2264 Two Sides of the Same Coin  
Eurys went so far as to nod. "I don't know what a Legacy Clan is, but congratulations!"  
Sunny smiled.  
"Ah. Well, you see... when I was growing up, I was at the very bottom, and Legacy scions were at the pinnacle. But now I am the pinnacle. You were a slave, no? Imagine becoming a prince all of a sudden. That is how it feels."  
Eurys suddenly let out a creaky laugh.  
"Oh actually, I used to be a prince before becoming a slave. So I would not know."  
Sunny blinked a couple of times, then looked at him with curiosity, "You used to be a prince?"  
The skull stared back at him, grinning.  
"Did I say 'prince? I meant priest. Or did 17 My, oh my! Who can tell... my memories are all scattered, oh no..."  
Sunny scoffed, then turned away.  
"Well, in any case. The Legacy Clans as a whole are not what they used to be, these days, Too many new Awakened emerged in the wake of the Chain of Nightmares, so the prestige of the old families has lost some relevance. Even the Great Clans, the symbol of the Legacy power, are overshadowed by the Immоrtal Flame clan now which is so above еverything else that it exists in a realm of its own."  
He remained silent for a moment.  
"Nephis is the only living heir of the Immortal Flame bloodline. Of course, she has her Fire Keepers in fact, the Fire Keepers are the most incandescent military force of humanity now. The tip of the spear. The original members of the Dreamer Army are still the core, but each is leading a hundred elite Awakened warriors now, the best of the best.  
He suddenly laughed.  
"Actually, they recruited this fresh blood through a huge tournament. Hundreds of thousands of Awakened participated, but only around four thousand were accepted into the ranks of the Fire Keepers. It was a very festive week- both worlds were watching with bated breaths. A perfectly timed distraction and reprieve and reprieve for the masses, аs well. It will probably be held every few years from now on, I think. I had fun too, by the way. Turns out, tourmaments make me feel nostalgic..."  
Sunny looked into the distance for a while, reminiscing.  
"I once won a tournament myself, you know? you know? Regardless, the Fire Keepers are everywhere, under the spotlight, serving as the valiant heralds of the new Domain. But there are certain tasks that they can't perform - tasks that require a delicate approach, or have to be accomplished without anyone being the wiser. That is where the Shadow Clan comes in. My clan."  
He scratched the back of his head in embarrassment.  
"For reasons that I won't explain, I found myself in dire need of anonymity. That doesn't mean that I have to go live somewhere in solitude for the rest of my life, though, just that my exposure to the world must be... I limited. So, Shadow Clan is far smaller in scale than the Fire Keepers. There are barely two hundred people, and only half of those are combatants."  
Sunny smiled darkly.  
"Each and every one of those combatants is an exceptional killer, though. I chose them myself. Most know a thing or two about stealth, too... oh, and since they bear my mark, they have certain advantages when operating in the shadows. Overall, they've been very effective in dealing with various problems we faced-like terrorist cells created by the unhinged loyalists, doomsday cults that began popping up after Neph's speech, Nightmare Creatures that required a special approach to be surgically removed, and so on."  
Glancing at Eurys, he hesitated for a few moments, and then grinned.  
"The Shadow Clan does not officially exist, naturally. There are scary tales about my minions... I mean, about my brave subordinates... being told around campfires, but most people know nothing."  
He sighed.  
"The Shadow Clan resides on the Forgotten Shore. That is where it all started, so retuming there as a ruler, instead of a prisoner, feels strangely emotional. Of course, I did not choose it simply out of sentiment it is an important strategic location for many reasons."  
Sunny raised a hand and began counting on his fingers.  
"First of аll we don't know where the pieces of the waking world will land and after after being absorbed abson into the Dream Realm, so it's important to have a strong presence north of the Hollow Mountains for a variety of reasons. Second, we need a base of operations in case we decide to stage a military expedition into the Nightmare Desert. Third, I need to find an easily accessible entrance to the Underworld. Fourth, I need to make my Domain stronger. The Burned Forest is a perfect place for that. Fifth. I can stay of I ou out of sight there."  
He grew quiet, and then added somberly:  
"And lastly, it is our contingency in case everything else is overrun by the Nightmare Creatures once the waking world is consumed. The last stronghold."  
At the same time, two more fingers grew out of his hand. Sunny bent the sixth, stared at the seventh for a while, then dismissed both and sighed.  
"We are in quite a predicament, you know? There are the Death Zones in the Dream Realm and the profane beings that dwell there. There is also the waking world itself... which already has at least one Category Five Gate there, and maybe even something worse on the moon. There will be more such Gates in the future - perhaps soon. That means that more Cursed and Unholy nightmare creatures will crawl into our world before it is consumed. Creatures like that are suppressed by the laws of the War Realm, but once it is swallowed by the Dream Realm, these laws will be no more. So, nothing will stop those horrors from roaming free. Imagine Earth's moon rising above Bastion... it will be total annihilation."  
Eurys clicked his jaw.  
"My, oh my! It certainly will."  
Sunny remained silent for a while, looking at him with strange intensity. Eventually, he said: "So, this is our deadline. In fact, we don't even know when the pieces of Earth will start popping up all across Dream Realm en masse. So there is no time to waste at all. we must become gods before our world is entirely consumed, Nephis and I. If not that, then at least Sacred."  
The ancient skeleton laughed.  
"Oh? Oh, that's all? You want to become at least Spirit, boy?"  
Sunny nodded and smiled pleasantly.  
"I do. So, how about it? You knew a thing or two about attaining Supremacy, Eurys. Do you know a thing or two about the Apotheosis, as well?"  
Eurys laughed again, then said in an incredulous tone:  
"I might."