

Second Citadel: The Devil in the Sunlight
(Part One)

By

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[Trigger Warnings](#)

Scene: 1

(OUTSIDE THE WALLS OF THE SECOND CITADEL.
THE MORNING AFTER OLALA AND QUANYII MET.)

SOUND: JUNGLE NOISES.

OLALA:

Miss Quanyii, I do not understand why we cannot enter the Citadel now. The gates are right there, and I have waited so very long, and—

QUANYII:

Shh, halvesie. We're waiting for someone.

OLALA:

And also—

QUANYII:

Shh!

OLALA:

Miss... or Mister Quanyii... Sorry, sorry. You still have not told me why you have changed from a beautiful woman into a beautiful man! Is that part of your scheme, too?

QUANYII:

If you can wake up each morning and decide whether to be an ape or a fly or a little girl, then I can decide whether to be a woman or a man. I don't even have to shapeshift for that. And besides, you try being a woman in this Citadel. Gross!

ANGELO:

(IN THE DISTANCE, SLOWLY GETTING CLOSER)
Hup hup hup hup hup!

QUANYII:

Ha! There he is!

ANGELO:

Ah, back to my Citadel at long last! I have missed these walls, lo these many weeks. But duty does not rest for man or woman or Sir Angelo the Strong! Who also fits into the first of those aforementioned categories!

OLALA:

That... man?

QUANYIII:

Watch everything he does, kiddo, and listen to every word he says. Even the smallest details matter.

OLALA:

Oh... okay...

GUARD 1:

Monster!!

OLALA:

(GASP)

QUANYIII:

Ah – and I think this might just be the moment we’ve been waiting for.

ANGELO:

A monster! Mere moments after my triumphant return! Hold fast, brother in arms, Sir Angelo the Strong is on his way! Hup hup hup hup hup!

SOUND: SIR ANGELO RUNS.

QUANYIII:

Follow him, quickly!

SOUND: QUANYII AND OLALA FOLLOW, RUSTLING THROUGH THE LEAVES.

GUARD 1:

S-sir Angelo! Is that you?

ANGELO:

Stay strong, fellow-knight, and keep calling so that I may find you! What manner of beast is this?

GUARD 1:

I don't know! But it has these cruel, curved horns, and it gnashes its teeth, and it stands on cloven feet, and its eyes, Sir Angelo! They terrify me!

ANGELO:

Be brave, Sir – I see you now!

Say your prayers, beast!

SOUND: HE DRAWS HIS SWORD.

_____ (GREAT BATTLE ROAR THAT PETERS OUT)

SOUND: ANGELO RUNS UP TO THE MONSTER, THEN SLOWS TO A STOP.

... Oh.

GUARD 1:

What are you waiting for, Sir Angelo? The monster's right in front of you! Slay it, slay it!

ANGELO:

My friend... I do not think that is a monster.

SOUND: GOAT BLEATS.

I believe that is a goat.

GUARD 1:

It *might* be. But imagine what terrifying kind of beast might pretend to be a goat.

ANGELO:

I'm afraid I do not—

GUARD 1:

And look at its *eyes*!

ANGELO:

Begads! They are terrifying, aren't they?

OLALA:

Mr. Quanyii... are you certain this is the man you want me to watch?

QUANYII:

Absolutely.

ANGELO:

... but on second thought, I believe all goats' eyes are rather frightening, aren't they? Those square and stretched-out pupils! Ugh.

My recommendation to us both, man, is to avoid goats at all costs. One need not put oneself through unnecessary fear when real threats lurk in this jungle. Now off you go, goat. Shoo, away!

SOUND: THE GOAT BLEATS, THEN WALKS AWAY.

GUARD 1:

But Sir Angelo, what will Captain Caroline think?

ANGELO:

I imagine she must like goats. She has rather frightening

eyes herself.

GUARD 1:

No, no, I mean... her orders to the Guards were that anything that *could* be a monster should be apprehended at once.

ANGELO:

That does not sound like Sir Caroline. Perhaps if you added "you fool" at the end, it might, but even so...

SOUND: THE GUARD AND ANGELO'S CONVERSATION FADES INTO THE BACKGROUND.

GUARD 1:

So much has changed in the weeks since you've been away, Sir Angelo. Hasn't Captain Absolon sent you any updates?

