

Journal 4 - in Shadow

I returned to the hotel in the evening. We talked plans over dinner; it transpired that Andreas had left about an hour before I had returned. Then we all retired.

At breakfast I was introduced to yet another member of our clan, and to another young lady also. The tall, heavily built man, pale of hair and eyes, was Tristan; the woman, essentially a slimmer, more curved and female version of Tristan was his wife, Elizabeth. Apparently Intruder had brought them from Amber to join us.

In an oddly domesticated scene, Intruder and Guin were cooking breakfast.

At this point I happened to look out of a window and was understandably surprised to see a wide grassy plain bisected by a river instead of a bustling city. The distant metal and glass towers were substituted by a forest instead.

Upon seeing my stunned expression Guin explained how during the night we had come under attack from some enemy, so she had been required to transport *the entire apartment*, indeed *floor*, to another Shadow to avoid them. Everyone else took this as being normal behaviour; how can they be so blasé? She demonstrated a lesser version of this ability by disappearing and reappearing around the room several times before returning to her cooking.

Intruder explained how this power was a faculty of her original existence as a 'Trump construct', whatever that is supposed to mean. He then told me Andreas was here, but that he had been grievously wounded and was slowly recovering.

Once breakfast was over Intruder introduced me to the oh-so-entertaining 'Chaos Test'. The first part was all right; I had to drink some incredibly alcoholic orange-coloured drink, which made me feel just dandy. Then I had to focus on my hand and imagine it glowed and contained the Pattern. Focusing on my hand at all was quite tricky. I had to close my eyes to do it.

Then something was placed in my hand; it suddenly *writhed*, producing the deepest feeling of nausea I have ever encountered; even worse than after that binge in Venice. Naturally I was forced to rather violently empty my stomach.

I did not feel too well afterwards either, so Guin helped me into my room, stripped me out of my vomit-covered clothing and pushed me into the shower, a contraption that sprayed warm water down onto me. Very nice, and rather refreshing too.

As I recovered, Guin explained to me that Chaos had a power to match the Pattern called 'the Logrus', which is also its opposite; the presence of each power producing an effect similar to the one I had experienced in persons using the opposite power.

Once I had dried off I put on a robe Guin gave me and rejoined the others in the living room. Intruder probed me a little about my past, and then went on to explain how magic items lose power or are destroyed when they leave the Shadow they were created in; something to do with the change in physical and magical laws between Shadows. Then he took me to see Andreas.

Joe was just leaving and Morianna was still there. Andreas lay in the bed just covered by the bedcovers. Other than numerous, relatively minor bandaged wounds, his most distinctive injury was a semicircular chunk of flesh that was missing from his left side, just including the last few ribs and stopping before it reached his pelvis. This wound, I was told, was inflicted by something they called a 'Logrus gun'; they did not know who had used it. Morianna was looking after him.

Since Amber history seemed fairly important at the moment, inasmuch as I hoped it would explain events more clearly, I asked Intruder to tell me something of it.

He explained that when Oberon, the original king of Amber, had vanished, Eric had effectively taken over as king. His brother Corwin had contested this, but in an attempt to attack Amber he had been captured, and at some point he had declared some kind of curse on Eric's reign, been imprisoned and subsequently escaped. Upon returning sometime later, Corwin attacked Amber to take the throne for his brother, only to arrive in time to save Amber from an attack by creatures out of Shadow, apparently from the Courts of Chaos. During the battle Eric was slain; there was no 'autopsy' (checking the actual cause of death) because an 'elder' called Caine prevented it.

Eventually the war between Amber and Chaos was over with Amber winning and the loss of the one who had instigated the war, Brand, and Corwin's sister Deirdre. Random was declared king by 'the Unicorn', the heraldic beast of our family and apparently a creature of some power and importance, judging by the vague awe in Intruder's voice.

He then went on to tell me that the Unicorn was the mother of Oberon! His father was Dworkin, the oldest of our family. I can only hope this is some sort of legend or allegorical story as opposed to an actual true event.

As I should have expected, Chaos too has it's heraldic/legendary creature; a creature representative of chaos called 'the Serpent'.

At that point we were all interrupted by Andreas' screams. We tried to restrain him, but only with everyone's help were we able to finally hold him down. Even as weak as he was, he is remarkably strong. Once Joe had given him a 'sedative' (it sent him into a deep sleep) he then used something called a 'general purpose Chaos anti-venom' to try to counter the effects of some poison in his system.

Once it became clear that without the correct anti-venom Andreas would die, Joe and Intruder got together to acquire it from his contact in the Courts.

Left with nothing to do, Guin decided she would take me shopping for 'necessary items'. Acquiring something she called a 'credit card' from where it was hidden under a drawer in Intruder's room, she took my arm and in a rainbow-like flash of colours I suddenly found we were standing in a busy street somewhere. All along the great length of the street were many shops, dedicated mostly to clothing; a multitude of people walked up and down the street, in and out of the shops.

She took me on a kind of tour around the largest of the shops, mostly so I could buy about two travelling chests of clothing of all varieties, from casual to rugged to formal; she also purchased a number of items, modelling even the most scandalous scanty underclothes for me to comment on. I found myself suddenly in possession of a vast wardrobe.

Then she took me to dinner at what as clearly a very high quality restaurant that served Italian food. Dinner over, we adjourned to a hotel for the night.

Alas, separate rooms.