

# **An Anubian Conflict**

Foxgamer01

Content warning: Transformation, Magic, Death, Battle

Copyright © [2024] by [Foxgamer01]

All rights reserved.

No portion of this written work may be reproduced without written permission from the publisher or author except as permitted by U.S. copyright law. This includes but is not limited to, the distribution of Patreon-exclusive content or early access content distributed during the exclusivity period.

Inpu was relaxed in the seat of his car, making sure he wasn't uncomfortable with his fluffy tail as he played music out of his phone; the device connected to his car via Bluetooth, as it felt soothing to his long black ears. Much of his Fur was Black, aside from the golden Ankh marking on his chest and the Eye of Horus around his Red Eyes, while his brown sandals remained snug on his digitigrade feet-paws, ending with golden claws.

He reached and rubbed his necklace, depicting a black jackal with a singular red eye that shined. He thought about what Glorfindel said when he was gifted the necklace some months ago. To put it simply, it casted an illusion over him that made everyone else see him as his former human Identity: Daniel. With this, he's able to live a normal live without attracting attention

At least, as normal as an anthro Anubis jack with a seventh of Anubis's power could be.

"You know, you could've let me teleport us to Hillford," Glorfindel said. He sat on the shotgun seat, with his staff on the back seats. Though he looked human, Glorfindel was, in fact, an anthro kitsune. His actual body, from its green fur and five tails to digitigrade feet-paws and muzzle, remained hidden within the human suit. It looked convincing, though Inpu could sometimes see Glorfindel's

aura depicting his true form. "That would've made it a lot quicker."

"Now, now, Glorfindel. We already talked about this," Inpu said. He brushed back his long hair-fur away from his eyes. The sunlight got absorbed into the black part of his hair-fur while the thin golden highlights reflected the light off. "We can't just appear out of nowhere after getting permission from the Hillford's museum. We need to travel there as normal as possible without attracting too much attention."

Glorfindel grunted but said nothing.

Inpu thought about the event two weeks ago when he discovered that Hillford's museum had an Ankh much like the one at his job. To most people, it looked like a pure gold Ankh with its tear-like hoop at its top. To Inpu, it may be one of the seven Ankhs that held a piece of Anubis's power.

Six months ago, when Inpu was the human Daniel, he encountered Glorfindel while checking the museum's Ankh. When he grabbed it from Glorfindel's clutches, it transformed Daniel into an anthro Anubis jackal with powerful magic. Since then, Glorfindel stuck around to train Daniel, who renamed himself Inpu, with his newfound magic.

When Inpu told Glorfindel about Hillford's museum and its Ankh, he suggested that they check it out. Glorfindel wanted to teleport the two over there, snuck into the museum, and check it out. Inpu, using his museum's connections, instead arranged a business trip that allowed him to check out the contents legally.

It took a week and a half until he finally got permission.

"There are ways that we could've gotten there without attracting attention." Glorfindel said. "We could've waited at your home for a few days and then teleport, or teleport there and then wait it out. Heck, we could've gone there without getting your job involved, much like how we met!."

"First off, anyone I know who knows about this trip would feel suspicious if they saw my car at home." Inpu made a left-hand turn to remain on the road. "And you said you can't manifest enough power to teleport us and my car to Hillford. 'Too much mass,' you say."

"It's a lot easier to travel from one universe to another than it is to teleport in the same universe," Glorfindel admitted. He squirmed in his seat. "Sounds strange, but the reason for that is because the space between universe is a pure dark, timeless place. Physics don't normally work in

such spaces. In fact, you could theoretically do a limited form of time travel if you know what you're doing."

"Meanwhile, teleporting in the same universe would require obeying the laws of physics there. I can't just snap my fingers and expect that everything will go smoothly. I need to be aware of the location, conditions, environment, and loads more so I don't accidentally merge us with this car. With less mass it would've been easier, but the distance demanded makes it impossible at my magic level to bring the car along."

"So, you're saying that you could teleport us and my car to another universe and back but can't do it in the same universe?" Inpu waited until Glorfindel nodded. Inpu chuckled and shook his head. "Magic can be confusing."

