2301 Blessed Land  
  
Eventually, Sunny emerged from the billowing smoke, streams of bright lava flowing down from the jade surface of his black armor. He shook it off his shoulder, then glanced at Kai.  
  
'It's done.'  
  
Sunny exhaled slowly.  
  
'It seems like the Tyrant had been growing in the depths of the volcano for a long time. In the past, оnly its minions would have ventured to the surface, but with the growing population of Ravenheart, the scent of human souls must have attracted its attention. It's a good thing that we dealt with the bastard before it shattered the roof of the magma chamber trying to climb up.'  
  
A Corrupted Tyrant was a powerful enemy for Kai, and it could still pose some danger to Sunny - but only if Sunny did not pay attention. Since Cassie had informed him of what powers the loathsome creature wielded, he managed to kill it both quickly and cleanly.  
  
In fact, he had spent most of the time simply looking around the depths of the volcano, not battling the Nightmare Creature. There were plenty of interesting things to explore there.  
  
Sunny considered his words for a moment. 'Initially, I was a little surprised that you did not follow me down, Nightingale. But once I dove into the lava, I understood… even with my Supreme constitution, staying alive down there was not easy. I was almost cooked alive. This is not a mundane volcano, is it?'  
  
Kai slowly shook his head.  
  
'No, it is not. My own constitution as a Dragonslayer grants me a great deal of resistance against various types of attacks, especially those based on fire… but even for me, the heat inside this volcano is too much.' He sighed.  
  
'You must have seen the reports Lonesome Howl and her scouts brought. The lands west of Ravenheart are a frozen hell - the cold there is so absolutе that even Saints cannot survive. But in fact, those lands had not always been frozen, and the theoretical ocean beyond them was not frozen either. The signs of fallen civilizations she discovered, encased in ice, are proof. More than that…'  
  
Kai's expression turned somber.  
  
'The cold must have spread eastward slowly, considering the remains. And it is my belief that it would have continued to spread, eventually turning the entire Dream Realm into a frigid, frozen, dead world - if not for this mountain chain and its mystical volcanoes, which servе as a barrier against the slaying cold. It is because of them and the ash they expel that people can live in Ravenheart; the soil here is so fertile, and the eerie beings that dwell in the snow can't cross over from the frozen wastelands.' He lingered for a moment and added with a faint smile: 'It is also my belief that these volcanoes had been created, or at least enhanced, by the Jade Palace and its Component. Well… in a way.'  
  
Sunny raised an eyebrow.  
  
'I don't think Nephis ever mentioned what the Component of Ravenheart is, at least not in detail.'  
  
Kai considered his words for a moment. 'It is a bit convoluted, isn't it? The Citadels and their Components. After all, they were created by the Nightmare Spell - but, at the same time, the Spell did not simply invent the powers of the Citadels from scratch. Rather, in most cases, it simply took the innate qualities of existing places of power and rebuilt them in a way that its carriers could easily use, adding a universal foundation to all of them at the same time. Most Citadels seem to be meant to be ruled by Saints, but the Great Citadels are clearly meant for the Sovereigns.'  
  
Sunny nodded.  
  
Indeed… Night Garden, for example, allowed Nephis to anchor both the entrance and the exit points of her Dream Gate in the same world. Since only Supremes could make use of that Component, it was not made to be wielded by a Saint.  
  
Kai continued in a neutral tone: 'So it is not really correct to say that the volcanoes protecting Ravenheart and the lands around it from the cold were created by one of its Componеnt. Rather, they were created by the power of the Jade Palace, and the Spell created a Component based on that power later on.'  
  
His radiant green eyes glistened.  
  
'That Component is… well, honestly, I can only call it terraforming. The Jade Palace can slowly transform the lands around it - for example, it can make them warmer, while at the same time enriching the soil with mystical volcanic ash. As a result, countless people can find shelter from the cold in the realm surrounding Ravenheart, and gather numerous bountiful harvests a year. If managed correctly, this land can become the treasure trove of humanity.' He shook his head.  
  
'Naturally, the opposite is also true. If the ruler of the Jade Palace wished to, they could turn this land into an uninhabitable hell, poisoning the entire Tear River Basin. Oh… and I can't accomplish much with my Transcendent power - the changes would be too slow and gradual. However, Nephis can.'  
  
Sunny scratched his helmet.  
  
'Right… I think I remember Cassie and Jet assigning a bunch of renowned scientists to a lengthy research project.'  
  
Kai nodded.  
  
'Indeed. Ravenheart - the Jade Palace - offers great power to its ruler. But it is a very intricate affair. After all, building a healthy ecosystem is a difficult task… it is easier to mess things up than to improve upon the existing equilibrium. So, we have left things as they are for now.'  
  
Sunny remembered the majestic black silhouette of the Jade Palace. The power Kai described was mystical in nature, but by calling it 'terrafоrming', he made Sunny think about it in a different context.  
  
'I wonder if we can somehow catapult the entire thing to Moon. Or to Mars. That'd be pretty awesome, wouldn't it?'  
  
He chuckled at his own thoughts and nodded at Kai.  
  
'Well, you aren't wrong. Local volcanoes do seem special… but this one in particular is extra special.'