

(8th of Hieliah) First-ever meeting:

“Hello. Caught by mice too eh?”

“Of course, it’s bound to happen to all of us,” the mysterious man replied, smirk evident on his face (though Iketasos belated realizes this smirk was rather one of fearful bewilderment after they have become Nyleein’s object of desire and obtained the privilege of being able to nestle into his arms, deep in the Private night). Moonstone white hair cascaded his eyes therefore Iketasos was not able to probe deeper into his features to see what thoughts he may have had in that moment; surely it was something akin to amusement, in that this individual probably knew who they all were. For, after all, he donned similar attire to the *Euostrath* that had just assaulted the group weeks ago -- perhaps the both of them were working together and the kimonos were how they showed affiliation.

But that is unsettling. The *Euostrath* (the Huntsman, as Jabril had coldly remarked, as being his true title) for some unknown reason, spared mercy to the phantom in that attack by saying, “*you’re one of his.*” Iketasos had not been in this dimension for long as well as having very little involvement in the gods so they knew not of what this god was speaking of. Deep down, unbidden fear slithered its way up their thoughts in a warning.

“It really is so.” Did *he* know Iketasos too then? “So, you white hair, what’s your name?”

With a new smile, he turned his head towards the Mesmer. “Nyleein.”

“Nyleein? Your attire looks lovely. It’s a pleasure to meet you.”

(18th of Zariel) First use of the cigar:

Even the ghost whose blood is made of apathy and feigned emotions, could still *feel* guilt at their lack of actions when Nyleein’s secret was revealed. They know how precious secrets are to keep oneself alive because for a charmer such as them, Iketasos knows the power in secrets especially those belonging to others; it’s just simply that, they do not have any of their own. No loss but all gain.

If the phantom wanted to court Nyleein into giving them his good graces, then they should have done better to uphold his privacy. Iketasos is not one to dwell on the past nor cultivate remorse henceforth they’ve decided to craft their own second chance.

As intended, Iketasos had investigated the man’s cigar for any traces of magic and the research results turned positive. If their ideas were correct, then the cigar could be used to contact Nyleein even if it was he who was the messenger. A possibility was held in wasting the magic for a singular use but this smoking device was in *their* hands. Any consequences to be had with the item could be blamed on something else; Iketasos was not worried.

With the grey smoking device, Iketasos endeavored to set things proper. They ungloved both of their hands to reveal nebulous claws to grind one of the claws on their thumb to conjure a flame of warm cream and maroon. The magical flame caught the lip of the cigar and it sighed pleasure with smoke.

“Fetch Nyleein and tell him that I apologize. That I... shouldn't have just stood there, in silence.”

The smoke of grey wings grew a head and beak before a pure white finch was born. It blinked its shiny cobalt eyes as if processing the request and fluttered to the extended claw finger. Iketasos had seen Nyleein conjure beasts like a horse from his pipes before but never had they seen magic such as this.

“Apologize?” Nyleein’s voice filtered through from the bird after several minutes. His cadence was thick and deep with no space left for insightful guesses as to what he may have felt.

"Leaving you.. to be exposed like that. I shouldn't have let that happen. Some secrets aren't meant to be shown and I reckon that was a major one for you.... I apologize.”

“It is fine,” spoke the feathered messenger.

Iketasos bobbed the finch with thinned lips. “If that is so... I don’t know the limitations of this cigar so that is all that I will be saying. Thank you for your time, Nyleein.” No words emanated from the small creature as it ascended into flight before vanishing into a puffy cloud and then, nothing.

Timidness is not an outfit that fits the phantom but it is one that might have pulled some strings on Nyleein’s end. Iketasos shrugged to himself before turning around to sit in the rickety chair.

“I’ll try that again once more... for science.”

"Nyleein," Skeatosi uttered weakly into the cigar she had just lit, in the desire to coax Nyleein out.

The smoke dripped from the object in her hands as the elder formed, wispy tendrils curled around his form in reminder that this is not truly him. “You seem to be struggling