

The Lord of Shadows watched from where the sun cast a shadow on the alleyway as the Elistandian soldiers approached the old beggar. The man had just been graciously given a gemstone from a wealthier woman, and the thugs in shining armor sought to accuse him of "thievery." Their assault was as relentless as a beam of sun on the scorching ground beneath it, their delusions of righteousness an illusion bent like a trick of the light.

They called him a monster. The rulers of Elistand decreed that any man who had not the coin to feed themselves, those forced to the shadows to survive was tainted and was to be punished until they would revoke the darkness and accept the light. If it appeared impossible to "cleanse" them, they were beaten to death, as it led to for most. No doubt it came from the senseless whispers of the spirits of Old Elistand, continuing a war from before it sank into the sands of Takk'ona long ago. When they arose after the turmoil of the earth, they began a conquest to cleanse the world of the monsters of the shadow, yet they quickly became monsters worse than the ones they vowed to destroy.

He believed it was time to intervene. In a single step he moved between his reality and theirs. He stepped behind the soldiers as they finished their attack. One of the soldiers held the gemstone aloft into the air, letting the light shine into the tourmaline stone. "Pardon me," he said plainly to the man with the stone, "I do not think that belongs to you." The trio seemed to disagree, as one of them lunged forward at him, sword now in hand. He did nothing to defend himself, allowing the blade to plunge into his chest. It stung for a moment, even a divine facet could feel pain, as jet black blood began seeping out of the wound. At the sight of the liquid darkness, the attacker stumbled back, leaving the sword in his chest. The Lord of Shadows pulled the blade out and dropped it, allowing the wound to reseal.

The men began to shout in fear, realizing the man they stabbed was the only facet of divinity to fight against the march of the Sun's warriors. They ran, but out of fear or for reinforcements, it mattered not to him. He turned back to the beggar, who still appeared conscious, though his face was bruised and battered, bones broken across his body. Fear mixed with pain in his eyes as he looked up at him.

The Lord of Shadows knelt in front of the beggar and kissed him on the forehead. "Stay in the shadows, my friend, for they shall be your shelter and your guide. The people of Kyrintar

will stand beside you, and you will always have a home with them." He stood up and looked once more at the man, noticing his wounds beginning to mend already. Fear fled from his heart as he fell into a deep slumber, the shadows draping over him like a blanket, concealing him from the gaze of any passerby. If the light was to be a ruthless force that exposed every fallacy and flaw, he was to be a benevolent force, shrouding and protecting those in need. If the light created a shadow wherever it went, he was sure to make the shadow a haven for the rejected, and a guide for the lost.