1584 Sevenfold

After calming down a little, Sunny conducted a few simple experiments to figure out what exactly his shadow avatars were capable of.

The results... left him a bit breathless.

The most important thing about his Transformation Ability was that the manifested shadows were, indeed, no different from himself.

They possessed the exact same body and the exact same Attributes. More than that, they were just as powerful as Sunny — meaning, each of the six avatars was as fast, strong, and resilient as a Transcendent Terror.

But that was not all.

Not only did they possess the same power as him, they could also use the same Abilities as him. Meaning that all six avatars could independently use Shadow Control, Shadow Step, and Shadow Manifestation.

They could also summon his Shadows, wield the Memories he possessed, and weave strings of shadow essence. Most frighteningly of all... each of them could form their own Shadow Shells.

Even though maintaining several shells at the same time almost made Sunny pass out, he could theoretically turn each of his avatars into a different kind of terrifying creature.

There were two things Sunny and his shadow avatars shared, though.

The first one was rather obvious — it was his mind. The shadow avatars could act independently, following his commands to the best of their ability. But when he took direct control of their bodies, it was not as though he suddenly had several consciousnesses. Rather, his sole consciousness controlled many bodies, and, therefore, took on the corresponding burden.

A weird quirk of that situation was that the shadows refused to speak unless the body was directly controlled by him, despite being physically able to. Whether it was an external limitation or simply not in their nature, he did not know. In any case, that meant that his Flaw prohibited him from lying even through the mouths of the avatars.

The second thing Sunny shared with his avatars was his soul. That was why they were able to summon his Shadows and his Memories... that was also why all seven of them shared the same pool of shadow essence.

Maintaining the avatars already cost him a considerable amount of essence. If all of them went around using powerful enchantments and activating their Abilities simultaneously... the result would be truly cataclysmic, without a doubt, but also short-lived.

If Ascended Sunny possessed this Transformation Ability, he would have been forced to only use it to deliver short bursts of truly devastating damage or short periods of incredible utility.

However, Sunny was not Ascended anymore. His Transcendent soul was full of frighteningly potent essence now, and could passively replenish it with spirit essence when in the embrace of shadows, to boot. just as important was the fact... that he had Soul Weave.

Soul Weave entirely changed the potential of his Transformation Ability. With it reinforcing his soul, Sunny could summon the full wrath of his avatars for much longer.

Beside that, he could also sustain a few of them permanently without losing any essence. The natural rate at which it was expended and replenished now made it so that he did not need to dismiss at least a couple of his avatars at all.

Which meant that he was one of those exceedingly rare, freakish Saints who could maintain their Transformation indefinitely.

There was another important piece of information in that latest discovery, too. It was that he did not need to Transform all of his shadows at the same time. He could make some into avatars while keeping the rest in their natural form.

Those shadows that remained in their natural form, then, could augment either him or the manifested avatars. The proportion could be whatever he desired — he could augment himself with all six shadows, manifest an avatar and augment it with the remaining five shadows, share the augmentation between himself and the avatar, do the same with two avatars, and so on.

In short, it was a supremely flexible and adaptable Ability. Sunny could shift freely between being a single source of overwhelming power or several sources of slightly less unreasonable might.

...With his Shadows added into the mix, the amount of strategies he could come up with grew even more varied.

In short...

'It's ridiculous.'

The amount of power and flexibility that Sunny now commanded was nothing short of daunting. He was already slightly frightened by his Transcendent might... now that there could be seven of him, that feeling only grew more intense.

Sunny had always held a lot of respect for Saints, but now that he was a Saint himself — and one of the most powerful Saints in existence, no less — he truly understood why each of them was a singular existence among the Awakened.

Granted... there were some limitations to his newfound power. The burden on his mind and reserves of shadow essence was one of them, obviously.

The need to arm each of the avatars with suitable equipment was another. They might all be wearing the Onyx Mantle, but that was simply because it was a manifestation of his Attribute. If he summoned a powerful Memory weapon, six copies of it would not magically appear in the hands of the avatars — there would be only one.

...Which was a moot point, for the moment. Sunny did not even have a Memory weapon right now, let alone a powerful one.

'How the mighty have fallen...'

He spent a moment in bitter silence, shocked at the fact.

And, by thinking about it, Sunny had to face some other facts.

Now that he had conducted the exploration of his new abilities — an initial exploration, at least — he had no choice but to turn his mind to other matters.

Much more frightening matters than his Transcendent power was.

What had happened at the end of the Nightmare? What had that Cursed Terror... whose identity was rather obvious... done to him? Was his fate really broken, and was he free?

What had happened with the other members of the cohort in Verge? Were all of them alright?

...What had happened to Antarctica after the Battle of the Black Skull?

Now that Sunny was back in the waking world, there was no escaping finding the answers to all these questions.

He looked at his six identical, but distinct avatars.

After a few moments of silence, Sunny asked:

"Shall we... go take a look?"

Just as expected, he was met with silence. The shadows seemed to be looking at him with expressions of support, though, each in its own way.

Sunny took a deep breath and then looked up, at the unstable ceiling of the pocket of space inside a ruin that he had found himself in.

"...Let's climb out of this concrete tomb, then."