2263 Beginning of the End  
  
Sunny remained silent for a while, then said somberly:   
   
“Of course, not everyone went smoothly. Far from it, really. Nephis had managed to compel countless people, and most of the Saints, to swear fealty to her. However, there were still loyalists who refused to accept her. Some were even hellbent on avenging the fallen Sovereigns. So... there was a quiet purge, of sorts.”   
   
He sighed.   
   
“It was not as bloody as you probably imagined. Very few people were actually killed, but quite a number of them were exiled. Nephis rules both the waking world and the human territories in the Dream Realm, though, so it's not like they had somewhere to go. So, we allocated them a settlement in Europe and a Citadel in Gograve. Old Jest is in charge of it now, spending his retirement leading those men in a perpetual battle against the scarlet jungle. Gilead, that buffoon, chose exile as well. What a waste."   
   
Sunny shook his head, a grim expression on his face.   
   
He did not speak for a while, then scoffed.   
  
“Well, those guys are the least of our problems. Truth be told, everything sort of exploded after Nephis took over."   
   
His lips twisted into a bitter smile.   
   
“That is because her style of leadership is more or less the direct opposite of how the Sovereigns used to run things. One of the first things she did after establishing her Domain was give a very solemn, very inspiring speech... that revealed to everyоne how our world is being consumed by the Dream Realm. You can imagine what kind of chaos ensued after that broadcast."   
   
Sunny chuckled.   
   
“We are still dealing with the consequences. It had to be done, though. Since we are not planning on leaving most of humanity behind, the great exodus must be accelerated. And we need for everyone to work together in order to make it happen, both in the waking world and in the Dream Realm."   
   
His expression fell.   
   
“There are numerous problems facing us, of course. For example... the entire Western Quadrant is infected by the Skinwalker now. A few cities are already lost, and worst of all, it is very hard for me or Nephis to return to the waking world for extended periods of time. Feels quite weird, by the way, to be rejected by your own world... in any case, there is a full-scale war against that damn nightmare creature going on in Australia, and most of our best Saints are holding the creature back."   
   
He sighed.   
  
“Meanwhile, the number of the Nightmare Gates opening each month only continues to grow. We had to abandon the initial plan of gradually resettling people from across the globe and concentrate on bringing away the population of the Eastern Quadrant first. If everything goes well, the Western Quadrant will be next. And finally, the Northern Quadrant will be last. That will take years, though, if not decades... because resettling the entire population of a world is not as easy as ushering them through the Dream Gate."   
  
Sunny grimaced.   
   
“They also need shelter, food, and means to survive on the other side. So, we need to prepare the Dream Realm to accept them first. That is not an easy task... you see, although we call large swathes of that dreadful world ‘human territories’, in truth, most of these territories are still abomination-infested wilderness. Only the Citadels and the immediate areas around them are truly safe. And while that is enough for a small number of Awakened to get by, there is no space for cities, arable fields, and so on... the situation started to change in the aftermath of the Chain of Nightmares, but it is not changing fast enough.”   
   
Glancing at Eurys, Sunny added with a smile:   
   
“Which is why a subjugation crusade unlike anything that has ever happened is now in process. All across the Dream Realm, numerous Awakened are cleansing the lands from Nightmare Creatures and preparing them to welcome settlers. Despite how bloody and arduous that process is, the morale is surprisingly high... well, maybe it is not that big of a surprise. The very nature of warfare in the Dream Realm has changed, after all."   
   
His smile turned a little wistful.   
   
"That is because humans have a living goddess now. Well... a demigoddess, to be precise, but most don't know the difference. And Nephis actually answers prayers, unlike the dead gods. What I mean to say is that she can feel the distress of her subjects and bestow her blessing upon them from a distance. So, they can be saved from the jaws of death by her flames, as well as be empowered by her radiance. It's no joke, Eurys... I'd say that the overall combat effectiveness of humanity has increased manifold due to Nephis and her Domain. Just like that. Can you imagine a difference between an army that has to be cautious of each wound and an army that is not only empowered by divine grace, but also practically immortal?"   
   
Sunny shook his head.   
   
"..She still has her limits, though. So we are still struggling, and there are still many casualties. The progress is stunningly fast... but it is also not swift enough.”   
  
He remained silent for a while, then sighed.   
   
“You might wonder what the second Supreme is doing while Changing Star toils night and day for the sake of humanity. What I am doing. Well... I am quite busy, as well. It is just that while Nephis is in charge of governing the great exodus from the waking world, I am preoccupied with preparing for what comes after.”  
  
His voice turned somber.  
  
“Because what comes after is more terrifying than words can express. All the work we are doing can be rendered meaningless if we can't stop the calamity that will start once the   
Dream Realm swallows the waking world and shifts."  
  
Sunny looked at Eurys, lingered for a few moments, and then chuckled.   
   
“Well, I am also doing quite a few things here and there. Like entertaining an obnoxious skeleton. Actually..."   
   
He looked into the distance and shook his head with an amused expression on his face.   
   
“You won't believe it, Eurys, but I found myself in charge of a Legacy Clan of my own.”