ANGELO:

He may have, but I was after a bat the size of your horse, my friend. It plucked royal pigeons straight out of the sky. What's changed, now?

GUARD 1:

Monsters, Sir Angelo! It's been so much, but you wouldn't believe how many monsters we've found, and how many places we've found them, and-

ANGELO:

Slow down, man, you're making no sense. What monsters?

SOUND: QUANYII AND OLALA SPEAK OVER THE GUARD AND ANGELO'S CONVERSATION ABOVE.

QUANYIII:

Do you think you've seen enough to recognize that man, Olala? His voice, the way he walks - everything?

OLALA:

I think so, but I still do not understand why—

QUANYIII:

Very good! Then let's get him out of our way, shall we? Now where did I put that Ventriloquist's Jawbone... Ah! Here it is!

OLALA:

Someone's *bones*? H-how did you get those?

QUANYIII:

I just reached into my bag. Weren't you looking?

OLALA:

But I meant—

QUANYIII:

Now listen closely: I just blow on the Jawbone, and then...

SOUND: HE BLOWS ON IT. MAGICAL HARP ARPEGGIO. VERY DISTANTLY, A MONSTER ROARS.

GUARD:

(YELP)

What was that?!

ANGELO:

Begads, now *that* is a monster! Come, lad, it sounds like it's deep in the jungle! Hup hup hup hup hup!

SOUND: ANGELO AND THE GUARD RUN AWAY.

QUANYIII:

And now that's done, I'll tell you exactly what I need you to do, halvesie: I need you to become that man.

We need something only he can take – and you're going to get it for me.

MUSIC: SECOND CITADEL THEME.

SOUND: AMBIENCE FROM INSIDE THE CITADEL.

CIVILIANS:

Sir Angelo the Strong!

Hey, Sir Angelo!

Bag any big monsters lately, Angelo?

ANGELO-OLALA:

Um... hello! Yes, greetings! H-hello!

QUANYIII:

Look at all the attention you're getting. That'll teach me to let someone else take the celebrity.

ANGELO-OLALA:

It is very overwhelming. I wish not quite so many people knew me.

CIVILIAN:

Back at it again, eh, Angelo?

ANGELO-OLALA:

Ehm... I think so!

QUANYIII:

Try not to let it get to your head. Or, wait, maybe do.

"Sir Angelo" definitely has.

Now I think it's time we discuss what we're doing in such a dangerous Citadel in the first place. Hm?

ANGELO-OLALA:

Oh, but that is easy. We are here to see the Queen!

QUANYIII:

(LONG LAUGH)

Of course, of course – *eventually* we'll see the Queen. But first, halvesie, I think it's only fair that you return the favor.

ANGELO-OLALA:

But how can I return a favor that you haven't done yet?

QUANYIII:

You see, Olala, the Second Citadel is home to a lot of highly magical artifacts – objects that any magic user would give his soul to wrap his fingers around. And since I gave my soul away years ago, that means I need to get a little more... creative.

ANGELO-OLALA:

Perhaps we could ask the Queen if–

QUANYIII:

You want to just ask for it? And waste my perfect gem of a plan? That just won't do, halvesie. It won't do at all.

ANGELO-OLALA:

Oh. I see.

QUANYIII:

Listen to me and I will tell you exactly the plan I've cooked up:

MUSIC: SECOND CITADEL THEME FADES OUT.

SOUND: AMBIENCE FADES OUT.

The only thing the Second Citadel loves more than slaying

monsters and burning witches is the trophies it gets from doing either.

SOUND: TROPHY AMBIENCE FADES IN - A FAINT, RHYTHMIC DULL DRUMMING.

They've dedicated an entire floor of their spire to the Hall of Trophies, and they hang heads and claws and other deliciously gruesome souvenirs there to bask in and remember why Citadel humans are so superior, et cetera, et cetera. But we only care about this Hall because it holds the entrance to the Trophy Archive - storage for all the magical trophies that Citadel scholars call "too dangerous" for public display. Or in other words: the room where all the fun things are.

I need to get into that Archive, Olala. There is something there I need more than air, or food, or life: I need to prove to someone that I'm right and they're wrong, and nothing in the Universe is more important than that.

ANGELO-OLALA:

But... how do we get into the Trophy Archive? And why must I be this man who is so very tall that when I look down at my feet I feel dizzy?

