

Shadows of the Past

ein englisches Intime, editiert von Kim Schneider;

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Egriel notices Calahel's hesitation with amusement.

"It's simple, really." he says matter-of-factly as he peruses over the various assortment of food, "Just place in your mouth and chew."

Winking to Calahel, Egriel sits down with his food and drink, awaiting Thommariel's blessing.

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Thommariel kneels down and whispers a prayer for blessing the meal. After that he looks up and say "Now brothers and sisters, let us begin". He smiles again and helps himself to some cheese.

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Ashviel bends over the table, serving herself with cheese, bread and some fruit. She seems to be as hungry as Phinael and concentrates upon her meal and her cup of tea.

In the middle of the meal, someone knocks on the door.

Thaël, busy with a spoon of dripping honey, looks up, very surprised. Then he gazes over at Thommariel, licking the sweet stuff from his fingers, rising slowly to prepare himself for the Michaelite's command.

"Should I open?" he asks.

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Pulling out his dagger, Egriel slices off two pieces of bread. On one slice he cuts and places the various fruits and cheese with some honey on the side, then puts the other slice of bread on top of it. Using both hands he picks up the amalgamation of food and takes a bite.

"Mmmmm.....", he winks at Calahel as he chews. He stops in mid-chew when there's knocking at the door, but continues unabated when Thaël arises. Waste not, want not, he thinks, taking another bite.

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While the others are dealing with the problem how to eat the cheese, Carniel steps into the room. Taking a surprised glance at the Engels putting mysterious yellow things in there mouths he clears his throat.

"Sorry, that I was away. I was inspecting the defense-systems of the covenant". He makes an excusing gesture.

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As it knocks on the door Thommariel looks up from his meal. After Thaël's question for permission to open the door he nods "Yes brother, please open the door". He stands up.

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Egriel pauses in mid-chew as Carniel enters, before washing the food down with his drink. Thinking for a moment, he reaches a silent decision with a mischevious glint in his eyes. Getting up from his stool, he gestures to Carniel's sword.

"By you and Thommariel's leave", Egriel inquires, "could you possibly activate your flame-sword and hold it in a position that runs parallel to the ground?" He smiles shyly, "I've had a desire to do this for quite some time now."

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Phinael, lookind around in surprise at Egriel's strange wish, frowns slightly, ignoring the matter as long as no one else reacts.

Thaël opens the door, allowing a tall, powerfully built woman with dark eyes, complexion and hair to enter the cella.

She bows at the Engel, entering the room in the same motion and comes to a halt before the small table.

"Soror Aramia," she introduces herself. "I am the Em of this Covenant." Looking around at the piled-up belongings of the Engel, she edges sideways to find a place to sit down. "Uh... I'm sorry to interrupt your meal, but I found it neccessary to wedge my honourable duty into my cramped schedule." Unable to sit down, she remains standing. "So, first of all, I want to welcome you to our Covenant. And," she adds, smiling, "I hope the meal is up to your expectations. We rarely feed heavenly guests, so you'll have to do with the humble food of us mortals."

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As the Em enters, Egriel gestures in dismissal toward his previous request.

"The food is good." he nods reassuringly, "And it's a welcome sight after a long flight." He sits down.

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As Egriel talk to the Em, Thommariel looks for a moment to him with anger in his eyes. Hi uses **Soul of the Fellowship* *It is on ME to start conversations which have to do wich our mission! He turns with a smile to the Em.** "We have to thank you for that meal. Please take a seat."

*

The Em settles herself, kneeling close to Thommariel on the wooden floor, clearing her throat with a twinkle in her eyes.

"Never mind, I've been sitting like that for all my apprenticeship. And if it's comfortable for the heavenly ones, then I will not suffer as a mere mortal."

Looking around, she nods to each member of the host, starting her speech in the process.

"You know, I don't like to beat around the bush. Certainly, we've got better things to do. So, I'll get right at it. We've got some strange occurances here, which threaten to disturb the peace of this place. We're specialized in song, and music."

She nods at Ashviel who listens intently.

