2312 Rules of Engagement  
Sunny could not extend his shadow sense to the neighboring volcanoes or to the snowy peaks in the distance, which meant that he could not use Shadow Step to reach them. Naturally, that alone could not stop him. If he wanted to, he could turn into a crow or weave wings out of shadows to fly to the lonesome mountains. He was not in a hurry to try, though.  
  
The sea of clouds below gave him an ominous feeling. 'The laws governing this miniature realm seem to be based on the rules of the Death Game. Naturally, something as important as moving between the peaks should be subject to some kind of limitation.' He remained motionless for a few seconds, then shrugged. 'Let's conduct a little test, then.'  
  
Thrusting his odachi into the ground, Sunny let go of its hilt and crouched. His hand plunged into the shadows, and as he rose, a long javelin was formed by them, resting easily in his grip.  
Sunny weighed the javelin in his hand and studied the white peak looming directly opposite the volcano, far in the distance.  
  
There were dozens of kilometers between the two, and the wind was quite severe. Taking a step forward, Sunny turned his body into a sling and launched the javelin into the dark sky.  
A deafening thunderclap rolled down the slopes of the volcano, and a billowing cloud of ash rose into the air in a vast circle around him. Below Sunny, the dark surface of the weathered rock was revealed from under the ash - only to fracture immediately, a web of deep cracks spreading from under his feet.  
  
The shadow javelin shot into the sky, sundering the veil of ash that obscured it and unleashing a torrent of pale moonlight. It was as if a silver line had been cut across the dark heavens. Sunny watched it fly with a curious expression. If he remembered correctly.  
  
There were Beast figures on all three white squares facing the remaining black ones. So, a Snow Beast should be resting on the slopes of the snowy mountain the javelin was aimed at. Sunny could not see that far, but the Snow Beast was still in for an unpleasant surprise. Even if the javelin landed nowhere near the creature, a comet charged with Supreme essence was about to hit the mountain. The Beast would have to react in some way. That reaction alone would let Sunny learn more about the situation.  
  
When the javelin breached about half of the distance to the snowy peak, however, he paled a little. 'Oh, my.'  
It was quite difficult to rattle Sunny, these days, but he had to admit that he had felt a cold chill running down his spine just then.  
That was because when the javelin escaped from the clouds of ash, a gigantic grey tentacle rose from the sea of clouds below, reaching higher than the mountains and the volcanoes, and easily swatted it away. Then, the titanic tentacle swayed lightly and fell back, disappearing into the milky white clouds a dozen moments later.  
  
Its unfathomable mass created a breach in the swirling veil of clouds for a few seconds, but Sunny wisely decided not to try prying into what lay hidden below it. Some things were not meant to be seen by mere mortals, and some were not meant to be seen even by Supreme demigods.  
He remained motionless for a while, then sighed, retrieved his odachi, and placed it on his shoulder. 'Let's scratch the plan to explore the roots of the volcano, I guess.'  
  
Sunny was quite happy that he had decided to throw a javelin first before trying to fly to the distant white peak personally. It seemed that he had been right to assume that there were laws governing the movement between the mountains. Not only that, but there was also an entity meant to enforce these laws.  
He remembered the harrowing gaze that had once fallen on him in the heart of the Estuary of the Great River, judging his soul. The corpses of innumerable Great Nightmare Creatures, who had failed to pass the judgment, were floating in the dark water... but Sunny was allowed to pass unscathed. The alarming watcher had seemed unfathomably powerful to him as Master... and now as a Supreme, Sunny still had no desire whatsoever to fight against another being serving the Demon of Dread. He did not even want to know what that being was.  
  
Still. 'There should be an allowed way to move between the mountains, though. I just need to discover it.'  
For now, however, Sunny wanted to focus on something else. He wanted to explore the volcano, and especially the crumbling castle standing in the middle of its crater.  
  
Just as he turned back, however, something unexpected happened. He sensed a new shadow appearing on the dark slopes.  
'Huh?'  
And a few moments later, a familiar figure landed on the ground near him.  
Ivory armor, auburn hair, electric green eyes... obnoxiously handsome face.  
  
Sunny blinked a few times. 'Kai?'  
Indeed, it was none other than Transcendent Nightingale, the Dragonslayer. The charming Saint looked no different from how he had been in the Toy Room, and when Sunny shifted his gaze to peer into the supposed Kai's soul, it was pure and radiant, with not a hint of Corruption hiding in its depths.  
He did not seem like an evil doppelganger or an illusory construct, but like the real deal instead.  
  
'Were you sucked into the Death Game, too?'  
Kai raised an eyebrow. 'Oh? So that is what happened?'  
Sunny simply stared. 'I'm pretty sure that it is, yeah. Why, what did you think had happened?'  
Kai hesitated for a moment, then smiled. 'Well... I'm not sure. You told us to back away, and the next thing I knew, I was standing on a volcano. That one over there.'  
He pointed to one of the three volcanoes and added neutrally: 'I was honestly a bit disoriented. But then I saw the clouds of ash part, as if cut by something, and finally noticed you here. So, I flew over.'  
  
Sunny shivered. '…You flew over?'  
Kai coughed. 'Yes. I was already in the air when that… that thing rose from the clouds. I guess I could have turned back at that point, but I would have had to slow down to make a turn. And honestly, seeing that tentacle made me want to fly faster than I had ever flown before.'  
  
Sunny lеt out a stunned chuckle. 'No kidding.'  
He remained silent for a few seconds, and then smiled. 'Well, welcome to my volcano. You don't know how glad I am to see you, pawn… I mean, buddy! How glad I am to see you, buddy…'