SOUND: THE RHYTHMIC DRUMMING GROWS FAINTER AND LOWER-PITCHED.

QUANYIII:

Because its contents are so dangerous, the door to the Trophy Archive is locked at all times by two keys. One of these is held by the Captain of the Journeyman knights; the other by the Captain of the Guard. I will take on Sir Absolon, Captain of the Journeymen. I've given you a form that the Captain of the Guard will trust.

I'd do it all myself, but she always sees through my

transformations right away. Killjoy.

ANGELO-OLALA:

I will try, Mister Quanyii, but I have never used my shape to deceive anyone before.

QUANYIII:

(SNORT OF LAUGHTER)

A shapeshifter who can't lie? Sorry, kid, but I don't buy it. You're cute, but not that cute. I've been fibbing since I couldn't change anything but the color of my hair.

ANGELO-OLALA:

But—

QUANYIII:

Now focus. We're at the gate of the Spire now.

SOUND: THEY APPROACH THE SPIRE.

GUARD 2:

Halt.

SOUND: A GUARD STEPS IN THE WAY, CHAINMAIL JANGLING.

State your name and purpose, citizens.

QUANYIII:

What are you, blind? You're talking to the top monster-slayer in the kingdom, Sir Angel—

ANGELO-OLALA:

My name is Olala! It is a pleasure to meet you, Sir Knight.

SOUND: A MOMENT OF STUNNED SILENCE. DRUMS IN THE BACKGROUND.

GUARD 2:

(LAUGHTER)

Sir Angelo! Oh, always a kidder, aren't you?

ANGELO-OLALA:

I don't know what you mean!

GUARD 2:

Oh-La-La! What a name!

QUANYII:

Yes, very funny, *Angelo*, but we have work to do, don't we?

He's Sir Angelo the Strong. I'm Hector of the Archives.
Here for... you know what? I'll let you guess that one.

GUARD 2:

The... Archives?

QUANYII:

Smart boy. We'll be going in now.

ANGELO-OLALA:

Erm... my apologies... sir! It was very nice to meet you!

GUARD 2:

But Angelo, you don't recognize me? It's—

SOUND: THE DOOR SLAMS BEHIND THEM, CUTTING OFF THE DRUMMING.
FAINT SHOUTING AND CLANGING WEAPONS.

QUANYII:

You really weren't kidding about lying, were you?

ANGELO-OLALA:

Hm? But Mister Quanyii, I do not know what you—

Oh no!! I already made a mistake!

QUANYII:

Adorable. Not as cute as me, but still... adorable.

All right, then, we'll just have to change up our plan a bit. I want you to watch and listen as I work my magic on Captain Absolon – and then I want you to do the same with Captain Caroline. All right?

ANGELO-OLALA:

Okay, Mister Quanyii.

QUANYIII:

Good. Now turn into something small and hide in my pocket – somewhere you can still get a good view, all right? But remember that form, halvesie; you're not done with it yet.

ANGELO-OLALA:

Yes, Mister Quanyii!

SOUND: OLALA'S TRANSFORMATION CHIMES. SHE TURNS INTO A MOUSE, THEN CLIMBS UP QUANYII'S CLOTHES.

MOUSE-OLALA:

I'm ready!

SOUND: SMALL MOUSE SOUEAKS.

QUANYIII:

Perfect. This is Absolon's office – watch and learn.

SOUND: HE KNOCKS ON A DOOR.

Captain Absolon?

ABSOLON:

(THROUGH THE DOOR)

And bang! Crash! With Sir Galahad's sword at the serpent's throat, one of its fangs lodged right in his thigh, now that was a battle, wouldn't you say, Sir Frederick?

SIR FREDERICK:

I do not know which battle you refer to, Captain.

SOUND: QUANYII KNOCKS ON THE DOOR AGAIN.

QUANYII:

Captain Absolon. I have a request from the Queen.

SIR FREDERICK:

Do you... want me to get that?

ABSOLON:

Yes, fine, fine, whatever. But my basic point is,
Frederick--

SOUND: THE DOOR OPENS. QUANYII WALKS IN.

that if Captain Caroline and the Guards can turn the
Craftsman's Quarter inside-out looking for shapeshifting
beasties, then the Journeymen ought to be able to turn a
settlement inside-out-upside-down-and-back-again in half
that time. Am I right?

