2410 Myriad of Stars  
  
The world was made of fire. Countless trees were burning, toppling with sorrowful groans. Ash obscured the sky, and unbearable heat melted the sanity of those who still fought in the boundless inferno.  
  
A Sacred Beast was galloping through the fire - a gorgeous white stag with antlers made of pure gold, its holy presence soothing the flames and saving the young sapling that had not succumbed to the world-ending blaze yet. Flowers and verdant grass sprouted where its hooves touched the ground. Its ivory hooves, however, were smeared with blood and ruby dust, having crushed the skulls of countless soldiers of the Demon Army.  
  
Suddenly, a ferocious figure lunged at the stag from the darkness and smoke. It was an enormous black leopard, its eyes burning with murderous fury. The leopard was smaller than the Sacred Beast, but its size did not seem to matter - its jaws closed on the white stag's throat, drawing rivers of golden ichor. The two beasts collided and rolled through the flames, crushing countless trees.  
  
The stag managed to throw the leopard off and rose to its feet, lowering its head to impale the predator with its great antlers. Ichor was flowing from its torn neck, but it was still full of vitality and tremendous power. The leopaгd, meanwhile, had already been heavily wounded and bleeding from dozens of awful wounds before their battle commenced. Now, it was all but defenseless before the charging stag.  
  
Then, however, the figure of the black leopard rippled, and a split second later, it turned into a stag as well - this one as black as night, but otherwise almost a perfect copy of the Sacred Beast in front of it.  
  
The two beasts collided, their antlers intertwining. The black stag threw the white one to the ground and changed again, becoming a boar this time. Its tusks dug into the stag's belly, and more ichor spilled on the ashen ground. Eventually, the battle was over.  
  
The Sacred Beast lay butchered on the pyre of burning wood, аnd in front of it stood a woman in torn leather armor, her gorgeous face bloodied and covered in ash. Distressing wounds littered her body, and there was a peculiar emptiness in her eyes.  
  
The fire was consuming the world, and the battle continued to rage around her, but she seemed oblivious to the slaughter. Swaying heavily, the woman took a step back and fell down. As she stubbornly struggled to rise, her blood soaking the ash, the flames crawled closer and closer.  
  
Before they consumed her, however, someone appeared out of the groans of dying trees, looking down at her silently. It was a tall figure wrapped in a nebulous mantle, wearing a fearsome mask of black polished wood. The mask snarled ferociously, but the gaze of the stranger was cold enough to douse the inferno that surrounded them.  
  
A voice that sounded like a myriad of dying curses resounded from behind the mask, addressing the woman:  
  
"Look at you. you're dying. How pitiful. How disappointing. Is this all you are capable of? Is this all you are? You are so easy, so weak. How dare you be so weak, my adversary?"  
  
There was no answer. A porcelain hand appeared from the folds of the nebulous mantle. Seven clawed fingers grabbed the collar of the woman's torn cuirass and violently wrenched her to her feet.  
  
A dreadful growl resounded from behind the mask, making the flames reel back in fear.  
  
"Do you even remember your own name, pathetic thing?"  
  
The woman stared at the black mask absently. Then, however, a hint of recognition ignited in her eyes.  
  
Her lips moved, and she said hoarsely:  
  
"You. I killed you."  
  
The masked figure laughed.  
  
"Did you? Did you really think that someone like you could have killed me? That you are qualified to kill me? Me, the Demon of Fate?"  
  
Weaver threw the woman to the ground and grew still, staring at her with a dreadful, inexplicable emotion.  
  
Then, the towering daemon crouched near her and whispered in a thousand insidious voices:  
  
"Well, perhaps you did, possibly you are, maybe уou will. That is your fate, after all, and you are Fated. So, tell me."  
  
Weaver's voice turned into a litany of dreadful snarls, full of scorn and indignation:  
  
".who gave you permission to die? You are not allowed to die yet, wretch. You and I are not done yet, so even if all existence ends, you must remember your fate. You must remember me."  
  
A porcelain hand moved, suffocаting the inferno around them. The flames died in terror, their very idea extinguished and erased from the tapestry of fate forever.  
  
"You can forget everything else, everyone else - you can even forget your own name. But don't you dare forget the name of Weaver, the Demon of Fate. We must see each other again, you and I. So. come find me in the Shadow Realm. Come and see if someone like you can really kill Weaver. Then, after you've learned the true meaning of despair. then, I'll allow you to die, Orphne of the Nine."  
  
Hearing her own name, the woman. Orphne. seemed to regain some of her strength. Her eyes regained their focus, and she glanced at the nebulous daemon with dark, concerned killing intent.  
  
Weaver laughed and rose, turning away from the bleeding huntress.  
  
"That's better!"  
  
The Demon of Fate glanced down, and then exhaled slowly.  
  
Their shoulders seemed to fall, and the eerie voice resounded once again from behind the fearsome mask:  
  
".Are you there?"  
  