"But there do seem to be melodies that unhinge some people. Unfortunately, we've got a guest here who seems to enjoy such tunes. Wasn't like that all the time. First he produced some rather beautiful music, but then... However, I think I should show you what he wrote."

The Em produces a bundle of tightly written pages, covered with lines, notes and written text.

"Yes, he writes. But I don't think he'll be subject to jurisdiction in that state of mind that he's in at the moment. He started scribbling this when we had him back in shape."

She hesitantly hands the leaves to Thommariel, looking over at Ashviel and Egriel.

"So, I thought it would be my duty to hand you over the notes. So I did, and the rest is up to you, I think. If you wish to see him, then everyone here knows where you can find him. If there are problems, please don't bother to ask. This guy's history is unknown to us. We found him in a storm, three weeks from now. He doesn't talk, at least nothing useful."

She looks around.

"Questions?"

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My apologies. Egriel responds in mind, **That was not my intention.**

He sits quietly as the Em explains the situation, eyeing the papers with curiosity.

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Before the Em enters, Carniel only could spoke the words "What do you.." and as she steps into the room he stopped to speak. He went to one edge of the room and stood there quietly, listening the conversation. Aaaah.. that.. thing... is human food, he thought.

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Thommariel takes the papers and asks the Em: "What especially happened to your guest? Did he do or say something?"

He uses **Soul of the Fellowship** to tell to all the others, **Please, if someone have a question about our mission, feel free to ask. We are a host and I'm not the only one which have to speak in this case.** A smile forms on his lips while he speak to his siblings.

Could you perhaps ask her, what the other strange events were, that she spoke of? Calahel asks in mind while watching the others examining the papers. It seems that he doesn't want to speak loudly.

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I have none at the moment, Egriel responds silently, **But if I may peruse over those papers? Perhaps I would have a question or two if I were more informed.**

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He looks to Egriel and hands him the papers. "Em Aramia, what were the other strange events you talking about?" **Soul of the fellowship to Egriel** **Please, take a look at the*

*papers**

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Ronariel listened carefully to the words of the Em. Quite surprised, he could really write. Ronariel asks Thommariel in his mind: **Sane ore insane, could insanity really be a excuse for braking the low of the Angelic Church?!** With an slightly angry face he looks over to Thommariel.

*

The Em uneasily shifts on her legs. "Well," she starts, then slowly shakes her head. "I do not know how to begin," she admits, running nervous hands over her robe. "I think, it first started, when the crows attacked our scarecrows out in the fields. Except, that we didn't put up any scarecrows anywhere, if you understand what I mean. They... well, they simply moved away, all those ravens and crows fluttering and screaming about them. The templars said it was Dreamseed." Her voice drops to a whisper with the last sentence. "And the birds drove them away."

Ashviel, gazing into the papers over Egriel's shoulder, absentmindedly draws a small flute out of her satchel and rubs over the wood with her hands.

"This is strange," she says with a frown. "I think you should hear that." She looks up at Thommariel, troubled. "Should I? Might unsettle some of you."

Phinael blinks, as the Sarielite gently nudges her. "If you don't want to listen to it, cover your ears. Might get the hooboos into you."

Thaël, kneeling close to the Raphaelite, frowns at the Em, but says nothing. Instead, he clasps his hands in his lap and gazes over the stone floor, eyes uneasy.

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Ronariel listens carefully with an troubled expression on his face. He thinks for himself: Dreamseed so near to an convent... is there any coherence between this incedent and the strange man the Em told us about?? Than Ronariel comes closer to take a better look at the mystical flute.

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"Em Aramia, if that birds dolve away the scarecrows then it seems the templars are right. Did someone try to attack the birds?" Thommariel looks to Ronariel, using **Soul of the fellowship** **Of course this man must be a heretic. But we will discuss it later!**

As Ashviel asks him for permission to use her flute he nods "We should all listen to our sister".

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Aramia nods, absendmindedly, as it seems.

She looks at the Sarielite who draws a deep breath, puts the flute to her lips and starts to play.

The melody, starting out with shrill dissonances, keeps cutting into your ears. Disharmonies, mingled together with strange trills of high-pitched notes cause your skin to crawl. Unexpected shifts insert small, melodic, if sad passages which keep haunting your minds even after Ashviel put her instrument down.