SIR FREDERICK:

Well, Captain--

ABSOLON:

But that, of course, raises the question of which
settlement we should inspect next. Ballast? They had that
witch a while back. Witches are like rats, they say. If you
see one there's bound to be a hundred more close by.

SIR FREDERICK:

Captain, I believe it was disproven that Ballast ever had a
real witch.

ABSOLON:

Well, then, I'd say they're due for one, wouldn't you? So, let's see, we'll gather a platoon together, headed by Sir Richard the Thorough, and we'll send them off to Ballast in the morning like so.

SOUND: HE THUNKS A WOODEN PIECE ONTO HIS MAP.

SIR FREDERICK:

Sir Richard seems an excellent choice, Captain.

ABSOLON:

Excellent? No, I don't think so. A competent choice, yes. But Sir Richard is slow. His monster-slaying numbers just aren't where they should be. Now if we had one of the real knights on it, the old stock, your Sirs Percy and Hector and, Saints grace us, Sir Galahad, now *there* were some witch-hunters. With Sir Richard, it will be a lot of interviews, a lot of hemming and hawing, and then maybe a dunking after a week or two.

QUANYII:

(CLEARS THROAT)

ABSOLON:

Though I do love a dunking. Gathers a big crowd, and hardly anyone ever drowns. No idea if they work, but that's monsters for you. Not like it's an exact science!

QUANYII:

(CLEARS THROAT)

Captain Absolon, sir. I have urgent business from the Queen, sir.

ABSOLON:

From the Queen? So Mira's too good to come ask me her favors herself, is she?

Sir Frederick, you have the orders. Go talk to Sir Richard. See if you can't get him to run some people out of their houses, burn down a hut or something. Tell him not to come back until he's found three witches.

SIR FREDERICK:

But Captain—

ABSOLON:

No, you're right; make that five witches. Off you go.

SIR FREDERICK:

Yes, sir.

SOUND: SIR FREDERICK WALKS OUT.

ABSOLON:

Now. You say the Queen needs something from me? You have the paperwork, I hope?

QUANYII:

I do, sir! Here.

SOUND: SIR FREDERICK CLOSSES THE DOOR BEHIND HIM, SHUTTING OUT THE SHOUTING AND WEAPONS. QUANYII HANDS OVER A PIECE OF PAPER.

ABSOLON:

What's this? I don't see a signature here.

QUANYII:

There's a signature.

ABSOLON:

No there isn't. There isn't anything else on this page, either. The whole damned thing's blank. What kind of prank does Mira think—

QUANYII:

Oh, if you look again, Captain, I think you'll find everything's in order.

SOUND: MAGIC HARP ARPEGGIO.

ABSOLON:

What are you talking about... Oh. So it is. Hm.

SOUND: ABSOLON RUSTLES THE PAPER, MUTTERING TO HIMSELF WHILE HE READS.

My key to the Trophy Archive? Mira wants *that*? What's she want that for?

QUANYII:

Search me, sir. You know how the Queen can be.

ABSOLON:

Oh *ho*! Cheeky! I could have reported you for that. Under the last King, I could've used your head for Farhole Stickball for saying a thing like that.

QUANYII:

Under the last King, I don't think I would have said anything of the kind, sir.

ABSOLON:

True enough. True e-nough.

Though this is irregular. A request from old Mira... and yet it comes to me through a squire I've never met instead of a pigeon? Highly irregular.

MOUSE-OLALA:

Uh-oh.

QUANYII:

If I were a pigeon, Captain Absolon, we couldn't have this

delightful conversation, could we?

ABSOLON:

Still, hardly a reason to...

SOUND: HE SNAPS HIS FINGER.

Aha! I know exactly what's going on here – and exactly what you are.

MOUSE-OLALA:

Mister Quanyii!!

QUANYIII:

That's very exciting, Captain. How many guesses would you like before I spoil the answer?

ABSOLON:

No need to guess. I know exactly what to do with visitors like you...

SOUND: ABSOLON OPENS A DESK DRAWER AND RUMMAGES AROUND.

MOUSE-OLALA:

Mister Quanyii, look out! He's reaching for something in his desk!

QUANYIII:

Do you, now?

ABSOLON:

Prepare yourself...

For an autograph!

