2305 Childhood Home  
  
Seishan did, indeed, arrive the next day, accompanied by two of her sisters. Kai met them at the end of the great stone bridge and invited them into the Jade Palace, where they were supposed to have a discussion regarding the development of the Dream Realm's western reaches.  
  
Each оf the seven Song sisters controlled a Citadel in the basin of the River of Tears or in Godgrave, although some of them spent most of their time here in Ravenheart. Beastmaster was in charge of a lion's share of logistics of the Human Domain, for example, Lonesome Howl commanded Awakened soldiers in a subjugation crusade across the wild expanse of the Dream Realm, Silent Stalker led teams of seasoned scouts to explore previously unmapped regions… Seishan herself was somewhat of an administrator, assisting Kai in the infinitely complex task of managing the West.  
  
Today, it was two of the sisters that Kai invited into the Jade Palace, while the third emerged from the caves below it. The meeting took place in a room without windows, illuminated only by the light of a Memory lantern - there were plenty of shadows for Sunny to hide in, but he still chose the darkest corner, wary of the three women bearing the lineage of Beast God.  
  
Revel was leaning on the wall with her arms crossed, her expression aloof, while Seishan and Death Singer took seats opposite Kai. The mood in the room was somewhat odd - after all, Kai was an usurper ruling their childhood home, and they, who should have owned the Jade Palace, had to be invited in by him.  
  
That said, the atmosphere was surprisingly cordial. The Song sisters were not exactly friendly, but they were also not hostile… whatever emotions they felt about their mother's fate were kept private, and all they showed the world was cold practicality.  
  
'Greetings.'  
  
Kai smiled, ready to begin the discussion.  
  
Sunny remained hidden. In fact, he was not planning to reveal himself unless there was no other choice - Kai was supposed to serve as his proxy, asking the questions that Sunny wanted to ask.  
  
Luckily, it was quite difficult to discover Sunny if he did not want to be discovered. Not only was he a shadow, but his presence had also assumed a special quality after he attained Supremacy - it was easily suppressed, disappearing completely if he wished to.  
  
'I don't even have blood now… not in my natural state, at least. Surely, I won't be discovered.'  
  
As soon as he thought that, Death Singer looked around with a confused expression and said, her voice sounding peculiarly excited:  
  
'This room… smells like death.'  
  
'What!'  
  
Revel and Seishan spared her glances, while Kai coughed.  
  
'Concerning the newest herd of Nightmare Creatures captured by Lonesome Howl in the south - it is being driven north as we speak and is expected to arrive at the base of the Moonriver Plains in two weeks. I hope that Beastmaster will be ready to enthrall the selected abominations rapidly. The selection this time is skewed in favor of construction work… procuring flight-capable creatures has proven difficult once again…'  
  
Revel looked at him darkly.  
  
'Something is wrong here.'  
  
Kai paused, then asked politely:  
  
'What makes you say that, Saint Revel?'  
  
Seishan was studying the room, her expression calm. When her gaze stopped at Kai, she answered instead of her sister:  
  
'Hel says that this room smells like death. And you are a surprisingly awful liar, Kai - you always have been, ever since the Bright Castle.'  
  
His smile grew a little forced.  
  
Revel raised an eyebrow, her dark eyes full of amusement:  
  
'Your blood has a peculiar scent today, Nightingale. You seem… stressed.'  
  
Kai forced out a chuckle.  
  
'…Do I?'  
  
Hidden in the shadows, Sunny let out a mental sigh.  
  
'Total failure.'  
  
These divine lineages were tough to deal with!  
  
With that, he manifested himself into the human form, took a few steps forward, and calmly sat down next to Kai.  
  
Revel suddenly tensed, while Death Singer stared at him with wide eyes. Only Seishan remained composed, studying him calmly.  
  
Sunny smiled at her.  
  
'Please stop bullying my best friend. He gets shy around… well, anyone. And also, smelling someone's blood? That's creepy. Keep your beastly habits private, please.'  
  
Death Singer glanced at Seishan and pointed at Sunny with a finger.  
  
'Sister… I see dead people!'  
  
Seishan smiled silently, while Revel smirked.  
  
'So you never actually died. Why am I not surprised?'  
  
Sunny looked at the Lightslayer and grinned.  
  
'Oh, actually, I did die. But staying dead for too long seemed horribly uncouth. So, I snapped out of it.'  
  
Kai turned his head to stare at him in resigned silence.  
  
Seishan, meanwhile, bowed faintly.  
  
'We greet the King.'  
  
Sunny waved a hand dismissively.  
  
'No, no. The King? That is too formal…'  
  
He smiled brightly.  
  
'Just call me the Dark Lord.'  
  
Seishan opened her mouth, then closed it, then opened it again.  
  
Finally, she spoke in a carefully neutral tone:  
  
'As you wish, my lord. Judging by your company… shall I take it that Nephis is aware of your return?'  
  
Sunny nodded.  
  
'If you are asking if there's another Domain War coming up, then no. We have no plans of wrestling for the throne of humanity, she and I. In fact, it's quite the opposite.'  
  
Seishan let out a relieved sigh.  
  
'I see.'  
  
There was almost a hint of bitterness in her voice.  
  
She lingered for a moment, then asked tentatively:  
  
'If so… to what do we owe the pleasure of meeting you, my lord?'  
  
And at the same time, Death Singer pointed at Sunny again.  
  
'Sister, who is this dead boy?'  
  
She looked at him furtively, then added:  
  
'And why is he so pretty?'  
  
Seishan exhaled slowly.  
  
'Hel… you promised to tone it down…'  
  
For some reason, Kai looked at her with compassion.  
  
Sunny, meanwhile, stared at the delicate woman with resentment.  
  
'Boy? Listen, auntie, ah, never mind. Why do I even care?'  
  
He was irritated, a little.  
  
'Our oracle is way better. And younger!'  
  
Seishan glanced at him, then at Kai, then back to him.  
  
Eventually, she said:  
  
'Hel, you've met him before. This is the Lord of Shadows.'