2163 Iron Heart  
  
It was on a rainy day two years later that Jest found young Anvil in the same underground hаll, gazing at the same ominous mirror with bleak eyes.  
  
Beyond this dark and silent chamber, the young man was the valiant knight and hero of humanity, Sir Anvil of Valor — a warrior whose bravery was beyond reproach, whose feats boggled the mind, and whose voice carried weight no matter whom he spoke to.  
  
For all intents and purposes, he was the ruler of Bastion and the leader of perhaps the most influential Legacy Clan in the world.  
  
But here, he was just a boy in his early twenties... a boy who was now an orphan.  
  
There was no real proof and no bodies for them to bury, but enough time had passed so that no one could deny it anymore.  
  
His father, Warden of Valor, was dead. He had perished while trying to conquer the Third Nightmare.  
  
And Jest was now a widower, as well. Ever since his wife entered the Seed of Nightmare, leaving Jest behind, all color had slowly drained from the world for him. By now, the world was mostly colorless.  
  
There were only a few things that still seemed vibrant and vivid in its dreary expanse. One of them was his son. The other was the vermilion cloak Anvil now wore, which he had inherited from Warden.  
  
That cloak was now like a beacon in the darkness of the underground chamber.  
  
Jest approached the young man silently and gazed at the canvas covering the mirror. The clasps tightening it were unfastened, and a piece of the ancient frame could be seen.  
  
He lingered for a moment, suddenly feeling uneasy.  
  
"Have you been inside?"  
  
Anvil nodded slowly.  
  
"I went to explore. My father might not have mentioned it, but there are rare inscriptions left in the ruins on the other side. That was how we were able to master a bit of runic sorcery, in the beginning."  
  
Jest frowned, wanting to say how dangerous the Other Side was. But Anvil knew. He probably knew it much better than Jest did, in fact, which was why he had gone alone without taking anyone else with him.  
  
Jest sighed.  
  
"You might not have heard, since you were here preparing for the wedding. But out there in the waking world, a few overly ambitious fools have hatched a little scheme and officially pronounced Warden dead. They are clamoring to depose your clan and take its place as the main seat of power. I handled them, of course... but I can't handle the side branches of your own family. Madoc's in-laws are stirring trouble, too. You need to either put them all in their places or, better yet, clean the house. Your fiancé is such a nice girl, so she deserves a peaceful honeymoon, right?"  
  
Anvil remained silent for a while, then turned and looked at him indifferently.  
  
The strange coldness that had first shown itself after his First Nightmare was back now, stronger than ever.  
  
The young man studied Jest for a moment or two, then said evenly:  
  
"Yes, I heard. That they pronounced him dead."  
  
With that, he turned to the mirror again.  
  
After a while, though, Anvil suddenly said:  
  
"Uncle Jest... do you remember what you told me once? About how one should deal with their Flaw."  
  
Jest hesitatеd a little, surprised by the question, then nodded.  
  
"I talk a lot of nonsense, kid, but I do remember what I said. I stand by it."  
  
Anvil lowered his head.  
  
"These days, I often wonder... if my father died because of my Flaw."  
  
Jest raised an eyebrow.  
  
"How could he have died because of that? It's your Flaw, not his."  
  
The young man slowly shook his head, then smiled bitterly.  
  
"Is that so? Ah... but my Flaw, you see. Haven't I promised to tell you once?"  
  
Anvil stared at the floor for a bit, then said quietly:  
  
"It's that I must lose everything I cherish."  
  
He sighed.  
  
"I cherished my father, and now, I've lost him."  
  
With that, he looked at Jest and smiled bitterly.  
  
"I was too arrogant, Uncle Jest. I didn't listen to your advice at all. I tried to fight my Flaw, I tried to cheat it. But I never tried to change the way I thought about it."  
  
The bitterness slowly drained from his smile, and the smile itself soon disappeared, too.  
  
All that remained was cold, calm indifference. Anvil looked away.  
  
"I see now. The answer was quite simple. It's not that I must let the things I cherish go... it's that I should not have cherished anything, to begin with. I must not treasure anything, or anyone. That way, I would not have to lose anything, or anyone, ever again. I'll be free of my Flaw."  
  
Turning away from the mirror, Anvil looked at Jest evenly and said in a calm tone:  
  
"Thank you for dealing with those jackals, Uncle Jest. I will handle the branch families. I will handle Madoc's in-laws, too. My fiancé is indeed a very nice girl. And she does, indeed, deserve a peaceful honeymoon."  
  
With that, he nodded and left the underground chamber without looking back. Before his figure disappeared in the darkness, though, Anvil paused and added in the same calm, indifferent tone:  
  
"Oh... I heard your son has Awakened. Please accept my heartfelt congratulations. I am sure he will make you proud."  
  
Soon, Jest was left alone in the silent hall.  
  
He felt strangely unsettled.  
  
After a while, he let out a heavy sigh.  
  
"Ah, that boy. He's so serious. What am I going to do with him?"  
  
Anvil had boldly proclaimed that he would turn himself into an unfeeling machine in order to defeat his Flaw. However, it wasn't that easy to strange your own heart — he was still a human, after all.  
  
Jest knew for a fact that Anvil would fail miserably despite his cold determination, and many times as well.  
  
But then again, he was Warden's son. Perhaps he would manage, somehow.  
  
Warden was gone, and Jest's wife was gone too. But their traces remained.  
  
Their children remained.  
  
And Jest was the only one left to take care of them. He had promised to.  
  
So, he was going to do anything and everything he could to not let them down.  
  
Glancing at the canvas covering the great mirror, Jest sighed.  
  
"Mirror, mirror on the wall..."  
  
Then, he shivered, frowned, and silently walked away.