SOUND: ABSOLON WHIPS OUT A PEN AND ELABORATELY SIGNS HIS NAME, READING IT OUT LOUD AS THE PEN SCRATCHES.

"To my young friend with grrreat cheek and grrreater potential... signed... Sir Absolon the Swift!" There you go!

SOUND: HE HANDS THE PAPER TO QUANYII.

You hold onto that, whatever-your-name-is. It could be worth a lot of coin some day. Probably worth it now, to the right buyer.

QUANYII:

I'll... keep that in mind. Thanks.

ABSOLON:

Now off you go. I have a campaign to plan, and these little wooden knights don't move across this great big map all by themselves!

Hmm... now let's see...

QUANYII:

(CLEARS THROAT)

ABSOLON:

Angelo should be back soon... and what's Damien up to in that Swamp up north, I wonder? Maybe I'll send Angelo for a visit—

SOUND: QUANYII TAPS IMPATIENTLY.

QUANYII:

Captain Absolon?

ABSOLON:

Oh. You're still here?

QUANYII:

The key, Captain.

ABSOLON:

What key?

QUANYIII:

I had a form—

ABSOLON:

And a dashing form at that! Have you considered a career as a Journeyman?

QUANYIII:

... from the Queen. For your key to the Archives.

ABSOLON:

Oh! That old thing. Of course.

SOUND: HE OPENS A DRAWER AND TAKES OUT A BIG, HEAVY KEY.

Catch.

SOUND: HE THROWS IT. QUANYIII CATCHES IT.

Now goodbye, goodbye.

QUANYIII:

Thank you, Captain. I'll bring this to the Queen right away.

ABSOLON:

(MUTTERING TO HIMSELF AS QUANYIII LEAVES)

No, no, a tank like Angelo's no good for a check-in... but then again, keeping him out of the Citadel is always a good idea... before *she* gets her claws in him again. Poor fool--

SOUND: QUANYIII WALKS OUT OF THE ROOM, OPENS THE DOOR, AND CLOSES IT BEHIND HIM. SHOUTING AND WEAPON CLANGING GROWS LOUDER.

MOUSE-OLALA:

That was amazing, Mister Quanyii!

QUANYII:

Well. I'm just glad it's over. I can't stand that man.

SOUND: HE TEARS THE AUTOGRAPH INTO LITTLE PIECES. QUANYII AND OLALA WALK DOWN THE HALL.

So, Olala? Do you think you have the system down? Ready to take on mean old Captain Caroline?

MOUSE-OLALA:

I think so! First I am supposed to give her one of those blank pieces of paper, like you did—

QUANYII:

Oh, no, don't do that. She'll see right through that in a second.

MOUSE-OLALA:

... Oh. Well, then I'll tell her that the Queen sent me to—

QUANYII:

(LAUGHS)

The Queen! If you tell her the Queen wants the key, she'll snap it in two.

MOUSE-OLALA:

Oh. Then I... um... I...

Ask for her autograph?

QUANYII:

(SIGH)

Were you even paying attention, kiddo?

MOUSE-OLALA:

I think so, but I don't know what you want me to do—

QUANYII:

Well, we're low on time, so you're just going to have to figure it out. Here, we're switching places.

SOUND: OLALA'S TRANSFORMATION CHIMES AND QUANYII'S HARP. OLALA TURNS INTO ANGELO AGAIN, AND QUANYII TURNS INTO A FLY.

ANGELO-OLALA:

Oh dear! It is... so very tall up here again!

FLY-QUANYII:

Get it together, kiddo. That's the door to the Captain of the Guard's office right there!

ANGELO-OLALA:

But but but but I'm not ready!

CAROLINE:

(THROUGH THE DOOR)

Angelo? Is that you? Get in here, quickly, before Absolon sees you.

FLY-QUANYII:

Looks like you'll have to make yourself ready, Olala. In you go!

SOUND: THE DOOR OPENS WITH A HARP FLOURISH.

ANGELO-OLALA:

Whoa!

SOUND: ANGELO-OLALA STUMBLES THROUGH THE DOOR.

CAROLINE:

There you are. Finally. Absolon finally ran out of errands

for you, did he?

ANGELO-OLALA:

I... Um... well...

FLY-QUANYII:

If you don't know what to say to her, just agree. She *loves* that.

ANGELO-OLALA:

Yes, Sir Caroline!

