1902 Gruesome Affair

Revel's darkness was chased away and diminished, but it still swirled around her like a cloud. Shrouded by it, she looked at Nephis.

Nephis was looking at her, as well.

Suddenly, a melodious voice resounded in the ruined hall, containing both the ferocity of the scorching surface of the sun and the tranquillity of sunshine reflecting from clear water:

"...You are the Lightslayer?"

Revel remained silent for a heartbeat.

Her battered, bleeding body looked like a dirty mess in front of the pristine, radiant spirit of light.

"That's what they call me, yes."

Nephis remained silent for a few moments, then spoke in her usual even tone: "I'm not impressed."

Her tone might have been emotionless, but that only made the remark sound more derisive.

It was as if she was saying... is that all? I am supposed to be slain by you? Hearing that, Revel smiled darkly.

"I‘m sorry for the disappointment, Lady Nephis."

With that, the ruined hall once again exploded with motion... the moment of peace was short—lived.

The scorching flames fell upon the princess of Song, as if possessing a life of their own. The radiance spirit seemed to turn into a streak of light, rushing at her with impossible speed.

Sunny was not far behind, either, knowing that this was their best chance to kill Revel.

Revel herself, meanwhile...

Took a step back and turned into a torrent of darkness.

The darkness did not attack, however. It did not try to defend itself, either — 7 instead, it flowed down and seeped into the cracked floorboards, disappearing from view.

The flames only licked the ancient wood, scorching it. Neph's strike missed. Sunny emerged from the shadows a split second too late.

Revel had fled.

For a moment, he was face to face with Nephis, feeling her heat despite the incredible level of elemental resistance granted to him by the Onyx Mantle.

He was silent for a moment.

"...Are you okay?"

The spirit of light nodded, her graceful figure drowning in the blinding radiance.

"What about you?"

Sunny grinned behind the mask

"I am alive, if that is what you mean."

With that, there was no time for conversations anymore. Because they both knew what Revel's retreat meant — she had fled downward, in the direction where the rest of their comrades were most likely fighting for their lives.

"Go! Destroy the corpse of the 'l‘error at all costs!"

Sunny threw a brief glance at Saint, commanding her to stay safe, and stepped through the shadows once more.

A moment later, he emerged in the chaos of the vast hall where the Saints of the Sword Army had been ambushed by the daughters of Ki Song.

Just one look was enough to erase the smile from his face, replacing it with a somber expression.

'So many have died...‘

The casualties suffered by the Sword Domain were appalling. He could only see four members of the conquest team still drawing breath — Roan, l-lelie, Jest, and the unfortunate Saint who had been wounded by Silent Stalker at the start of the sight.

Rivalen was nowhere to be seen, and the rest of the Saints were now corpses — some of them damaged too terribly to be of use for the Raven Queen, some still moving.

Silent Stalker was a bloody mess, barely clinging to life. Lonesome Howl and her one remaining Reflection were engaged in a fierce brawl with Fiend, protecting her fragile human body from him.

The corpse of the Great Terror, at least, seemed to have already been destroyed. Sunny did not know why Nephis had asked him to make getting rid of it a priority, but he was glad to know that the abominable creature did not pose any threat anymore.

Revel had just coalesced from the flowing darkness, standing at the opposite end of the hall from him. She had dismissed her Transcendent Form and looked like a human once again, her pale face smeared with blood.

Just as he caught sight of her, she shouted:

"Back!"

Immediately, the two great wolves leaped away. The Reflection lingered for a moment before retreating to stall Fiend, while Lonesome Howl herself gently grabbed Silent Stalker in her teeth and dragged her toward Revel like a kitten. Sunny shaped a mass of wild shadows into an odachi and prepared to defend the wounded Saints from the champions of Song.

"Fiend! Come here!"

The infernal troll looked at the retreating wolves with regret, and then stepped through the shadows to stand by Sunny's side.

The four surviving Saints were now behind them, looking relieved at the sight of the Lord of Shadows.

They were in a sorry state — even Sir Jest, who had escaped with relatively fewer wounds, was covered in blood.

In fact, the only person in the vast hall whose armor wasn't covered in blood was Sunny himself. That was because it was rather hard to make him bleed — however, to those who did not know about that peculiar trait of his, it looked as if he had escaped the dreadful battle against Dark Dancer Revel entirely unscathed.

His armor was breached and broken, though, making some of them question if there really was a human body underneath it.

Sunny, meanwhile, was given pause by Sir Jest's Transcendent form. Where had the amicable old man gone? Instead, a sinister abomination had taken his place, pure malice burning in its inhuman eyes. It had the body of a man and the legs of a goat, with two frightening horns growing from its disturbing, bestial head. The only word that could be used to describe it was... demonic.

Was he a satyr, or a literal friend from the depths of hell?

Sunny suddenly felt a chill run down his spine.

...Across from them were Revel, Lonesome Howl, Silent Stalker, the Reflection, and the remaining undead Saints. The air seemed to crackle with tension, and none of the sides was in a hurry to make a move.

It was then that a violent explosion shook the hall, and Nephis arrived from above in a rain of burning debris.

At the same time... it felt as if Sunny's vision was blurred for a moment. Suddenly, a delicate beauty with white hair and shimmering eyes — Moonveil — appeared near Revel, her face pale and smeared in blood. Accompanying her... He blinked.

Accompanying the beautiful princess was a Reflection of Nephis. The creature looked like her, and had the same presence as her... and yet, Sunny found the copy lacking.

There was simply no way to mistake it for the real Changing Star, even if one was blind.

The appearance of: the Reflection answered Sunny's recent question, though, making him scowl behind the mask.

'No wonder.‘

Now that he saw the copy of Nephis, he knew why she had told him to destroy the corpse of the Great Terror as fast as possible. Considering that the Reflection was able to mirror her, it could not be a mere Beast.

Nephis had already reformed the soul core she had detonated to escape from the Cursed Terror, Condemnation, and was a Transcendent Titan once again — therefore, the Reflection had to be a Titan, as well. Either a Transcendent one... or even Supreme.

Sunny's eyes widened a little.

'That bastard…’

If the Great Terror remained whole, the damn creature might have been able to mirror it, instead. Then, they would have had to contend against that abomination in addition to the daughters of Ki Song.

Sadly, Sunny could only see the reflection of Neph's mirrored soul cores, and with the mess of various potent auras clashing in the dark hall, he could not measure the power of the Reflection accurately... it might have been hiding its power, as well.

'Can it really be Supreme?‘

What the hell could Mordret have done to nurture a Supreme Titan? How would he have even created one, considering that each Reflection demanded a sacrifice of as many soul cores as a creature of its Class was meant to possess?

He had so many questions, and none of the possible answers promised anything good for the future.

As Nephis softly landed on the ground, an eerie silence settled in the darkness of the devastated hall.

A moment later, however, the darkness was chased away by soft light.

The wounds on the bodies of Roan, Helie, and the Saint slumped on Helie's back shone with white radiance and began to heal with startling speed.

Almost at the same time, the Reflection of Nephis laid its hands on Revel and Silent Stalker, healing them in turn.

'Great.‘

Sunny sighed.

It was an incredible boon, to have a healer on one's side.

However, if the enemy had access to a healer as well, an already terrible battle could become a truly gruesome affair.

That was precisely what seemed to be happening right now.