### The Stranger in Our Midst

**Summary**

(Title is a work in progress)

The Jade Palace is playing host to foreign royalty. 
Along with an unknown stranger who happens to be really good at sneaking around unnoticed.
The Stranger in The Garden

Tigress was the first to encounter the stranger.

It was around lunchtime, and she'd gone to a secluded spot in the Palace's garden to eat in peace. The princess had enough company with Po and the rest of the Five eating with her, Tigress felt no need to listen to a conversation she'd take little to no part in.

However, the secluded spot she'd chosen was not unoccupied. Sitting in front of the statue of the deceased Master Oogway with their back to her was a feline she'd never seen before in her life.

She guessed it was a he, based on nothing other than the shape of his body. It was too masculine to be female, despite how slim the cat was. He was dressed in skin tight clothing with various lightweight armor pieces, all dyed various shades of a dark, sometimes grayish, blue.

What made her tense was the four blades strapped to his thighs, all sheathed, but still presumably deadly.

Tigress immediately dropped what she was carrying, taking a defensive stance. The sound of the falling food garnered her nothing more than a slight twitch of the feline's ear, which was sticking out of the off-white turban he wore.

"Trespassing in the Jade Palace is a serious crime. You're either very brave, or very foolish." Her words gained her nothing more than an ear turned in her direction, and a slight swish of his yellow-furred tail. After a moment, he stood.

Tigress tensed further, fully prepared to attack at the slightest provocation. The feline turned to face her, revealing his face was almost completely covered by white cloth. The only part of his face that wasn't covered was a small opening for him to see. His eyes were vibrant red, like twin rubies.

"I would say brave, but perhaps foolish as well. I was not the one blessed with Wisdom as my sister was." He said, his even tone quiet as though not to disturb anyone who might be nearby.

"So, foolish then. That's comforting." She muttered, cautiously approaching the feline with her guard up in case he tried anything.

"I suppose I could be foolish. Then again, compared to my sister, everyone is foolish." He said, tone now laced with the slightest hint of jealousy. It was familiar, his attitude towards this supposed sister of his.

"Quit speaking in riddles. Why are you here? How did you get in here without being seen?" She questioned, keeping her stance through the conversation. The male feline's tail swayed gently, his stare contemplative.

"I am here because I need to be, though politics are not my strong suit. As for how I got here, it is quite simple. I walked through the front door with the rest of the Hyrulean entourage." He revealed, walking towards her slowly but calmly. Tigress growled, her muscles as tense as her training allowed.

However, instead of an attack, the male knelt and began gathering the remains of the lunch she had dropped. He straightened, placing it in her paws silently.

"I believe you dropped this." Was all he said before turning. A harp was suddenly in his paws, and
he plucked a few notes as he walked away, vanishing from sight.

Tigress had never been more conflicted in her life. A stranger, armed to the teeth and fully capable of attacking at a moment’s notice, had simply handed her the lunch she had dropped and walked away.

Without even the slightest hint of hostility.

Tigress didn't know what to think of it. Did she tell Master Shifu of the intruder? Did she say nothing; just wait and see how it all turned out?

Regardless of what she did, it was of little use now. The male was gone, not even the sound of his harp lingered, which had ceased as he rounded the statue out of sight. Perhaps she’d wait and see.

After all, she’d sensed no hostility from the petite feline. If anything, the only hostility in the garden had been her own.

Perhaps he was harmless. Perhaps he’d been with the foreign princess and she’d glanced right over him, he was barely up to her shoulder even when she’d been crouched in a defensive stance. He was practically an adolescent compared to her own height.

She turned, tail swaying, intent on finding out for herself who this stranger was.

And why he was in the garden.
The Stranger in The Village

Monkey was the second to encounter the stranger.

He had been in town with Po, wandering off on his own once the panda had begun talking to his father, Mr. Ping. It's not that he didn't like Mr. Ping, he did. He just knew once Po started talking with his father, the conversation would last for a while.

As Monkey was walking around the village, he caught sight of a feline-esque tail vanishing around the corner. His immediate thought was that Tigress was in the village as well, but he'd seen her earlier back at the Jade Palace.

The foreign princess perhaps? It was a possibility, he hadn't seen her since the early morning.

"Excuse me!" He called out, hurrying to catch up. He turned the corner and stopped short.

It was definitely not the foreign princess.