CAROLINE:

It's about time. You've been gone for weeks, and I have too much work for you to do and too much to catch you up on.

ANGELO-OLALA:

Yes, Sir Caroline!

CAROLINE:

Oh, and don't you "but I'm a Journeyman and so my duty is to Captain Absolon" me, Angelo, because that empty-headed fool wouldn't know what to do with you if...

What did you say?

ANGELO-OLALA:

Um... yes, Sir Caroline?

CAROLINE:

Oh.

Well, what are you waiting for? Get over here. I've something to show you.

ANGELO-OLALA:

Yes, Sir Caroline.

SOUND: THE DOOR CLOSSES, SHUTTING OUT THE SHOUTING AND WEAPONS.

Hup... hup... hup... hup... hup...

CAROLINE:

The situation has worsened considerably since the last time you were in the Citadel. We've an invader in Milltown who is escalating his demands by the day, and meanwhile it seems our Citadel isn't as secure as we thought.

Monsters, Sir Angelo. There are monsters *everywhere* in this Citadel. I have no idea what the past Captains of the Guard were doing, but it clearly wasn't much, because this supposed Northern bastion of human security is teeming with magical creatures. Now, what does that make you think? Hm?

ANGELO-OLALA:

That... is very good for them, and I hope they are very happy, Sir!

CAROLINE:

(SCOFFS)

Well, isn't that *nice* of you. But my job as Captain of the Guard is to protect the Citadel from monsters, and if that means running every last one of them out of here myself, I'll do it.

You wouldn't believe where I've found them, Angelo. Monsters underneath houses. Monsters in the plumbing. People keeping monsters as pets, if you can believe it, and worst of all: the shapeshifters.

ANGELO-OLALA:

Are there a great many shapeshifters, Sir Caroline? Many shapeshifters... and maybe some who are half-human and half-monster?

CAROLINE:

What did you just say?

ANGELO-OLALA:

I-I-I was only asking—

CAROLINE:

Half-human, half-monster. That's what you said. But you've been gone since long before that devil in Milltown made his demands. How did you know about it?

ANGELO-OLALA:

S-someone in Milltown was asking for m... for a half-human, half-monster?

CAROLINE:

If you didn't hear about it from Milltown, where did you hear it?

ANGELO-OLALA:

I... I mean... that is to say... well...

FLY-QUANYII:

Say *something*, kiddo!

ANGELO-OLALA:

I don't... remember?

CAROLINE:

Typical. So much for secrecy. Likely the entire Northern Wilds knows about that Kite and his demands.

(DISSATISFIED GRUNT)

Yes, Angelo. The Journeymen and the Guards have both been conscripted into finding this half-monster shapeshifter the Kite wants so badly, but in the process all we seem to find are other shapeshifters, hiding in the Citadel as livestock

and pests and even... humans. It must be another of the monsters' plots. I'm certain of it.

We haven't been able to pull any confessions out of the other shapeshifters, but there's at least one we've confirmed as a clear threat. A nasty thing, lurking in the shadows, and it's confessed already to eating a child, Angelo. A *child*.

If just one could do that much harm, what would the others have done when prepared? Hm? So I've had a few of the guards build these in response. Hold this.

SOUND: CAROLINE TAKES A SPEARLIKE OBJECT OFF A RACK ON THE WALL, THEN HANDS IT TO ANGELO-OLALA.

ANGELO-OLALA:

Yes, Sir Caroline.

Um... but what is this stick? Ohhh, and what is this shining rock at the end of it? It is very pretty, and it looks so smooth!

CAROLINE:

Can you be serious, Angelo? For even one moment?

ANGELO-OLALA:

Y-yes, Sir Caroline!

CAROLINE:

Touch the pretty stone all you like.

ANGELO-OLALA:

Oooooooh.

CAROLINE:

It's anti-magic stone, taken from the cells in that fort at the end of the world. Doesn't do a thing to us, but it

gives the shapeshifters a very satisfying shock -- and more importantly, it returns them to their true form.

ANGELO-OLALA:

Ahh!!

SOUND: SHE DROPS THE ANTI-MAGIC SPEAR WITH A CLATTER.

CAROLINE:

Be careful with that, you dolt! Really, Angelo, what's gotten into you?

FLY-QUANYII:

It might be time to speed things up a bit, halvesie. The less time you're here, the less chance she has to catch you.

