2374 Demon of Doom  
They were the runes left on the floor of the underground cell under the ruined cathedral of the Dark City by one of the two High Priests of thе Nigthmare Spell, from whose corpse Sunny had retrieved Weaver's Mask. He had not been able to read them at first, but managed to discern their meaning during his return to the Forgotten Shore as a Saint.  
  
Taking a step back, Sunny whispered:  
"Thus spoke Weaver… they will open the Gates. And they did, calling forth doom and destruction upon us. Now, in the ruins, gods lay dead. And the daemons have fallen. The Forgotten One comes, wide awake, to consume them."  
  
He closed his eyes for a moment.  
The weapon to kill the gods… was it the Forgotten God himself? Had the Nine wanted to unseal the Void, thus awakening him and causing the end of all existence?  
Was that their vengeance for the blood of their people that the Empire had spilled, for the land it destroyed, and the freedom it robbed?  
Were these bastards fated, or were they a personification of doom?  
"Those… those lunatics."  
  
He shuddered, then shook his head.  
'No… no, I am jumping to conclusions.'  
Weaver had proclaimed that "they" would open the Gates. The they in question could have been the Nine… it could have been the daemons. Or the gods. It could have even been Weaver themselves - the Demon of Fate could have been simply proclaiming their own intention.  
Sunny raised his hands and rubbed his face fiercely.  
  
He had learned so much… but he still did not have any answers!  
How had that damned war ended?  
Had the Nine achieved their goal, or had they ultimately failed?  
Were the Gates of the Void open, or were they still closed?  
The spreading Corruption, the blossoming Nightmare Seeds, and the constant expansion of the Dream Realm suggestеd that they were wide open, and that the Forgotten God was free. And yet, the Forgotten God also seemed imprisoned and asleep, because if he was not, there would be no existence left. All of it would be swallowed by the Void.  
Everything was a paradox, and Sunny did not have the key to solve it.  
'Ah, I don't get it…'  
He groaned.  
  
One thing was certain, though.  
There had always been a third player hiding behind the curtain. The daemons, the gods… and the Nine.  
The fate of the world had been decided by these three forces.  
And while the Nine seemed pitifully weak in comparison to these mythical figures, their influence was anything but. In fact, because of how little was known about them, the Nine seemed especially dangerous.  
No… actually, there was a fourth force as well. The most important of them all. How could Sunny have forgotten?  
There was Weaver.  
  
Sunny exhaled slowly.  
He still did not know how Weaver fit into all of this, what goal Weaver had pursued, and what had happened to them.  
The Oracle had seemed to believe that the Demon of Fаte would be the greatest obstacle in the path of the Nine. Considering that the Nine had intended to kill the gods and destroy the world… did that mean that Weaver's goal had been the opposite?  
No, it did not. Knowing that slippery daemon… not that Sunny knew them that well… it could have been anything. Weaver might have been the enemy of the Nine, or they might have been using the Nine to further their own goals.  
Who could know the truth?  
Well… Slayer could, if she had her memories.  
After all, her task was to kill Weaver.  
'Insanity!'  
"To hell with this."  
  
Turning around, Sunny headed for the Shrine of Truth with determined steps. Entering the cool darkness of its great hall, he ignored Kai and walked directly to Slayer, who was sharpening her swords while leaning her back against one of the altars.  
Stopping in front of her, he looked down and growled:  
"So… tell me. Did you manage to kill Weaver?"  
The sinister Shadow stared at him silently, showing no trace of emotion.  
He scoffed.  
"Or did you fail? Right. You must have."  
Naturally, she had. How could someone so insignificant slay the Demon of Fate? The very thought was preposterous.  
But then again…  
The thought that nine mortals could bring about the death of the gods was preposterous, as well. And yet, the gods were dead.  
Was the woman whose Shadow now served him truly Weaver's killer?  
No, it was impossible.  
"You must have died by Weaver's hand, instead!"  
Slayer showed no reaction at all, as if his words held no meaning.  
However…  
He felt her cold, blacк eyes changing faintly.  
Finally, there was a hint of emotion.  
What was it?  
Pride… despair? Resolve? Confusion?  
It seemed that Slayer did not know herself.  
Well, why would she?  
She did not even remember her name, let alone her past.  
  
Sunny covered his face with a palm and sighed deeply.  
"What, what the hell did you do, you lunatics?"  
Slayer stared at him for a few more seconds, then shrugged and returned to sharpening her swords, completely indifferent to the turmoil in his heart.  
  
Sunny cursed quietly.  
"I… have some strong words to say to Eurys, the next time I meet him."  
  
Kai, who had walked over and was looking at them in confusion, raised a brow.  
"Eurys? Who is that?"  
Sunny looked at him, blinked a few times, and waved a hand in a dismissive gesture.  
"Eurys… he's just an acquaintance of mine. A god - slaying slave, but also a prince, who was banished from death by a divine curse. He just sort of hangs out in the Shadow Realm now, so I visit him from time to time to chat, joke around, and try to kill him. Oh… he's also a skeleton. A talking skeleton. Well, about eighty percent of a talking skeleton - he had lost a few bones over time."  
  
Kai nodded slowly.  
"Ah, I see. Makes sense, I guess. Are you alright, though? You seem… on edge."  
Sunny glanced at him darkly.  
"Naturally I am alright."  
He smiled and pointed at himself with a thumb.  
"I am perfectly alright being on edge."  
Kai coughed.  
"Oh. That's… good, then."  
  
Next morning, three new Snow figures arrived to surround the destroyed volcano.