You cannot tell how long she was playing, but she rubs her arms with violent motions, and you can see the goosebumps on her flesh.

Phinael, pressing a fist to her mouth, shakes her head.

The tall Urielite, sitting beside her, draws up his wings, as if to hide himself within them. Every single feather is ruffled, just like Phinael's. Both wear an almost identical look of shock, disbelief and horror on their faces.

Aramia softly clears her throat. "That's what I mean," she says, her voice piercing the stunned silence. "He writes stuff like that all the time." She too, rubs her upper arms. "And, that's what's giving the drudges the creeps. I really do understand they avoid him wherever they can."

Thoughtfully, she adds, "And about the Dreamseed... They tried to. The birds wouldn't let them. Kept them away, driving them away. I saw a dozen or so ravens circle our Armatura. No attacks, just... I don't know. Pushing her off, like a shepherd-dog would do with sheep." She shakes her head again. "In all my life, I've never seen such a thing before..."

Haunting tunes

March 25.th, 2639

After Ashviel has finished playing the written notes Ronariel looks up with an scared expression in his face, a teardrop running down from his left eye. Then he shakes his body until his feathers rustle. With an jitter in his voice he speaks softly, (not even aware that he talks aloud and not only in his thoughts) : "Even for that he should be striked down by an arrow."

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Thommariel frowns while Ashviel plays the melody. As she finished he asks "Who can write such things, and WHY?".

"Em Aramia, you said that the birds attacked the Dreamseed, but they stopped the armatura to do the same?"

As Ronariel speaks, Thommariel looks at him "We will take a look at him and THEN I will make a decision what we have to do with him!".

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Em Aramia frowns at the Michaelite. "Why, yes. That was a really ridiculous thing to observe. Our templar normally never withdraw from battle, and as someone said, that those scarecrows move, we all grabbed what we could do defend the people here. Not only the templars wield weapons here. With so few people... Anyway." She shakes her head, smoothing her robe with nervous hands. "I was one of the last to arrive. I only saw Caelia, our Armatura, with her hands over her head to protect her eyes, withdrawing from the Dreamseed which was literally hacked to pieces by the birds.

One of them they finished like a thunderstorm in next to no time. The rest - there were two others, I think - were driven off into the forest. We heard strange sounds from there. Like bursting things.

No one was brave enough to enter the woods afterwards."

Slowly, she raises a hand to point into a direction on the other side of the shuttered window. "It's the Darkwood out there. It has got its name for good reasons, I think."

Drawing a deep breath, she continues: "Anyway, no one was hurt. Caelia said, the birds just grabbed her, armor, clothing and weapons, more risking to damage themselves than any human being. She said, she thought it was something sent from God. Birds being kin to angels, but I don't buy that. But she's probably got more to say about birds, I think."

"And about this man, I don't think you could really... talk to him. He's far away from the lands of sanity so far. Mumbles only this one word over and over again. Always this 'Nevermore'."

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"Sorry for my interruption Thomariel," Ronariel speaks still with a small quiver in his voice. Then he looks half scared, half offended over to Thommariel. It seems that he wants to

say something but then he bites his lower lip and remains silent.

*

"Oh, and one more thing," Aramia adds, taking something small and glisteny from a hidden pocket in her robe. "Don't know, if we've got a connection with the bird-thing, but we find things like those all the time. But recently, there seem to be more."

With this, she pours a handful of silvery tiny spheres, the size of marbles onto the table. There they lie, reflecting light and their surrounding as every perfect mirror does.

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Calahel's attention was back to top and focused on the small spheres. Lifting an eyebrow he moved a bit closer and leaned down a bit, examining the glistening small things with his eyes. "May I?" he mumbles in the direction of Thommariel, his voice silent and his cheeks contracting in nervosity. Slowly he lifts his hand and reaches for the metal things, curious like hell...

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Thommariel looks thoughtfully to the em then he whispers more to himself as to the others "So it seems the birds protect the people...".

