

Journal 6 - in Shadow

I awoke with aching head (and backside) next to my bed. My wound had gone a little putrescent, not a welcome sight in my state. Guin came in to see how I was and was soon playing nurse again before giving me a bowl of stew. She left again and promptly returned pushing a sort of small, open-topped cage on wheels she called a 'shopping trolley'. Handing me a bottle of what the label said was orange juice, she then left me to recuperate.

Intruder inspected me as well before handing me a few novels; various representatives of what the covers proclaimed were 'the best in the suspense-thriller genre'. He told me that Guin had gone shopping again for us all, this time for winter clothing.

He then asked me who had been in Andreas' room last night; he was somehow aware of the residue of Trump use, he told me. I told him I could not tell him, but would inform him later if it was so important to him. He said he would try to get it out of Andreas; I wished him luck.

Later that afternoon Guin came to see me; another 'town meeting' was planned downstairs, so she helped me dress (such a delightful woman) and guided me downstairs. Only Victor was not present, being off on some errand or personal matter; they did not tell me which.

Much of this meeting was governed by the fact that Fiona and Bleys joined us after a short time. Fiona spoke most of the two of them, with Bleys mostly interjecting with reports he had received from Amber.

Clearly true brother and sister, both had flaming red hair, Bleys' short with a small beard and Fiona's long and tied in several braids alongside the main flow of hair. Bleys was tall where Fiona was short, both were of average build for their size, but somehow they radiated an air of confidence and vigour that went beyond mere appearance. Victor looks (and is) big and strong, but I felt that Bleys could probably take him with ease. Fiona would probably talk him out of fighting her and into helping her instead. A formidable pair.

Joe and Tristan seemed to be almost constantly at odds, a relatively unimportant but noteworthy matter. There existed similar antagonism between Andreas and Bleys, though of a distinctly older and more well trod nature.

Fiona told us something of the situation, mostly adding to what we already knew; Tristan added his words to hers, which suggested where his interests (of sorts) lie.

Fiona seemed to be a very black and white, with us/against us kind of person, not what I expected from what I had heard about her at all. Maybe the stress and urgency of the situation required her to be less subtle than normal. To put it simply she said that anyone of the family who would not stand for Random could not be completely trusted. She even intimate that anyone who was 'against us' might well end up dead.

Left with no apparent choice (maybe she reserves such threats for us 'young ones'), in the proceeding vote I elected to stand for the Random or Die Party. Tristan, wooed (presumably) by Fiona's eloquent words, voted that way also. Fiona said she held Julian's vote to stand for Random, and in some way swayed by this, Morianna voted that way also (why was he so high in her esteem? Was he her father? Or perhaps just one of the 'elders' she trusted?). Guin restated Victor's vote to stand for Random.

Joe was the only one present not to do so. The essence of his argument was that he had no real evidence either way to form an opinion on which to base his decision. Clearly a death threat was not enough of a decision-prompter for him; or it may have been that, as the only one unknown to Fiona (as far as I could see anyway) that threat really applied only to me. The main reason for his current neutral/undecided stance was that to make a decision could be to endanger his wife, still in Amber.

Dworkin arrived with the news that he was still trying to contact Corwin (out of family obligation, obviously....); so far he had been unsuccessful.

It was suggested that Joe should attempt to contact Caine; this suggested another relationship I was (understandably) unaware of. It seemed Caine was his father. It was also proposed that Victor should try for Gerard, because he knew him well enough from being in

the fleet with him. Fiona said she would try Benedict, who they had still not managed to contact. Naturally, I kept quiet.

According to Bleys' report, Gerard's fleet had been attacked by something he called a Kraken, presumably related to the famous aquatic monster of the same name. However, most of his ships were not part of this fleet, and the remaining vessels may be hidden somewhere in Shadow or even Amber, doubtless with Gerard amongst them.

Eventually, the following basic outline sketch of a plan was drawn up: Fiona and Bleys, with assistance from Andreas and Intruder, would make actions against Eric's forces wherever they could. The first matter was a reconnaissance into Amber itself, for basic intelligence as well as to look for Gerard and Joe's wife, Florence. Later efforts would concentrate on attacks on Amber, focusing on the disrupting of supply lines.

Bleys and Andreas went upstairs once the meeting was over to make plans; I was told that though they hated each other they would do what had to be done.

Fiona suggested to Joe that he should attempt to contact Caine using a dagger that belonged to Caine and that he now carried. Most of what she said might work went over my head.

After dinner I was returned to my bed like an invalid, which I suppose I was, to a degree.

The next morning I was better and so could just make my own way down to breakfast. Joe had gone out, and I passed Tristan taking breakfast up to his wife.

The day was slow, spent reading in a comfortable chair in the main room. I even played chess with Tristan a few times; but, as usual, I lost. Manfred always beat me too, so I am used to losing, at chess anyway; I always got the better women.

Joe and Guin returned about mid-afternoon; Guin looked a little worn out, probably because she does not really walk around that much. She asked me to come upstairs with her.

She quickly ruined any chances of some fun at last by collapsing on my bed and begging me to massage her bruised and blistered legs and feet. I told her that it was the price for not walking around enough, but did as she asked anyway. She moaned in pain and pleasure in a way rarely heard outside of incredibly satisfying sex, and fell asleep before I had finished (so to speak).

Once I had finished I covered her with a blanket and went off to have a slow, hot bath before sleeping myself, in Guin's room.