2417 Harmless, Hilarious Hostage  
  
Rain glanced at the masked thugs and smiled innocently.  
  
'That should be enough, right?'  
  
Life was really unpredictable. Today was supposed to be a usual day, and yet, she had found herself in the middle of a bank robbery. Rain would have blamed her awful luck, but she suspected that luck had nothing to do with it. rather, it must have been Tamar.  
  
She gave the Legacy girl a sidelong glance.  
  
The two of them were visiting NQSC on business - well, Rain was, while Tamar had come along as her friend and unofficial bodyguard.  
  
Chief Bethany had achieved a groundbreaking feat by establishing a hydroelectric plant in the Dream Realm, but she could not return to the waking world to share her research with the part of the academic community still residing here. If she did, she would be pulled into the First Nightmare - so, an intermediary was needed to make a report on her behalf.  
  
Rain was the only Awakened on the team, so she was a natural choice despite being an intern. She had been wanting to visit NQSC for the longest time, as well. This was where she had grown up, after all, but after leaving the city for Ravenheart numerous years ago, she never had the opportunity to return.  
  
So, Rain and Tamar used the Dream Gate to come back to the waking world. The conference where she was supposed to make the report was supposed to start in a few hours, but before they went to the venue, Tamar asked to visit the bank where her clan had a deposit box. And here they were, restrained and being stared down by a dozen armed assailants.  
  
Said assailants were staring at Rain with overflowing malice right now.  
  
"Oh, was I too loud? Sorry, sorry. Uh. continue as you were."  
  
She glanced at the leader of the bandits awkwardly.  
  
Of course, she had not just offended him for fun.  
  
Rain might have been young, but she knew people well. She had met all kinds of men and women - numerous of them at their worst or at their best. Crisis and war had a way of drawing out one's true nature, and both were plentiful in the world of the Nightmare Spell.  
  
So, having rapidly glimpsed the Tyrant's true nature, she knew where things would go from the moment he began to speak.  
  
The callous man needed to make a crowd of frightened people submit to him - it was an imperative necessity if he wanted to emerge from this conflict with minimal lоsses. But frightened people were rarely rational. mere threats were not going to work.  
  
If he knew what he was doing, and he seemed like someone who did, he would illustrate his promise of violence with something more convincing than words. She was certain that the Tyrant was going to make an example out of someone, even if no one challenged his authority immediately. their blood would prove his point and make the rest of the hostages believe his threats.  
  
That was why Rain had provoked the man. If someone had to be made an example of, it would be much better for her to play that role - Rain was an Awakened, after all, and could endure much more punishment than one of the mundane hostages would. And if the Tyrant went too far, she and Tamar could offer far more resistance.  
  
She was not arrogant enough to think that the two of them were invincible. In fact, in other circumstances, Rain might have acted with more caution.  
  
But she had noticed Ray among the hostages. Fleur was here, too, having infiltrated the criminal crew - their disguises did not fool Rain, and after sensing them communicating with the shadow signs, she concluded that the tall man in the mask of a grotesque Devil was a member of the Shadow Clan, as well.  
  
The mysterious Devil emanated a sense of confidence and dreadful composure. She could not see his face, but his piercing blue eyes were cold and indifferent, as if he was not at all disturbed by the tense and potentially lethal situation. He seemed like a man with ice flowing through his veins.  
  
Rain did not know him, and he did not seem to recognize her either, so he was probably someone Sunny had recruited recentlу. Collecting unique people seemed to be his latest hobby.  
  
In any case, there were five members of Shadow Clan in the bank and ten assailants - meaning that while Rain was indeed putting herself in danger, that danger was not too serious. Five Shadows was more than enough to handle this rabble. The only problem was the Tyrant himself, who seemed to be a Master. however, the magnitude of that problem remained to be seen.  
  
As the callous man turned his glassy gaze to her, Rain smiled and whispered two words almost inaudibly to assign herself a pair of Epithets.  
  
"I am Harmless, Hilarious Promise of a Distant Sky."  
  
People were less likely to attack those they were not threatened by, and far more likely to treat those who made them laugh well. Now, she could only hope that the Tyrant would not decide to go too hard on hеr.  
  
He studied her for a few seconds, then approached her with slow, measured steps and stared her down, making her shiver. Something was lacking from the man's gaze. empathy, possibly, or possibly even humanity.  
  
'Ah, I hope it won't hurt too much.'  
  
But as long as the other hostages were spared, Rain was alright with hurting a little.  
  
To her relief, however, the Tyrant suddenly let out a low, unnerving chuckle.  
  
"Why, thank you, young lady. Eloquence is indeed something a man in my line of work needs to excel at."  
  
With that, he shifted his glassy gaze to Tamar. The Tyrant remained silent for a moment, and then spoke in an even tone:  
  
"Tamar of Sorrow. what a pleasant surprise."  
  
Legacies were no different from celebrities, so it was no surprise that he recognized her - even if Clan Sorrow had lost its former prominence, numerous people would know what she looked like.  
  
The Tyrant seemed to smile behind his mask, and then spoke over his shoulder in an emotionless voice:  
  
"Corsair, take these young ladies down with us. It will be easier to get into the vault with them around."  
  
Rain let out a tiny sigh of relief and threw a glance at the tall man in the Devil mask, Corsair. The newest member of the Shadow Clan was looking her way, as well.  
  
'Huh.'  
  
But why did it seem like he wanted to strangle her?