2281 New Recruit  
  
Sunny was sitting on his throne, looking down at Kim and Corsair. The former had just finished delivering the report, while the latter was looking at him with a somewhat distant expression.  
  
Corsair - Master Randall's grandson - was lowering his gaze from time to time, studying the tattoo of an onyx snake that now coiled around his arm, peaking from under the rolled sleeve.  
  
The new addition to the Shadow Clan was a tall man with black hair and piercing blue eyes. He had chiseled features and an aloof expression, exuding a sense of calm confidence and lethal danger. All in all, if there was one word Sunny had to use to describe Corsair, it would be… cool. No, really, Sunny would have killed to look like that as an Awakened. It was like looking at the hero of an Awakened action flick.  
  
…Corsair was going to fit in with the other members of the Shadow Clan, no doubt. They were a colorful cast of characters. Naturally, the new recruit had lost some of his cool after meeting Sunny. Most people were shocked to face the Dark Lord for the first time, although not everyone could hide their bewilderment quite as thoroughly - thаt was because they all expected to see the fearsome Lord of Shadows, but met a carefree and eccentric young man instead.  
  
There was a reason why Sunny went by 'boss', insisted on being called the Dark Lord, and acted like an overgrown child sometimes, though. First of all, because he wanted to. Now that he was a Supreme, there was no reason to put on a mask, so Sunny could be his true self instead of playing some sinister role. And his true self, well… it was very far removed from the solemn majesty expected of a Sovereign, as far as people were concerned.  
  
So, the question was not why he would call himself the Dark Lord. The question was why wouldn't he? It sounded awesome!  
  
There was another reason, as well - the peculiar way people treated Nephis. The meditation halls that resembled temples, the solemn silence that felt like a prayer, the reverence that smelled of religious zeal… Sunny did not want to be worshiped like a deity. It was peculiar, and on top of that, Weaver's blood was flowing through his veins.  
  
So, he acted the way he did to kill any inclination his subordinates could have to treat him as some sort of half-baked god. His act seemed to have worked wonderfully on Corsair, who had entered the throne room with a subtle hint of awe in his cold blue eyes, but was leaving it in pure bafflement instead.  
  
Sunny yawned, then waved a hand at Kim.  
  
'I see… that is good to hear, Kimmy. And yeah, I do know that we need more healers than just Quentin and Fleur. But, you know! Luring a healer into a shady clan of murderous spies is not easy!'  
  
He looked at her with a smile. 'Oh, I have an idea! How about you tell our guys to just do better and not get wounded, in the first place?'  
  
Kim glanced at him nonchalantly. 'This shady clan of murderous spies has spent three million credits on medical supplies this quarter, boss.'  
  
Sunny froze for a moment.  
  
'Let's poach some healers, Kimmy! Let's do it soon! Those Song sisters have too many… how about we steal a Blood Sister or two from Seishan?'  
  
She took a deep breath and glanced at him silently for a bit, then lowered her gaze. 'I'll try.'  
  
A few minutes later, the report was over, and he sent them away with a lazy smile.  
  
'Welcome to the Shadow Clan, Corsair! Rest well today - your training will start tomorrow. Naturally, there is no sun here on the Forgotten Shore… a friend of mine sort of destroyed it… so day and night are exactly the same, which makes the concept of tomorrow feel vague. But you'll get used to it. Oh, and don't disappoint your teacher. I practically raised her since she was a wee little Awakened Monster… Argh, how time flies…'  
  
Corsair paled. 'D - destroyed a sun? No, wait, boss, you raised a Monster?'  
  
Sunny glanced at him in confusion. 'Well, yeah. Why, have you never destroyed a sun?'  
  
Corsair slowly shook his head.  
  
Sunny remained silent for a bit, then scratched the tip of his nose in embarrassment.  
  
'Oh. No, no! It's nothing to be ashamed of. You… you are still young…'  
  
The new recruit turned to follow Kim with a pained expression on his face. Before he left, though, Sunny suddenly called out to him:  
  
'Hey, Corsair. You used to be a professional killer, right?'  
  
Corsair glanced at him and frowned a little. 'To be precise, boss, people hired me to solve problems. If the problem was some scumbag, though… or a group of scumbags… well, then I had to solve them instead.'  
  
Sunny glanced at him with an expression of deep contemplation, then smiled. 'Wow. That sounded so cool! 'I had to solve them instead', I'll seriously need to steal that. But anyway, give me some professional advice then. How would one go about killing a sea?'  
  
Corsair blinked.  
  
'Killing… a sea, boss?'  
  
Sunny nodded a couple of times. 'Yes! You see, there is this sea… a very vile sea. We have a score to settle, but I haven't quite figured out how to kill a sea, yet. So I thought perhaps you would know, being a professional and all!'  
  
The new recruit remained quiet for a while, then said evenly:  
  
'I have to apologize, boss. That's a bit… outside my area of expertise. I mostly specialized in dealing with humans, Nightmare Creatures, and an occasional rogue killer robot or two.'  
  
Sunny sighed. 'I see… well, no matter. I'll figure something out…'  
  
With that, Kim and Corsair left.  
  
Sunny remained on his throne, staring at the ceiling with a bored expression. Naturally, there was a lot happening in his mind.  
  
Hundreds of shadows were moving across the Dark City, clearing it of debris, preparing less damaged buildings for repairs and reconstruction, and marking unsalvageable ones for demolition. Things on the surface were going well, but the catacombs were still presenting a problem, requiring him to oversee the process personally - not only because of the delicate nature of working underground, but also because the devastating light of the sun had never reached the extensive network of tunnels below the city. There were still Nightmare Creatures there…  
  
Gaining control of the catacombs was a vital task, though. A good city began from a robust sewage system, after all. What made people different from beasts? It was the fact that humans had plumbing, naturally!  
  
He needed to decide where and how to bury the innumerable bones resting in the catacombs, too. He also needed to decide what to do with the collapsed lighthouse of the Dark City… restoring it was possible, but every member of the Shadow Clan could see in the darkness. They did not need a beacon of light. Potential settlers would be different, though.  
  
Then, there was the issue of the seven enormous statues. The Ρriestess was right in front of the Dark City, heavily damaged. Sunny could return its broken arm to where it belonged, but then that posed the question - was he supposed to put the severed heads of the statues back where they belonged, as well?  
  
There was so much work… Additionally, he also kept an eye on the members of the Shadow Clan. A cohort was hunting down the members of an eerie cult in the bowels of NQSC. Another cohort was preparing to eliminate a Terror that had made a nest in the sewers below a small town in the Western Quadrant and seemed to be targeting children. Yet another cohort was preparing to rob a bank - or rather, extract a seemingly cursed book from a private deposit box there…  
  
'Why did I never think about robbing a bank?'  
  
With his Aspect, it would have been easy. Sunny sighed. Then, he froze.  
  
'Wait. Why have I never thought about opening a bank?'  
  
His eyes twinkled in the darkness.  
  
'Aiko!'