2344 Bitter Solitude  
As Sunny worked, Kai remained silent for a while, resting. It did not seem like he was ready to sleep, and there was nothing really for him to do on the barren volcano. The charming archer glanced at the walls of the crumbling fortress for a while - or rather, through them. He was observing their enemies, most likely.  
  
The remaining Crystal Wasps, the snow worm, the clockwork giant… 'Stop staring at the frightening Nightmare Creatures, Kai. That will only wind up more, not help you recover.'  
Kai slowly glanced away from whatever horror he was observing and focused on Sunny. Eventually, he asked:  
'That is a strange form of sorcery. I don't think I've ever seen anyone enchant something in that way before.'  
Sunny nodded.  
'I don't think there's anyone else capable of performing this form of sorcery in the world, anymore. I'm the only one.'  
Kai had to have an idea of what his Aspect Abilities were. So, he would know that creating Memories was a skill Sunny possessed, not an Ability. The charming archer glanced at him with interest.  
  
'How did you learn it?'  
Sunny responded without looking up, his six hands forming the spellweave inside the black bow, one string of shadow essence at a time. 'Oh. One of my Attributes allows me to see the spellweave of Memories, while another one allows me to touch it. One time… I was in a pretty desperate situation. So I figured out how to create a rudimentary Memory to escape it.'  
He smiled faintly.  
'Then, it was just a lot of research, study, and experimentation. I slowly taught myself how to do more by watching what the Spell does.'  
He glanced at Kai briefly.  
'What about you? You seem to be perfectly suited for Shaping, with that Aspect of yours. Have you not tried to master it?'  
Kai chuckled.  
'Oh… I tried. I seem to be a special case, though. Some people have a talent for Shaping, while some people don't. What I have, however, is negative talent.'  
Sunny raised an eyebrow.  
'How so?'  
Kai shrugged with a smile.'Because of my Aspect, the True Names I invoke are extremely powerful. In exchange, however, it is especially difficult for me to master them… Lady Nephis thinks that it's the way for the world to balance things out.'  
He sighed.  
'I can't even speak the Names as a human - at least nоt yet. I can invoke them pretty easily as a dragon, though, almost as if a dragon's maw is meant to bellow them. But it's of no use, really, since I can barely keep the Names in my mind. Even after years of effort, I've only mastered a meager few.'  
  
Sunny contemplated his words for a few seconds. 'I'm not buying that someone like you is not meant to be a Shaper. Maybe you just have not met the condition to master the Sorcery of Names, yet. Things will probably change dramatically when you reach a higher Rank. Alternatively… it might be connected to your Aspect Legacy. Or not. You have not received it yet, have you?'  
Kai shook his head.  
'No. But I don't see how an Aspect Legacy can help me become a better sorcerer. Aren't Legacy Relics usually just powerful Memories?'  
Sunny chuckled.  
'Usually, уes. But not always. Oh, and technically, Legacy Relics do not need to be powerful - they just need to complement your Aspect greatly.'  
He pointed to himself with one of his forty - two fingers.  
'Take me, for example. My Aspect Legacy is actually a… skillset, of sorts. I developed it myself, but the Spell had helped me take the first step - or rather, take it faster. It also used to reward me with Relics when I reached certain milestones. Then there is Nephis, whose Aspect Legacy is based in understanding, and who is rewarded for it with nothing except knowledge.'  
  
He returned to weaving the strings of shadow essence.  
'So even though most Aspect Legacies are indeed Memories, or more rarely Echoes, not all of them are.'  
They remained silent for a while. At some point, however, Kai studied him with a neutral expression and asked tentatively:  
'Sunny… can I ask you something?'  
Sunny nodded while keeping his focus on the black blow.  
Kai hesitated for a few seconds.  
'Before… you told me that my survival would depend on my companions, while their survival would depend on me. That no one survives in the Dream Realm alone.'  
Sunny raised an eyebrow.  
'So I did.'  
Kai lingered for a while.  
'But you were living in Godgrave all alone when we met. A solitary Saint, all alone in the world. Did… did you speak from experience, or was it simply common wisdom?'  
Sunny smiled faintly.  
A Saint… a Saint was someone who had braved the Dream Realm and conquered three Nightmares. As far as Sunny knew, there was only one person who had conquered the Third Nightmare alone - the Princess of War, Morgan of Valor.  
Kai seemed to be curious about his previous solitude. He sighed.  
'I spoke from experience. I had someone to depend on, too, in the past. I had companions.'  
'You were one of them, dummy.'  
Kai glanced at him mournfully, not saying anything… and yet, it seemed like he wanted Sunny to say more. Sunny chuckled.  
'Well, it did not end well.'  
He picked up one more soul shard and placed it into the weave, carefully anchoring innumerable strings of essence to it.  
'It did not end well because I betrayed my companions, and lost them. I want to say that I had a good reason to abandon them… maybe I did… but in the end, it was a selfish reason. I am a very selfish person, Kai. I am a very greedy person as well. My selfish greed was my undoing.'  
  
What would have happened if Sunny had stayed with his cohort and faced the First Seeker with them? If he had made a different wish? Would it have been for the best? Or would he have spent the rest of his days living in regret? Had he made an unforgivable mistake? He did not know.  
He did know that he regretted losing his companions bitterly, though. Some days, it felt too bitter to endure.  
Kai shook his head slowly.  
'You do not look like someone who is undone, Sunny.'  
There was some truth to that, Sunny was a Sovereign, after all.  
  
He glanced at Kai and smiled.  
'Looks can be deceiving.'