

Introducing George

Shisen asked, "Who's your little friend?"

Thosl answered, "You are holding George, whom I have summoned."

The Scarecrow smiled, though Thosl couldn't see it as she navigated her way to the gathering place. He asked, "Why do you need a cat? Is it a powerful psychic? Is it a huge monstrous being, capable of ripping robots limb from limb, in disguise? Oh! Oh! It's another dragon. No, it's actually Nim!"

Thosl commented, "I heard an interesting story about Nim. He was visiting this squad before we joined and he was receiving 'tongue' from Rad. Max aside, no one had seen Nim as anything other than a negro human male. Nim had enough of the Juicer's insolence and transformed suddenly right in front of them."

Shisen said, "I would have loved to have seen that. That boy don't seem too keen on us."

Thosl said, "You think that the Captain is biased against us? I have not seen such an attitude. Now if you mean the 2nd Lieutenant."

Shisen told the Basilisk, "The Walker is working closely with the dragon."

Thosl ignored the slight and replied, "True, but the Captain is dallying with the Satyr from the recon team."

Shisen nearly dropped George as he shouted,

"What?"

Thosl told him, "I have seen her twice now sneaking from out of his tent in the hours shortly before dawn. The smell of it strong on her."

Shisen whistled and Thosl really had to wonder how he did it. He said, "I guess I've been learned. Any idea what he sees in her to make him cross species?"

Thosl answered, "I know not. She seems such a flimsy creature."

Shisen told her, "I would not mess with her, she is a faerie. You might, but not I. Never meddle in the affairs of the faeries unless you want to be dancing from now until the end of time."

"Peasant nonsense," Thosl told him, "Some of them are quite tasty."

He told her, "Your bragging is going to cost you one of these days. That or your threats."

She said, "Shall it not be amusing to see if that is prior or proceeding to your honour doing you the same _again_."

Changing topics Shisen asked, "So you summoned this cat here, and what else?"

"I have a surprise for anyone trying to steal from us." Thosl began. "I have summoned up a Syphon Entity. I will infuse it into whatever we place the artefact into."

Shisen whistled again and said, "Nasty."

Thosl told him, "I had no time to summon anything else of much use, though I do have plans later to

summon one more thing to guard the artefact."

Shisen asked, "Going to tell me?"

Thosl answered, "No. Look. There are the others."

Thosl and Shisen landed. Shisen handed Thosl her black cat, or whatever it was. Chris told them, "You're late, but apparently Max expected that. He's conferring with the Recon Team. What's with the cat?"

Thosl sat the cat on the ground and said, "Return to your natural state and greet everyone, George."

Bronson said, "George?"

The cat began to metamorphose. When it was done before them stood a six-foot tall well-muscled goat-legged man with a beatific face and horns sticking out of his forehead. His thick, curly black hair and the fur on his lower body contrasted his pale complexion and blue eyes. He sported a neatly twisted moustache and a short triangle of hair on his chin. He spoke in a deep baritone in American, "Salutations, I am George."

Thosl gave Chris a look as he began introducing everyone to George. Shisen whispered to Thosl, "By George I think he's got it!"

Thosl pointedly ignored the comedic scarecrow. She was worried about the line walker's behaviour. Shisen looked over George and something came to him suddenly. He blurted out, "I thought it was another satyr, but now I get it, it's a Deevilkin. Never thought I'd see another of those. How goes the corrupting George?"

Chris said, "Now that's a terribly stereotypical thing

to say. I'm quite sure George isn't here for nefarious purposes. I wouldn't have expected such prejudice from someone like you Shisen. Not very knightly if you ask me."

Shisen was taken aback by Chris' comment. First he thought he was being insulted for being a prejudiced non-human, something that must be just as frequently found as a prejudiced human. Then he thought that maybe his honour was being insulted. Chris was either being just rude, or he was blindingly naive. The chances of a non-scheming member of a true demon race like the Deevilkin was most unlikely. So Shisen opted simply to say nothing more on the matter and keep a button on the demon. He did not think about what the demon's presence meant about Thosl.

Like a tumbling of hard boulders in a rockslide Thosl laughed mockingly at Shisen.