2227 The Dragon and the Princess  
  
Nightingale told her to cease movement, and so, Morgan found herself unable to move.  
  
It was as if her body had turned into an ice sculpture. She could still breathe, but nothing more than that… his clear voice had easily crushed her defenses, seeped past the barriers erected by her potent Memories, and caught her completely by surprise.  
  
'Such power…'  
  
Morgan attempted to disobey the overwhelming finality of his command, desperately struggling against her own body. But it was of no use.  
  
She was completely and utterly at his mercy.  
  
'Ha… ha-ha…'  
  
Vulnerable as she was, Morgan mostly felt amused. There was more than a fair bit of indignant disbelief in her heart, as well, but no fear — not only because she was not a ρerson who felt fear easily, but also because she found herself not caring that much about what would happen to her.  
  
Still…  
  
Sure, she had failed to remain vigilant at all times, turning a blind eye to the potential threat presented by her supposed comrades. Perhaps it was because she had stayed with them for so long, and had experienced so much, but Morgan allowed herself to lower her guard around them — forgetting that for these three, most of the time they had shared amounted to merely a single day.  
  
She had also been conserving essence in preparation for the final battle against her brother, and so, the more powerful of her defensive Memories were not even active.  
  
And… she was exhausted…  
  
However, the fact still remained. It was too easy to forget sometimes because of how nice he seemed, but Nightingale… he was a terrifying man, that slayer of dragons. Or rather, he had the potential to be terrifying, simply choosing not to abuse his dreadful power.  
  
'But what is he trying to do?'  
  
Morgan doubted that Nightingale would have struck a deal with her brother. So was it some misguided scheme to save her life against her will? To whisk her away to safety, whether she wanted to or not? Knowing the man… no, even for him,it would have been too ridiculous and infantile.  
  
She was not sure, and infuriatingly enough, she could not even ask. All she could do was stare at the charming bastard with cold fury burning in her eyes.  
  
Nightingale met her sharp gaze without looking away, a hint of regret apparent in his firm gaze. A few moments later, he sighed and turned to his companions.  
  
"I won't be able to hold her for long. But it should be long enough."  
  
Raised by Wolves scoffed and caught her black locket one last time, rising from the piece of rubble. Soul Reaper pushed herself off the wall and came closer, studying Morgan lazily.  
  
Morgan felt a chill run down his spine under that relaxed gaze.  
  
Jet clicked her tongue and glanced at Nightingale.  
  
"That's great, but what are we supposed to do with her? Simply killing her is not an option... I presume. Even though, gods know, she deserved to die for all the vile crap she and her clan are guilty of."  
  
Morgan stared at her with dark amusement, undisturbed by the threat of being killed and the stark accusation both.  
'Not a rescue, then…'  
  
They wouldn't be considering disposing of her if it was. So what the hell were they planning?  
  
Nightingale shook his head.  
  
"We are not killing her."  
  
Soul Reaper sighed with regret.  
  
"What, then?"  
  
He hesitated for a few moments, then shrugged.  
  
"I'll just take her with me. It will… probably be alright."  
  
Jet looked at him with a dubious frown.  
  
At that moment, Raised by Wolves spoke in a subdued tone:  
  
"Whatever. If Kai says that it will be alright, then it will be alright. We don't have any time to wаste, anyway… Cassie is not responding after giving us the signal, which means that things are not going great out there. None of us expected that the day would come so soon, and in such a strange manner. But now that it did, there is no way back. Each of us knows what we must do — so, take Morgan and leave. Before her brother shows up."  
  
Nightingale and Soul Reaper looked at her with concern.  
  
Eventually,Jet spoke softly:  
  
"Are you sure that you can do it?"  
  
Raised by Wolves looked at her for a few moments, then grinned.  
  
"Worry about yourself, big sister. I'll be fine."  
  
Morgan observed them intently, trying to understand what the three were trying to achieve. Were they retreating, but leaving Raised by Wolves behind? Why?  
  
The woman, meanwhile, looked at Nightingale and remained silent for a bit.  
  
Then, she grasped his shoulder for a moment and pushed him away.  
  
"Go. I'll be fine… let's all meet in NQSC when it's all said and done. Actually, let's meet in Bastion — I know an amazing café there. Not as well as Nephis knows it, though… wait, did she take the café with her?"  
  
Nightingale took a few steps back from her push, remained silent for a second, and then smiled.  
  
"Are you really thinking about food even now? No... of course you are."  
  
With that, he rose into the air and moved further away.  
  
Soon, a magnificent dragon with scales the color of the midnight sky towered above the ruins, his eyes shining like two cold white stars.  
  
Morgan still couldn't move — in fact, the moment Nightingale assumed his Transcendent form, she felt that the power binding her grew even more inescapable.  
  
'Damn it…'  
  
She had just barely managed to move one of her fingers slightly when Soul Reaper grabbed her unceremoniously and lept on the dragon's back.  
  
Two enormous wings raised a hurricane, аnd the great beast shot into the dark sky.  
  
Leaving the ruins behind…  
  
Morgan saw a glimpse of Raised by Wolves, who was left standing alone on the rubble. Athena followed the dragon's flight with her gaze for a few moments, then turned away and faced the distant forest… where Mordret was prepaгing to besiege Bastion one last time.  
  
The ruins swiftly grew smaller, and the empty lake did, as well, soon disappearing from view.  
  
Morgan had finally left the ruined castle after fighting to defend it for so long… the battle for Bastion was over.  
  
At least it was for her.