Single-Mission: Time of Changes

von Obergefreite Breda Krulock (DOG)
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Unofficial Prolog of the forthcoming adventure with and by Breda Krulock
Dafür vergebene Note: 10

This Single stands for its own, still it's just the beginning.

The dim shimmer of the night lightning covered the foggy street with a thin coat of grey shadows, trying to reach the black corners of the cold stonewalls and empty doorways. It was night like all other nights before. Maybe a little bit foggier then usual, but the streets of Ankh Morpork always have a little special treat for its visitors.
The male human crawled slowly, his body closely pressed against the slippery roof underneath him. His dark clothing offered him the perfect disguise from any unwanted gaze. And it also made him look slim.
Wolfram wrinkled his nose. The black mask felt extremely heavy on his skin, the cloth was moistened with his sweat and all he wanted to do was rip it off and throw it as far as he could. But instead he breathed slowly, scratched himself [1] and continued his mission. He had followed the other assassin for quite a long time now. A couple of streets behind, his subject decided to use the streets instead of the roofs, which was very unusual for a professional. It's the basic rule No.1, every Assassin learns within his first hours during the drill. Well, they had better do, otherwise they would spend the rest of the week with an intense pain in both legs.[2]
The more Wolfram was observing, the dirtier and angrier he became 'Where is she going?'
He spat the hairy fluff back out into the inside of his mask and kept mumbling.
He stood up and sneaked around the chimney. As he reached the other side he saw the red distinctive lights of the Boucherie Rouge, infamous to the city. He blinked as he knelt down and grasped at the crossbow from the holder on his hip.
He hesitated for a second, the little tingle in his neck alerted his attention, but then he armed his weapon and aimed. He got this *thing* right in his line of fire. All that was left to do was ... turn around and face a huge shape right in front of him. He stared.
ARE YOU DONE?
The sound of the words echoed in his head. He wasn't sure if they had taken a detour through his ears or if they were even real.
He looked back and saw an arrow in the back of a body, lying on the cold rooftop.
"Shit! What the f..."
PLEASE, NO SWEARING. The shape interrupted Wolfram.
HAD A BUSY DAY, CAN WE GO NOW?
He shrugged his shoulders and looked back to his dead body. He noticed the Guild receipt on top of it. With a last look of his weary eyes he saw the Signature, stared at it and felt his anger rising. Thinking about what just had happened, silence came over him, pushing the anger and all other emotions away. Death's scythe cut the light-blue string in two and Wolfram faded into an endless eternity of harmony and peace.

1. Playing Tricks

The ordinary bottle stood in the center of the dark, wooden table. Paperwork and open files were

[1] Guess where
[2]You don't want to know what exactly happens to an assassin who falls off a roof. It's painful, believe me.

strewn all over it, covering the texture of this antique piece.
Gray thick fumes arose from the chair behind this silent chaos, the smoker well hidden behind the huge backrest of the chair, facing a black and white painting on the wall.
Dr. Henry Schneider, well known Alchemist in Ankh Morpork, had to admit that he did feel quite uncomfortable in the presence of his host. Usually his clients order his work by pigeons or equally minded people. This time instead he received it face to face. And now, after the pre-work was done, he was ordered into the Guild Head Masters Office.
Henry slowly exhaled.
"So, how are you going to use it Sir?" He was used to talking to the upper class; still he couldn't disguise the small tremble in his voice.
After a moment of deadly silence the chair turned around, of course without the tiniest sound.
"Me?" The man in the chair was in his best age. His hair shimmered silver, small wrinkles around his eyes and the little dimple on his chin gave him an interesting touch, one that makes a woman sigh satisfyingly with delight. Most of them weren't aware of his occupation.
Lord Downy [3] leaned forward and placed his elbows on the table, his hands both under his chin. The royal blue suit he was wearing was made of the finest fabric you can find in the Discworld, fashioned by the most talented tailor in Uberwald. Contrary to his staff he dislikes wearing black all the time.
The Alchemist tightened his posture.
"Yes Sir. I know it's none of my business but...."
"Excuse me, Henry. None of your business?" He stressed the last words with explicit emphasis.
Henry understood, hesitating with a second to spare.
"Is there a misunderstanding Sir? You ordered the potion. Well, here it is."
"That's right, my old friend. But our deal is not complete." Lord Downy smiled at his visitor. Dr. Henry Schneider nodded his head, thinking of the money he would receive once this job was completed. He focused his attention back onto the bottle.

