1961 Soul of a Poet

Several more days passed... Sunny would have lost count how many, honestly, if not for the fact that two of his incarnations were out there in the world — one marching with the Song Army, the other preparing to raid and destroy its supply lines.

He had spent these days immersed in weaving.

At some point, Aiko delivered a collection of Memories to the basement of the Brilliant Emporium. Some of them she had purchased and was about to resell, some had come from the Fire Keepers. Sunny had to take breaks from time to time to rest his boiling mind, replenish essence, and weave more shadow threads, so he spent his breaks studying these Memories.

With each Memory he fused with, his insights grew.

Almost two weeks had already passed since his battle with Revel. The Marvelous Mimic had long healed the hole made in the floor of the dining hall by the black arrow, and Nephis was set to arrive any moment now.

Letting out a tired sigh, Sunny took a step back and looked at the Memories resting on the workbench in front of him.

The first of them was the [Bag of Withholding], the spatial storage Memory that had helped him advance his sorcery to a new level.

Next to it was a canteen which looked like it was made from green copper, housed in a black leather sleeve with an intricate image of a coiling serpent etched into it. There were some decorative patterns on the canteen itself, as well, all following the same theme.

In truth, Sunny had crafted it from the leftovers scraps of the Huntsman's axe. The canteen was a kind of storage Memory, as well, albeit quite different from the Bag of Withholding — it could store a great volume of water, as well as purify it. Needless to say, it was his crude attempt at replicating the Endless Spring.

He had called it the [Green Canteen].

...The [Knockoff Endless Spring] had been considered, but eventually dismissed.

Crafting the [Green Canteen] had not taken him a lot of time, actually. However, unlike the original, it had to be filled by hand — so, Sunny sent Aiko to do just that. The canteen could really contain a lot of water, so his poor assistant had to spend an entire day filling it under the confused gazes of the Fire Keepers. They even chased her off the Ivory Island when the water level of the lake started to drop...

The third Memory Sunny had crafted for Rain had a very simple enchantment, but was exceedingly difficult to devise. In fact, in terms of complexity, it might have been the most troublesome of them all, forcing Sunny to really strain himself mentally.

It was a long strip of black silk that could be used as a sash or as a scarf, decorated with subtle embroidery. After thinking for a while, Sunny had named it [In Case of Emergency].

The [In Case of Emergency] was meant to serve as a safeguard against a very particular peril — the incinerating radiance of the white abyss that hung above Godgrave. Its function was indeed simple —if given a mental command, it would instantly turn the person wearing it completely still.

It didn't matter if the person was standing stably on the ground, in the middle of falling over, or even leaping through the air. As soon as the enchantment of the [In Case of Emergency] was activated, they would become frozen in place.

It had taken Sunny a lot of time to construct the weave of this Memory — not only because it demanded much more complexity than one would have anticipated, but also because he had to make it as efficient as possible so that it did not consume a lot of essence.

After all, Rain could potentially topple after a few hours of immobility due to running out of essence, which would render the entire Memory useless. So, Sunny had tried hard, and eventually managed to make the [In Case of Emergency] consume less essence than any Awakened could replenish naturally, thus making its enchantment somewhat passive — as long as it was used by a person of Rain's weight.

That was it for the utility Memories Sunny had prepared. Pressed for time, he had no choice but to eventually turn his attention to other areas.

Next to the neatly rolled sash were three arrows, each possessing a unique enchantment.

They were [Heavy Blow], [Outskirts at Noon], and [Don't Cut Yourself].

All three had black shafts, crafted from the charred wood of the Burned Forest. The fletching and arrowheads, however, were different.

The [Heavy Blow] had grey fletching an arrowhead forged from dull metal. Its enchantment was a vastly improved version of the [Burden of Peace] — one of the enchantments of the sorely missed [Morgan's Warbow]. Once the arrow pierced the flesh of the enemy, its master could pour out their essence to make it immensely heavy. The more essence was spent, the heavier the arrow would become.

