

GIRAUT OF SHADOW

Past

When you were but an infant, you were left in the woods with two other newborns. Solomon is the one who found your basket, saved you from the wolves and brought you to the Monastery. You spent your whole life training, to impress your sister Lylie and stand up to your brother Renier. But you never managed to beat him. Three years ago, you became a Regent.

You have been haunted by a recurring dream for as long as you can remember:

You sink in dark waters and on the surface you see the person you most love, Lylie, surrounded by a halo of light. You try and reach for her, but you keep sinking deeper and deeper until darkness surrounds you, alluring and fearsome. In its embrace, you feel yourself die.

This nightmare terrifies you, but you have never told anyone about it. They must not know how much you fear the shadows you can master.

Present

A month ago, the dream began to change, becoming more detailed with each passing night.

You walk along a stone corridor, away from the same light you remember around Lylie. You advance in the darkness until you reach a cave illuminated by scarlet bolts. At its centre sits a disfigured woman.

«You have finally arrived».

Your heart sinks when you recognise Lylie's voice.

«None of this is real, not yet. Darkness has not seized me yet, but it will soon if you do not prevent it. Only you can save us, my love».

Fearful coldness grabs your stomach. No, you will not let her succumb to darkness like you.

«What do you want me to do?»

«Climb the shattered peak of the Impassable Mountains, at the very border of your Fiefdom. There you will find a well of pure moonlight and an amulet of lost times. There you will find the answer».

As you watch her, everything fades into darkness.

Two weeks ago, cradled by the dark of night, you climbed the rocks and pushed yourself farther than ever. There you glimpsed a silvery shimmer and followed it to a cave, identical to the one in your dream in everything but the hue of the light within. There was the amulet, glimmering like the moon itself: You only had to touch it to feel its immense power. Enough to save Lylie and the Vale. Enough to show Renier you are better than him.

Until three days ago you were still studying the nature of the amulet, then the horn of the Wandering Regent echoed across your Fiefdom: the Black Dragons, guided by their legendary progenitor, believed extinct by all. Only you stood steadfast, as your troops unravelled behind you and fled at the sight of the Great Black Dragon.

Save Lylie. Humiliate Renier. Kill the Dragon. I shall save Lylie! I shall humiliate Renier! I shall kill the Dragon! Live kill love live kill love!

As these thoughts raged inside your head, silence loomed over the field. The Dragons dove for you. You took a single step forward.

Kill the Dragon. Save Lylie. Kill Renier.

For the first time you embraced the shadows without fear. You felt them break their chains like rabid beasts, engulfing you and lifting you to the heights of godhood. As you struck at the heart of the Great Dragon, a scarlet bolt tore across the sky. The beast crashed lifelessly to the ground, its swarm scattered to the winds. You had defeated them.

I win this time, brother.

Future

Lylie: The Oracle's lectures about self-sacrifice and love for one's neighbour always sounded empty to you. The goal of your training was always to become the best warrior. Your greatest spurs were your rivalry and your spite towards Renier, tremendously talented and always ready to humiliate you. After yet another defeat, Lylie held your hand, smiled at you, and gave meaning to everything. Loving her and being loved back is all that keeps your obsession at bay.

Your bond has always been forbidden, but now all will change. You will succeed Cerdic as Regent of Zamar and Lylie will be by your side, where everyone can see her.

Renier: Your brother. Your only rival. Lylie's tormentor. Talented enough to eliminate the threat of the Great White Dragon. Arrogant enough to be deemed unworthy of the Regency of Zamar. Until now, you have never been able to punish him for all the wrongs he inflicted on you.

Today you will humiliate him by obtaining the custody of Zamar he has always longed for. Will it be enough to quell your thirst for vengeance? The shadows whisper, dark and terrible: They want to see him dead and you know how keenly they understand your heart. But what if someone... What if Lylie discovers you?

Solomon: Your saviour, the only person you care about besides Lylie. He is the eldest of the Regents and, although his body seems to never grow old, his mind often forgets things along the way.

At times, his peaceful disposition and his insistence on making everyone get along frustrate you, but he is the only one capable of shutting Renier up. You truly count on his support during the Council for the election as Regent of Zamar.

Ninon: Introverted and shy, nothing like the flames she masters. Her Fiefdom has recently been devastated by the White Dragons and only the timely arrival of Renier's troops could save her.

Her gratitude for your brother will lead her to favour him in the election. But during your training she was always by Faramond's side and you wonder whether he could put in a good word for you.

Faramond: The eighth Regent, trained in spite of the tradition that has always seen seven for seven Fiefdoms. The Wandering Regent watches the Vale to sound his horn at the sight of Dragons.



You have never held his talents in high esteem and he certainly did not do much to prove you wrong, failing to warn Ninon in time when her Fiefdom was attacked. But today you need his support as well.

Wilhelm: He has always wanted to compete with you and Renier, without ever being able to keep up with you. Derided by your brother, seven years ago he faced a Dragon alone in open combat and he was almost killed in the process. You respect him for trying to prove his worth and you admire his mastery over thunder.

It was Lylie that saved his life, but not even she can explain how Wilhelm could survive such terrible wounds. Now you know that the Vale is riddled with mysteries and his makes you curious, although you do not wish to risk alienating a potential supporter by investigating his secrets.

Allen: So the apprentice is now the new Oracle. It will be hard to stop calling Allen by his name, but tradition is tradition and you expect him to respect it to the slightest details.

You doubt he is knowledgeable enough to sense the power of the amulet, but you do not want to make the mistake of underestimating him.

Drystan: Captain of Zamar and pupil of late Cerdic. His master was the Oracle's favourite, but he had been charged with the Regency of Zamar more for his disposition than for his talent.

This common man witnessed the death of Cerdic and has the right to vote on the Council. You need to search his soul and ambitions to bring him over to your side.

Action - Restricted to Giraut

Cut this out and hide the card in the amulet or in your pocket. If you decide to use the amulet's power on Renier, toast to him and taunt him with these exact words: «I win this time, brother». Never use this expression for anything other than this effect.

The power of the amulet is unfathomable, like the unique gift of every Regent, and most of all extremely ancient, even more than the Monastery. You are sure it could circumvent its seals and work even within its halls. You know because when you unleashed it against the Dragon, the amulet revealed its secrets: You felt it draw from the same spite that feeds your shadows. This is why on the battlefield its unstoppable power rained down on your soldiers as well as the Great Dragon. When you saw them flee, you loathed their cowardice and the beast inside you roared for vengeance. You saw your men clutch their hands to their chests, you felt their hearts stop beating.

Now you know that only one man sparks enough hatred in you to fuel the fury of the amulet: your brother Renier.