2292 Name Giver  
  
Rain had really expected that her Aspect would reveal itself during the war… maybe even at the last possible moment, in her most dire moment of need - so that she could turn the tables and save the day in the most dramatic fashion.  
  
In hindsight, it could have never happened that way.  
  
Rain not quite sure how the world worked - no one was, really - but she could sense that there was subtle poetry to the nebulous crossroads of fate. People and their choices rhymed with each other… so did the circumstances that people could not control. So, in a sense, lives were like poems.  
  
Not all of them were, naturally, or at least not in equal measure. But the lives of those who wielded immense power or were exceptional in some regard usually were.  
  
Rain did not wield immense power, and while she was somewhat special, she would not go as far as to call herself exceptional. True, she had achieved something astonishing once - she had become Awakened without relying on the cruel graces of the Nightmare Spell - but most of that accomplishment belonged to her brother, not herself.  
  
Still, there seemed to be some poetic inclination to her life, as well. And while the poem of her life described war and bloodshed, that was not its theme.  
  
Her Flaw, the Crown of Thorns, proved as much.  
  
What was the theme, then?  
  
The conclusion of the Great War had been a confusing affair for Rain. She had barely come to terms with the fact that she was a Legacy - a princess in the making, no different from Tamar. But then, in the blink of an eye, her brother betrayed everyone and diеd.  
  
So, instead of a princess, she became the sister of a dead traitor… the most despicable villain in the world, no less.  
  
Luckily, Rain was merely an Awakened, so she had not seen Lady Nephis strike her brother down herself - her sight was not keen enough for that. In fact, she did not know what had happened until much later, when Cassie's voice suddenly resounded in her mind, telling her not to worry. She learned that her brother was alive, and only then that he was supposed to have died, as far as everyone was concerned. So, she did not even get an opportunity to feel worried about him.  
  
And even more fortunately, no one really knew that Rain - or rather, Rani of the Seventh Royal Legion - was in any way connected to the Lord of Shadows.  
  
In any case, the world began changing at a horrible speed after that. When everything was said and done, Rain decided to stay behind in Godgrave to participate in the construction of the road across the Collarbone Plain - the road that was supposed to connect the former Sword and Song Domains. She made that decision for no other reason than out of fondness for building things, not that it carried little weight. In fact, it carried great weight, and she made that choice after contemplating what she wanted to do with her life both gravely and for a long time.  
  
Rain was sick and tired of war, sick and tired of destroying things, and sick and tired of seeing things be destroyed.  
  
So, she returned to her role as a member of a road construction crew - granted, this time, she was not a mundane laborer but an Awakened elite.  
  
And it was when the construction of the road was finished a few months later that her Aspect was suddenly unsealed - not on a battlefield, but in the middle of a construction site instead.  
  
It was quite fitting, especially for someone whose Flaw made all her battle experience and years of bitter training more or less meaningless.  
  
Rain had spent innumerable hours wondering what her Aspect would be, but in the end… it turned out far too peculiar for аnyone to have guessed.  
  
Honestly, it was unlike any other.  
  
As an Awakened, Rain could command two Aspect Abilities now. She also had two pools of essence - a pool of soul essence, and a pool of spirit essence.  
  
Her Dormant Ability allowed her to… give names to things. Or rather, Names - they were not quite True Names, but also not quite mundane ones, either. Because these Names were permanent, and wielded power of their own… a modest power, considering thаt she was merely an Awakened, but quite a real power nonetheless.  
  
Bestowing a Name required a single-time infusion of spirit essence. The more spirit essence she infused, the more influence the Name would have on the Named object and the world itself.  
  
The problem was that Rain had yet to figure out how to expand her pool of spirit essence. Despite that, by the time the road across Godgrave was finished, she had somehow managed to gather quite a lot of it - the sky of her Soul Sea, which had once been vast and clear, was entirely covered in stormy clouds by then, drops of rain falling to the surface of the restless sea in constant drizzle.  
  