CAROLINE:

At any rate... where was I? Shapeshifters, shapeshifters...

ANGELO-OLALA:

Sir Caroline! I am very sorry to interrupt you, but I have a most urgent request! And that is why I have come here! And it is why I have to leave, as soon as possible! Um, please!

CAROLINE:

This is a request from Absolon, isn't it?

ANGELO-OLALA:

No! It is from me! Um...

FLY-QUANYII:

Sir Angelo the Strong!

ANGELO-OLALA:

Sir Angelo who's strong!

CAROLINE:

The Queen, then? She's having you run errands for her now?

ANGELO-OLALA:

No! Just little old... um, *big* old me! I am in need of your key to the Archive, please, ma'am! Sir! Sir-ma'am!

CAROLINE:

My key to the Archive? You mean this key?

SOUND: SHE OPENS A DRAWER AND TAKES OUT A HEAVY KEY OUT.

ANGELO-OLALA:

Yes! Thank you, Sir Caroline! I will take this key and then I will return right away.

CAROLINE:

What do you need it for?

ANGELO-OLALA:

Beg pardon?

CAROLINE:

I asked what you need it for, Angelo. The Archives are a high-security area. This key is only to be used in case of great emergency. So what, then, is your emergency?

ANGELO-OLALA:

I... um... well... I...

CAROLINE:

Everyone seems very interested in the Archives, suddenly. The Queen. You. *Her*. That's even where we caught that shadowy shapeshifter. Lurking in the Hall of Trophies, by the Archives door. So why do you need the key, Angelo?

SOUND: ANGELO RUNNING FROM OUTSIDE THE DOOR.

ANGELO:

(THROUGH THE DOOR)
Hup hup hup hup hup!

CAROLINE:

Hm? What's that noise?

FLY-QUANYII:

Take the key! Quickly!

SOUND: ANGELO-OLALA SNATCHES THE KEY.

ANGELO-OLALA:

Thank you for the key, Sir Caroline! I promise only to do
the things I am supposed to do with it!

CAROLINE:

What sort of nonsense—

SOUND: THE DOOR SLAMS OPEN. SHOUTING AND WEAPONS CLANGING IS
AUDIBLE AGAIN.

ANGELO:

Ha HA! Hello, Sir Caroline! It has been far too long since
I've seen my... my greatest...

Pardon me, Sir Caroline. I did not realize I was
interrupting a meeting with... uh, myself?

CAROLINE:

I knew it! Shapeshifter!

QUANYIII:

She's going for the anti-magic stone! Get out of here,
halfsie!

ANGELO-OLALA:

Goodbye Sir Caroline and thank you very much for the key!

SOUND: TRANSFORMATION CHIMES. MOUSE-OLALA SOUEAKS.

ANGELO:

Begads, I've become a little girl, and then a mouse! I didn't know I had it in me!

CAROLINE:

Don't just stand there, Angelo! That's the half-monster thing we're after!

ANGELO:

What half-monster, Sir Caroline?

CAROLINE:

The one I just told you... I told it... I told...

(FRUSTRATED GROWL)

Guards! Don't let that mouse get away!

SOUND: LOTS OF FOOTSTEPS RUN AFTER THE MOUSE.

ANGELO:

A hunt, in the Citadel's own Spire! How thrilling!
Hup hup hup hup- Uh.

SOUND: ANGELO RUNS A FEW STEPS, THEN STOPS AND TURNS BACK.

Hup hup hup hup hup. Sir Caroline? Aren't you coming along?

CAROLINE:

Shortly. But my role as Captain means that first I have business...

(SIGH)

With the Queen.

ANGELO:

Ah, the thrills of upper management! Don't let me stop your fun, Sir Caroline -- and now I shall get to mine!
Huuup hup hup hup hup!

SOUND: ANGELO RUNS OUT THE DOOR AND CLOSES IT BEHIND HIM.

CAROLINE:

Yes. Thrilling.

SOUND: THE SCENE FADES.

Scene: 2

(OUTSIDE THE QUEEN'S MEETING-ROOM.)

SOUND: SIR CAROLINE APPROACHES THE DOOR.

KITE:

(THROUGH A SOUND-STONE BEHIND THE DOOR)
I don't think you can blame anyone but yourself for this.
The biggest and most organized army in the world, and you
still can't find what I want? Sorry, Your Majesty. That's
just lazy.

