2414 The Incredible Adventures and Astonishing Deeds of Heroic Dreamer Sunless and his Dashing Best Friend Nightingale, Abridged (Volume IX)  
  
Sunny leaned back in his chair.  
  
He had a story to tell. And after having suffered through the story personally, he was going to enjoy himself telling it.  
  
He begаn off in a solemn tone:  
  
"A long time agо, the Demon of Fate and the Demon of Dread played a game. Only, being insane bastards, they played with Great and Cursed Nightmare Creatures instead of game pieces. And - what would you know? - Kai and I got sucked into the Death Game realm and given a choice between winning an unwinnable game or meeting our deaths. So, we went and won."  
  
Nephis sighed. ".A little bit less short, please."  
  
Seishan, meanwhile, glanced between them with a stunned expression. "Excuse me? Demon of Fate, Demon of Dread? Cursed Nightmare Creatures?"  
  
Sunny grinned.  
  
"You're excused. Anyway, where do I begin? First, we eradicated a swarm of one hundred Great Beasts. Then, we graduated to fighting Cursed abominations. The first one we killed was an infinite worm. And I mean literally infinite. That thing seemed like trouble, but actually, it died when I simply stepped on it."  
  
Revel stared at him foг a few seconds, then turned to Kai.  
  
Kai waved a hand weakly, still exhausted from the ordeal. His voice was faint: "It's true. it's all true."  
  
Her eyes widened. "No, but."  
  
However, Sunny interrupted her.  
  
"So, next we found a cozy temple on the peak of a mystical mountain and waited to be beset by a pack of frightening wolves led by a Cursed Demon, as well as a very impressive training dummy. I was really hungry by then, but sadly, there was no wolf meat left by the time I was done with them. In fact, there was barely any mountain left as well. I sort of blew it up to smithereens. it was quite a sight."  
  
Nephis shifted slightly and gave him a strange look. "You. blew up a mountain?"  
  
Sunny raised his chin.  
  
"Sure did!"  
  
He thought she would be proud of him, but for some reason, her gaze seemed a little dejected.  
  
If Sunny did not know any better, he would have thought that Nephis was. pouting?  
  
But that was impossible, naturally. After all, she was Changing Star, the last daughter of the Immortal Flame. The fearless Sovereign of Humanity. Surely, she would not mind him stealing her signature move?  
  
'Right. No way!'  
  
Sunny cleared his throat awkwardlу.  
  
"Well, in any case. Next, we killed another Cursed Demon and two Cursed Monsters. How? To be honest, I don't actually remember, but it must have been in quite a spectacular fashion."  
  
Death Singer glanced at him, then at the other him laying on the couch with a miserable expression on his grimy. but unmistakably dashing. face. She raised an eyebrow.  
  
"Uh. wait a minute? How can you not remember slaying a Cursed Demon and two Cursed Monsters, though?"  
  
Those were Cursed Nightmare Creatures they were talking about! Actual deities!  
  
Sunny gave her his most sincere, innocent smile and shrugged nonchalantly.  
  
"It must have slipped my mind."  
  
There was silence in the room for a while. Eventually, everyone turned to look at Kai in unison.  
  
Exposed to their gazes, Kai smiled awkwardly.  
  
"Oh. actually, I don't remember either."  
  
Nephis and the Song sisters seemed deeply betraуed by that statement. Their reproachful gazes were obviously saying.  
  
You too, Nightingale?  
  
You too?  
  
Kai coughed and glanced away in embarrassment.  
  
Sunny chuckled.  
  
"After that, though, something incredible happened!"  
  
Four gazes turned to him once again. He paused for a few seconds, and continued in a happy tone:  
  
"We finally procured a meal! Well, at least I did. There was this Cursed Beast, you see - an endless swarm of rats. And I mean literally endless. Turns out, a cursed rat roasted over lava is simply delicious. Blighted, diseased, and poisonous, but nonetheless piquant and delectable. I positively stuffed myself, and can you blame me?"  
  
Death Singer paled a little and moved away from the incarnation on the couch. Her mumble was almost inaudible, but it still made Nephis let out a long sigh.  
  
".On second thought, you can have that one, Changing Star. He's all yours!"  
  
Then, she glanced at the incineration on the chair and batted her eyelashes.  
  
Sunny wisely pretended not to notice.  
  
"Now that I had a full stomach, it was finally time to take on the Cursed Tyrant! The Cursed Tyrant was an acquaintance of an acquaintance, as it turned out - quite a pleasant fellow, really. We had a nice chat."  
  
This time, it was Cassie's who interrupted him.  
  
[You. you chatted. with a Cursed Tyrant?]  
  
Her voice seemed to tremble a little as it resounded in his head.  
  
Sunny smiled.  
  
"Indeed, I did. We discussed refined topics like philosophy, theology, and peaceful resolution of violent conflicts. Sadly, our enlightened debate reached an impasse. so I cut off the Cursed Tyrant's head."  
  
He sighed and glanced into the distance thoughtfully. "That, I find, is a surefire way to win an argument."  
  
The council room was filled with a stunned, incredulous silence for a long time.  
  
Sunny did not hurry to say anything else, either. At least for a while. Then, he glanced at his audience and smiled again.  
  
"And here I am!"  
  
He scratched the tip of his nose.  
  
"Well, technically, I've been here all along. But you know what I mean."  
  
His smile widened.  
  
Nephis stared at him for some time, then rubbed her temples.  
  
"Yes. here you are."  
  
She hesitated for a moment, then glanced at Kai. "Did he forget to mention anything?"  
  
Kai considered the question seriously.  
  
"I don't think so? Well, I guess. there was also that dragon."  
  
Nephis suddenly stood up, interrupting him.  
  
"Actually, never mind. Let's continue this conversation later, shall we? Better yet. forget I asked."  
  
Her gaze softened.  
  
"You two must be awfully tired. Go wash off the grime of battle, eat a proper meal, and rest. There will be plenty of time tomorrow."  
  
Kai nodded in gratitude and rose to leave. Sunny stood up, as well.  
  
"If you'll excuse me, then."  
  
Both of his incarnations headed for the door.  
  
The one covered in soot was let go, but the other one. someone suddenly caught him by the collar.  
  
Turning around, Sunny was met by Neph's heated gaze.  
  
"Not you. You stay here. if you will. I have a few questions to ask."  
  
[Yes. I have a few questions to ask, too?]  
  
Cassie's voice had an edge to it now.  
  
Sunny forced out a pleasant smile.  
  
"Why, naturally."  
  
Something was telling him that he was in for a long, restless night.  
  
At the same time, he found himself in a peculiar predicament.  
  
The events that had transpired in the world at large in these last few weeks were old news for him, but at the same time, he just learned about them.  
  
So, Sunny found himself in a strange state of being surprised and stunned by something he already knew.  
  
'Rain. did what?'  
  
The incarnation who had just left the council room paused for a moment and covered its face with a palm.