1579 Forgotten

Sunny had reached the very heart of the Estuary.

There, hidden in the depth of a towering mountain, a vast cavern was filled with darkness. A single ray of bright light fell from somewhere high above, illuminating a small island rising from the glossy black water.

There was a beautiful tree growing on the island, its leaves a sea of pale magenta. As the branches of the tree swayed slightly under the wind, the leaves fell down on the surface of the water, making its reflection ripple.

And in the shadow of those branches, a simple stone sarcophagus stood, its lid covered by withered leaves.

It made... for a vivid and breathtaking sight.

The heart of the Estuary was peaceful, like an island of safety and tranquility in a world full of nothing but dread. And yet... it was also poignant and mournful. As soon as Sunny entered the cavern, he felt a strange melancholy fill his heart, as though an echo of a great sorrow that had been experienced here by someone, sometime, still resided in this sacred and silent sanctuary.

He shifted slightly.

'Why... why is there a grave here?'

The great black pyramid was called the Tomb of Ariel, but it was not the place where the Demon of Dread had been buried. Instead, it was a place he had built to bury unbearable truths. So, it was not really a tomb.

...Or was it?

Sunny stared at the unadorned sarcophagus, struck silent by the overwhelming sorrow that remained here even now, thousands of years after the daemons and the gods were no more.

He knew that the Tomb of Ariel was not a burial place for someone because of the words the Demon of Dread had shared with Weaver. Ariel had said so himself — what he had buried here were the hideous truths he did not wish to remember.

But that was the thing. If Ariel did not remember what he had buried in this tomb of his, then didn't it mean that his words could not be trusted?

Who was to say that he had not buried someone precious here, and then chose to forget about his sorrow?

Suddenly, Sunny remembered the description of the Mirror of Truth. Weaver's strange words...

'I have not known that you've built a tomb, nor have I ever seen it. How would I know to admire it? I just happened to be here by chance. Now that I've seen it, my heart is untouched. I feel nothing.'

'You wanted to be free of the truth, so you didn't deserve it.'

Why did it feel... that although Ariel had forgotten his sorrow, Weaver remembered?

Had the Demon of Fate really happened to visit the Nightmare Desert and stumble upon the great pyramid by chance?

And if it was not a coincidence...

Then who was buried here, at the heart of Ariel's Tomb? Forlorn, and forgotten.

Looking at the sarcophagus that rested under the branches of the beautiful tree, Sunny inhaled sharply.

'Oblivion. The answer... is Oblivion.'

The Tomb of Ariel was where the Demon of Oblivion had been buried by her brother. Somehow, he was sure of it.

Wasn't it sad, even for her death to be forgotten?

'Wait, no... no, that doesn't make any sense!'

Suddenly, Sunny was confused. How could Oblivion have been dead? Six daemons had risen in rebellion against the heavens, while the seventh —Weaver — refused. Because of that, the Demon of Fate had been despised and hunted both by the six daemons and the six gods.

If Oblivion had been dead all along, then how could there have been six daemons participating in the war and pursuing Weaver? Something... fundamentally did not make sense about all this.

And yet, Sunny could not shake off the feeling of certainty about who it was that had been buried in the heart of the Tomb of Ariel.

It was the Demon of Oblivion

'What does it mean?!'

Taken aback and awestruck, he winced and closed his eyes for a moment. More importantly, what did it mean for him?

Cassie had said that he would gain freedom from fate if he reached the very heart of the Estuary. Well, here he was, at its innermost sanctum. Even if there was a grave of a daemon in front of him... how was it supposed to break the chains of fate that bound him?

Sunny hesitated for a while, feeling a sense of solemn awe at the sigh of the peaceful grave. Then, he took a deep breath and took a step forward.

If he had any doubt that an unimaginable being was buried here, it disappeared as Sunny crossed the still expanse of dark water and approached the small island. The closer he got, the more sacred the silent cavern seemed, and the more pressure he felt.

Even in death, the being resting in the stone sarcophagus emanated enough of it to crush a mundane person and make their soul collapse. Sunny, meanwhile, was able to reach the island and step onto its soil, albeit with difficulty.

As the withered leaves rustled under his feet, he walked to the sarcophagus and stopped in front of it, looking at the weathered surface of the stone lid. Then, following an impulse, he raised a hand and cleaned it from fallen leaves.

There were no runes on the sarcophagus, no carvings. Nothing to indicate who was buried inside, as no mark left to remember them by. It was nestled between the roots of the ancient tree, as if they were growing through it... or from it.

Taking a deep breath, Sunny fell silent and listened to his intuition. What was he supposed to do here?

His intuition... was telling him to look up.

He did just that, and noticed that one of the branches of the tree was hanging low, pulled down by the weight of a beautiful golden fruit. The fruit glistened as it basked in the light falling from the ceiling of the cavern.

Sunny hesitated for a few moments, then raised a hand and easily plucked the fruit off the branch.

His mind was in turmoil.

'Am I... really doing this?'

There was no answer. But he had already made it so far...

Letting out a sigh, Sunny brought the fruit to his mouth and sunk his teeth into its succulent flesh.

It was the sweetest thing he had ever tasted.

Without wasting any time, Sunny satisfied his hunger and quenched his first by consuming the mystical fruit. He did not know what to expect, exactly, but felt that it would be like the fruits of the sacred tree growing on the deck of the Chain Breaker — which contained soul essence within them.

Granted, it could also be like fruits of the Soul Devourer, which contained soul fragments, as well as enthralled those consuming them with an insidious hex.

However, nothing of the sort happened. After finishing the divine fruit, Sunny received neither essence nor fragments. He was not enthralled, either.

Instead...

There was a strange feeling in the depths of his soul. A chillingly familiar feeling.

Sunny's eyes widened.

'Don't tell me...'

In the next moment, he let out a terrible shriek and fell on the lid of the sarcophagus.