1952 Choice Paralysis

'It just doesn't end today!'

Sunny stared at the Shadow Lantern with a very strange expression.

Today, he had discovered the key to mastering the next step of Shadow Dance. Later, he had found a way to elevate his sorcery to new heights.

And now, he had discovered that the door to Shadow Realm had been in his pocket the entire time!

Well, alright... technically, these events had happened in the span of several days, as Aiko so politely reminded him. But still.

How was his poor heart supposed to handle this barrage of stunning revelations?

'Who cares about my heart? I have six spare ones anyway...'

Standing up, Sunny approached the Shadow Lantern and carefully picked it up. He studied it silently, a deep frown slowly appearing on his face.

He was pretty sure that his conjecture was correct. In that short moment when Sunny fused with the Divine Memory, the two of them had been one and the same. As a result, he had caught a brief glimpse of what the Shadow Lantern truly was, and what was hidden beneath its surface.

He had not fathomed it entirely, of course, but he had learned enough to understand the nature of the [Gates of Shadow] enchantment.

Sunny was pretty sure that the gate of the Shadow Lantern led directly to the Shadow Realm.

Which would explain a few things.

For example, why an infinite amount of shadows could enter the Shadow Lantern and then return. Or why the Fragment of the Shadow Realm could be stored inside, but not retrieved.

That Fragment had been torn from the Shadow Realm when some dreadful being escaped it, after all. So, by returning the Fragment to where it belonged, Sunny was mending a rift in the Shadow Realm.

And he wouldn't very well be able to pull the entire Divine Domain out of the Lantern, would he?

Just thinking about these things made Sunny feel incredulous.

'Shadow Realm...'

There had been six Divine Realms in existence. After the seventh Divine Realm — the Dream Realm — was born, it slowly consumed the mortal realms, assimilating them into itself. The same fate befell five of the six Divine Realms, as well... at least according to Wind Flower.

Sunny strongly suspected that the Stormsea was what remained of the Divine Realm of Storm God. Godgrave had most likely been the Divine Realm of Sun God once. Although he had no proof, he believed that the Burned Forest had been the Divine Realm of Heart God. The Divine Realm of Beast God was somewhere in the Song Domain... the Moonriver Plain might have been one of its parts in the past.

And then there was his own world, Earth, which seemed to be the former Divine Realm of War God, the patron deity of humanity.

Five of the Divine Realms were accounted for, but Shadow Realm had always remained a mystery. Where was it? Had it also been devoured by the Dream Realm? If so, in what region of this nightmarish world were the remains of the Shadow God's Realm located?

Sunny had never seen or heard about any place that resembled the Realm of Shadow. So, he had always been curious where it went.

And now... he could go and find out.

Thinking about it, Sunny shuddered, suddenly overwhelmed by an inexplicable sense of terror.

'Can I? Should I?'

It was easy to answer the first question — yes, he most definitely could.

His shadow had been able to enter the Shadow Lantern all the way back when he first received it. Now that Sunny had Shadow Incarnation and could take direct control of his shadows, he could do it himself.

In fact, he probably could have done it even before Transcending, by using Shadow Step to assume the form of an incorporeal shadow. It was just that Sunny had not been keen on trying, considering that he had known nothing about what was inside the Shadow Lantern, and that there would be no one left behind to summon him back if he did enter it.

Now, however...

One of his avatars could hold the Lantern while another ventured inside. He could maintain at least two avatars indefinitely, as well. And on top of that, the passive use of Shadow Step did not consume his essence anymore, either.

So, the possibility was there.

But Sunny was not sure that he should make use of it.

There was one big reason why he wanted to go to Shadow Realm, and one enormous reason why he was wary of it.

The latter did not really need to be explained. He just needed to look around to know why blindly venturing into a fallen Divine Realm was a bad idea. Godgrave, Stormsea, and Burned Forest — all three places were the definition of being deadly, representing some of the most nightmarish corners of this already harrowing world.

And although Sunny had no reason to believe so, he felt that the Shadow Realm might just turn out to be the most dreadful of the five fallen Divine Realms, by far.

That said, there was also a very important reason why he felt compelled to explore it, at least a little. It was similarly simple.

It was his absent Titan Core.

Sunny's Aspect was especially cruel as far as saturating one's soul went... which was, perhaps, quite fitting for an Aspect originating from the God of Death. It had always been harder for him to collect fragments than it was for most Awakened, and that difficulty seemed even more dire now that he was a Saint.

Especially because there were no Shadow Creatures around for him to slay — corrupted or not.

But wouldn't it be reasonable to assume that there would be plenty of them inside the ruins of Shadow Realm?

Sunny thought that it would be very reasonable to assume that.

So, entering the Shadow Realm was the most certain way to become a titan he could think of.

If Sunny did become a Transcendent Titan...

Not only would he receive another core, another shadow, and another avatar...

But Serpent would also become one. Which would allow it to assume the shape of the titans Sunny had slain.

The Fallen Titan Goliath, the Winter Beast... having the ability to summon either one would add another trump card to Sunny's arsenal. And he was in desperate need of those, considering that the chance of defeating the Sovereigns in battle still seemed very slim.

A long sigh escaped from Sunny's lips.

"Damnation..."

He had so much to do, already!

He had been planning to start crafting Memories just now. There was also the whole damn war, the necessity to learn more about the Sovereigns between facing them in battle... and Nephis was finally coming back to camp, as well, which meant that he could finally see her again.

Now, the task of exploring a dead god's lightless realm has been added to the pile of things he had to accomplish.

Sunny covered his face with a palm and groaned.

'What the hell?'

He had seven bodies now, so how come he was busier than ever before?!

Shaking his head, he took a deep breath and stared at the ceiling.

For now, the only question was... what was he going to do first?

Sneak into the Shadow Realm or make a breakthrough in weaving?