Instead, he was met with a masked feline all but hidden in a dark cloak and looking every bit the assassin he'd imagined one to look like. The supposed assassin stared back at Monkey expectantly, as though waiting for him to speak.

"Yes? Did you need something?" The feline asked politely, his tone quiet. Monkey was silent for a moment before speaking.

"Sorry, thought you were someone else." He managed to get out, slightly embarrassed at the mix up.

"Let me guess, you thought I was the princess?" He asked, his voice taking on a slightly exasperated tone. Monkey nodded, slightly confused as to how the male knew. Then again, most everyone in the Valley knew what the princess looked like, so he supposed it wasn't too unusual.

"Of course. This does not surprise me. It happens more often than I prefer to think about. This is why I do not like to linger, masked or not." He said, sighing lightly.

"Well, you do look a little like the princess. I think it's the fur color." Monkey suggested in an attempt to be helpful. The feline simply fixed him with a look that, if stares had the power to kill, Monkey would be very near death.

"I know this. I cannot change the color of my fur however much I wish it." He said slowly, his tone extremely bitter.

"Hey, sorry I said anything. Didn't mean to upset you." Monkey said quickly. The male nodded, quietly tugging the hood of his cloak up over his head.

"You are forgiven. However, I really must be going. I came here for a reason, and I do not have much time before my absence is noticed." He said, giving Monkey a polite bow. He then turned to leave. Monkey leaped, twisting his body and landing in front of the feline lightly. The feline started in surprise, taking a half step back. Monkey balanced on his tail, giving the stranger an easygoing grin.

"What is it you're here for? Maybe I can help you find it. I got time before Po notices I'm gone." Monkey offered. The feline didn't answer for a moment, his head tilted to the side in a
contemplative manner. Monkey felt oddly comfortable around the male, like he was talking to an old acquaintance he hadn't seen in a while.

“Well... As much as I dislike admitting it, I cannot read your language. I can only speak it due to the influence of the princess.” He began slowly, pulling a small slip of paper from beneath his cloak. “I am looking for only a few things, but I cannot read any of the signs posted. I only made it this far due to sheer luck.”

Monkey was three things at once, confused, amused, and impressed. Well, he had offered his help to the oddly small cat, he couldn't very well take it back could he? He hopped off his tail, gesturing for the male to follow him.

“Follow me, I'll translate for you as we go.” Only the barest hint of sound as his cloak flapped was Monkey's only clue that the male was following. “Never introduced myself, now that I think about it. I'm Monkey.”

An amused chuckle, barely audible.

“You may call me Sheik.”

“Well, Sheik, let's get going before our friends find out we're missing.”
The Stranger and the Bet

Mantis was third to encounter the stranger. Well, he and Po were the third to encounter the stranger, as they had found him together.

He had bumped into the male while helping Po find Monkey, as the Kung Fu Master had disappeared on the panda while he was talking to his father.

Coincidentally, Monkey was with the stranger. He walked beside the cloaked feline, pointing out signs and reading them aloud as the male glanced occasionally at a slip of parchment.

The feline was carrying a small basket, his arm looped through the handle and letting it hang from his elbow as he purchased various herbs and plants to place in it.

Po was immediately entranced by the male, spouting questions at him while Mantis hung back with Monkey. He perched casually on the Master's shoulder, watching the panda bombard the cat incessantly.

"So. Who's the cat?" He asked, his antenna twitching slightly. Monkey leaned back, balanced on his tail as though it was the easiest thing in the world. Which it was, for him at least.

"He said his name was Sheik. Apparently he came with the princess and her group and we didn't notice."

"He kinda looks like the princess. Think they're related?" Mantis said, gesturing at the oddly calm feline.

Monkey shook his head at that. "He seemed really bothered about the fact he looks like her. And the princess would've said something if they were, right?"

"Wanna bet? Maybe he's an illegitimate child. That can happen." Mantis pointed out, waving his claw thingy in vague gestures.

"Fine, five gold says they're not related."

"Ten gold says they are."

And the bet was sealed with a nod, unbeknownst to Po or the mysterious stranger, and the two masters turned their attention back to the duo.

The feline looked honestly quite exhausted from all the questions, even with most of his face hidden. He gave a polite bow to the panda, clutching his basket to him as he spoke.

"Apologies, but I must return before my absence is noticed. We will meet again. Farewell, Sir Panda. Sir Monkey, Sir Mantis." Sheik bowed once again, then turned and vanished around a corner without a sound. All was quiet for a moment, until-

"How did he know my name?"

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