1690 A Blade to Slay the Gods

Understandably, Nephis seemed doubtful of Sunny's outrageous claim. She looked at him silently for a few moments, then raised an eyebrow.

"But you are merely an Ascended... forgive me for being blunt. How can an Ascended create something that powerful?"

Sunny could see how she would question his ability to keep such a promise. However, he meant what he had said. Because he had been thinking of a way to achieve something like that for a long, long time.

He lingered for a moment, then sighed.

"It's easier than you think... not that any random Ascended would be able to, of course. But my way of creating Memories is rather unique, so I can do more than most. It... would be easier for me to show you. Would you mind following me?"

Nephis did not move, looking at him intently.

"I don't mind following, Master Sunless. But not yet."

He frowned a little.

"Not yet?"

She nodded slowly, her face still and motionless. Her voice sounded even:

"Yes, I…”

Nephis paused for a moment, then added stoically:

"Haven't finished my cake yet."

Sunny thought that he had heard her wrong.

'What?'

He blinked. But Nephis ignored his confused stare, picked up her spoon elegantly, and turned her attention to the piece of cherry cake.

She ate it unhurriedly, maintaining a composed expression. He couldn't tell if she enjoyed the taste or was simply reluctant to waste food. A couple of minutes later, Nephis put her spoon down, wiped her lips with a napkin, and nodded courteously.

"Thank you. How much do I owe you?"

Sunny slowly shook his head.

"No, no. It's... on the house."

What was going on in that head of hers? They had been talking about killing gods, and then paused... for cake?

Not that Sunny was complaining.

In fact, he would have enjoyed watching her eat an entire cake instead of just a small piece, if she wanted to.

Ten cakes, even... although that would be a bit costly...

"Shall we go, then?"

He stood up and guided her to the basement of the Marvelous Mimic. Unlike the day he had led Telle of White Feather to retrieve the [Belated Apology], though, Sunny headed for the back of the boutique.

Nephis followed him, looking around with a hint of curiosity. He explained helpfully:

"This is the Memory Boutique part of the Brilliant Emporium. As you might know, I don't advertise my ability to craft Memories, so most of the customers think of me as a merchant with a wide network of connections. They peruse our inventory here or commission us to search for a Memory that fits a set of custom parameters."

Nephis nodded.

"The interior is very tasteful. It suits you well."

'Huh?'

Sunny was not sure what she meant, but smiled in appreciation.

"Thank you. Most customers only ever see the boutique, but it's actually just the front side of the business. My workshop is beyond that door over there. And beyond this door is where I keep valuable materials."

As Sunny was opening the door, Nephis asked in her usual even tone:

"Can I ask why you are so reluctant to reveal your talent, Master Sunless?"

He lingered for a moment.

"You certainly can. There are many reasons, but mainly... I just don't like the great clans. Please don't take offense, Lady Nephis.”

She smiled faintly.

"I won't."

Sunny led her into the material storage, which was a vast hall drowning in darkness, with only a few lanterns illuminating its expanse. The lanterns were there for Aiko, who sometimes assisted him in crafting.

Nephis paused at the entrance.

The material storage was very different from the refined shopfront. The atmosphere here was cold and ominous... sinister, even. That was because it was full of monstrous remains, most of them belonging to truly harrowing Nightmare Creatures.

There were grotesque bones, hollowed-out carapaces of vile abominations, and odd artifacts of all kinds. The remains of the Winter Beast were here. Shards of frozen shadows were here, too, among other trophies Sunny had collected in the past four years.

He walked to the middle of the vast underground storage and turned to Nephis, pointing around.

"A powerful Memory has to be crafted from potent materials - otherwise, it won't survive the burden of its own enchantments. The remains of Nightmare Creatures are the most easily accessible source of such materials, albeit not the only source,"

Nephis looked around with subdued interest.

"...Have you chanced upon the remains of an Unholy abomination, then? Is that what gives you the confidence to claim that you can forge a godslaying sword?"

Sunny smiled and shook his head.

"No. Actually, what I wanted to show you is not the materials, but rather the storage itself. Have you noticed how large it is?"

Nephis nodded slowly, prompting Sunny to smile.

"Saint Cassia must have informed you that my shop is actually an Ascended Devil. In fact, the volume of its interior... seems a bit too vast, doesn't it?"

She lingered for a bit, then shrugged.

"It is hard to say without knowing what creature you killed to receive this Echo. But yes, I would have expected it to be much smaller. Dimensional storage Memories of the Ascended Rank are usually much more modest."

Sunny pointed at himself.

"But, you see, this dimensional storage is a bit unique. Because its volume does not depend on the creature's Rank and Class, but rather on the potency of the creature's master's soul. Which, in this case, would be my soul."

Nephis remained silent for a moment.

"It seems that you have an unusually potent soul, then."

He chuckled, causing a small smile to appear on her lips.

"Thank you for the compliment. That is not the point, though."

She frowned, then suddenly pierced him with an

intense gaze.

"Do you mean to say..."

Sunny nodded.

"Indeed. It is not impossible for me to create a Memory that is bound to its wielder's soul, and is thus as powerful as the wielder is. You strike me as someone who will continue to grow stronger, Lady Nephis. So, it is not impossible for your sword to become sharp enough to slay a god, one day."

Sunny was being a little dishonest... but only a little.

In truth, his ambition was not to replicate the enchantments of the Covetous Coffer. What he was after, and had been trying to achieve for a while now, was to replicate the [Bound] trait of the Onyx Mantle, which was responsible for that Attribute of his being as potent as his soul was.

The reason for that was the shift in his perception of power, and his views of Memories, after becoming Transcendent. Sunny had long realized that truly powerful beings did not pursue greater power from the weapons they wielded and the tools they used - because they themselves were the power. The weapons and the tools were only meant to channel their own strength, not be a source of external might.

And yet, it had always been the opposite for Sunny. He had made himself into a lethal warrior, yes, but most of his victories came from cleverly using the enchantments of his powerful Memories, which he could utilize better than other Awakened due to his eyes having been altered by Blood Weave.

Being banished from the Spell, he had lost most of these Memories. That had shown him, in a rather cruel manner, the difference between internal and external power.

So, even though Sunny could craft himself a diverse arsenal of potent Memories, he had not done so. Because he was powerful enough to not need it, and did not wish to be led astray by excessive reliance on undeserved strength. He would rather achieve such strength himself.

That way, he would be following in the footsteps of those who were truly divine.

So, the only Memories Sunny wanted to craft for himself were those that would help him channel his own power better, or provide simple convenience. He also wanted these Memories to be able to keep up with his progress.

Therefore... he had to master the [Bound] enchantment.

The problem was that forging a Memory that possessed such a trait was not easy, since it had to be intricately tied to one's very soul.

...But it would be different if Nephis and her soul flame, as well as the Crown of Dawn, were there to help him.