"It's why I dedicated my life to researching every magic system possible and replicating them." Glorfindel snapped his finger and thumb. His thumb caught on fire as though it was a lighter, but it did not burn on his skin, nor did it concern him. "To gain a greater understanding of magic."

Inpu gave Glorfindel a bit of a side-eye from that comment. Though he had only known Glorfindel for half a year, he knew him enough to realize that Glorfindel was not being honest even to himself. From what little he has

learned of his home world, Glorfindel had the lowest amount of magic compared to others like him and felt embarrassed.

That, along with some envy.

"Right," Inpu said.

"Though you haven't explained why we needed to have your job involved in this." Glorfindel blew out the fire. "If you didn't, we could've gotten there and, with a slight perception filter spell on us, checked it without drawing attention two weeks ago."

Inpu hummed and said nothing. He could not help but feel that Glorfindel had a point there. It would've been more straightforward instead of waiting on the paperwork for permission on entry. The first thought he could think of was to grant his human identity something to do that was more official.

No.

That was a lie, and he knew it.

In reality, Inpu wanted an excuse not to take the Ankh's power should it have it; He felt awkward having some power of a Deity. The Museum's politics made for an excusable cover, but he could also have some leeway to transfer the Ankh over to his workplace to keep tabs on it.

In doing so, it would remain close and no one else could take its power.

He would take it for himself if it came to that, but there was no need so far.

“That way, we could legally transfer it to my workplace or even try to trade it with the duplicate Ankh you made,” Inpu responded.

Glorfindel gave Inpu a side-eye with those mysterious blue eyes.

He wondered how much Glorfindel guessed the truth.

# # #

An hour would pass before the pair arrived at Hillford; a town with a picturesque fifties look built in its aesthetics. Every house had beige paint that was difficult to look at, each with a pristine tree filled with green leaves. The Roofs were of clay tiles, the streets themselves having few to no cracks or holes. It was new to Inpu, like stepping into a dream or window of the past.

Glorfindel glanced at the side with a curious expression. “I must say, this looks interesting.”

“Tell me about it,” Inpu responded while keeping his eyes on the road.

Once arrived at the hotel they were to stay at, Inpu parked and got out of the Car along with Glorfindel. The building itself was covered in a beige paint; a worker applying paint to the walls was adding an extra layer to it. His clothes seemed stained of said paint, the stains mostly on the overalls and shirt. His green hat was unaffected, covering his whitening hair as he looked back on the pair and waved before turning back to continuing his work.

Glorfindel glanced at the painter in confusion. "Huh. The walls look fine as is. Why is he adding an extra layer to a good paint job?"

"Maybe he just wants to make sure it's spotless?" Inpu responded, but he sounded doubtful. "We should get ourselves checked in."

Glorfindel nodded back, but he glanced back at the painter as he followed Inpu.

Inside, the air felt sterile, like in a surgical room. The floor shone cleanly with no sign of dirt or dust. On the side, a janitor mopped the floor, swinging the mop back and forth on the same spot. He lifted his head at the two, sighed, and moved the mop bucket to behind them at the wooden door. There, he continued to mop on the floor, cleaning where they stepped on.

The hotel clerk, who looked buried in her binder, looked up and saw the pair. "Ah, welcome! Did you have a reservation with us?"

"Yes. It's under Daniel of the Museum of Ancient History," Inpu answered. He gestured to Glorfindel and added, "He's my plus one."

"Ah, I see." The hotel clerk went to her paperwork and rubbed her finger down it. "Daniel. Daniel. Daniel." She reviewed the same line three times before adjusting her thick glasses and said, "Ah, there you are. Your room is 107."

"Thank you." Inpu winced when he felt a mop brushed against one of his feet-paws. "Careful with that!"

"Ah, sorry." The janitor shook his head and kept mopping the floor near them. "Got to keep the floor clean."

"Here are your keys." The hotel clerk pulled out a pair of brass keys and handed them to Inpu and Glorfindel. "Enjoy your stay!"

"We'll do so." Inpu smiled at the clerk. "Have a good day, ma'am."

"Ah, you too." The hotel clerk brushed her curly white hair and returned to her folders. "Got to keep things organized."