2. Dangerous Game

The air was filled with the clicking sound of dozens of spoons hitting the bottoms of soup bowls, as everyone concentrated on the work in front of them. Besides that, it was quiet in the Assassins Guild canteen. Even the shy laughter generated by the younger ones immediately stopped, once a sharp scowl from the older members hit them.
Breda Krulock, member of the department D.O.G. at the City watch, sat quietly on one of the benches, leaning over her personal bowl of digesting problems. She stirred the green paste while she scanned everybody who entered or exited the hall. There were one or two familiar faces, that one guy even gave her a wink. She didn't remember his name. There have been too many names that have passed her way over all the years, and she knew, a lot more would follow.
She had thought about this case. It was one of the weird ones. One assassin had been legally killed by another assassin, an authorized member of the guild who filled in an official form of execution. Araghast Breguyar instructed her to pay the Guild an surprise visit to find out more. And so she had.

A shadow rose in front of her. She noticed the D.O.G. informer and nodded her head. Without a word the guy took her tray and switched it with a small piece of paper. He left as quickly as he had appeared.
Guy in black garment
Breda hesitated and looked up, away from the note. Of course, there was no other colour than black. She read the message again, this time more closely. She ignored the ugly drawing, that resembled a Smiley. She found the correct information written on the very bottom of the paper. She stood up and left the room.

[3] Witwenmacher

After a short sprint she heard the voice of her suspect.
His name was Richard West, a middle aged man with the licence to kill. [4] He was not the brightest one but his record in the archive was quite astonishing.
She already had the pleasure of dealing with Mister West before.
And now, while she followed him in disguise through the hallways of the Guild Building, she listened to his thoughts.
There were the usual insane ones:
'If I rule the world...'
'Oh I just can't wait to be king!'
The ones of sexual content:
' -censored -'
' -censored --censored -'
The regular ones:
'Did I turn the Coffeedemon off?'
'I need a present for Mom's Birthday; its next ... last Monday... shit!'
And the one which is interesting for a following Watcher:
'Next turn right, then 2 doors left, upstairs...'
Unfortunately Commander WithoutThirst [5] did not permit any Thought Reading Evidences at all, the reason why Breda had to let him go last time.
But basically ... there is no actual rule against Thought Reading and its advantages.
So, it happened quite often that Breda read the thoughts of the people around her, but kept most of it for her own amusement.
You would be surprised what the head of your department thinks about if he or she is totally stressed out. Breda learned some interesting personal insights for the other departments, including the Watchers working in them. Most of them were funny names, specifically chosen, depending on the stupidity or brainless activity of the owner. [6] Sometimes the Vampire Girl knows the right formula to solve a case... but regarding Rascaal's order, she kept her mouth shut. It's not easy being a supernatural, an undead AND a woman all at the same time.
Richard West however, had no clue that his thoughts became x-rayed while he ambled through the Guild. He didn't notice the other assassin behind him as he turned into another corridor and moved towards his room with determined strides. He grabbed the key out of his pocket, unlocked the door, greeted the buddy walking by, and entered.
As the door closed shut, the D.O.G. Member turned and eavesdropped at the door.
After a while she got bored of hearing his permanent snoring and pretending to be a *very busy* assassin on his way to another *very important* assignment every time somebody walked by. Without further ado, she cracked the lock of the door opposite, and sneaked inside. The small room was empty except for some piled up chairs and one old straw puppet on a stick. Breda left the door open a slit so that the light of the torch could shine through, and also for better spying on the suspects' room.
Just her luck, it only took approximately 2 minutes until a Guild Member passed the door and became irritated.
'Why is this door unlocked?' He peeked through the opening, carefully and cautiously. He experienced complete darkness flickering around his long shadow on the wall across. He took the torch, opened the door completely and went inside. The room was empty.
The male assassin shrugged his shoulders preparing to exit, and kicked something with his foot. He leaned forward to find a pile of black clothing. He lifted it up with his free hand.
In the moment he heard the flapping sound behind him, he dropped the clothes immediately and turned around. All he saw in the spare light was a nude woman with silk skin, only her long black hair covering inches off her big round ...
He had no chance to look deeper or more closely as the fist dashed into his face too quickly.

