2423 Silence is Golden  
  
The Tyrant walked out of the ruined parlor like a sinister spirit, three luminous Memories igniting above his shoulders and above his head like three eyes of a furious monster. His black fatigues were covered in dust, and his face was smeared in blood. His glassy eyes were gleaming with cold, murderous wrath.  
  
Walking over to stand side by side with his Echo, he glanced at the three Shadows darkly. The Vault Keeper moved to stand behind them, shielding her eyes from the bright light. Four Awakened against a Master and аn Echo of a Fallen Devil.  
  
They looked at each other.  
  
'Should we stall to give Ray an opportunity to get down here?'  
  
Rain hesitated for a moment. She did not know the plan of Corsair's team, but was pretty sure that Ray had dealt with the four henchmen the robbers had left to guard the hostages by now. The young man was not the most formidable fighter of their cohort, but he was its hidden weapon - he was exceptionally lethal, often striking from the shadows to bring down enemies much morе powerful than him. However, the Tyrant's potent defensive Aspect Ability would make it hard for Ray to kill him in a single strike.  
  
More than that, they would have to engage the Ascended man in conversation to stall for time. And Rain had a feeling that letting the Tyrant talk would be a big mistake. 'What to do?'  
  
Corsair shifted slightly, taking something off his belt. Rain's eyes widened slightly when she recognized what the tall man was gripping in both hands. 'G - grenades?' What was he planning to do? And what kind of Awakened carried grenades around, anyway? She had only seen them in movies before.  
  
Corsair seemed to smile chillingly behind his devilish mask.  
  
Tamar raised her greatsword slightly, preparing to dash forward.  
  
Fleur braced herself, shielding the Vault Keeper with her body. The Tyrant opened his mouth. And froze in confusion, failing to make a sound.  
  
Well, naturally he failed.  
  
After all, Rain had assigned him an Epithet just then. The Tyrant became the Mute Tyrant. 'Ouch.'  
  
Forcefully placing an Epithet on an unwilling Ascended was difficult, strenuous, and burned through her essence with dire speed on top of that. The sinister Master would most likely shake the effects off in a moment or two - but that was alright.  
  
Because Rain was not done yet. She wanted to try something else, as well. Turning to the Echo, she concentrated and Named it, turning it from a nameless Echo into the Gross Friend of the Mute Tyrant. And then, she assigned an Epithet to the Echo, connecting it to the given Name.  
  
This one was quite easy, and did not go against the nature of the Echo at all - in fact, it was reliant on its nature. Just like that, the Gross Friend of the Mute Tyrant became the Dismissed Gross Friend of the Mute Tyrant.  
  
'Be gone!'  
  
Rain poured her essence and willpower into the Epithet, praying that this unconventional application of her Aspect would work. And did it.  
  
A second later, the Echo exploded into a whirlwind of sparks, pouring back into the Tyrant's soul. "Attack!"  
  
The gross Echo was not destroyed, merely dismissed. So, the Ascended bandit could easily summon it again - it would take some time to manifest the grotesque Devil for the second time, though. They had to finish the Tyrant before that happened.  
  
The sinister Master was, without a doubt, surprised by the sudden vanishing of his Echo. The Shadows, however, were accustomed to all kinds of strange and inexplicable things - after all, they came from the Dark City, wherе the Lord of Shadows reigned. Rain's brother was a weirdo to put all other weirdos to shame. If he proclaimed himself to be the second most bizarre person in the world - two worlds, even - no one would dare to claim the first place. So, they reacted instantly.  
  
Tamar exploded forward, turning into a blur. Corsair was not far behind, with Rain and Fleur following. Four black weapons were aimed at the Tуrant's vital points. Well, Rain aimed a little off the mark, knowing that she would not be able to strike him where it counted. However, even caught by surprise, a Master was still a Master.  
  
The Tyrant moved with awful speed, evading Tamar despite her Awakened Ability. In the next moment, his hands shot forward to grab her neck - then, both of them slowed down, as if caught in a mire. The Tyrant was reaching toward Tamar, who was evading away. Her hair fluttered in the wind, rippling slowly. Her hands shifted slowly on the hilt of the black greatsword, pushing and pulling to turn its colossal blade around. The blade was mere centimeters away from the Ascended bandit's torso, but at the speed it was moving, he would not be cut any time soon.  
  
Then, Corsair slammed into the Tyrant, throwing them both back. Time resumed its usual flow, and the two men hit the floor a dozen metres away from the rest of them. Something rang as it rolled on the floor. Those were the safety pins of the grenades.  
  
Rain's eyes widened. "You insane?"  
  
At the last moment, Corsair managed to push himself away, sliding back across the floor. Still.  
  
When the grenades detonated, he was no more than a couple of meters away from the explosion.  
  
The Tyrant was suddenly enveloped in light and flame. The flame, the shrapnel, the shockwave moved slowly, however, blooming in all directions like a peculiar, gorgeous, radiant flower. Corsair was right in front of the slowly exploding ring of fire and shrapnel, his kneeling figure countered against it sharply. ".bastard!"  
  
Something moved within the flame.  
  
A Master was not going to be killed by a couple of mundane grenade, naturally. He was not even going to be seriously hurt by them. Unless Rain got involved.  
  
Dismissing the "Mute" Epithet, she assigned two new ones to the Slow, Combustible Tyrant. Then, she opened her mouth.  
  
And spoke the True Name of Fire.