Inpu and Glorfindel nodded and walked away while holding their keys. The janitor followed, mopping at the precise spots they stepped on. After some searching, the two found room 107, unlocked it, and entered. Outside, they could still hear the janitor mopping the floor.

Glorfindel sighed and flopped on one of the two beds; both of them donning white sheets, blankets and a pair of white pillows. The floor was carpet with beige coloring, but cleaned so thoroughly that there wasn't any dirt, save for the ones stuck to Inpu and Glorfindel's footwear. Inpu sat in front of the lone brown desk, tapping the clean top with a golden claw.

Inpu thought about how it had gone since they entered the town. Everything went smoothly, despite how beyond OCD the first three people they met were. After a night's rest, they would check the museum and its Ankh.

So why did Inpu feel that something was wrong here? Something beyond those three folks?

Inpu thought about what he knew of the town: Hillford had a population of around 2000, which had decreased during the past few decades. Much of the population had either died or moved out for various reasons. As a result, the current population were mainly middle aged or elderly individuals; few of which were younger than 26.

He kept thinking about it, but he just could not put his finger on the situation.

"Say, Inpu?" Glorfindel asked. Inpu flinched but turned to him. Glorfindel already sat on the bed, adjusting his red shirt before standing again. "Should we get the suitcases in?"

"Right. I almost forgot." Inpu stood as well and stretched a bit. "Let's get them."

The two opened the door, only to find the same janitor mopping the floor there. He stood aside, allowing Inpu and Glorfindel to walk past them. Once both moved, he continued mopping where they both walked. Passing the front desk, both saw the secretary was still focused on her paperwork; still adjusting them as if the organization was unsatisfactory.

Once outside, they saw the painter still working on the walls; repainting the same spot as before. Inpu paused and stared, as he kept thinking how all three people they met were borderline obsessed with their work; it was unfathomable.

"Ah, much better," the elderly painter said. "Got to make every wall beige."

The obsession made Inpu raise his arm, a magical interface appearing before only him by his wrist. It looked like a mist-like menu displaying magic or objects he had access to. Those being the Ankh that transformed him and his Scales. He would twist his wrist until he splayed his fingers out on the Scales.

A golden light formed on his hand-paw, which solidified and took form. At the vase, various markings formed with sapphires as tips. An Ankh symbol solidified at the top, with wings stretching out to the sides. Bowls formed at the side, connected with silver chains to the beam above. Each bowl held mist, with one black and the other white.

"Anything wrong, Inpu?" Glorfindel asked. He carried both suitcases and his staff while walking to Inpu's side. "Did you sense something?"

"Just want to do a quick check." Inpu raised the Golden Scales toward the painter. At once, a new options menu appeared for spells such as **Illusion Dispel**, **Mild Illusion**, and **Check Soul**. He picked **Check Soul**, causing a sphere of pure white to form above the Golden Scales. "Just in case."

It fired the sphere over to the painter, fusing into his body. The man did not turn around or react to it, instead continuing to paint the wall. Seconds passed until the

sphere left the man's body and fused into Inpu's Scales. It brought in data that Inpu skimmed through. He flinched and read it closer a second time.

"G-Glorfindel!" Inpu said, stammering as he went pale with widening eyes. "His soul!"

"What about it?" Glorfindel asked. He leaned in despite not seeing the data Inpu read. "What did you find out?"

"It's-it's full of holes!" Inpu dispelled the Golden Scales, though his horror did not leave him. "I-I can't explain better than that. It's like a piece of his soul is missing."

"That can't be." Glorfindel glanced at the painter. "A person cannot survive by having their soul split into pieces. Only someone who is an advance spellcaster can tamper with a soul while leaving them alive."

"Even so, that's what my scan found out." Inpu shook his head. "I, well, do you think the other two might be the same?"

"The secretary and janitor?" Glorfindel thought about it. "I-I don't know. But, if they're behaving the same way because they have something missing, then maybe."

Inpu glanced at his surroundings, spotting some people walking around. One was a middle-aged lady trimming a

tree, but instead of using a hedge shear, she used pruning shears to cut individual leaves before cutting the branch. Another was a young man walking his golden retriever, the dog pausing to bark at the lady as if she were some bear. The dog only stopped once his leash was tugged.

“What’s going on here?” Inpu asked.