[4] Please laugh now *g*

[5] Ohnedurst, Rascaal

[6] This is plain fiction, no offense to be taken!

"Hi Honey, I'm home!"

3. Evil Plans

"You fink fhe will come, Mafter?"
"She will." Henry Schneider replied. "She must, and we will be prepared for her, won't we?"
Igor didn't answer the question.
It was not his job to entertain or keep up a conversation; he just did as he was told.
Instead of an answer he nodded his head, professionally ignoring the *sprrring* coming from his neck. He left the room with the bottle in his hand. On his way to the kitchen he shivered, parts of his body covering in Goosebumps. Sometimes his master has an extreme maniac look in his eyes, mostly after he had finished one of his potions. Igor never asked for the purpose of all these experiments, he knew most of the chemicals he bought for his master but the buildups of these just seemed wrong to him. Again he reminded himself that Dr. Schneider was pleased with the cooperation and the discretion he brought up against his master. Of course it was his duty, but the alchemist was also a good man. He had some corpses in the cellar [7] and the payment was excellent, what else could an Igor want?
Henry stood at the window and stared through the dirty glass. Shy and restrainedly the rain started to knock against the boarding of the house, leaving the drumming sound of rippling water flowing down the gutter.
'She will come!' A small fire lit his face as he light a cigar, taking a deep suction. 'And then I will set her free.' He waited while the night came over town.

4. Fatal decision

Her eyes opened slowly as Richard West left the room. He rushed through the hallway, trying to get his right foot into the left leg of his pants and stumbled down the stairs. With an absurd fascination the Vampire looked from the door at the man, then to the unlocked door and back to the guy. She sighed, got dressed and checked whether the male intruder was still unconscious. She resisted the temptation of taking a little snack. It was still *her* Guild and she was not going to eat an assassin. It would be bad for her reputation and for **any** of her plans regarding the future within the next 2 months.
She locked the door of her observation room and went straight across the hallway, quickly entering the room of Richard West. She moaned as she smelled the typical odor of men's room with the windows tight shut. [7a] Breda focused on what was in front of her. It was not much. A bed, a closet, both doors open and with all clothes lying and hanging everywhere. Everywhere except on the wooden hangers. And there was a desk. A regular, basic desk you could buy all around the city for less then $20. Breda walked towards it and examined the stuff on top of it. She tossed away an old pair of underpants and felt around the corners, ready to sense every little uneven detail with her sensitive fingertips. With her eyes she recognized some things, not important for her, but to important to the assassin, so she left them untouched.
The stationary was kind of pretty, showing a butterfly arranged around a streetlamp, underneath it a man who slept on a bench. Breda stopped touching the table and took one of the stationary papers. The guy on it, the one on the bench... she wrinkled her forehead. He looked like on of the wizards from the unseen University. She wasn't sure but there was something written on his hat. 'Wizz ...'
A door slammed shut close by and she cursed herself for being that foolish. Without any hesitation she dropped to her knees and felt underneath.
Hmhmmm. Deftly she opened the small drawer and took out a little yellow book. When she opened the cover, she realized she had found what she was looking for.
'Finished Executions' Breda read. 'Gottcha!'

[7] An Igor takes double meanings very seriously.

[7a] You know what I mean, it's something between old socks, cigarettes butts dumped in half empty beer bottles and that special smell of pure Manhood. Nobody exactly knows what it is.

It started raining as she left the Guild behind her, proud with her result, as she had decided to get this done on her own. Why waste precious time if she had all evidence she need to solve this lame case. Another reason was, that she wanted, no, needed to know why the dead assassin was found nearly right in front of the Boucherie. She felt the curiosity rising while she reflected over the events of that night. She had been to the Guild that day but couldn't seem to remember a purchase order for that area.
She had the name and the address of the client, and she also knew more about the dead guy by now. While she walked toward the south of the city, she wondered how persuasive some people must be. How much could this client have paid for Richard to have killed his own brother?

