1899 Mirrored Darkness

Sunny knew what was supposed to happen.

In fact, it was very simple — the answer was nothing.

Mordret's Reflections were strange creatures, after all. They were neither dead nor alive, neither divine nor profane. A long time ago, when he killed the Mirror Beast on Reckoning Island, the Spell had announced the kill, but did not whisper anything about his shadow growing stronger.

Sunny was banished from the Nightmare Spell now, but the result would be the same. Killing Reflections did not grant him fragments, and no shadow would appear in the silent stillness of his soul.

Therefore, Saint was unlikely to receive any reward for slaying the Supreme Reflection, either. Even its darkness was merely a reflection of Revel's own — now that the living mirror was gone and there was nothing left to reflect it, the false darkness would most likely disappear, as well.

...Which was a real shame. Sunny really felt that Saint deserved to receive a boon after fighting a battle as dreadful as this one had been — especially considering that she had forged her path to Transcendence by taking the essence of Nightmare Creatures wielding powers over true darkness.

Sunny had never been clear on how exactly Saint was able to increase her Class. He did not know how to help her reach a new Rank without the assistance of the Spell, either. So, he had hoped that defeating a being of true darkness, even if it was a Reflection, would grant her some kind of reward.

But it was not meant to be...

Or so he thought.

Even though Sunny could not see anything, he still felt a sudden shift in the atmosphere of the ancient castle.

If he could see, though, he would have witnessed the dark splendor of what was happening around him and Serpent.

Saint stood motionlessly, her unshaken hand still making a fist. Glass sand slowly poured from between her fingers, and at the same time, the fluid darkness around her stirred.

It flowed like a vast whirlpool around the graceful stone knight, whose ruby eyes continued to burn with cold crimson flames in the surging darkness. The ethereal vortex spun faster and faster, pulling more strands of darkness into its silent torrent.

Some distance away, Revel was rising to her feet. Sensing something, she threw a sharp gaze at Saint.

Saint met that gaze calmly, no emotion betraying itself on her inhumanly beautiful, flawless onyx face.

At that moment, the torrent of darkness came alive, and poured into her body. The darkness entered her chest like a raging flood and was absorbed into her fiery heart.

But that was not all.

Suddenly, Sunny felt a hint of a faintly familiar, terrifying chill.

If he could see, he would have seen the mirrored darkness start to change in the absence of the slain Reflection. Some of it dissolved into wisps of an eerie, chilling white mist...

He knew that mist all too well.

However, Saint was unmoved. Still staring at Revel silently, she remained motionless... and eagerly absorbed the wisps of the white mist, as well.

All of it happened in the span of several heartbeats, and by the end of it, the sphere of true darkness enveloping the hall of the ancient Citadel had shrunk a bit.

It still drowned their surroundings, though, trapping Sunny in its cold embrace. Revel smiled coldly.

"...So full of surprises."

As she rose to her feet and looked around in search of her sword, a cold voice suddenly responded from the darkness:

"Don‘t be shocked just yet."

The voice belonged to Sunny, who had separated himself from Serpent and manifested his avatar into a corporeal form once again.

Without the enhanced perception of Dire Fang's Aspect, he suddenly felt deaf and lost. The true darkness enveloped everything around him, making him blind. It was an uncomfortable position to be in.

But it had to be done.

Serpent was more fragile than Saint and Fiend — it had already received plenty of gruesome wounds, so Sunny silently dismissed the bleeding Shadow.

Saint, meanwhile, was mangled even more terribly. He would have recalled her into the nurturing haven of his lightless soul... however, it was not time yet. Instead, Sunny spent more of his essence to take control of another incarnation —- one of the three shadows that had remained fused with the graceful stone knight, augmenting her battered body.

Instantly, he had returned to the previous state of unity with his taciturn Shadow. He could see the ruined hall through her eyes... including his own back, which stood between her and Revel.

He could also feel how weak and broken her body was. The flowing darkness caressed it softly, helping the terrible wounds heal — but they weren't healing fast enough, and the damage was too dire.

Saint was in no condition to continue the fight.

There was something else, as well...

Something about her had changed, but he couldn't quite tell what it was.

It wasn't an evolution to a higher Rank, and it wasn‘t an evolution to a great Class, either.

However, there was definitely a deep, unfamiliar power taking root both in her body and in her soul — or rather, in the vast shadow that served as her soul. For now, it did not matter. Saint's inability to support him in the battle against Revel did not matter, either — now that the princess of Song was without support, Sunny was confident enough to face her alone.

Especially because he wasn't blind anymore.

Of course, seeing himself from Saint's perspective was a bit strange, as if he was observing himself in the third person. Being robbed of shadow sense left Sunny feeling dazed, too.

But he was nothing if not supremely adaptable. Even in this weird state, he could still fight... and win.

Defeat was not an option, and honestly enough, he had quite a burning desire to make Revel pay for hurting his Shadows.

Smiling viciously behind the mask, Sunny looked up at her.

'Now...‘

First of all, he had to prevent her from reaching her sword. Serpent was gone, after all, and there were no shadows around to manifest into a weapon — so, Sunny was unarmed.

If Revel did manage to pick up her sword, or lived long enough to dismiss it and summon it back, things could become... problematic.

Commanding Saint to retreat, Sunny clenched his fists and dashed forward.