2193 Greater Good  
  
Cassie remained silent for a while, struggling against the nauseating feeling of not being in full control of her body and soul. Her torn cheek throbbed with dull pain, and drops of blood glistened coldly on the stone floor.  
  
'She... doesn't seem quite human, anymore.'  
  
The beautiful corpse in front of her looked like Ki Song and sounded like Ki Song, but while there was some resemblance — a deeply hidden sameness — the young woman she had seen in the memories of Master Orum was mostly gone.  
  
As if she was not a living being, but a wraith sustained by unbreakable Will.  
  
Both of them didn't seem human, really — the King and the Queen.  
  
Ki Song was dead, and did not have a heartbeat. But while Anvil was undeniably alive, his unfeeling heart was colder than that of a corpse.  
  
They looked human, but the way they thought was not human. There was a limit to how callous one could be, how heartless one could be. There were limits that no person could cross without becoming a mindless beast.  
  
But then again, the Sovereigns were not supposed to be completely human.  
  
'Is it because they are Ki Song and Anvil of Valor, or because they are Supreme?'  
  
Supreme beings were demigods in quite a literal sense. Saints like Cassie herself were called demigods, as well, but while they did possess some qualities of the divine, having transcended mortal limits, that title had mostly come from human fancy.  
  
To mundane people, the powers Saints wielded seemed godly, and so, the Saints had been dubbed demigods.  
  
And even though that title was mostly a metaphor, Cassie could already feel how her sense of self was changing.  
  
She had lived the memories of countless people, and perceived the world from countless points of view. She had experienced being men and women, young and old, healthy and sick — she had experienced the lives of soldiers and warriors, factory workers, lofty Legacies, destitute refugees, actors, artisans, politicians, housewives, criminals, servants, laborers... and so many more.  
  
What kind of person could possess a lifetime's worth of greatly varied experiences and remain the same?  
  
Several lifetimes?  
  
Naturally, her worldview had changed.  
  
And she was merely a Saint...  
  
How would she change if she became Supreme — a demigod whose conscience had to be vast enough to encompass an entire realm? How much of her former self would remain?  
  
How much of her humanity would be discarded to make space for divinity?  
  
She sighed, then faced Ki Song with a grim expression.  
  
"...To what end?"  
  
Cassie gritted her teeth.  
  
"You and Anvil have spent two decades ruling the world. You created the Great Clans, shaped the Legacy caste into what it is today, conquered vast lands in the Dream Realm. You have suppressed the number of emerging Saints, ruthlessly eliminated all who dared to disobey you, and maintained a semblance of order in the waking world. When you could not hold the Nightmare Spell back anymore, you finally revealed your claws in Antarctica. And now, you are at war. To what end?"  
  
She hesitated for a moment.  
  
"Is it simply to become the strongest a Supreme can be? To spread your Domain to all of humanity? Why? What are you after? Do you lust for more power? Do you want to resolve those old, unforgivable grudges? Are you preparing to challenge the Fifth Nightmare and become Sacred? Have you given up? Why, why have you done all of this?"  
  
Ki Song looked at her calmly from the throne.  
  
A faint smile illuminated her breathtaking face.  
  
"Why... it's for the greater good, of course."  
  
Cassie couldn't help but let out a scoff.  
  
"The greater good?"   
  
The Queen nodded.  
  
"Our goal is to preserve humanity, as it has always been. You can disagree with our method... despise them, even... but do not doubt our intentions. Everything we did, we did to build a better world for those who would follow in our footsteps."  
  
Ki Song let out a sigh.  
  
"To answer your question... the war is necessary because Anvil and I are much too weak"  
  
Her puppets chuckled.  
  
"Our power, great as it might seem, is woefully insufficient. Our Domains are incomplete. Our strength is lacking. We are nearly immortal and have no rivals among the human population, but the enemies we face aren't human either. They are the true rulers of the Dream Realm — the old, corrupted deities who dwell in the darkest cоrners of this cursed world."  
  
Ki Song leaned forward a little, smiling faintly.  
  
"There is a simple equation to safeguarding the future of humanity, you see. In this dire world, humanity has no luxury to afford itself things that it does not need. It is a luxury to have a population of three billion people, but is it necessary? Can we save them all? No... spreading our forces too thin will only result in total annihilation. Meanwhile, humanity can survive with far less. The ones whom we have brought from the Chain of Nightmares will do — it is a large enough pool to produce Awakened at a sufficient rate, who will produce enough Masters and Saints in turn. In fact, it is already too large."  
  
Her smile turned somber.  
  
"More than a hundred million mundane people aгe in the Song Domain right now. All of them need to be fed, clothed, sheltered, and protected from the Nightmare Creatures. We had been preparing the human enclaves in the Dream Realm for more than a decade, and yet the burden of caring for so many people is already straining every possible resource we have, shaking the entire kingdom. The infrastructure is on the verge of collapse, the supplies are dwindling..."  
  
Cassie frowned.  
  
"Those people are not just sitting idly. They are working the fields, building the roads... they are volunteering to face the First Nightmare and become Awakened, as well. In a few more years, they will feed, clothe, shelter, and protect themselves."  
  
Ki Song shook his head.  
  
"But the situation on Earth will also become far less stable in a few years, which means that we won't be able to deliver as many supplies through the Dream Gate. But, suppose you are right... even then, the waking world will continue to deteriorate at ever-increasing speed. Soon enough, it will be consumed entirely, and the entire Dream Realm will change. Its geography will be rewritten, and countless Nightmare Creatures will start a great migration. We will be besieged from all sides, and the Death Zones will spill from their borders, threatening to drown the human nation we have so laboriously established."  
  
The Queen smiled darkly.  
  
"When that happens, neither the Song Domain nor the Sword Domain will be able to survive. However, the Human Domain — one kingdom united under the torn, patchwork heaven of the Dream Realm by one Supreme — might just stand a chance."