2419 Bank Vault  
  
Deеp in the bowels of the heavily fortified bank, the colossal doors of the vault opened, and the Tyrant led his men inside. Rain and Tamar were forced to follow, as well, finding themselves in a.  
  
'Huh?'  
  
The bank vault looked nothing like what Rain had expected.  
  
In fact, it looked no different from a tastefully decorated, luxurious apartment. There was a spacious guest room with lavish furniture, video walls showing a scenic seaside landscape, and a sophisticated climate control system that imitated an invigorating breeze.  
  
Several doors led out of the guest room, opening into a gorgeously furnished kitchen, a neat and cozy bedroom, a recreation room with a state-of-the-art entertainment system, a stylish parlour. There was everything a person needed to live a comfortable life here, not having to step outside at all.  
  
A woman in a muted, but fashionable business attire was standing in the middle of the guest room, looking at the Tyrant with a tense expression.  
  
'What is going on?'  
  
Rain looked at Tamar and Corsair furtively, but neither of them seemed surprised by the scene.  
  
The Tyrant gave a nod, and his people dispersed across the luxurious vault apartment? Vault? The man himself, meanwhile, walked over to the woman and gave her his usual cold, glassy stare.  
  
He spoke first:  
  
"Pleasure to meet you, vault keeper. Now I presume there is no point in expecting your willing cooperation?"  
  
The woman shook her head somberly.  
  
The Tyrant chuckled.  
  
"Suit yourself. Tоrture it is, then."  
  
She gave him a cold smile.  
  
"You seem to know your basics. Then you should know that people like me are employed for a reason, as well. My Aspect makes me immune to pain, so try your worst."  
  
Rain finally understood what was happening. In hindsight, it was quite obvious.  
  
This bank was an old and prestigious one, offering its services to numerous prominent Legacy families. And what was it that Legacy clans would want to keep safe?  
  
Jewelry, precious materials, pieces of priceless art?  
  
Well, that too. But primarily, the most valuable assets Legacies possessed were Memories and Echoes.  
  
Only Awakened could own those, though.  
  
In case the heirs of a family had not undergone the Awakening yet, a reliable intermediary was needed to make sure that they would receive their inheritance - Awakened led perilous lives, after all, and could die at any moment. Parents were not always able to transfer the Aspect Legact relics and valuable Memories to their children themselves. Adult Legacies were most likely in the habit of entrusting the heirlooms of their clan to a reliable, neutral party for safekeeping, especially before embarking on a life-threatening journey like challenging a Nightmare or participating in a war, for example.  
  
Hence the need for the bank, and for the woman who was standing in front of the Tyrant with a cold smile.  
  
He had called her the vault keeper, but more precisely, she was the vault. She was the Awakened who kept the Memories and Echoes entrusted to the bank in her soul. That was why she was locked underground, living in the safety of this luxurious, heavily protected apartment.  
  
And just in case someone invaded the underground safe room, the Vault Keeper possessed an Aspect that negated pain - and was therefore immune to more mundane forms of torture, making it that much harder to force her to transfer the Memories and Echoes against her will.  
  
But where there was a will, there was a way.  
  
Rain's expression darkened.  
  
There was probably an armored room with mundane deposit boxes somewhere here, as well, but that was not the Tyrant's goal.  
  
His goal was the Vault Keeper.  
  
The man studied her silently for a moment, and then seemed to smile behind his mask.  
  
"Bold words, but will you be responsible for them? We will see just how potent your Aspect is soon, Vault Keeper. Are you truly immune to all pain? Does that encompass all physical pain, or do you not feel the agony of having your soul torn apart, either? What about fear? Do you not fear watching yourself be maimed and disfigured, even while not feeling anything?"  
  
She pursed her lips, but remained silent, looking at him with a pale face.  
  
'Yeah, no. I don't know what Corsair's mission is, but I am not going to watch an innocent woman be tortured right in front of my eyes.'  
  
At that moment, the Tyrant chuckled again.  
  
"Well, no matter. As much as I'd love to test your limits, insolent fool, there is no time for that. So let me introduce you to my friend."  
  
Suddenly, a whirlwind of radiant sparks surrounded him. The whirlwind was too large to manifest into a Memoгy, which meant.  
  
'An Echo?'  
  
Suddenly, there was a sound of claws scraping against the floor.  
  
A grotesque creature appeared in the spacious room, towering above the humans. It was about three meters tall, with a gaunt torso and long, pale limbs. Its lower limbs were long and powerful, resembling that of a frog, while its upper limbs looked almost like that of a human - apart from their deathly pallor, eerie proportions, and clawed hands.  
  
The truly appalling part was its face, though.  
  
'Ugh. Disgusting.'  
  
A mess of slithering tentacles hung from the creature's mouth, obscuring its chest. Its eyes were large and milky-white, covered by cataracts, and there were fin-like ridges crowning its head. The whole thing was moist and glistening dimly, as if the creature had just crawled from a dark pool of stagnant water.  
  
From what Rain could tell, it was an Echo of a Fallen Devil.  
  
The Vault Keeper took an involuntary step back, while Corsair took a lazy step forward, which just so happened to put him between Rain and the Echo.  
  
Coincidentally, he almost bumped shoulders with Tamar, who had done the same.  
  
"What what is this thing?"  
  
The Vault Keeper's voice was concerned.  
  
The Tyrant craned his neck to look at his Echo, and then turned around to the woman.  
  
"This is a uniquely persuasive Echo. Its powers affect the mind. Sadly, they also physically destroy the brain of the victim - but only after getting the victim to do what the master of the Echo needs. So, Vault Keeper, you have a choice. You can either get to know my friend better, or hand over a Memory called the Key of Ascension voluntarily."  
  
Rain lowered her head and prepared to manifest her Mark into a weapon.  
  
At that moment, however, something unexpected happened.  
  
Just as lazily as he had come between her and the Echo, Corsair took another step forward.  
  
And plunged a black stiletto into the back of the Tyrant's skull.  
  
Or rather, tried to.  
  
Peculiarly enough, the sharp blade simply slid off the man's head, only leaving a shallow scratch on it.  
  
Time seemed to slow down for a moment.  
  
'No what the hell? Time has literally slowed down?'  
  
Corsair sighed.  
  
"Ray, now!"  
  
And then, everything around them was suddenly plunged into darkness.