1654 Opening Salvo

As ash rained from the sky and the ground quaked, Sunny inhaled deeply and extended his shadow sense as far as he could. Soon, his mind was flooded with an avalanche of sensory data, almost making him dizzy.

He was still unaccustomed to how vast his sight was now. Of course, he didn't actually see anything... but after years of perceiving the shapes and movements of the shadows, it was not much different. Sunny had tested his limits while relying on his shadow sense to stay alive in the ocean, but the dark depths were different from land. They were unfathomable and empty, with nothing but the cold currents to see.

Here in the Antarctic Center, though, there was almost too much to sense.

Further, further, and further still... Sunny filtered out the useless data to keep his Transcendent mind from overloading and reached across many kilometers of cracking ice toward the approaching snowstorm.

Soon, he sensed the shadows trembling from the lethal cold. Even they were not spared from the cruel tyranny of the Winter Beast.

'Somewhere between forty and fifty kilometers.... this is as far as I can reach.’

His shadow sense reached further than his actual sight, which was limited due to the curvature of Earth. And yet, it wasn't enough to find the heart of the vast blizzard - at least not until it got closer and enveloped him.

'Still, it is already close enough for the initial greeting.’

Sunny extended a hand. A thin pillar of darkness rose from the ground, growing to stand at almost twice his height. Then, it solidified, turning into a inky-black javelin with a needle-sharp tip. He grasped and weighed it, looking at the towering wall of swirling snow with a cold expression.

He had created the javelin in the image of the Siege Souvenir - a similar weapon he had once fashioned to slay Goliath. The original Souvenir had been made from the quill of a Corrupted abomination, while this one was merely a manifested shadow. However, that shadow had been suffused with his Transcendent essence, and was thus equal to a Transcendent weapon.

A uniquely powerful one at that, due to the fact that his soul had been altered by Soul Weave.

Sadly, the shadow javelin lacked the powerful enchantments that the real Siege Souvenir had possessed. Still... it was not bad for an opening salvo,

Exhaling slowly, Sunny took a step forward. Using the full augmentation of his five shadows, he infused a torrent of essence into his muscles and tendons, pushed against the ground with his feet, and strained his entire body to whip his hand forward and send the javelin into the dark sky.

The moment he threw it, the world quaked again.

A cloud of ashen snow exploded from under his feet, and a thunderous boom tore through the roaring of the eruption. There was an invisible shockwave that pushed the snow and the falling ash away, creating a sphere of clarity around his ominous onyx figure for a few fleeting moments.

The javelin was like a black comet as it shot across the lightless sky, Its speed immeasurable.

However... the actual process was rather dull. It actually took it an entire minute to reach the wall of snow and disappear into it. Twenty or so seconds later, Sunny felt his connection to the infused essence disappear.

At the same time, he sensed the javelin plummet into the snow and shatter into countless shards of ice, which then dissolved into an intangible shadow.

The corner of his mouth twitched.

‘...Not enough.’

With the volcano erupting behind him and the gargantuan wall of snow that connected heavens and earth racing to swallow him from the front, Sunny stared forward with a dark expression and did some mental calculation.

'I am no better than an artillery cannon, distance-wise, Granted, that javelin of mine was about twenty-five times heavier than an average artillery shell, Still, I would need to be inside the storm to reach its eye.’

He grimaced with displeasure. All these mathematics... was not exactly what he had wanted. What he had wanted was to get up close and personal with the Winter Beast, and feel its blood flow down his hands. However, reality was never what one wanted.

Well... maybe not, considering that Sunny had gotten exactly what he wanted. He had gotten his freedom. And everything else that had come with it.

In any case, the distance was not that important. Much more important was the fact that the javelin had been able to survive for more than twenty seconds in the outer reaches of the snowstorm. That... was something Sunny could work with.

Of course, he still did not know how long his missiles would last in the inner hell of the Winter Beast's domain.

He shook his head, let out a resentful sigh, and glanced at his Shadow.

"...War is a boring affair, isn't it, Serpent?"

Serpent raised its gargantuan head into the air and hissed, perhaps expressing its solidarity.

Sunny smiled.

"Let's make it a bit more exciting, then."

As the first torrents of snow swirled around him and plunged the world into unbearable cold, Sunny raised his head to the dark sky and laughed.

A few moments later, his laughter disappeared abruptly, and his face suddenly turned still, Only his eyes gleamed with a strange, dark excitement.

Something stirred in their depths...

And at the same time, the darkness around Sunny stirred, as well.

Dozens of inky-black pillars rose from the ground, followed by dozens more. They rose into the swirling stow like the fangs of a dragon, their needle-sharp points parting the wind with shrill whistles.

Then, just as many tendrils of darkness wrapped around the shadow javelins, turning into inky-black hands. Each hand had seven fingers, ending with sharp claws.

Sunny raised a hand, and at the same time, the shadow hands raised the great javelins.

He stared into the swirling snow with a cold smile.

He was not satisfied with being a Transcendent siege engine. To welcome the Winter Beast, he was prepared to summon forth an entire division's worth of devastating artillery.

"I'm going to drown you, bastard."

Letting out a low growl, he waved his hand forward.

The world seemed to shatter from the thunderous roar when countless black javelins tore the swirling snow apart and shot into the depths of the raging blizzard.