2360 Leader of the Pack  
  
On the other side of the mountain, Slayer had begun her barrage. The pack of Great Beasts was rushing across the bridge, turning into billowing streams of snow from time to time - Sunny was not sure what Attributes the grotesque Wolves possessed, but they seemed quite elusive.  
  
He did not sense any new shades entering his soul, at least, which meant that none of them had been slain by the arrows.  
  
On the eastern slope of the volcano, Kai sent an arrow flying, as well. Sunny heard it fly - this one was quite unique, having been crafted specifically for the charming archer. Its enchantment allowed him to imbue the arrowhead with sound, which allowed Kai to record his commands and deliver them from a distance. In other words, the arrow carried his mystical voice.  
  
Far away, the Clockwork Giant had already stepped onto the glass bridge. The singing arrow struck him square in the chest… and powerlessly bounced away, not dealing the Cursed Beast any damage.  
  
That was just as Sunny had expected.  
  
Empowered by the boon of ash and Sunny's own deathly will, Kai might have been able to wound some other Cursed being. But the brass giant glanced like a thing that had been created specifically to be sturdy and resilient… practically indestructible.  
  
Sunny had known that this particular adversary would be too tough to be pierced by arrows, enchanted or not. That was the very reason why he had sent Slayer to fight the Snow Wolves - the nature of the malevolent training dummy made it impervious to most of her arsenal.  
  
In fact, it was probably impervious to most anything, which was why Kai with his rattling sonic attacks and Abundance with its sheer mass were a better choice. Even if they were not able to destroy the Cursed Beast, they would at least be able to stall him.  
Sunny was not at all ashamed to use the easy, but effective powers of Abundance to his advantage. A dumb meat shield was a perfect foil for an indestructible adversary. He was actually most worried about himself.  
  
Unlike his two companions, Sunny did not try to attack the Snow Demon on the bridge. He just waited patiently, watching as the blizzards rushed toward the volcano at great speed.  
  
"Ah. This thing just had to go and make me angry…"  
Sunny had not felt any personal animosity toward the Cursed Demon before seeing it advance just now. That was because any creature using a veil of snow as cover reminded him of Winter Beast.  
  
And although Sunny had already killed that Titan, he still carried quite a lot of spite toward it and its ilk in his heart.  
"Come here, then."  
  
Finally, the billowing mass of snow reached the slope of the volcano and enveloped it in bitter cold.  
This was Sunny's territory, though. This was his Domain.  
As soon as the blizzard - and the thing hiding within it - reached the ashen ground, the shadows surged. Darkness swallowed the entire southern side of the volcano, and the ash rose into the air, mixing with the snow.  
The ash remained, but the snow turned black and melted, disappearing without а trace. Even the cold winds were suffocated.  
  
In a matter of seconds, the blizzard was no more.  
  
And once it was gone, the wraith that had been hiding within it was revealed, standing motionlessly in the hurricane of ash.  
Sunny smiled darkly.  
",Unexpected."  
What faced him was a frozen corpse.  
  
It was the corpse of an enormous wolf, its rotten fur as white as snow. There were innumerable crude spears sticking out of its desiccated hide like a palisade, the spearheads carved roughly from flint and obsidian.  
The Cursed monstrosity had three eyes, each burning with malеvolent, crimson flames… the sight of them reminded Sunny of the primordial hunter Jet had slain once, an eternity ago, in front of the Nightmare Gate in NQSC.  
That Gate Guardian had worn a skill with three empty eyes as a helmet, too. Sunny had suspected that most of the Nightmare Creatures trapped in Ariel's Game had been collected by the daemons in the frozen wastelands west of the Jade Palace.  
  
If so, he could imagine the corpse of the appalling wolf being encased in ice after dying to the spears of the primordial humans of the bygone era… only to become possessed by a malevolent spirit thousands of years later and emerge from it as a vengeful wraith.  
Had it been an appalling predator who hunted primal humans and feasted on their flesh? Had it been a guardian Spirit of a human tribe whom the hunters from a different one had slain to eradicate the adversary? Had it hunted alone, or had it led other predators like a bestial deity?  
  
Slayer was fighting the pack of wolves on the northern slope of the volcano right now, but this one - this one might have been the leader of the pack.  
Or possibly their god.  
In any case, Sunny was going to have to face this primordial horror in battle.  
  
The three harrowing eyes of the wolf glanced at Sunny, and he felt his very soul shiver and shudder under their gaze. The pressure that descended upon him was suffocating, and he felt something that he had not felt in a long time.  
A primal, utterly irrational, overwhelming fear rising to drown his wildly beating heart.  
The fear that prey instinctively felt when facing a predator.  
Sunny scoffed.  
  
"Hey, you… who do you think you are?"  
He took a step forward, walking between the Obsidian Wasps. Then, he pointed to the ground with the tip of his odachi.  
"This here is my volcano. So, I suggest you tuck your tail and run."  
  
Instead of answering, the Cursed Demon lowered itself to the ground and let out a dreadful growl. Sunny felt a cold shiver run down his spine, and his very soul shook, as if straining to remain intact.  
  
He was quite certain that this malevolent growl alone could have snuffed out the souls of many humans of a lesser Rank - mundane people, Awakened… possibly even Masters. Saints would be left paralyzed and writhing in agony after being exposed to this malice…  
He grimaced.  
"Very well. Come closer, then… I'll give you the honor of becoming the second god I've slain."