2381 End of the Hunt.  
  
It was the dead of night when Sunny and Kai returned to the temple. Slayer was still resting, so he simply placed one of the jade figurines next to her and handed the other one to Kai.  
  
The last one, though… that last one, he kept to himself.  
  
The Shrine was tilted and drowning in lava, so placing the figures on the altar was an awkward task. Still, Kai could fly, so it did not pose much of a problem. As the third ring of ash was forming around his soul core, Sunny left once again, threw a wary look at the eerie sculptures rising from the lake of lava, and made his sacrifice.  
  
This was going to be the last truth he would learn before slaying the Snow Tyrant.  
  
They were going to leave the Shrine of Truth in a few hours, which meant that even if another Nightmare Creature fell to their blades, he would only be able to make another offering after conquering the Snow Castle - if it was similar to the castle of Ash. Sunny was not sure what would happen after the Tyrant died, so there was even a possibility that this was going to be the last truth he would receive as a reward in this accursed game.  
  
He took a deep breath.  
  
The figure of the Snow Demon drowned in the lava, and Sunny found himself somewhere else once again.  
  
But this truth was unlike the rest.  
  
Sunny was in pain.  
  
His nebulous body was being eaten alive by a terrifying curse, his secretive mind was being consumed by vicious illusions. His heart was being torn apart by indescribable dread, and his very spirit was broken, his will and desire to live teared from it by a cruel hand.  
  
There was no solace for him, no reprieve.  
  
No choice but to die.  
  
And yet, he refused to. He staggered, walking across the sand with unsteady steps, surrounded by darkness. Somewhere above, the ebony sky shimmered with the light of a myriad of silver stars, but their pale radiance was not enough to illuminate the shadowy valley, let alone warm his mangled, freezing body.  
  
Blood was flowing out of his mouth, spilling through the fangs of his mask as it shone with a beautiful golden light… with the light of divinity. Radiant blood was flowing out of the wounds littering his body, too, soaking the fabric of his dark mantle.  
  
Step. Step. Another step.  
  
Sunny was running out of steps he was fated to make. There were only a few left.  
  
"Aahhhh…"  
  
A groan slipped from his lips, its subtle sound distorted by the mask.  
  
Then, another sound came.  
  
The sound of leaves rustling under the foot of a predator, The sound of graceful wings parting the night sky.  
  
The sound of an arrow piercing the fabric of fate.  
  
The arrowhead struck him in the neck, and he was thrown to the ground.  
  
Sunny fell to his knees, the drops of golden blood shining like precious gems on the sand. Raising a hand, he grasped the smooth black wood of the arrow's shaft - not too dissimilar to the ρolished wooden surface of his mask - and pulled the arrow out, shattering it in his grip.  
  
The firm hand of the archer who had sent the arrow flying was much too weak to harm a being such as him. It only managed to pierce his flesh because there had already been a wound there, on his neck, left by a far more alarming foe.  
  
The arrow was of no consequence…  
  
The legendary poison smeared on its tip, however, was anything but. It was a poison that was not supposed to exist in the world anymore, and yet, here it was.  
  
A dreadful cold spread through his body with dreadful speed. Then, it invaded his soul, his mind, and his spirit.  
  
Suddenly, Sunny felt weak.  
  
He even found it difficult to keep his eyes open. His broken body shuddered.  
  
Cold, cold.  
  
He was cold, and alone.  
  
He was going to leave alone, unwitnessed… just like he had lived. No one would even remembеr that he existed at all.  
  
Death was coming.  
  
It came in the sound of soft steps, taking the form of a woman who walked quietly out from the darkness. The woman wore battered dark armor and a veil that covered her beautiful face, her long, luscious hair tied into a braid.  
  
The starlit night cast a deep shadow onto her, but he could see her cold eyes clearly.  
  
He could see his reflection in them, too.  
  
A nebulous figure shrouded by a tattered mantle, a mask of black polished wood covering its face.  
  
He was Weaver, the Demon of Fate.  
  
The mighty, dreadful daemon…  
  
That mighty daemon was now kneeling in front of a mortal huntress.  
  
A stifled laugh escaped from the daemon's lips, made odd and elusive by the mask.  
  
"You Nine… ah, how we loathe you…"  
  
The Demon of Fate knew the endless despair of struggling against Fate better than anyone else.  
  
The Nine were nothing but pitiful mortals, but they were also fated. Their lives were a convergence of fate. To anyone else, they would seem tiny and pitiful, no more than vermin… but to Weaver, who could see the great tapestry of fate, their figures towered like those of giants, looming above, oppressing Weaver with their crushing weight.  
  
The woman glanced down at the daemon silently.  
  
The daemon smiled behind the mask.  
  
"It was you doing, wasn't it? Oh, what a wicked trap you set for us. We have escaped our siblings… but it seems that we've failed to escape you, in the end."  
  
The daemon knew the woman well. She had been stalking Weaver for a long time, this mortal with a pure soul. Sometimes, she came as a beast. Sometimes, she came as a huntress. The daemon had not seen her moving stealthily across the realms, enduring battle after battle all in order to grow stronger… but they had felt her figure growing closer and closer in the tapestry of fate, constricting them like a serpent.  
  
Until they could not move at all, and there was nowhere to go.  
  
Finally, the woman spoke.  
  
The daemon had thought that her voice would be triumphant, but it was simply tired.  
  
"I know what you are."  
  
The daemon was tired, too.  
  
"If you know what we are, then you know what destroying us means. There is a price that has to be paid for slaying a daemon. Are you prepared to pay that price?"  
  
The woman did not answer.  
  
The daemon let out a long, sorrowful sigh.  
  
"You know nothing, child. You poor girl, it is too late. Please forgive me, if you can."  
  
The woman unsheathed her sword then and plunged it into the daemon's chest in one fluid, speedy motion. There was no hesitation in her strike, and no mercy.  
  
That nebulous figure fell to the ground, lifeless.  
  
The black mask stared blindly at the starlit sky, then fell apart into a hurricane of sparks.  
  
The huntress sighed deeply and glanced at the sky.  
  
At long last, her task was finished.  
  
She swayed lightly and raised a hand, touching her veil in confusion.  
  
Her lips moved subtly, producing a barely audible whisper.  
  
"…What task?"