# # #

Deciding not to wait another day, the pair rested in the hotel for an hour before heading to the museum; it was only a short walk away anyway. Inpu remembered from his research that the museum had been a major tourist attraction for decades. Things slowed down in recent years, hurting the town’s economy. That being said, the people here were tough and worked hard to improve their situation for the next generation despite how scant things were.

Along the way, they passed by more townsfolk who were also acting obsessed with their work. A middle-aged man kept mowing the lawn despite it being even on all accounts. Another elderly man redid the décor of his front yard to an unending satisfaction. There was even a little girl, no more than 9 years old, drawing on the ground with chalk and wiping it away to redo it repeatedly.

"So strange," Glorfindel said. To the side, a middle-aged woman used a tamper to flatten an already even-out ground. He scratched his golden blonde hair a bit. "There's so much of such people."

"What of such people?" a new voice asked.

Inpu and Glorfindel blinked and spun around to his right. There, a young lady stood wearing a black blouse tied in a bow at the upper chest. Her knees bumped against the bottom of her black with white thin striped skirt when she walked. The emerald green eyes gazed into Inpu's disguised red eyes, hidden behind the illusion of former brown eyes. Her blonde hair, reaching to her shoulders, swayed with the wind.

"About how much the people here seemed to be OCD," Glorfindel responded. He gave her a kind smile, though she kept her attention on Inpu. "You look like a lovely lady, though."

"Sorry, not interested," the lady said as she shook her head.

Glorfindel widened his eyes in surprise. "I-I wasn't implying any—"

"So, you must be Daniel," the lady said while ignoring Glorfindel.

"Y-yeah." Inpu blinked and folded his ears back. "How did you know?"

"News travels fast in small towns like this," the lady answered. She flashed a grin with teeth far too white. "Heard that we'll be having two visitors to our humble museum for business-related reasons. Well, I say 'ours,' but I have only been here for less than a year. Still, it's easy to spot newcomers when they come."

"I guess my friend and I stuck out." Inpu chuckled a bit.

"Yeah. Oh, sorry. I haven't introduced myself." The lady held out her hand. "The name's Melody."

"Hello, Melody." Inpu extended his hand-paw and shook hers.

A shock went through Inpu's body as though he felt a spark from the touch. He flinched from it, surprised by how harsh it felt. From Melody's expression, she was surprised by it. She stared at Inpu for a couple of seconds and laughed.

"Ahaha. Sorry about that." She rubbed the back of her head. "I guess I had some static from these clothes."

"No, no. I'm sorry." Inpu shook his head. He rubbed his brown leather Egyptian wide collar with golden linings and an alternative pattern of gold squares and circles near

the neck. He supposed it would look like he rubbed his blue hoodie to her. "Also, this is my friend, Glorfindel."

"At your service, Melody." Glorfindel bowed to Melody.

Melody glanced at Glorfindel, turned away, and stared at him again. "Thank you, kind sir."

"We're off to the museum now," Inpu continued. "If you wish, you can come with us."

"Thanks, but no thanks." Melody shook her head. "I have things to do."

"Alright. Well, then." Inpu waved and turned away. "Hope to—"

"Wait." Melody's eyes lightened up. Inpu stopped, spun back to her, and waited until she said, "You work at a major museum. The largest in your state, I believe. Why would someone like you want to come to our humble museum?"

Inpu glanced at Glorfindel, who glanced back and shrugged. Inpu turned to her and answered, "I heard that this museum had its own Ancient Egypt collection, and I'm an enthusiast who wanted to see how it is."

"That's interesting." Melody smiled and nodded. "I do wish to see you two again."

With that, Melody walked the other way with her hand against her hip. Inpu kept his eyes on her until she walked past a corner and sighed. He turned to Glorfindel and took a step back from his playful expression.

"My, you look rather intrigued by that lady," Glorfindel remarked with a chuckle.

"H-hey!" Inpu huffed out his cheeks. "She's just a woman we met. Nothing more."

"*Sure.*" Glorfindel spread his lips out into a smug grin. "So her curiosity for you is nothing?"

"Look," a storming Inpu exclaimed, marching to the museum ahead of Glorfindel. "People just don't fall in love the minute they see each other! It's not like some fairy tale!"