So, Rain infused all of that essence into the finished road, Naming it the Road of Shadows.  
  
The skies of her Soul Sea cleared when she did, bright sunlight shone upon the glistening water once again, and something miraculous happened.  
  
Before, her brother had taken his Citadel away - but he left the Shadow Realm Fragment, whatever that was, behind. As he explained to her, he could control the Fragment a little as a Supreme, but not enough to make use of it where he was going.  
  
The dome of impenetrable darkness sprawled at the center of the Collarbone Plain, covering a rough sphere dozens of kilometers across. When Rain gave the гoad a Name, though, it stirred, moving to stretch into a thin line that enveloped most of the road's length.  
  
Just like that, the Road of Shadows became safe from the merciless radiance of the white abyss above Godgrave.  
  
And Rain passed out from essence exhaustion, causing quite a stir among the members of the Shadow Clan hidden among the road builders to protect her.  
  
In any case, it worked out great - sadly enough, Rain had not been able to achieve something quite as monumental again. With the road across Godgrave built, Rain traveled to Bastion to participate in the construction of the Rivergate Dam and begin her lessons of Shaping.  
  
She had been carefully experimenting with Names and trying to understand her own soul better all along. She discovered a few interesting things - for example, that giving Names in the runic language that the Nightmare Spell used was more efficient, consuming less spirit essence to achieve the same result.  
  
Rain also discovered that Naming something that already possessed a True Name seemed to be impossible. She learned how to use her Awakened Ability better, as well.  
  
Her Awakened Ability allowed her to assign descriptors to things - Epithets, as they were called. Unlike the Names, the Epithets were not permanent and only existed for as long as she could sustain them with her soul essence.  
  
For example, she could assign an Epithet to a shield, making it the Indestructible Shield. As a result, the shield would become vastly more durable until Rain's essence ran out. Actually, as an Awakened, she could assign two Epithets at the same time. So, she could turn it into the Indestructible Magnetic Shield, making adversary weapons stick to its surface after failing to break it.  
  
Naturally, more powerful Epithets consumed more essence. The 'indestructible' descriptor was more potent, but also more costly than the 'durable' descriptor.  
  
There were many factors affecting how potent and how expensive Epithets were, in fact. For one, the more an Epithet conflicted with the nature of the thing, the more essence sustaining it consumed - so, making a shield extra durable was easier than making it brittle. Assigning Epithets to living beings was always more expensive, as well…  
  
But Rain still could make a person attacking her an Immobile Person if she wished to, especially if she knew the person's name - or even better, their True Name. At least for a few seconds, if their Rank was not too high.  
  
In fact, assigning Epithets to things that had True Names or had been Named always cost less essence.  
  
It worked the other way around, too - assigning True Names she had learned as Epithets consumed less essence аnd produced far greater results than simply using words of the human language.  
  
For example, assigning the True Name of Burning to an adversary sword would easily melt it, while simply assigning it the 'Burning' epithet would heat it up enough to make the adversary drop it, at best.  
  
In that way, using her Awakened Ability was sometimes far more useful than using Shaping itself. After all, a Shaper has to speak the Names and channel them to perform sorcery - as soon as the sound of their voice fell to silence, the power of their sorcery would start to be dispelled. However, an Epithet remained in effect for as long as Rain had essence.  
  
She could even sustain a few minor Epithets indefinitely, as long as she chose them wisely.  
  
She could even assign Epithets to herself…  
  
Rain took a sip of her cocktail and grinned at Telle and Tamar.  
  
Her friends did not know, but she was not Promise of a Distant Sky at the moment.  
  
In fact, she was Sober, Well-Rested Promise of a Distant Sky.  
  
Granted, that second Epithet was devouring her essence at quite an appalling rate.  
  
Even the combined power of her Aspect and Shaping were no match for Chief Bethany, it seemed.