a soft whisper, for now.

It was an incredibly beautiful sight.

Stunned by the magical beauty, Sunny let out a quiet sigh.

'...Why must this dreadful place be so breathtaking?'

With that, he glanced at Cassie, who was holding the steering oars.

Guided by her hands, the Chain Breaker soared above the waterfall, flew above the water for a few hours more, and finally landed on the surface of the Great River.

They had returned.