Weaver straightened and glanced up, as if seeing something no one else could see. As if addressing someone whom no one else could hear.  
  
"Are you watching?"  
  
The Demon of Fate chuckled hoarsely.  
  
"Watch well then, epigone. Let me show you. how gods die."  
  
And with that, Sunny suddenly became aware of himself.  
  
'Wait. is Weaver talking. to me?'  
  
He had a split second to feel boundless shock. And then, the burning world shattered.  
  
Instead, a chaotic torrent of scenes poured into his mind, too great for him to fathom.  
  
All Sunny could discern was a few frightening images. An unimaginable tree whose roots were the foundation of the world, whose branches supported the weight of the sky, enveloped in flame and burning as a fiery shape wrapped itself around its gigantic trunk, sawing into it with ruthless cruelty.  
  
The moon shattering and the stars being extinguished as an unfathomable being swiped its claws at the proud towers of a gorgeous white castle, the city below it drowning in a flood as all its citizens screamed and died. A vast shadow enveloping two great armies on the bloodied sand of a boundless desert, the deafening cacophony of the harrowing battle replaced by utter silence so abruptly as to cause an even greater horror.  
  
A great red dragon plummeting into the watery depths as golden ichor spilled from its severed neck, sinking to the bottom of a gorgeous sea as its dying throes shattered and broke the world, cursing it to be plunged into mist and twilight forever.  
  
A vast army assembling on the edge of the Abyss, somberly preparing to wage war on Death itself. The invading legions drowning in the tide of endless shadows, their blood spilling on the obsidian dust. Unfathomable figures clashing within the raging essence storms as the last, desperate battle of the Doom War shook the very foundation of existence.  
  
And then, at the end of it all, a nebulous figure in a tattered mantle walking through the darkness with unsteady steps, cracks covering its wooden mask.  
  
In front of the torn figure, at the heart of the Shadow Realm, was something so distressing, unknowable, and inconceivable that simply beholding it shattered Sunny's mind into a thousand fragments, making him blind and deaf, unable to think.  
  
And yet, he still saw.  
  
Weaver dragging their tattered body forward as the daemons made their desperate last stand against the gods around them. A trail of ichor was left on the obsidian dust behind the Demon of Fate, glowing with a gorgeous golden glow in the cold darkness.  
  
"Fools. all of them, such fools."  
  
A laughter resounded from beneath the cracked mask as Weaver finally reached their destination - the very heart of the Shadow Realm, and the unspeakable horror that was hidden there. The Void Gate.  
  
The Void Gate stood wide open, now.  
  
Sunny was mercifully blind, so he could not see what Weaver saw when they gazed beyond the Gate.  
  
The Demon of Fate laughed again.  
  
"Now. One final trick."  
  
But before the cunning daemon could do anything, a bone blade pierced their back, tore through their flesh, and severed their shadow before exiting in a fountain of ichor from their chest.  
  
Weaver staggered and glanced back.  
  
There, a woman in bloodied armor was holding the hilt of a bone dagger, life rapidly draining from her cold, dark eyes. Her face was hidden behind a tattered, torn veil, but the daemon still recognized her.  
  
"You."  
  
The two of them fell down at the same time. Golden ichor and crimson blood mixed before being swallowed by the obsidian dust.  
  
The woman's lips twisted into a vicious smile behind the torn veil. She twisted the dagger with a faltering hand, then grew still, still smiling. Her eyes dimmed, turning hollow and glassy.  
  
She was dead. The Demon of Fate was not going to survive much longer, either.  
  
A deep sigh resounded from behind the mask.  
  
Looking at the dead woman, Weaver drew one last, arduous breath.  
  
".You are just in time."  
  
The last thing Sunny saw startled and confused him, because it did not make much sense at all. He found himself in an endless black void illuminated by a myriad of stars. Some of the stars were small and dim, while some were great and radiant. Some were connected by strings of silver light, while most were isolated from each other by the vast expanse of empty darkness.  
  
By then, something changed.  
  
Seven radiant stars suddenly blazed in the void, and as strings of silver light extended from them to countless others, there was suddenly a pattern to them all. Anchored in the seven stars, the tapestry of silver light expanded, consuming more and more of the smaller stars.  
  
And then, it extended its tendrils to the great stars that burned as brightly as the seven that had served as the catalyst to the explosion of silver strings. There were eleven constellations of them, and by the time the tendrils of silver light reached them, it was already too late to react.  
  
By then, the tapestry had already become too vast, having consumed perhaps myriad smaller stars - all of them, possibly - and so, the constellations could nоt resist. They still tried, naturally.  
  
In the end, the tendrils of silver strings enveloped and consumed them, absorbing them into the tapestry of light.  
  
Casting a Spell upon the Void.  
  
Sunny gasped.  
  
And then. One last truth poured into him, permeating his flesh and rewriting its very nature on the fundamental level. That last truth was the fragment of Weaver's legacy.  
  
'Oh, hell.'  
  
The pain was exquisite.  
  
[End of Part I: Death Game.]