

PD Parade, Event Quest

Shadows Within, Pt. 2: Ghostly Roundup

short story by [yuewithluv](#), featuring my plush dragons, [folke](#), [rue](#) & [miles](#)!

everything seemed to make a little more sense after hearing st. cerridwen explain the situation. suddenly the unexplainable chills he'd been getting since this morning didn't seem so out of place, nor did the constant feeling of unease that had permeated every second of today. with this many spirits on loose, living beings were bound to feel their presence, one way or another.

even st. cerridwen's shadow, which seemed to be quite tame in comparison, still made folke a tad uneasy, but if he was going to help they'd have to learn to get along. apparently cerri had requested him specifically to help out with the search, and though he was honoured, he wasn't entirely sure how to feel about that. *why him, of all plush dragons?*

maybe they thought his size would be of aide, but he wasn't certain he'd do more than slow them down, or even startle the spirits before they could be properly caught.

still, folke was going to honour that request. even he knew the saints were important plush dragons, and he certainly didn't want to come off as rude by not obliging.

"come on, you two! st. cerridwen asked us to come to the back of the shop...", he called out to rufus & roscoe, who seemed a little miffed that they had to leave the group of plush dragons lavishing the little companion in attention. folke just playfully rolled their eyes at them.

after a minute or two, the large plush dragon managed to squeeze past yet another door, and into the room that sat in the back of the shop. cerrie sat there, seemingly enjoying some tea, but hocus & pocus were nowhere to be found.

"those two are still handing out amethyst crystals for those who wish to help, but they'll be back in a few moments, i'm sure~!", she reassured, taking another sip of tea.

folke was still decidedly confused, but he wasn't sure how to express that.

"uh... i hope it's okay to ask, but...", the monstrous plush dragon said awkwardly, still searching for the right words, "...why did you call *me* here? i don't know that i'll be very helpful...", he admitted, averting his eyes.

st. cerridwen simply chuckled in response.

“you should give yourself more credit... *folke, was it?*”

folke couldn't remember if they had been properly introduced, but he tried not to let that bother him. clearly this was a powerful plush dragon, so maybe she just had a way of knowing. it's not like *he* knew how any of this worked, anyway.

“yes, m'am...”, he breathed out, trying not to let his nerves show too much.

“well, sybil and i think you'll be perfect for this task, so don't you worry, okay?”

that was a little easier said than done, but folke didn't have a choice at this point.

and so he sat there awkwardly for a few more minutes, waiting for the magical duo to return so they could proceed with the task at hand. roscoe seemed keen on taking a nap, but rufus was apparently rather eager to play with cerri's shadow, which made for quite the scene.

“get along, you two...”, he chided weakly, shaking his head at the companion.

he could feel cerri's shadow eyeing him even as it entertained his (rather conflicted) adorable abomination. it made folke a little uneasy, but he tried not to think about it.

suddenly, the door which had given folke so much trouble opened wide once more.

“we're sorry for the delay, lots of folks wanting to help out, y'know?”, pocus announced as hocus (...*sybil?*) closed the door behind her. she turned to smile at folke, bowing her head once. she motioned to his paw, which folke hesitantly extended to her, holding very still as not to hurt her with his large claws.

she placed a small crystal there. it had seemed to much larger in her own paws, but it looked tiny now – *another reminder of his monstrous nature*, he thought as he gently closed his paw around it. he could feel an odd energy emanating from it. he could tell it wouldn't have any trouble trapping the spirits within, just as st. cerridwen had explained before.

“we should head out soon, we're wasting moonlight!”, pocus exclaimed, and the group nodded in response, “now, any ideas where we should head off to first?”

folke was no expert in this matter, but he did have a suggestion.

“perhaps the iridescent woods? i've heard spirits like gathering in wooded areas, and i'm local to the archer's ilse, so i know the area decently well. we could also drop by ivystead in case we need any supplies...”, he explained, somewhat timidly, to his captive audience of three. it was a bit unnerving, since he wasn't very used to talking to others, but they seemed to be interested in listening, which was reassuring.