5. Confrontation

Thunder rolled over the mansion as Igor opened the white front door. With an open gesture he led the visitor inside and directed the woman into the salon.
"Mafter, your gueft if here."
Dr. Henry Schneider leant on his elbow against the stone fireplace, dressed casually in a white sleeveless shirt and black pants, his brown hair combed to the side. Breda Krulock remembered his face from the Guild prom last month. "You?"
"Ah, welcome, Mrs. Krulock. I've been expecting you." He smiled at her and reached out with his right hand as he walked towards her. The vampire noticed the movement of his shirt over his well formed chest and took his hand, hesitating. The warm grip around her bloodless fingers felt voluptuous to touch. She raised her eyebrows.
"Oh Dear Breda," Henry said. "I know that you are a perfectionist, that's the reason why you're here." He led her closer to the fireplace, sparks jumping on the hot surface of the glowing pieces of wood. "Something to drink?
"No." She insisted, adding a friendlier: "Thank you ... Sir."
"Thought so." A small wink and the Igor left them alone, closing the door behind him. The room was stuffed with shelves and old books, the odor of the heavy paper filled the air; old, wise and some kind familiar. "Take a seat!"
"This won't take long, Mr. Schneider. Why did you ...."
"Nah nah nah," The man teased with a tottered finger. "How rude!" He sat down, waiting for her to do the same in the opposite chair. Breda took the offer, watching him closely. While he grabbed the Wineglass on the table next to him, she felt a twinkle in her nostrils. Small pieces of ash flew around in the fireplace, whirling around before landing on the red carpet under her feet.
"You know who I am?" The words ripped her out of her thoughts.
"I know what you are. An Alchemist, on of the best. So why ...?" He interrupted her again. "Pscht!" One finger on his lips.
"Let me ask you one think, Mrs. Krulock. Why are you here? And don't start your story about Wolfram. He was an idiot, nobody cares."
If she was honest to herself, she knew he was right. There was no family left, except the brother, the one who killed him. But that was not the point, was it? It should have been, but it wasn't.
"When was the last time you hunted?" The words struck her like lightning, loud thunder exploded over the house accompanied with the cracking sound of the fire.
"What?"
For a moment there was absolute silence apart from the rain against the window.
Her hands firmly gripped the armrests and her fingernails bore into the cloth. 'How?'
"I know who you are." Henry paused. "Let me correct myself. I know **what** you are" He stood up.
"You are a hunter, every night you go out, alone, searching. What are you looking for? Tell me, Breda." He took a step forward, the D.O.G. Member pushing herself back into the seat. She felt dizzy, slowly moving one hand over her face. "What ...." Her voice was weak and she felt loosing control over this. 'Something is wrong... a trap ... but how?' Her mind was trembling, not able to remember his duty.
"You poisoned me, you bastard!" As Henry continued talking, she heard his voice through a cotton

wool barrier.
*Ha, you are a smart girl. I knew you would decline the offer to take something to drink, so I asked myself: 'Myself, how could you do it?' And there it was, right in front of me." Her eyes followed the movement of his hand, showing the fireplace. "It took me a while to prepare the wood with the potion, but in the end it worked out fine." He knelt down, right in front of her, aware of her disability to attack him. "Since you entered this room, dear Breda, your body absorbed the ... lets call it *medication* . You want to know why Wolfram had to die? It's just because of you. He became curious about you, thought it would be wrong to have a female vampire assassin in the Guild. So we hired his brother. People are interested in you, in what you are and what you might become. And from now on, you can be what you are, no boundaries, no rules. You are free!"
Breda tried to touch his face, it was like screaming for help, but she couldn't make out which of the two heads was the real one. She fell forward into his arms as her world turned black.
A man stepped out of the shadow.
"Did it work?"
Henry nodded. "Yes, Lord Downey, it worked."

Critic:Yes

A big "Thank you" to Robyn, who helped me out with the grammar and stuff. Love you!
--- Zählt als Patch-Mission.