2092 Fragments of War (29)

"Crazy, crazy… that bastard killed a god… this is crazy…"

Walking through the northern siege camp of the Sword Army, Sunny — in his persona of Master Sunless — couldn't help but mumble under his nose.

The experience in the ruins of Condemnation had left a deep impression on him. More importantly than that, it was the first time he had seen a Sovereign truly exert themselves in a fight.

And what he had seen was sobering.

Witnessing how fearsome the King of Swords was… was humbling. But even more ominous than that was witnessing how helpless Anvil had been in the battle against a creature of the Cursed Rank.

In the end, the Sovereign had won by doing what humans did best — using his intelligence and the accumulated knowledge of humanity to use every resource available to him in order to slay the enemy. In that particular case, the resource he had used was the sky of Godgrave, which destroyed Condemnation in his stead.

But before that, Anvil had struggled to even damage the Cursed One, let alone slay it. His ultimate attack only managed to deal an inconsequential wound to the enemy.

Because Condemnation possessed a more overwhelming will, and because its authority was more tyrannical than that of the King of Swords.

In short, the disparity in power between the two was quite similar to the disparity Sunny and Nephis would face if they challenged the Sovereigns as Saints.

Utter helplessness.

'Damnation.'

No, why was he even considering that scenario? Nephis had been clear when she said that attaining Supremacy was not simply their best option, but also the only acceptable option.

Because there were hundreds of millions of people being held hostage in the two Domains. If the Sovereigns were to die before she usurped the throne of war, all those people would succumb to the Nightmare Spell. There was no telling how many of them would survive to become Awakened, but the death toll would be staggering.

So there was no point in considering how to deal with Supremes as Saints, to begin with.

Sunny grimaced.

…It was just that he did not know if they would have a choice.

The war was rushing towards the grand finale. Both of them had made some progress in figuring out how to attain Supremacy, but not nearly enough to feel confident in their chances.

Granted, Sunny had felt a hint of an epiphany while watching Anvil fight Condemnation. Sadly, it had been vague and unclear, slipping out of his grasp before he could digest it.

Every Aspect was unique, so every Domain — an extension of an Aspect — was unique as well. Therefore, each Transcendent pursuing Supremacy had to find their own way of manifesting a Domain.

However, after observing Anvil, Sunny could not help but feel a chilling premonition.

It almost seemed seemed as if…

That the key to attaining Supremacy was literally willing it into existence.

'That sounds too immature. It sounds like a joke, really. The great secret of becoming a Supreme… is wishful thinking? What a joke...'

But he had sensed the tyrannical will of the King of Swords. It was apparent in his every move and action, after all, especially so during the battle against a Cursed being.

There were many subtle qualities to Anvil's will, but if Sunny was to pinpoint the most fundamental one… it was how domineering it was.

Cold, sharp, uncompromising. And most importantly of all, absolutely confident both of its rightfulness… and of its very existence.

But that was how a will great enough to reshape the world had to be, wasn't it? Sunny was not sure if intent powerful enough to force itself upon reality could be hesitant of its ability to do so.

Doubt and indecisiveness were the antithesis of will, after all.

So… was Supreme will a self-fulfilling prophecy? A concept that could only be realized if one believed in it, and grew more powerful the more absolute that belief became?

Willing their own will to exist.

'Isn't that a paradox?'

But then again, the very existence of Sovereigns was paradoxical in nature.

Sunny let out a heavy sigh.

He was not sure. His brush against an epiphany had been brief and shallow, after all.

However, he did feel like he had found another component of attaining Supremacy. He just needed to figure out how to apply it to all the other components he had found, as well as those that he was yet to find — and fit it all to his own Aspect.

His expression darkened.

Regardless of these complicated matters, one thing had become painfully clear to him after witnessing the battle between Anvil and Condemnation.

It was that he had to become stronger… as strong as he could possibly be, at the moment.

Of course, that had always been a priority — how could it not be, in the world of the Nightmare Spell? Sunny had always pursued personal power, first to survive, then for a few misguided reasons, and finally — hopefully — for a more enlightened goal.

But there had also been balance to that pursuit. Sunny had to weigh potential gains against inevitable risks when making decisions on what to do, and how to go about it.

And now, after watching the King of Swords slay a god… he knew that there could be no balance anymore. In other words, he had to do things that he had not been willing to risk before, no matter how perilous they could end up being.

'Damn it.'

Sadly, power was not something one could just randomly find laying on the floor. At his current level, Sunny's options were more than a little bit limited.

Frowning deeply, he passed by a row of tents and approached a large wooden building.

One of the ways he could exploit to gain power was weaving a shadowbound Memory of his own, and for that, he needed materials.

The building he was approaching could help him with just that — it was the hangar where the Sword Army stored various resources harvested from the corpses of the Nightmare Creatures slain by the soldiers.

He took a deep breath and tried to clear his mind of unnecessary worries.

'Let's see what we can find…'