2040 Lack of Symmetry

Sunny felt a surge of emotion all of a sudden.

Not because it was a secret… he had told Rain to keep her True Name to herself, indeed, but that did not include Nephis. Being the one who had helped him and Cassie interpret the meaning, she already knew it, after all.

No, it was simply because she asked.

Recently, Sunny had noticed that Nephis almost never asked him anything. He knew it was partially because she was vaguely aware that he simply could not answer some questions, and respected his request to keep some of his secrets.

But he could not help but feel that it was also because she… simply did not care enough to ask.

Their current relationship was full of sparks… gods knew they weren't shy with sharing affection. In fact, with both of them being Saints, the last few days had been quite intense for the Ivory Tower.

They also enjoyed each other's company in the more peaceful moments. There was mutual trust and respect, and quite a bit of tenderness between them.

It was like a dream come true. It felt much more wonderful than he had ever dreamed of, even.

But, at the same time, Sunny was aware… sometimes painfully aware… that their relationship was not symmetrical.

How could it be, when he was someone Nephis thought she had only met a few months ago?

Sure, she liked him… she was perhaps even infatuated with him. It wasn't like he was a random stranger to Nephis — not at all. He was her first and only lover, and the mere fact that she had discarded her solitude and chosen him above all the people in the world said a lot about how special he was in her eyes.

She did not have memories of him — but her heart seemed to remember.

That said, the harsh truth remained. Compared to the dire depths of what Sunny felt for Nephis, her own feelings… were relatively shallow.

So, she could have very well been comfortable with the current state of their relationship.

But he was not.

Even while drowning in bliss,even while having his most ardent desires fulfilled and his most daring expectations surpassed tenfold…

He still wanted more.

He wanted so much more.

Sunny was a greedy person, after all.

He wanted her to remember… but that was impossible.

So, he wanted her to at least want to know about him — everything there was to know, and more. He wanted her to ask questions, even if he could not answer.

That was why Sunny was pleasantly surprised to hear Nephis take the initiative to ask him about something meaningful.

Perhaps he was slowly growing on her… slowly, but surely.

He smiled.

"Well… sure, I'll tell you. If you must know, it was a True Name."

Nephis chuckled.

"Yeah, I figured. It was pretty obvious. But whose True Name is it?"

Sunny hesitated for a few moments, then leaned back.

"I think I haven't told you this before, but I have a… a disciple."

He had to be careful about how he chose his words. Nephis had been aware of the connection between him and Rain in the past — so, if he wanted her to remember, he had to make sure to present it as a new relationship, one that was not connected to a person named Lost from Light.

That way, she would not forget.

Nephis seemed surprised.

"The Lord of Shadows has a disciple?"

Sunny shook his head.

"That guy? No… he's a bit of a loner. I mentioned before that one of my incarnations was in the Song Domain, right? He's the one doing the teaching."

Nephis seemed amused.

"I can never grow used to that Ability of yours. It is quite, quite something, you know?"

He laughed.

"Oh, don't I know it… in any case, that incarnation of mine has been with her for four years. My troublesome disciple finally Awakened right before the war — and, to my shock and disbelief, decided to join the Song Army. So, that is where she is right now. And therefore, my last incarnation as well."

Nephis tilted her head a little.

There was a lot to digest from his final statement, but she instantly discerned the most important piece of information.

"If your disciple just Awakened before the war and already has a True Name, then she must have received it in the First Nightmare. She must be… quite a special young woman, then. I received my True Name as a Sleeper, too. Like my mother before me."

There was a spark of interest in her eyes… actually, it had been there from the moment Sunny mentioned that he had a disciple. But after making the mistaken conclusion that Rain had received her True Name in the First Nightmare, Neph's interest grew.

Sunny lingered for a moment, then slowly shook his head.

"My disciple is indeed quite special. However, she did not receive her True Name in the First Nightmare… in fact, she never experienced a Nightmare. She is not a carrier of the Nightmare Spell."

Nephis froze.

She remained motionless for a few heartbeats, then slowly took a sip of her wine and carefully placed the glass on the table.

"She is not infected by the Spell? You… you taught her how to Awaken naturally?"

Sunny nodded.

"It took four years, an endless amount of research, and some special circumstances, but yes. That is what my incarnation in the Song Domain has done."

Nephis suddenly leaned forward, white sparks ignited in her eyes.

"Do you understand what that means?"

He sighed.

"To me… it means that she did not have to gamble her life in the Nightmare. But yes, I understand. Her achievement might shake the very foundation of our world, one day in the future."

Because it was a path to power for humanity to take that had nothing to do with the Nightmare Spell.

Because it offered choice, and maybe even freedom.

Nephis stared at him silently for a while, then leaned back with a stunned expression.

A few moments later, she smiled brightly and said in a playful tone:

"I could kiss you right now."

Sunny answered with a polite smile of his own.

"...Please do."

In the end, the important matters they had to get to ended up being postponed quite a bit, after all.