CAROLINE:

She's listening to that damned sound-stone... *again*.

SOUND: SIR CAROLINE KNOCKS ON THE QUEEN'S DOOR, THEN OPENS IT.

My Queen. If I may.

QUEEN MIRA:

There is only one thing I'm hoping to hear from you,
Captain. Please tell me you have the news I'm looking for.

KITE:

Bring him here.

SOUND: THROUGH THE STONE, A STRUGGLING VILLAGER IS DRAGGED TO
THE KITE.

CAROLINE:

You don't think... that perhaps you could stop that rock's
babbling for a moment?

QUEEN MIRA:

I am capable of listening to you while the sound-stone
plays.

CAROLINE:

My Queen--

QUEEN MIRA:

(SNAPPING)

The Kite sends me one of these sound-stones each morning, Captain. It is my duty as the Queen presiding over Milltown to bear witness to the fate of my people. And to study these sounds for any plan that might alleviate their suffering.

KITE:

Take his gag out. The Queen'll want to hear this.

VILLAGER:

(PANTING)

Help! Help me! Please, somebody!

CAROLINE:

There is a difference between attempting to alleviate others' suffering and wallowing in suffering yourself, my Queen.

KITE:

Well, Mira. You know our deal. If you won't get me what I want... then I get to collect my payment from the good people of Milltown.

SOUND: THE KITE UNSHEATHS HIS SWORD.

VILLAGER:

No... no... please don't...!

SOUND: THE KITE RUNS THE VILLAGER THROUGH.

CAROLINE:

(WINCES)

KITE:

You'll hear from me again tomorrow, Queen Mira. And the next day. And the next. Every night, as long as it takes, someone in Milltown will die -- until I have that little half-monster abomination in my hands.

Good night, Your Majesty.

QUEEN:

You may tell me your news, Captain.

CAROLINE:

The abomination... the half-human, half-monster creature. It is here in the Citadel. Sir Angelo and a squadron of guards are in pursuit of it now.

My Queen?

QUEEN MIRA:

I give you permission to do whatever it takes to find this creature and bring it to me alive.

CAROLINE:

Whatever it takes?

QUEEN MIRA:

Whatever is fastest.

What are you still doing here?

CAROLINE:

Of course. Farewell, my Queen.

SOUND: CAROLINE WALKS OUT AND CLOSSES THE DOOR.

QUEEN MIRA:

Little creature... if only you knew the pain you've caused already... and the pain that's yet to come.

TO BE CONTINUED

Trigger Warnings:

- Mistaken identity
- Deception and gaslighting
- Violence and threats of violence
- Death
- Sudden loud noises
- Depictions of sexism
- Misgendering (accidental)

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"Kind of Girl" by Jeris, featuring spinningmerkaba:

http://ccmixter.org/files/VJ_Memes/35657

"Metal Creak 02.wav" by joanasjoan

<https://freesound.org/people/joanasjoan/sounds/462714/>

"Tool Box" by NWSP <https://freesound.org/people/NWSP/sounds/240743/>

"Jingle_Achievement_00.wav" by LittleRobotSoundFactory

<https://freesound.org/people/LittleRobotSoundFactory/sounds/270524/>

"bang prison door LOOP 130903_00.wav" by klankbeeld

<https://freesound.org/people/klankbeeld/sounds/207930/>

"FX_Body_Blows_01.wav" by PeteBarry

<https://freesound.org/people/PeteBarry/sounds/493788/>

"Squeak rubber stretch" by stiffen

<https://freesound.org/people/stiffman/sounds/384704/>

"Digital breakdown.wav" by LukeSharples

<https://freesound.org/people/LukeSharples/sounds/143978/>

"ELEMENTS_FIRE_01_Burning-Room.wav" by suonho

<https://freesound.org/people/suonho/sounds/17725/>

"Thunder - Medium distance (no rain)" by Spennnyyy

<https://freesound.org/people/Spennnyyy/sounds/350505/>

"FX_Vent_Foley.wav" by PeteBarry

<https://freesound.org/people/PeteBarry/sounds/474014/>

"UI, Mechanical, Turning-Off, 02, FX.wav" by InspectorJ

<https://freesound.org/people/InspectorJ/sounds/458584/>