2400 Breaking the Rules  
  
'Aaahh.'  
  
Sunny could feel his mind slipping.  
  
The Puppeteer loomed above the world like a dark cliff, the giant black orbs of its eerie black eyes staring down upon the slopes of the silken mountain dispassionately.  
  
Kai was still struggling to free himself from under the mass of black silk, but he was almost entirely immobilized by now. Sunny was straining against the Puppeteer's strings, as well. But it was pointless.  
  
If they were only holding him in place, he could have torn them apart. He could have slithered his way out of their inescapable embrace, at least. But the strings bound his mind just like they were binding his shadow - his very thoughts were restrained, and Sunny could not even fathom trying to break free anymore. Time was running out.  
  
The only thought the Puppeteer could not poison with doubt was the one Sunny kept repeating silently, using it as an axis that held his mind together and prevented it from falling entirely under the eerie Nightmare Creatuгe's control.  
  
'Kill it, I must kill it!' His bloodlust was his only salvation. The vast shadows stirred. Sunny broke his mind apart into innumerable streams, abandoning most of them to free some from the insidious grasp of the Puppeteer.  
  
He had to do something drastic. The time for desperate measures had come. And gone.  
  
Now was the time for pure madness. Sunny imagined himself taking a deep breath. Then, he took all his willpowеr, all his authority, all his killing intent, and all the power granted to him by the Evening Star. And used them to call forth a shade.  
  
If he thought about it, the Puppeteer was really in a bad situation. Its true power lay in its thralls, but none of them were here to protect their master. The black moth stayed still and motionless, and that was not because it had no need to move - rather, it was because the Snow Tyrant was not that ferocious and physically strong. All it could do to deter the adversary was use its profane powers and peculiar will to reach it. On top of that, Sunny was more or less its natural predator.  
  
That was because Sunny commanded a legion of shades, and shades possessed neither will nor a sense of self. They had no desires, no resolve, no determination of their own. And therefore, they knew no hesitation. They were immune to doubt, because doubt was foreign to their very nature. There was nothing for the Puppeteer to poison, so it was powerless to control the shades - it could only control their master. But as long as Sunny remained firm in his conviction, his shades would be able to do what he could not.  
  
There was just one enormous, mountain-sized problem. The Puppeteer might have been weak in direct confrontation, but that was only in relative terms. It was still a Cursed Tyrant, no matter where its true talent lay.  
  
Not just any shade could face it in battle. The Obsidian Wasps would be destroyed by one flap of the Puppeteer's wings. The Shadow Wolves would be vanquished and torn apart in an instant. Abundance would hold out longer, but it would not muster enough offensive power to kill the detestable moth before it was too late. The Rat King was vicious and annihilating, but it needed time to propagate and grow unstoppable. That only left the Wolf.  
  
The ruthless, proud predator from the dawn of time, one ferocious and fatal enough to tear the Puppeteer's wings off and crush its appalling head. And yet. Sunny was full of doubt.  
  
Would the Wolf really be able to kill the Snow Tyrant? Would Sunny himself remain firm enough not to command his frightening shade into retreat? 'No.'  
  
Doubt made Sunny weak and indecisive. It made him feel despair. He still was in control of enough of himself to summon a shade, but he was not confident that the same would hold true in a few minutes. So. He did what he always did when forced into a corner. He cheated.  
  
The shade Sunny called forth was not an Obsidian Wasp, Abundance, Rat King, or the Wolf. Instead, it was the shadow of another Cursed Tyrant. It was Condemnation.  
  
Sunny had lost access to his shades after entering Ariel's Game, but they still existed somewhere out there, within his soul. Other shades might have been summoned and carrying his orders, but Condemnation wasn't. Because it had never answered his call before.  
  
Augmented by the Evening Star, Sunny's tyrannical will and his undeniable authority descended uρon the somber giant, commanding it to emerge from the peaceful darkness of his soul. Sunny had thought that he would be able to overpower the obstinate Tyrant while strengthened by the Sacred Memory.  
  
But he was wrong.  
  
His will and his authority crumbled against the unfathomable, inert depths of the enormous shade. Condemnation refused to move, just as it always had. It remained still and motionless, towering above the silent waters of his soul. Sunny had expected as much.  
  
After all, he had not been able to call upon any other shade eaгned beyond the confines of Ariel's Game, either. But while Sunny could not summon them with his [Shadow Legion] Aspect Ability, which the lаws of this artificial realm were interfering with, that did not mean that he could not fool these laws.  
  
So, instead of commanding the gigantic shade to reveal itself, he simply gathered all his willpower. And banished Condemnation from his soul. He threw Condemnation out.  
  
Sunny had never done something like that before - which did not mean that he couldn't. Now that he was Supreme and wielded greater authority both over his soul and over the shades populating it, he could summon them forth and call them back. He could also store physical items within his soul and expel them from it, effectively manifesting them. And that was what he did with the vast, huge shade of Condemnation - he expelled it.  
  
Sunny had not attempted to do that with any of his shades in the past for a good reason, though. Any shade he could not summon with his [Shadow Legion] Aspect Ability was a shade that did not obey his commands. That fact would not change even if he managed to summon it into existence, somehow, which meant that once the shadow of Condemnation emerged into the light, Sunny would have no control over it whatsoever.  
  
It could attack the Puppeteer. It could just as well attack him, instead. It could even remain still and do nothing, content to simply be. But that was a risk Sunny was willing to take, at the moment. In fact, he welcomed it.  
  
The potentially deadly drawback of summoning a disobedient shade was actually a life-saving grace in his current situation. Because if Sunny could not control Condemnation, the Puppeteer could not control Sunny to order Condemnation to stand down. And since he was not using [Shadow Legion] to summon it, the laws of Ariel's Game would, hopefully, fail to prevent the shadow colossus from appearing.  
  
'Snow Tyrant, Ash Tyrant. let's add a third Tyrant into the mix, shall we? Let's break the rules!'  
  
As innumerable strings of black silk fluttered in the wind, rushing to bind the vast shadow. Reality seemed to ripple. The sea of clouds swirled. And then, the mass of silk stands was torn apart when a huge hand emerged from Sunny's formless vastness, extending far into the sky and casting a titanic shadow onto the slope of the shuddering mountain.