2213 A Hundred Thousand Deaths  
  
The soldiers watched the battle between the Sovereigns in stunned, breathless silence. To them, it looked apocalyptic.  
  
The sea of the dead and the celestial river of rustling swords had intertwined into a vast storm of devastation, with mangled pieces of severed flesh and shards of shattered metal obscuring the battlefield like a chilling haze. The bone plain continued to tremble as if from a powerful earthquake, the violent tremors throwing countless soldiers to the ground. The cacophony of the unfathomable battle was overwhelming and deafening, and the winds it had given birth to were strong enough to make the Awakened warriors stagger and sway.  
  
It seemed as if the sky itself would break apart and fall... or rather, overflow with incandescent radiance, countless rays of incinerating sunlight pouring through the breaches in the cloud to annihilate the cowering armies.  
  
However, the Cloudveil still held — perhaps because the Sovereigns had chosen to preserve it, perhaps because Saint Tyris of White Feather still struggled to maintain it.  
  
The Sovereigns themselves were like two tiny specks in the vast, calamitous carnage of the world-ending confrontation. And yet, it was impossible to miss them even in the mayhem —wherever the two collided, the storm of swords was torn apart, and the sea of puppets receded, leaving countless pulverized corpses in its wake.  
  
Ki Song and Anvil fought on the ground, and they fought in the air. The power of their blows was so devastating that air itself was displaced and burned away, creating vast pockets of vacuum above the quaking battlefield. The wind rushed to fill the void, causing hurricane gales and furious twisters to move across the surface of the ancient bone, and deafening thunderclaps rolling above it.  
  
Few were able to discern the details of the royal battle, but those who could saw Anvil defending himself with his seven dreadful swords as Ki Song attacked with her bare hands like a fierce beast. Her movements were so fast that it seemed as if she simply disappeared from one spot to appear in another — sometimes nearby, sometimes hundreds of meters away.  
  
The King was like a statue of black steel, his fluttering cloak and the plume of his helmet framing it with brushes of vibrant vermilion. The Queen was like a beautiful gоddess of blood, her regal dress flowing like a vivid red stream in the shadow cast by the myriad of flying swords. Two great wings tore through the porcelain skin of her back, spreading open as drops of crimson blood fell from the black feathers.  
  
Anvil's armor bent and rippled as Ki Song's nails pushed and cut into the mystical metal. However, it repaired itself as swiftly as it was damaged, remaining immaculate and pristine — for now, at least, the Queen had not been able to make the King bleed.  
  
Which was why he was still alive, perhaps, considering that her Dormant Ability allowed Ki Song to aggravate any wound. That Ability had been slow, but deadly when she was a Sleeper... now that she was Supreme, the smallest scratch received in her presence could very well mean instant death.  
  
That was why Anvil chose a steady and methodical sword technique, concentrating on defense while manipulating the indestructible metal of his enchanted heavy armor to maintain its flawless integrity.  
  
However, even though he was mostly defending himself against the Queen's — each of them seemingly devastating enough to erase entire settlements off the map — that was not all Anvil did.  
  
His six dreadful swords were moving around him, creating a rustling sphere of metal. The seventh, the most terrifying of them all, rested solidly in his hand. The cursed blade parried and deflected Ki Song's blows, shooting forward from time to time to pierce her flesh.  
  
The Queen seemed wary of the cursed sword... however, she did not put too much effort into avoiding its touch.  
  
Time and time again, Anvil's sword cut her. The ruthless blade tore through Ki Song savagely, dealing her harrowing wounds...  
  
Or rather, it should have.  
  
Strangely enough, though, no wounds was left on the Queen's body when the sword retreated after delivering her a fatal blow. It was as if she was a ghost made of water — or maybe blood — and the grey steel simply passed through her without leaving a trace.  
  
If one was very attentive, however, and possessed the inhuman ability to parse through the calamitous chaos of the great battle with their mind, taking all of it in at the same time, they would have noticed a curious detail.  
  
Every time Ki Song received a lethal wound and ignored it without as much as a wince, one of her puppets far below fell to the ground, its body gruesomely severed.  
  
Anvil did not seem surprised by what was happening at all.  
  
Deflecting another attack and pushing Ki Song's hand away, he sent one of the six flying swords barreling forward. The Queen was a split second too late to react, and the cold steel passed through her slender neck. She should have been beheaded, but instead, there was not even a mark left on her skin. Her other arm shot forward, striking Anvil in the chest.  
  
The world shuddered from the dire power of her blow, and the obliterating shockwave rolled upward, threatening to disrupt the veil of radiant clouds.  
  
The King sneered behind the dark steel of his helmet.  
  
"This... is going to be tedious."  
  
He mended his armor a moment after it was almost torn by Ki Song's hand, then raised his own, grabbing the second of the seven terrifying swords from the air.  
  
Wielding two blades now, Anvil effortlessly switched from his defensive battle art to a reckless, aggressive style that abandoned caution in favor of an overwhelming offensive might.  
  
His black figure exploded forward, flying across the sky with dreadful speed.  
  
The two of them collided high above the battlefield, raising a hurricane with the sheer dreadful force of the thunderous impact.  
  
"How many of these puppets do you have, now? Tens of thousands, hundreds of thousands? Well, it doesn't matter. I'll kill you a hundred thousand times if that is what it takes."  
  
Ki Song laughed.  
  
"I wish I could enjoy кilling you a hundred thousand times, as well!"  
  
With that, she pushed one of the swords away, battered another one to the side with her fist, and grappled Anvil in the air. Her raven wings pushed against the blinding sky, and then, both of them plummeted from the height, falling toward the bone plane.  
  
Ki Song rammed Anvil into the ground with harrowing force, making the entire plain shudder.  
  
A powerful quake threw thousands of soldiers off their feet, and the ancient bone fractured, thousands of sharp shards flying in all directions like a vast cloud of spreading shrapnel.  
  
Standing among the soldiers of the Sword Domain, the Lord of Shadows looked down and stared at one of the bone shards rolling to his feet.  
  
His fearsome mask remained expressionless.  
  
'Crazy bastards. They are actually breaking the bone...'