

VIGILANCE AT DUSK

An original dark fantasy writing sample

Written by

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FADE IN:

EXT. KALCION CITY - DUSK

Fog rolls through alleys lined with stone houses and wood cabins. A castle looms over everything with crimson and gold flags waving on each tower.

A rush of wind glides through a cobblestone street. A loose stone jostles out of place, but no one is around.

EXT. SUNNY SOLACE INN - DUSK

A guard approaches the front door and glances at a piece of parchment in his hand. He looks to the inn's sign, pockets the parchment, and walks in.

A shadowy figure, with a similar build, watches from across the street.

With the door still open, a boisterous voice spills out.

BARKEEP (O.S.)

Rainier! Good to see you, but  
shouldn't you be on duty?

The closing door muffles a response.

INT. DREWSON CABIN - NIGHT

RAINIER DREWSON, a large man outfitted in crimson and gold armor with a longsword on his side, walks in and quickly closes the door behind him.

His wife PERRY DREWSON, tall with braided hair, turns from the hearth to see her husband breathing heavily.

PERRY

What's the matter, dear?

RAINIER

Keep it down. What I'm about to  
tell you must be kept quiet and  
don't interrupt before I'm through.  
Every detail is of great  
importance.

Perry nods with a slight squint of her eyes.

RAINIER (CONT'D)

A mercenary will be coming to our home in a short moment. You mustn't worry. We will be discussing a sensitive matter but I want you to be privy.

PERRY

Are you in danger?

RAINIER

(stern)

I said not to interrupt.

Perry flinches. A soft knock of three raps on the door echoes in the now quiet cabin.

RAINIER (CONT'D)

Just listen and don't offer up any information that is not pertinent. I don't deal with mercenaries and if I get caught, it'll be the end of my watch for the crown.

Rainier walks to the door and opens it enough for the guest. WILLOW, a slender figure in a black cloak, slides in and stands silent.

RAINIER (CONT'D)

This is Willow, she came highly recommended by the unseemly types at the inn.

Willow removes her hood to reveal a stern face and a white mark above her right eye.

WILLOW

Those ale guzzlers may be unseemly, but I am far from that. I am here because of what you told me and the payment of course.

Perry looks at Willow, then to Rainier. Her mouth opens as if she's about to say something.

RAINIER

Right. Let's get to it as we don't know when this thing could strike.

PERRY

Strike?

Rainier shoots Perry a scowl.

RAINIER

Yes. I have received information there is a shapeshifter in our humble city with the goal of assassination.

WILLOW

And you said this target might be a high profile prisoner in the dungeon?

RAINIER

Indeed, but I feel I may be the intermediate target as I have the keys. My primary concern is that I don't know who to protect. We have at least fifteen prisoners in the same keep.

WILLOW

I know you hired me for my skills and my knowledge, so here is my instinct. It could either be Lord Picoult or that swindler Trent. Both are rumored to have witnessed or have involvement with the royal incident that took place in the castle halls.

RAINIER

Lord Picoult. Really? I would have imagined-- never mind.

Willow looks at Perry who is focusing on the words of her husband.

RAINIER (CONT'D)

We have to act now. Willow, you will accompany me to the castle as a prisoner. It's the only way I can get you in place to protect the target.

WILLOW

Aren't there more guards like yourself to watch the cages?

RAINIER

They have no idea what's at stake here. They're liable to become victims of this shapeshifter if we don't proceed.

WILLOW

You hired me to track down and  
eliminate the shifter, not watch  
prisoners bide their time until  
trial.

Perry notices Willow's face turning red. Rainier pulls out a heavy coin purse.

RAINIER

It's all gold and you'll do what I  
ask of you.

Willow looks at Perry.

WILLOW

(to Perry)

I'm sorry.

Willow unsheathes her curved sword, waves her left hand over it, and a bright white aura surrounds the blade.

She plunges it right into Rainier's chest. He coughs up blood, drops the coin purse, and locks eyes with Willow.

RAINIER

You dirty scoundrel!

Perry screams at the top of her lungs. Willow pulls the sword out of Rainier, drops it, and darts over to Perry. She covers Perry's mouth and holds her from behind.

WILLOW

Shhh. It's going to be fine.

Perry's eyes well up with tears as she watches blood spread across the floor.

The door swings open and a helmeted guard rushes in. He sees Willow holding Perry hostage with her hand over her mouth.

The guard removes his helmet... it's Rainier.

Willow slowly removes her hand from Perry's mouth. Perry shakes her head.

PERRY

I don't understand...

She looks at the corpse and sees a skinny man with horns emerging from a visage of Rainier.

Perry gasps and hugs Rainier. Willow picks up the coin purse and walks to the door.

RAINIER

(to Willow)

From my heart, thank you. I always thought you lot were criminals, but I guess there's a few good ones out there.

WILLOW

Yeah. Just be sure to pay those sordid folk at the inn. They're not as kind as I, especially when they're owed some coin.

(to Perry)

Mistress, I'm sorry for the scare.

Willow pulls up her hood and leaves. Before closing the door, she turns back.

WILLOW (CONT'D)

And remember, Rainier. A time will come when I ask you to look the other way.

RAINIER

Rightly so.

The door closes as a wisp of fog curls into the cabin.

PERRY

I was considering stabbing you myself the way that thing spoke to me.

RAINIER

Never in my days, would I expect anything else, my love.

PERRY

Was this ruse really necessary in our own home?

RAINIER

I needed your authenticity to convince the shifter to let down his guard.

PERRY

Well, I think you owe me a nice hot stew in return. The meat and vegetables are on the table.

Rainer smirks and kisses Perry on the top of her head.

FADE OUT: