2049: Things to Do in the Apocalypse

Master Alice concentrated on creating more enchanted arrowheads. As she explained, they would be attached to shafts and fitted with fletching later — and most likely by a different forgemaster.

After the second one, the petite woman dove into a lockbox containing the crafting hall's daily allocation of soul shards and used them to bolster her Aspect. Every once in a while, the shimmering crystal she was holding in her hand would crack and crumble into dust.

Sunny studied the process with a thoughtful expression.

No wonder custom Memories were a luxury reserved for the private troops of the royal clan. The work of the enchanters was chillingly expensive — especially considering that each of the spent soul shards could have been used to strengthen the core of an Awakened soldier.

In Antarctica, the continent had been flooded with great hordes of relatively weak abominations. That was why soldiers of the Evacuation had many opportunities to saturate their cores — but here in Godgrave, all Nightmare Creatures were stronger and more ferocious than the warriors of the two human armies.

Killing them was a tough task, and therefore, the soul shards were scarce. There were also many more Awakened here than there had been in Antarctica, so most soldiers still had plenty of room to grow.

That just went to show how exclusive the services of someone like Sunny were. Aiko was right… the Brilliant Emporium had to be presented as a luxury service. Very few people could afford bespoke Memories, especially considering that the royal clan was the main source of them by far.

Usually, Sunny would have felt bliss at the confirmation of his bright financial future, but today, his thoughts wandered in a different direction.

The situation in Godgrave — overwhelming enemies that were dreadfully difficult to defeat even for powerful Awakened, scarcity of resources, and a constant attrition of human lives — seemed to resemble what awaited humanity in the future very much.

Once more pieces of the waking world were swallowed by the Dream Realm, the civilization as he knew it would slowly start to collapse… transform, at best. The Dream Gate exodus would accelerate, with most of the population slowly migrating to the other side — at least if Nephis had anything to say about it.

If it was left to the Sovereigns to decide… who knew. Sunny could easily see a situation where the ruthlessly pragmatic Supremes simply shut the Dream Gates, leaving billions of people to die. Because the human enclaves they had been preparing in the Dream Realm for decades could only sustain hundreds of millions of inhabitants, not billions.

But even if the Sovereigns were defeated and Nephis usurped the throne of war, the future still looked dire.

There were more Death Zones in the Dream Realm, after all… and nothing really held the dreadful creatures populating them from migrating to greener pastures. Especially once those pastures were populated by countless humans, and started to emanate the alluring scent of myriads of human souls.

In fact, Sunny expected that to happen. A slow, inevitable, and terrifying escalation that would bring humanity to the brink of destruction. Not only because he had a habit of expecting the worst from the world, but also because there were relevant examples.

There had been five other Divine Realms swallowed by the Dream Realm before his world, after all. There were Supremes among the inhabitants of those worlds, too. And yet…

If it was so easy to survive in the Dream Realm, those civilizations would have still been around. But something had wiped them out, leaving no survivors… in fact, Godgrave itself seemed to be the place where one of these civilizations had been destroyed.

What was a Cursed Tyrant doing in the ruins of a human city?

A chilling thought suddenly entered Sunny's mind.

There were no Cursed Ones in Bastion.

But there was at least one in North America…

So what was going to happen when America was consumed by the Dream Realm?

Would it appear north of the Forgotten Shore and the Burned Forest, like the fragment of Antarctica he had stumbled on?

Or would it appear somewhere else?

In the middle of the Stormsea, perhaps, or in the wilderness east of Bastion? Maybe even next to Bastion, moving other lands away?

Once it did, where would the Nightmare Creatures populating it go? Would they stay in place or disperse?

'Damn it…'

Before, Sunny had only been thinking about the approaching collapse of the waking world in terms of a human mass migration...

But there would probably be a mass migration of abominations, too.

After all, by the end of it all, there would be more Nightmare Creatures left in the waking world than humans. And they would be much more dreadful than they were now.

He sighed and briefly glanced at Nephis.

'We do indeed have to become Supreme…'

For now. But even that was most likely not enough to face the future.

Sunny would probably be able to slay a Cursed Tyrant like Condemnation after attaining Supremacy and establishing a vast Domain… somehow. But an Unholy Tyrant? An Unholy Titan?

Those were gods. Vile and corrupted, but still gods. And not only that, but gods of the highest caliber.

A mortal, no matter how powerful, could not defeat a god.

Sunny sighed again.

'Great.'

So, if he described it briefly…

These things were on his to-do list: forge a soulbound sword for Nephis, rebel against two Supremes and kill them, conquer the world, find and deal with the third Supreme, oversee the resettlement of the human race to the Dream Realm, become a god, and kill every god of the less handsome variety aiming to swallow humanity.

Oh, and also keep the flames of romance and passion alive in the process… with a workaholic girl who could not really remember him.

And keep his sister alive.

Preferably, make comically large sums of money while he was at it.

Sunny lingered for a moment, then lowered his head and rubbed his face.

'Ah…'

How come life had been so much simpler before?

He felt almost nostalgic about trying to survive in the outskirts.

Almost.

But not quite…

Nightmares, however, did feel strangely cozy and inviting at the moment.