He looks worried to Ronariel for a moment. **Soul of the fellowship to Ronariel* *I'm sorry if I was harsh. But we should not act like this in front of humans. And... I think too that the man is a heretic and that we have to judge about him.**

As the Em pours the spheres on the table and as he sees the reaction of the Raguelite, he looks thoughtful again. He nods to Calahel "Yes, it seems that you have an idea about that spheres?" To the Em, "Did you find these things on a special place?"

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Aramia shakes her head.

"No. The children pick them up. They say, they found them in the woods, on the trees." Frowning, she eyes one of the bigger spheres more closely.

"They call them "dewballs". Play with them all the time. There must be dozens around here. I just picked up those this morning as I nearly stumbled over them."

"Sorry for asking, but did you ever realize some changes with children which play with that little spheres?" Thommariel looks to Calahel "Could you tell us more about them?"

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Calahel took one of the bigger ones in his left palm and then tipped with his right finger on it, slowly examining the surface and feeling the structure of it. He bites on his lower lip and wrinkles his forehead, twinkling shortly and then concentrating himself. "Mhmm..." he murmures when trying to feel what this device is for, to long for the 'Spirit of the machine'...

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Aramia shakes her head again. "No. Never. They just roll or kick them around, playing that old marble game of theirs. They're harmless. Unless, sometimes, one of the kids swallows one of the smaller ones. But they all get dropped the natural way, if you follow me..." She looks at Calahel examining one sphere closely. "They are, aren't they?" Her voice rises in anxious query.

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"Em Amaria my I ask you a maybe silly question"? Ronariel raises his head and takes one of the spheres in his hand and examines it while asking Aramia. "You said they found them on the trees in the wood. Did you mean they grow on them like aples on an apletree?" Ronariel looks with at the Em with a sceptical expression on his face.

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Thommariel listens to the Em "Fine, so it seems there is no danger from the spheres and it seems they have nothing to do with the Dreamseed... but Ronariel is right. You find the sphers in the trees. Could you lead to such a tree later?"

He looks confused for a moment and uses **Soul of the fellowship** to all the other Engel. **Could someone explain me what she means with 'that old marble game'?**

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Aramia smiles at Ronariel. "No, as I understand it, they simply lie there. Not easy to find, as they seem to hide. I will show you the border of the Darkwood, but not cross it. I'm not brave enough for this."

Phinael grins at Thommariel's question but says nothing. Thaël nearly chokes on a piece of cheese and turns away his reddened face.
He, as well, says nothing.

Only Ashviel's face remains motionless. "What do you mean. Not brave enough?"

Aramia hastily clears her throat. "Talk. Superstitions. But after all, I'm very busy with the Covenant's daily duties. I will show you to the border of the woods," she repeats, rising and straightening her robes.

"If you will now excuse me, revered Engel. I find, that I am needed. The people of this place will show you everything and any place you need to find.

I will see you later, after the fourth hour after noon. Then we shall investigate the... the Darkwood." Nodding towards the Engel, her eyes brush past Calahel, still busy with the silvery spheres. Without another word, she leaves the room, closing the door softly behind her.

OOC: The tiny spheres are covered with an intricate network of shallow, engraved lines which build a symmetrical pattern. They seem to have two sides: one with a nearly untouched, mirroring surface, the other with those lines. The spheres are unexpectedly heavy, cold to the touch but warm quickly to the hand.

Their size ranges from that of a small marble to that of the double size.

The silver surface is without blemish or scratches and mirrors everything perfectly.

*

When the Em left, he started to say: "I am not that sure, what exactly they are. It seems to me, that they fit altogether in a larger scheme. This one is only a part of a bigger arrangement of similar machines..." He looked up to his brothers and sisters and sighed a bit disappointed, but his eyes gleamed with curiosity. "Perhaps something like an executive for the brain, that is located somewhere else. It is strange, I know, and you all are not really able to understand what I mean, but - I don't know how to explain it better. Machines are a weird topic, even for us."

"But - I don't know, where they come from. I suggest, that we investigate as soon as possible."

*

Rubbing his temples, Egriel puts down the papers.