“that's a wonderful idea! the isle isn't too big, so it'll be easy for us to cover it on our own, but there's still plenty of places to look, especially in the woods~!”, cerri added enthusiastically.

“it’s settled then!”, pocus said as hocus expertly conjured up a portal.
tonight was gonna be quite the adventure, it seemed.

(at least roscoe & rufus seemed eager enough. folke, decidedly less so, but still.)

hunting rogue spirits was some serious work, it turned out.

it wasn’t particularly dangerous with two experts around to help, but there were lots of them, and they were all getting a little bit worn out after a couple hours of work. and so cerri & sybil had decided to make the trek to ivystead to grab some food and possibly supplies, leaving folke behind on his own. *that was his choice, of course.*

well, he supposed he wasn’t entirely alone... cerri’s shadow had stayed behind at her behest, in case folke needed any help. even his own companion had decided to ditch him, but at least this little shadow buddy was there to keep him company. it was mostly silent, but that wasn’t a bad thing – *tonight had been plenty exciting already, and it wasn’t even over yet.*

“i hope they come back soon...”, the large plush dragon whispered to himself, feeling his tummy rumble, and his tummy mouth complain in tandem. he should’ve packed some food before he left the cave earlier today... but then again, *how could he have known?*

at least it was quiet, and there didn’t seem to be anymore spirits lurking around...

just then, a high-pitched, panicked scream rang out from somewhere in the woods.

...so much for that, folke thought as he got up with a jolt, anxiously looking toward the direction the scream came from. he was sure his appearance would probably only scare whoever this was more – *but if they were in danger, he couldn’t just stay put...*

“...can you stay behind and tell the others if i don’t make it back before they do?”, folke asked cerri’s shadow, who seemed to nod in agreement, attaching itself to one of trees at the edge of the forest, “thanks, buddy. i’ll be back soon, *hopefully...*”

soon folke was trekking through the forest, keeping his ears and eyes open for any sign of the source of the screaming. but the only sound he could hear was his own tail dragging behind him on the forest floor, and the murmurs of nocturnal creatures going about their lives.

it was oddly quiet, in fact. not a spirit to be found, even.

that is, until he heard rushed footsteps.

unfortunately for him, before he could even turn, folke felt the impact of two small creatures ramming right into him. it wasn't enough to tip him over, but it was more than enough to startle him into letting out a shout – *which unfortunately was almost a roar* – of his own.

a lot of screaming going on for the next couple of minutes, in fact.

“s-sorry, we didn't mean to run into you, *we w-were just–*”, one of the creatures – both which seemed to be rather small plush dragons – spoke through chattering teeth, but took pause when they could finally get a good look at folke, eyes widening. *here it comes...*

“wow, you're even bigger than lemon!”, the other one gasped, wings fluttering about.

folke wasn't sure what that meant, but they didn't seem scared anymore, so that was good.

“y-yeah...”, the gloomy looking fella murmured, their many eyes blinking in tandem. they, too, didn't seem particularly scared of folke, but it was clearly something had shook the poor plush dragon, “we've been trying to help out in the effort, but some of these spirits are very aggressive... they were chasing us down, but it seems we lost them...”

ah, so that explained it. he supposed it might be harder for smaller, more unassuming plush dragons to deal with the particularly nasty ones...

“well, if you'd like, you can join me...”, the monstrous plush dragon suggested meekly, before adding, “i'm helping out st. cerridwen and sybil. they went to ivystead to get some food so we could continuing hunting after a meal, but they should be back rather soon...”

“really?! we'd love to join you!”, the cream-coloured plush dragon replied eagerly, and folke could swear he saw tears in his eyes. the poor thing must have been quite scared...

“that would be very nice indeed... we didn't think this whole thing would be so scary...”, added the second plush dragon as they fidgeted with the wings at the end of their long tail.