[Heavy Blow] was meant to slow powerful enemies down.

The [Outskirts at Noon] was also meant to debilitate a strong enemy, but in a much more insidious way. Its fletching was white, and its arrowhead was carved out of bone — a shard of bone Sunny had picked up here in Godgrave. Although its enchantment was his original creation, it had been inspired by the [Blessing of Dusk] from the Shroud of Graceless Dusk.

What Sunny had done was store a mental image inside the arrow — a mental copy of the overwhelming disorientation he had experienced after enveloping the outskirts of NQSC with his shadow sense for the first time. Once the arrow struck true, this terrible cacophony of sensations was projected into the victim's mind, hopefully causing complete sensory overload.

[Outskirts at Noon] was meant to daze the enemy. The master of the arrow could continue to expend essence to sustain the disorienting effect.

Finally, there was the [Don't Cut Yourself]. Its arrow and arrowhead were green, the latter forged from the same metal as the [Beast of Prey] and the [Green Canteen].

Unlike the other two arrows, which were meant to debilitate enemies, this one was meant to kill. It carried a deadly toxin, infecting the blood of those pierced by its sharp arrowhead. The longer the master of the arrow fed the enchantment with essence, the more poisoned the enemy would become.

The harm dealt by the toxin was cumulative, so it was a perfect weapon for Rain, who mostly faced enemies far above her in terms of power. Even though she was much weaker, with enough determination and tenacity, she would be able to slowly kill even the most terrifying of the jungle beasts.

In fact, Sunny had created all three arrows while thinking about how to help his sister deal with Nightmare Creatures that she had no business fighting, and yet had no choice but to fight.

Sadly, the arrows had active enchantments, so she was going to be tactical about when and how to use them. Nevertheless, he would give her effective tools to choose from, at least.

Lastly, there were the defensive Memories he had crafted.

One of them looked quite unassuming — it was a polished piece of volcanic glass hanging on a leather cord. It was a powerful charm that could passively bestow a moderate degree of resistance to elemental attacks upon its wielder, or a high degree of protection if used actively.

Better yet, the master of the charm could limit the scope of what resistances were active, thus augmenting them even further. As a bonus, it could either cool the wielder down in case of heat or warm them up in case of severe cold.

Sunny had called the charm the [Piece de Resistance].

...He had no idea what these words meant, exactly, but it sounded fancy and vaguely fitting.

Apart from the charm, Sunny had also crafted a Memory inspired by the chainmail shirt Nephis used to wear — which was a unique piece of enchanted armor that could be worn atop or below other Memories of that type.

The Memory he had devised was designed to augment the defensive properties of the Puppeteer's Shroud, and was made from black, lusterless leather. There was also a lining of light, dark-grey chainmail to make the entire ensemble more durable, effectively adding a second, hidden layer of physical protection to the Puppeteer's Shroud.

He had called it the [Safety First].

These were all the Memories Sunny had crafted for Rain.

His gaze shifted to one more item laying on the workbench.

It was a bracelet much similar to his own.

However... Sunny had not been able to finish it, yet. He needed Cassie's help to complete the weave of this unassuming, but deeply complicated Memory.

'Still... I have outdone myself this time, if I do say so myself.'

A faint smile appeared on Sunny's face.

He couldn't wait to present these Memories to Rain!

There was just one thing that bothered him, though...

Sunny frowned, then summoned the runes and glanced at the list of his own Memories.

[Shadow Chair], [Overpriced Saddle], [Weaver's Needle], [Handy Bracelet], [Quintessence Pearl], [Definitely Not Me]...

His gaze shifted to the Memories he had crafted in the last few days.

[Bag of Withholding], [Green Canteen], [In Case of Emergency], [Don't Cut Yourself], [Outskirts at Noon], [Safety First]...

He closed his eyes, and let out a quiet sigh.

There was no denying it.

'I guess... I have a poetic soul, too...'

Sunny was starting to understand how he and Rain had ended up with their weird names.