2225 Broken Covenant  
  
The shattered moon shone upon the ruined castle.  
  
The cold winds howled as they passed through the ruins, slamming into piles of rubble with vengeful power. An especially strong gust sent a small pebble falling from a broken wall into a pan of bubbling stew.  
  
Morgan ignored the pebble. She ignored Nightingale, who landed nearby, as well.  
  
Instead, she looked up and let out a long sigh.  
  
‘Loyalty…’  
  
Loyalty was a funny thing. It came in many forms and many shapes, from different sources. Loyalty had a power in and of itself – a great power, sometimes – but in the realm of Supremes, it also possessed a mystical authority.  
  
It was the covenant between a ruler and the people. It was the lifeblood of a Domain, as well as the means thrоugh which Domains spread. To be precise, for those Supremes who built their Domains with the help of the Nightmare Spell, it was the loyalty of Saints that mattered most.  
  
Because their kingdoms were built from Citadels, and most people – even those of the Supreme Rank – could only control one Citadel at a time. There were exceptions, of course, like her monstrous brother, but those exceptions only served to prove the rule.  
  
So, Saints became proxies for the Supremes, controlling Citadels in their name. To do so, they had to pledge their fealty to a Sovereign… and swear loyalty to a Domain.  
  
But loyalty was not an event. It was a process. Therefore, even if a Saint swore an oath of fealty, their loуalty was not carved in stone. It could grow more powerful or weaken – it could even become entirely exhausted, dissolving like a mirage. If that happened, the Sovereign would lose a vassal, and the Domain would lose a Citadel.  
  
But it was not easy, to exhaust someone’s loyalty. Because loyalty came in many forms.  
  
There was personal loyalty to a Sovereign, like what Sir Gilead and other retainers of the Great Clan Valor felt. There was also a more abstract kind of loyalty like that of vassal Saints, who were not necessarily devoted to their Sovereign, but were instead devoted to the Domain itself – because their families, clans, friends, and comrades were a part of it.  
  
And many more.  
  
That was why a vassal Saint could despise a Sovereign, but still be part of the Sovereign’s Domain. Domains were vast things, after all, and encоmpassed much more than solely their rulers.  
  
Which was why it was so ironic…  
  
That Morgan, the daughter of a Sovereign, had no loyalty left.  
  
It was because to her, the Sword Domain was precisely that – it was solely a representation of her father. She was raised to be a ruler, and for that reason, her connection to the vast complexity of the Domain was different from that of everyone else.  
  
It was far more simple, and therefore, far more easily destroyed.  
  
Morgan did not have friends or comrades, she only had subordinates… who were mere tools. Her clan and her family were a single person – the King of Swords.  
  
And so, once she lost all faith in her father, she lost the connection to the Sword Domain as well.  
  
Perhaps she was simply selfish, not caring about anyone or anything else.  
  
‘It can’t be… I am Morgan of Valor, I am the princess of the Sword Domain.’  
  
But it could.   
  
Morgan smiled crookedly.  
  
Her brother… had her beat.  
  
The bastard…  
  
A forlorn chuckle escaped her lips.  
  
“Lady Morgan? Are you alright?”  
  
She turned her head, noticing Nightingale looking at her with concern. The others seemed wary, too.  
  
Right… there were her six Transcendent blades, as well.  
  
What the hell was she supposed to do?  
  
Morgan forced out a smile.  
  
“I am perfectly fine.”   
  
But she wasn’t.  
  
She… was supposed to defend Bastion from Mordret. To prevent it from falling into his hands, and therefore becoming lost to her father, empowering the Ki Song instead.   
  
Today was the day of the full moon – one that had repeated countless times – which meant that even those who did not control the Great Citadel would be able to travel between its true and illusory versions in a few hours. All her brother had to do to conquer Bastion was cross over to the other side, enter the illusory version of the ancient castle, and tether his soul to its Gateway, thus overwriting her own imprint.  
  
But it was all meaningless, now. Bastion was already lost to the King of Swords. Her brother would without a doubt still want to conquer it for the Queen of Worms – and for himself, as well – however, did Morgan still want to defend it?  
  
Perhaps she did. Not for the Sword Domain, but for herself.  
  
…But even if she did, was there a reason to make these people die for it?  
  
Morgan studied her Saints.  
  
Soul Reaper, Raised By Wolves, Nightingale, Naeve, Bloodwave, Aether…  
  
She had conscripted them into this war, and watched them die countless times. To be honest, Morgan was a little sick of it.  
  
‘How… strange.’  
  
She was not a part of the Sword Domain anymore, but she had never been anything else. Morgan’s entire sense of self was tied to the Great Clan Valor, and therefore, all her actions had always been for the benefit of the clan.  
  
Now that she had turned her back on that, there was no structure to the world, and nothing for her to lean on.  
  
It had been reasonable and a matter of course to sacrifice these people for the Sword Domain, if neеd be, before. But what about now?  
  
There was no reason to force them to their deaths whatsoever.  
  
Apart from Morgan’s own selfish desire to defeat her brother, of course.  
  
Was she despicable enough to condemn her subordinates to death for a purely selfish reason?  
  
‘Yes. Yes, I am.’  
  
But she was not pathetic enough to do so.  
  
Morgan had nothing else left, but she still had her pride.  
  
She did not have to deceive anyone into fighting her brother for her. If she were to defeat him, she was going to defeat him herself.  
  
Granted, chances were that she would just die a graceless death instead.  
  
That was a matter of course, as well.  
  
Morgan took a deep breath, and then smiled at her Saints,  
  
“The battle is over. We lost. You can all leave now… if you wish.”