“of course! the more the merrier, right?”, folke added, in spite of his own nerves. somehow, being around these tiny plush dragons didn't feel him with so much dread, even though he could easily hurt them even on accident... “shall we head back, then?”

the little ones nodded eagerly, latching on his tail after hearing some rustling coming from the bushes nearby. it was just a raccoon, it seemed, but they were quite on edge, so folke didn't mind. *the two of them were so light, he could hardly feel their weight, anyway.*

soon they made it back to the edge of the woods, where cerri's shadow awaited them.

the duo seemed hesitant to approach it, but folke assured them it was very friendly.

“oh, pardon me, but i don't think i got to introduce myself!”, folke spoke suddenly, feeling a bit embarrassed, “my name is folke. it's very nice to meet you two...”

“pleased to meet ya, folke! i'm miles~!”, answered the cream-coloured dragon.

“...i’m rue. nice to meet you too...”, the quieter of the two said, still avoiding eye contact.

folke saw a bit of himself in rue, strangely enough. on the outside, they were obviously quite different, but he knew a recluse – or perhaps a *former* recluse – when he saw one.

an interesting night indeed. for more reasons than one, it would seem...

“i see you’ve made some new friends, folke~!”

st. cerridwen & sybil were back at last, only to find folke and a pair of sleepy plush dragons cuddling his large tail. maybe he wasn’t quite as monstrous as he’d thought, if these little guys could stand to be around him without screaming and crying...

“oh, is that miles and rue? i didn’t realise they’d come to archer’s isle as well...”, sybil whispers to herself before blinking up at folke and blushing slightly. pocus seemed to be resting, so she likely didn’t realise she’d spoken, since the magical hat usually did it for her.

folke shook his new friends awake as the two returning plush dragons spread all their findings. it was a pretty big meal, so there was definitely enough to go around. miles & rue were more than happy to be included, chowing down on pumpkin bread and cookies.

“woah, you eat with your tummy?! that’s cool!”, miles exclaimed as folke fed his tummy mouth, which was usually more convenient than eating the normal way, especially if he was hungry. it also got the troublesome second mouth to stop complaining, so it was a win-win.

no spirits came to bother the group as they enjoyed their meal, but time was awasting and they had to make good use of nighttime, for it would be much harder to catch these spirits during broad daylight. ***it was time to do what they came here to do.***

the group ended up splitting up to cover more ground partway through – folke stayed with miles & rue, hoping he’d be enough to keep the two of them safe. since rue was apparently from satin, they decided to head there to search, while the experts stuck to the woods and surrounding area, where there were sure to be more rogue spirits milling about.

the smaller plush dragons were still quite nervous, but that ended up being to their advantage – every time there was any sort of noise nearby, miles & rue were the first to notice and point it out, and 9 times out of 10 it was a spirit waiting to be captured.

“*there*, behind that gnarly tree!”, shouted miles as he pointed at something in the distance.

the spirit seemed to spot them, swiftly whirling around, seeking to attach itself to one of them.

it was no match for a powerful amethyst crystal, however.

“wait, the crystal... it stopped glowing?”, rue noticed, reaching into folke’s paw to touch it.

“that means it’s full, right? i think that’s what cerri said...”, miles added.

folke remembered that, too. he’d left the crystal he’d been using previously with sybil & cerri, so that meant the trio should probably return to their meeting spot just outside the iridescent woods. he wasn’t sure when the duo would be back, but they’d probably be safer there.

“time to head back, i suppose...”, the large plush dragon shrugged, “we did a good job...”

“yeah! and it wasn’t even that scary~!”

“it was still a little scary, but it wasn’t as bad as when we were by ourselves...”

folke felt so touched hearing that. he’d have never thought in a million years that someone as scary looking as him could put other plush dragons at ease. *and yet here we are.*

roscoe & rufus, who had fallen asleep after their meal, promptly woke up when folke’s new friends decided to join them on top of his tail. the adorable abomination seemed a bit miffed they had to share the space with others, *but it was nothing that a few scratches and pets couldn’t fix.*

“folke express, all aboard~!”, the large, not so monstrous plush dragon said jokingly, and quite fondly, as they all set off towards the starting point of their journey together.

what an interesting night, indeed!