2342 Divine Whims  
There was a long time to go before sunset, so the three of them were stuck on the newborn volcano for now. Sunny spent about an hour turning the shadow house into a shadow manor, purely for his own amusement. The elegant edifices rose and fell, changing style. Wings were added to the main building; a bell tower rose from the ground, the bell ringing loudly as it was assaulted by the wind.  
  
After a while, there was even a semblance of garden, perched precariously on the steep slope of the volcano. The bushes, the trees, and the flowers were all inky-black and intricate, but devoid of life.  
  
Sunny sat in front of a flower bed full of black roses for a long time, staring at them intently. Eventually, one of the roses slowly changed, its petals swelling with a vibrant red color.  
  
Color was another property of matter, after all. When light shined on an object, some of it was absorbed, and some of it was reflected - the reflected light was what humans perceived as color. Sunny had never attempted to form the manifested shadows to absorb and reflect light in a specific manner, but nothing really prevented him from trying.  
He had successfully turned the shadow rose red after experimenting for a while. Funnily enough, changing the color of a single flower had been more difficult, and strained him more, than building the entire manor.  
  
Both the manor and the rose were destined to be destroyed in no more than a day, when the volcano was conquered by the Snow Domain. Their beauty was fleeting, and would be gone in an instant…  
  
But possibly that was what made art truly precious. Its evanescent nature.  
  
Sunny had never deemed himself an artist, but at that moment, he thought that possibly being able to create something breathtaking was not too bad.  
He studied the red rose for a few minutes, then shook his head and made it turn black once again.  
Black flowers suited his taste better.  
Even knowing that his black garden would be swallowed by ice and snow come tomorrow, Sunny still made it permanent - partially in defiance of that inevitability, partially out of a peculiar hope that it would survive against all odds.  
  
'It's truly remarkable.'  
Turning his head, Sunny glanced at Kai, who had approached him at some point. There was an expression of wonder on the charming archer's face, prompting Sunny to raise an eyebrow.  
'What is?'  
Kai hesitated for a few seconds, then gestured around them.  
'This. The trees, the flowers, the manor… just appearing out of nowhere on your whim. They say that Supremacy is like taking a half-step into godhood. It all sounded like mere words to me before, but now… now, I am starting to understand what a demigod is.'  
Sunny smiled faintly.  
'Possibly that's because all the Supremes you've met before were half-devils, at best, instead of half-gods.'  
He sighed and then rose from the ground, turning away from the black roses.  
'What do you think being Supreme means?'  
Kai considered his question for a few seconds.  
'A Supreme is someone who rules. Someone who carries responsibility for their subjects, and is powerful enough to bear the weight of that responsibility. Someone whose soul is vast enough to encompass the world, thus becoming a Domain… a Sovereign.'  
Sunny smiled and shook his head.  
'No. A Supreme is simply someone who is daring enough to reshape the world according to their whims.'  
He patted Kai on the shoulder.  
'You are bound to become Supreme yourself, onе day soon. So, I suggest you start daring.'  
Kai stared at him blankly for a bit, which made Sunny sigh.  
'Stop being afraid of your own power, Kai. Embrace it.'  
His friend frowned and lingered for a while.  
  
Eventually, he asked:  
'Even if it turns me into a monster?'  
Sunny chuckled.  
'Especially if it turns you into a monster. How else are you going to survive in this appalling world, let alone change it?'  
Inhaling deeply, he headed for the manor. His short second of rest was over, and he had to get back to weaving.  
As Sunny walked away, Kai suddenly asked:  
'Is that what you did?'  
Sunny halted his steps, smiled wistfully, and then continued walking.  
'Of course. Countless times over.'  
Kai remained silent for a bit, then shook his head.  
'Well, I disagree. I don't think that becoming a monster is something to be proud of. So, I refuse.'  
Sunny grinned.  
'Says a guy who killed a dragon, and is now himself a dragon!'  
He kept that thought to himself, though. Instead, he gave Kai a thumbs-up.  
'What a daring thing to say. Keep it up!'  
With that, Sunny disappeared behind the door of the manor, leaving the charming archer alone.  
Well… alone, being watched by Slayer.  
The murderous shadow was sharpening her swords on a piece of stone - a completely unnecessary thing to do, considering the sublime materials from which they had been crafted - while observing the two of them silently.  
There was no particular emotion in her inky-black eyes, but the measured movement of a blade across the surface of the stone slowed down for a moment.  
  
In the evening, they crossed the obsidian bridge and conquered another mountain in the north. From there, they could see the fourth row of Ariel's Game… and the central square of the board, where a Snow Devil was waiting for them, protecting it.  
Sunny had expected to see another mountain… but he could not have been more wrong.  
As he, Kai, and Slayer stood on the slope of another newborn volcano, their expressions were a little odd.  
Sunny blinked a couple of times.  
'What the hell?'  
In front of them, far in the distance, a huge tree stood where a mountain was supposed to be. Its roots were hidden beneath the sea of clouds, and its branches seemed to support the sky, spanning countless kilometers across.  
Kai glanced at Sunny, dumbfounded.  
'I'm… not seeing things, am I? How can such an enormous tree exist?'  
Sunny nodded slowly, unable to look away from the fantastical view.  
'No, you're not. And indeed… that is one humongous tree.'  
He shook his head in disbelief and said, his voice full of wonder:  
'I mean, it's almost as large as a single branch of the largest tree I've ever seen…'