2217 Forbidden Fruit  
  
Sunny froze for a moment, startled by an entirely unexpected statement.  
  
Weaver? That sinister Demon?  
  
What could a dead daemon have to do with Brоken Sword's murder?  
  
As the bone plain groaned and quaked under the calamitous onslaught of Supreme power, he lingered for a moment, then asked incredulously:  
  
[What the hell do you mean, because of Weaver?]  
  
Cassie responded a few heartbeats later, her voice sounding louder — the Queen, it seemed, was growing more distracted, allowing the blind seer to express her powers better.  
  
[Broken Sword was… inconsolable… after Smile of Heaven perished. He convinced himself that she was still alive, lost somewhere in a Nightmare. He grew obsessed with challenging the Seed that had spawned the Category Five Gate in America, and to do that, he had to accumulate power… great power… as much power as he could.]  
  
Sunny frowned, digesting what he heard. The truth of Broken Sword's later years was startling enough…  
  
But what did Weaver have to do with any of it?  
  
Cassie paused for a moment, then added:  
  
[The members of his cohort… were all special. Smile of Heaven, Anvil, Ki Song, Asterion — they all possessed a divine lineage. But he did not. So, he ventured to do what Ki Song had done and find a Lineage Memory of his own. The only lineage that was still unclaimed — the lineage of Shadow God.]  
  
Sunny stirred in Rain's shadow. Far away, the Lord of Shadows tilted his head a little. Even Master Sunless blinked a few times, allowing surprise to show itself on his face.  
  
[...Shadow God's lineage?]  
  
Cassie's voice resounded in his head a moment later:  
  
[Yes. He searched far and wide… but… he failed to discover the tracеs of Shadow. Instead, he found something else. A piece of a forbidden lineage left behind in secret by one of the daemons. Something that should not even exist, but apparently does… or did back then, at least. Broken Sword claimed that lineage, inheriting some part of Weaver, the Demon of Fate.]  
  
Sunny forgot to breathe.  
  
'W—what?'  
  
If he had been stunned before, he felt shocked now. It was as if someone had struck him in the head.  
  
'Broken Sword… found… one of the Weaves?'  
  
And Cassie had waited so long to tell him?!  
  
'Wait…'  
  
Cassie's Dormant Ability only saw Sunny as a void. She could not remember anything she had known about him in the past, either… so, she probably did not even know that Sunny himself had Weaver's blood running in his veins.  
  
No one did.  
  
Cassie wouldn't have κnown the importance of that knowledge.  
  
'Wait, Broken Sword had a part of Weaver's lineage?!'  
  
Feeling rattled and confused, Sunny took a deep breath.  
  
[...Weaver's lineage, I see. Why is that important?]  
  
Cassie remained silent for a few moments, then answered quietly:  
  
[I am not entirely sure, but it was the fact that he had come to possess the forbidden lineage that convinced Anvil, Asterion, and Ki Song to betray him. There were plenty of other reasons, too… but this one was the decisive one, as well as the one that seemed to have forced their hand. For some reason, those of divine lineages could not tolerate Broken Sword's existence after he became Weaver's heir. And so, they killed him.]  
  
Sunny shivered.  
  
This was… a disconcerting piece of news to learn.  
  
Wasn't he much more of an heir to Weaver than Broken Sword had been? He had not one, but three parts of Weaver's lineage by now.  
  
Would those who had inherited the lineage of the gods target him for some unknown reason one day, as well?  
  
Sunny inhaled deeply.  
  
Suddenly, he was overcome by an ominous feeling…  
  
It was not a premonition, exactly, since his intuition had lost its mystical edge when his connection to fate was severed. However, Sunny had enough experience and knowledge by now to develop a sixth sense of his own.  
  
Learning that the Sovereigns had turned on Broken Sword because of Weaver's lineage was definitely sounding alarms in his head.  
  
'Damn great.'  
  
Sunny wanted to ask another question, but at that moment,a deafening crack washed over the Song Army… and the Sword Army, as well.  
  
The ground shuddered once more, this time more violently than it had ever done before. Rain finally lost her balance and fell, hitting the ground with a startled yelp. On the opposite side of the battlefield, the Lord of Shadows grunted and swayed, finally straightening and raising his odachi to put it on his shoulder.  
  
The soldiers around him were all on the ground, looking around in dazed confusion. Slowly, their features were twisted by fear.  
  
His cold voice escaped from behind Weaver's Mask, full of aloof indifference:  
  
"...Don't fret. There's nothing to worry about."  
  
In front of the two cowering armies…  
  
The harrowing battle between the two Sovereigns had entered a new, utterly inconceivable stage. The forces unleashed by their confrontation were so dire that the breastbone of the dead god itself was struggling to withstand them. New cracks formed on the surface of the bone plain, and the cracks that had been there before deepened.  
  
And then, after an especially calamitous blow, the cracks began to widen and grow uncontrollably, as if a point of no return had been passed. The initial noise of the battlefield breaking had been drowned out by the thunderous roar of the impact, but now, everyone could both heaг and sense the ground below them shifting.  
  
The crack that was near the Seventh Royal Legion extended in an instant, cutting all the way to the edge of the Breastbone Reach. It widened, too, and a few unfortunate soldiers plummeted down….  
  
Into the darkness.  
  
'Damnation.'  
  
Most people could not feel it, but Sunny could. His shadow sense extended far and wide, as well as penetrating deep.  
  
More importantly, he had an aerial view of the battlefield from the Ivory Island. Therefore, he could see the spider web of deep cracks spreading across the entire plain.  
  
Stretching all the way down to the Hollows.  
  
As Rain rolled and rose to one knee,looking at the dark fissure of the jagged crack…  
  
She saw a thick, scarlet vine rise from the darkness and attach itself to the splintered bone.