"Thank you for the musical accompany, Ashviel." a hint of sarcasm could be detected, "That added to a rather eerie experience in this lunacy of literature."

"And speaking of investigation." he continues, "I need time to examine these in a more proper manner. A quiet place would be ideal for me to meditate on this."

*

As the Em has left the room, Thommariel looks around and smiles softly. "Sorry to you all if I was a bit harsh while the Em was here. But if there are humans around - especially from the church - we have to act as a host. That means that I should speak to humans".

He looks to Egriel "You need a quiet place, so we will leave the cella for a while. You will find me outside the building". With a grin he says "I will examine this snow a bit more closely. Please, let us go outside and leaving Egriel some time to meditate. Tomorrow we will try to find out more about that spheres ... Calahel, you think it's technology? So we should really find out WHAT it is and WHO placed it here".

*

Thommariel has barely ended the mention of snow, as Thaël grabs Ashviel by the waist, drapes her over his shoulder and says over her giggling, "I promised her to pay her back for something she did. I will." With this, he leaves the room, a laughing Sarielite over his left shoulder, wingfeathers ruffled.

Outside, the children fall silent for a few moments, then the laughter and screaming starts.

Phinael pouts. "He could've taken me along as well. Now she gets all the fun. But I'll try to find out more about that game," she adds, sweeping from the room. "Coming, the rest?" she calls over her shoulder.

Ashviel's voice outside is drowned by those of the children. "Thaël, don't you dare to -" she exclaims, and her sentence breaks off to end in muffled, laughing protest. A few

seconds later you all can see the so dignified Urielite hopping around in the court, escaping a mass of well-aimed snowballs thrown by the children of the Covenant who side your Sarielite. She is covered with snow, her skirts soaked. Thaël looks no better.

Thommariel is hit by a soft, cold ball in the middle of the face as he enters the court.

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Ronariel still with one of the spheres in his hand:" Thommariel, I think there can be a coincidence between this and the Dreamseed. We should not forget that the Lord punished mankind for the technology they used. If these things really belong to a larger machine from the time before Engel like us arrived on Earth, such a thing could - so in my opinion - attract Dreamseed as they are both evil and the Lord of the Flies always tries to make bad things." Ronariel makes a small pause to take a deep breath. "I suggest that we take a look at first where the Dreamseed was and then we take care of the heretic. At least we should not forget to look after the sphere-case. Or does anybody else have another idea?" He looks to the remaining Engel of the host with an slightly confused expression.

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Thommariel wants to say something to Ronariel while he is on his way outside. But the only thing he says is "Ron... HUMPF" as the snowball hits his face. He shakes his head for a moment he looks angry. But then he shakes his head and laughs while he tries to find out who 'attacked' him while he forms a snowball.

Soul of the fellowship to Ronariel: *Let us talk about that later. I agree with you that we have to find out more and if that's the work of a heretic we have to judge him. But for now we should use the time to relax*

*

Thael ducks, wings folded behind his back. "Sorry for the headshot," he gasps before Ashviel and Phinael bury him in freshly fallen snow. The children surround the three Engel, dragging on the skirts of Ronariel and Thommariel as well.

OOC: Unless you don't do something else, every single character will be soaked and wet after half an hour of "examining" the snow.

One and a half hours after this (you'll need time to bathe in hot tubs and change clothes, you are all more or less "operational" again. Depends on how eagerly you participated in the "fight" ;-)

Everyone who joined the children in the court may note a handful of the older ones as additional informants. Maybe they come in handy sometime in the future.

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OOC: Calahel will not participate in the joyful games, he'll stay aside and examine some more of these spheres, not understanding the fun the others have, but sometimes glancing at them curiously but secretly.

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Ronariel joins the "battle" with as much enthusiasm as as a gabrielite who runs into Dreamsed or a heretic. At the beginning of this he would be a green dot in the freshly fallen snow, but in the end his clothes change colour from green and white to mud brown (it could really be that he is dirtiest Engel of this convent had ever seen at the end of the fight). Still laughing he ends up in an hot bathtub. For the first time since the Host leavt Roma Ætherna with a truly relaxed expression in his face.