2062 : Sacrificial Blade

[Flame Conduit] was perhaps one of the most straightforward enchantments of the Blessing, as well as one of the most consistently impactful. Although other traits of the soul sword were more astounding, Sunny was secretly proud of this one the most.

It had two functions. One allowed the Blessing to serve as a fulcrum for Neph's flames, channeling them in a more compressed and focused manner. In other words, she could use the Blessing to control fire more easily or produce jets of flame — rays of light, maybe — that were narrow and sharp enough to slice apart the most durable of tangible objects.

This was especially useful because these rays had much greater length and reach than the blade of the sword itself. Since Sunny and Nephis often faced enemies of a much greater size than their own, such an ability was exceedingly convenient to possess on the battlefield.

The second function was more subtle, but had been infinitely more difficult to weave into existence. It drew upon the nature of the blessed alloy and the innate affinity of the soul sword to Neph's soul flame, increasing the efficiency of her Dormant Ability when applied to the Blessing.

Simply put, it made the result of augmenting the silver longsword greater without affecting the potency of the Ability itself. The increase was not too drastic, perhaps adding a few tenths to the overall strength of enhancement… for now, at least. Sunny hoped that as the Blessing grew more powerful, this function of the [Flame Conduit] would evolve further, as well.

Needless to say, such an enhancement was a real boon, especially because it did not demand an additional cost to be paid. Even though it did not double the efficacy of the soul flame augmentation, it still increased it by a considerable amount… and if Nephis poured more of her flame onto the soul sword, the effects would only mount.

Sunny was quite satisfied with himself greatly for achieving this feat. That pattern of the overall spellweave had been incredibly intricate and complicated, having demanded a similarly stunning amount of effort to design.

It would serve Nephis well in the future, no doubt.

The [Purifying Light], in comparison… was not something he could take full credit for. It was another enchantment that differed from his original design.

The [Purifying Light] had been meant to be a version of the [Brilliant Will] — the enchantment of the Undying Chain that had allowed his long-lost armor to grow more durable in relation to the presence of divinity contained within its master's soul. Similarly, Sunny had wanted to make the power of the Blessing grow if the flames of divinity burned in its wielder.

And it had worked… in a sense. The power of the silver sword was now indeed connected to the flames of Neph's soul, just not in the way he had intended.

The enchantment did not depend on the quality of the [Flame of Divinity]. Instead, it depended on the quality of Neph's own flame… the soul flame. And the boon it granted the Blessing was not a blanket enhancement, but rather quite a specialized one.

The soul sword would grow stronger and more deadly when wielded against creatures who had succumbed to Corruption, as if its light was antithetical to the appalling darkness dwelling within their souls.

Purifying it… in a quite final manner.

While wielding the Blessing, Nephis would not only be immune to Corruption due to her [Longing] Ability, but also especially dominant in slaying Nightmare Creatures.

Which was beyond amazing in the Age of the Nightmare Spell, of course, albeit not so much for their current predicament.

The [Change] was rather simple when compared to the other two auxiliary enchantments… or simply familiar, perhaps. It allowed the Blessing to change both shape and form.

Nephis was quite conservative in her choice of weapons, mostly preferring to wield a versatile longsword. However, that did not mean that there were no situations when something else could suit the situation better — the [Change] allowed the soul sword to become a soul spear, for example, or even an unassuming bracelet… not that the latter had any practical use.

However, there was another quality to the [Change]. It also allowed the Blessing to shift between states — be it steel, liquid metal, compressed flame, or even pure light. Nephis would have to explore the ramifications of that ability herself and find proper uses for each of the states, but its most important boon was quite obvious.

It was that the Blessing could merge with her Transcendent form in its flaming and radiant states, thus imbuing her with its traits and enchantments — similar to how Serpent could fuse with Shadow Shells Sunny created to grant them its.

This gave Nephis a choice on how to use the Blessing while Transformed — whether to wield it in her hand, or simply make it a part of her hand, as well as of her entire radiant body.

Finally, the last of the four auxiliary traits was [Ruin]. That one… the soul sword seemed to have inherited from the black arrow Sunny had sacrificed to create the blessed alloy.

Bearing a breath of the Shadow Realm and the echo of the killing intent of its mysterious inhabitant, the Blessing had attained a death will of its own. It was very much like the [Slaying Blade] Ability

of the Soul Serpent, making the soul sword more lethal to those beings who were able to bend the world to their will… albeit much weaker.

Most of it would still depend on Neph's own murderous will, of course, but the sword itself was going to enhance her lethality. Sunny was not worried about the quality of her killing intent, really, considering that Nephis had been preaching murder from the days they were both teenagers. But every little bit helped, not that the [Ruin] was that little of a boon.

Then... there was the second of the two core enchantments of the Blessing, as well.

The one that, as Sunny suspected, had given the soul sword its name.

It was the [Blessing of the Fire].

This one, he had designed himself in its entirely. And although it was not as consistently useful as the [Flame Conduit], at the end of the day, it was utterly and undeniably more vital.

Because it was an enchantment meant to tip the scales of those dire battles where everything that could go wrong went wrong, and Nephis was pushed to her very limit. The battles against the truly powerful foes… the ones that mattered the most.

Its function was simple.

It increased the power and lethality of the Blessing in direct proportion to how heavily Neph's soul was damaged.

That went well with the essence of her Transcendent Battle Art, of course, and would be useful against enemies capable of wounding and destroying the souls of living beings.

But fundamentally, the [Blessing of the Fire] was aimed at something else.

It was aimed at Nephis herself, and her ability to burn her soul in order to ignite with incredible power. Like she had done in Twilight, and while escaping from the clutches of Condemnation as well.

Neph's self-sacrificial act of igniting her soul was a form of dealing direct damage to it, too.

So, if she ever had to mutilate her own soul severely — meaning that she had faced a truly overwhelming enemy — the sword would become exponentially more powerful the worse the state of her soul became.

If she sacrificed one soul core… two, three, six of them… it would grow stronger and stronger, until its power reached a limit that even Sunny was afraid to imagine.

And that was it, the sword he had created.

A beautiful sword.

A deadly sword…

A sword that would one day cut the fabric of the Nightmare Spell, perhaps.

And would cut down the Sovereigns much sooner.

Sunny sighed.

It was worth the effort.