2054 : Dreams of Fire

Some time later, Sunny descended the steps to the basement of the Marvelous Mimic alone. His expression was distant, and he was carrying a beautiful silver longsword in his hands.

Entering the workshop, he looked around its dark expanse. Shadows had reigned in this place unopposed before, but now, there were pure white flames burning in the tall furnace. Their radiant light pushed the darkness back, making them shrink while growing darker.

Sunny glanced at the furnace and sighed.

It was already showing signs of irreparable damage. Changing Star's flames were simply too ferocious — they destroyed everything they touched, and neither furnaces nor crucibles, even those made from mystical materials, could contain them for long.

So, most of his forge would have to be replaced after today.

It was a pity, since procuring this equipment had been both difficult and costly for him. However, it was also unavoidable… as Sunny's power grew, so did the potency of the sorcerous components he had to use. If not today, he would have had to renovate his forge sooner or later.

Adding more fuel to the furnace, Sunny walked over to the anvil — a new one, crafted roughly from a splinter of the dead god's bone — placed the Dream Blade on its surface, and peered at it.

The spellweave of the silver longsword was relatively simple, but beautiful. It was an exceptional Memory, by all accounts… otherwise, it would not have been able to serve Nephis for so long despite its modest Rank and Tier.

Of course, Sunny could not summon the runes and learn about it from the Spell. In fact, he could not even receive the Memory from Nephis without altering its spellweave first — which he had not done, since that would have defeated the purpose of what he was intending to do.

Still, Sunny could easily learn what was written in the silver blade's runes. After all, he had woven many names and descriptions into the weaves of various Memories — finding the strings expressing them and translating the ethereal patterns into familiar runes was not at all difficult for him.

Sunny studied the weave.

Memory: Dream Blade.

Memory Rank: Dormant.

Memory Type: Weapon.

Memory Description: [...Lost in the darkness, a lonely soul once dreamt of fire.]

He smiled faintly. That was all. There was no mention of the Tier, no list of its enchantments, and no description of what those enchantments could do. That was how most Awakened perceived their Memories.

It was only because of attaining Blood Weave that the Spell added more runes to what Sunny saw. Of course, it was merely translating what he could find out himself by examining the weave — the rest of the Awakened either had to find out the true potential of their Memories by trial and error or hire professional appraisers.

'It saved me so much money…'

He glanced at the description of the Dream Blade one more time. The runes expressed by the pattern of ethereal strings were, as always, a little ambiguous. They could mean that a lonely soul once dreamt of fire while lost in darkness… or maybe longed for warmth.

In fact, the description could have also meant:

[Sealed in the void, a forsaken soul desired warmth.]

Darkness, void. Dreaming, longing. Fire, warmth. And desire.

…It was a little ominous, knowing what he knew now.

Shaking his head, Sunny turned away from the pattern of ethereal strings expressing runes. Instead, he studied the weave of the Dream Blade itself.

Its single enchantment was quite intricate, but simple in function. It was meant to grant the wielder of the silver longsword resistance against soul attacks — a moderate amount of it, which was an incredible feat for a Memory of such a low Rank.

Sunny appreciated the beauty of the intricate design of the radiant spellweave, then sighed and raised his fist.

Bringing it down on the silver blade, he easily shattered it into countless pieces.

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The Ivory Island was bathed in sunlight. A warm breeze caressed the pristine white walls of the Tower of Hope, sent ripples across the surface of the lake, and made the leaves of the ancient grove rustle peacefully.

Nephis was standing on the edge of the island, looking into the distance with a somber expression. After a while, she heard soft footsteps approaching her from behind, and heard a familiar voice.

"What are you thinking about?"

She turned and looked at the beautiful young man with pale skin and raven-black hair who was standing a few steps away, dressed in garments made of shadow.

"...Godgrave."

The young man raised an eyebrow, and his onyx eyes glistened with a hint of curiosity.

"What about it?"

Nephis looked away and continued to study the horizon.

After a while, she said evenly:

"Some people believe that Godgrave is what remains of a god. But I think that they are wrong… or rather, that they are right for the wrong reason."

He smiled.

"How so?"

Nephis looked up.

"...The sky above is what remains of a god. The ground below is, too. But that giant skeleton has nothing to do with one of the gods… it is far too small, insignificant, and paltry."

The young man considered her words for a few moments.

"So, what you are saying is that no one has been able to find the corpses of the gods… because the ground we walk on and the skies we live under themselves are their remains? That our world is not simply the Realm of the War God, but also her corpse?"

She nodded and looked at him with a wistful expression.

"Gods... are vast, Sunny."

He chuckled.

"Well, that makes it sound as if we humans are no different from maggots that were born to feast on the flesh of a dead god. Of course, one can also be more generous and interpret it as us being War God's children. Children of War… sounds quite fitting, considering our track record."

Nephis looked away once more, this time a hint of a sad smile on her lips.

After a while, she said:

"That would mean that all of us were born from a dead mother. That all of us are orphans."

Just like she had been, and was.

She lingered for a few moments, and then spoke in an even tone:

"You have three shadows today."

The young man smiled.

"That I do."

She frowned slightly, as if remembering that she had forgotten something, and asked after a short pause:

"When will we start forging the sword?"

He walked over to the edge of the island to stand side by side with her and looked at the horizon, as well.

"We have already started."

Finally, Nephis seemed to understand something. She looked at him with curiosity, hesitated for a few moments, and asked:

"This is a dream, isn't it?"

He laughed quietly.

"Yes, it is."

There was no warcamp around them. No titanic skeleton below the Ivory Island, no overcast sky above it.

Instead, the Ivory Island was drifting in the air above a calm ocean. The world was suffused with sunlight, and the perfectly still water below glowed beautifully, reflecting the brilliance of heaven. It was as if they were flying above a radiant sea of liquid gold, awash in breathtaking radiance.

Above them, seven pure suns burned brightly in the vast expanse of a brilliant sky.

It was a dream of her Soul Sea.