1837 Part of Life

A few days later, Sunny dove into the cold waters of the Mirror Lake while the full moon slowly climbed the lightless sky. It was the last full moon before the great war between the two Domains set both worlds aflame, and therefore, the last chance he had to meet Cassie in the ruined stronghold of a dead daemon. Infiltrating the true Bastion unnoticed was still somewhat difficult...

However, Sunny was tense for an entirely different reason.

’Rain... ah. That girl is really committed to making my life overly exciting, isn't she?'

It was shortly before his sister expressed her determination to participate in the Domain War on the side of Queen Song.

Which wasn't really a big surprise to Sunny, who knew Rain well enough to guess that she would not stay idle. She was too compassionate and not nearlyjaded enough to let her neighbors be bullied without trying to do something about it — no matter how small her contribution would be, in the grand scheme of things. So, he wasn't that angry.

In fact, he was happy to see that she still retained this kind of innocence. He was also a little proud to know that she had this kind of integrity — something that he had always lacked, and only barely found in Antarctica before losing it all over again.

But still, what brother wanted to see his little sister put herself in danger? Honestly, Sunny wanted nothing more than to whisk her to the Nameless Temple and keep her under lock until everything was over. No... the Nameless Temple wasn‘t safe enough, considering what role it was supposed to play. Nowhere was really safe anymore, and nothing would be really over for a long while.

However, the main reason Sunny had not tried to dissuade Rain from joining the war was that she had to make her own choices, earn her own triumphs, and suffer from her own mistakes in order to learn and grow. No matter how much he worried about her safety, he would never want to become someone who stifled her growth with overbearing care instead of aiding it.

That would only be a disservice, especially for someone as bright and dauntless as Rain was.

Plus... so what if she was going to war? It would be a little tricky, without a doubt, but Sunny was quite confident in his ability to keep her alive even in the middle of a battlefield.

Who was there among the champions of Song and Valor whom he couldn’t handle?

Well, alright, there were the Sovereigns... but he could at least run away from them safely.

So, this war could very well become a harsh, but indispensable opportunity for her to mature and grow stronger — both in terms of ability and mentality.

It was the latter part that Sunny was worried about. Not because he thought that Rain couldn't handle it, but because he knew that she would be left with invisible scars even if she did... . Scars were a part of life as well, though. They were a part of growth.

’Ah, I don’t know.'

In any case, there was nothing he could do about it now. So, Sunny tried to forget his worries and concentrate on the task at hand.

Cassie was waiting for him near the collapsed tower, her beautiful hair glistening in moonlight like pale gold.

She was in one piece, and seemingly alive. There were no visible bruises anywhere, either. So, Sunny felt a little less guilty about exposing her to Neph's wrath.

’I'II make it up to her later, somehow... ’ Rising from the water, he climbed onto the remains of the fallen tower.

"Hey, Cassie."

Cassie smiled faintly.

"Hey, Sunny."

It was still strange — and heartwarming — to hear someone call him by his name. Sunny enjoyed the feeling and looked at the crumbling walls of the ruined fortress.

They seemed even more deserted than before.

He raised an eyebrow.

"I don't see any Knights on the walls."

She nodded.

"There was no call for the vassals to assemble their armies, yet, but the royal clan has already started to move its forces. Most of the Knights and Paladins are heading north. Awakened soldiers, too. It is hard to notice on the streets of the false Bastion, but here, their absence can be felt."

Cassie hesitated for a few moments.

"... The king is still here, though. So we need to be careful."

He offered her his hand without wasting any time, then pulled them both into the Mirror Maze.

Once they were in the familiar stone chamber, Sunny let go of Cassie's hand, summoned the Shadow Lantern, and said:

"I am glad that you are okay... and I’m sorry for putting you in a difficult situation. Well, I am sure that Nephis was her usual composed and restrained self. But still. The two of you must have had a heated conversation."

Cassie faced him, and for a moment, there was a strange expression on her face.

"Oh... yes. Indeed. She was her usual, composed self."

With that, she turned to the door and smiled.

"It's alright. I was actually glad to see her a little flustered. You did a finejob, by the way. Telling her. Now that this obstacle is behind the two of you, the future seems a little brighter."

Sunny sighed quietly.

"I hope so, too. But... to tell you the truth, I am as worried and apprehensive about it as I am relieved and elated. There are things I simply can't tell her, after all. Can we really be together when we can't even be honest with each other? I am worried."

Cassie smiled.

"Of course, you can. Honesty is important, but it is also overrated. If people were entirely honest with each other, there would have been no romance in the world. What do you think a relationship is? At the start, everyone hides their true selves and only shows the other person their best side. And by the time two people come together, even if some details remain hidden, the important truths shine through. I think you showed her the important truth splendidly."

Sunny stared at her silently for a while.

It was strange, but after hearing her words, he suddenly fe, a lot better. Sensing his reaction, Cassie raised an eyebrov.

"What?"

He shook his head.

"Nothing, really. It'sjust that... how are you so good at giving advice? You’ve never been in a relationship before, yourself. It’s weird! ”

Cassie seemed mortified.

"W—who said that I've never..."

Sunny gave her a dubious look.

"Please."

The young woman remained motionless for a few moments, then slowly turned her back to him.

Her voice sounded a little irked:

"Unbelievable... that’s two times in a week, now..."