"Yet you found yourself in a world of magic." Glorfindel chuckled and followed. "You should take wonders as they come instead of denying it."

"What about yourself then?" Inpu huffed. "I never hear about or see you with any kind of lady."

"Oh, my apprenticeship in magical arts." Glorfindel shook his head. "I'm just more curious about discovering

magic and mastering it than finding love. That's not the kind of life I'm looking for."

"Sounds like you need to listen to your own words, then." Inpu rolled his eyes.

"Believe me, if there's one meant for me, she'll need to be extremely powerful and skilled in magic for me to be interested. And she must be mature if I want to fall in love with her."

"If you do fall in love, I hope she has only one ability, loves to tease, and have a bit of a temper."

"As if!"

# # #

Inpu and Glorfindel arrived at the steps of the museum. It was larger than the other buildings and had a plum-colored shade compared to the beige of the town. There was notably only one window, strangely tinted black, and there were posters that looked pretty worn and a bit old. The doors made of wood looked worn as well compared to everything else in town.

Inpu raised his eye at this. "Why is this so different?"

"There could be several reasons for this. One is to make the museum stand out," Glorfindel explained. He

reached for the door handle and pulled it open. "Another may be the architectural standards of the mayor in charge of this town. In doing so, this building has its own distinct look over the rest and granting it with special privileges."

The two entered inside and headed to the lobby, where an elderly clerk stood. She gazed beyond the two as though looking through the wall and door behind them. It took her fifteen seconds to realize that Inpu and Glorfindel were waiting before her.

"Ah, one, two, three, four, fiiiive." The clerk leaned from side to side, adjusting her upside-down glasses. "Welcome to Hildale's Museum of History."

"Hildale?" Glorfindel blinked. "This is Hillford last time I checked."

"Ah, riiiiiiight." The clerk shook her head. "Sorry. My mind doesn't work as it used to."

Inpu and Glorfindel stared at each other for a moment.

"Uh, I'm Daniel," Inpu said. "I discussed with this museum's head to study this place and perhaps exchange some relics."

"Ah, of course." The clerk bent down to the desk and pulled out a thick binder. She flipped it open and turned the page before pausing. She stared at the binder with an

unfocused expression, as though her mind was rebooting. It took her half a minute before she realized she had the binder upside-down. "I'm soooooorry, I don't know what's gotten into me."

The clerk flipped it right-side up and turned the pages there. Inpu's expression was a mix of pity, but also grave concern at this point. Like before, he brought his armband up, more subtly this time, and selected the **Check Soul** option as the clerk went through the binder. He scanned her soul and was able to get the data. His face grew pale from reading it.

Her soul was mostly gone; very little of it remained.

"Ah, I see one, two, threeeeeeee, fouuuuuuur, fiiiiiiiiive." The clerk shook her head. "Sorry. I see your name, Daniel, listed as a guest along with a plus onnnnnnnne. Have a good day, gentlemen."

Inpu blinked, half expecting that she would mention that the visit was tomorrow, not today, but instead she went back to staring at the door behind them. He swallowed and dragged Glorfindel away. He was just about to question him, but Inpu's stare and expression told him his answer. Inpu felt his heart slamming against his chest, his gut feeling about the town getting worse. At this point, he wanted to check the Ankh and get out of Hillford.

The two glanced around the museum as they proceeded to the Ancient Egyptian section. A layer of dust filled most rooms and benches they passed by, as if very little was done to maintain this place. The museum was also barren, and it crept Inpu out, making his instinct about leaving once finished stronger.

After a few minutes, the pair arrived at the location, which was much worse. It was practically a dust haven and looked as though it had been poorly maintained at all. As they skimmed around, they found the glass case with the golden Ankh within, somehow free of dust. Its cross-like shape with a teardrop-shaped loop for its top lay there as if it was made yesterday. It stood out from the rest of the poorly maintained displays.

Inpu summoned his Ankh, appearing like the one in the case. "Ready?" he motioned.

Glorfindel extended his arm out. Once sitting in the hotel room, his brown wooden staff teleported before him. It stretched as high as his height, ending with a yin-yang symbol for its head, though with the white part brown instead. He grabbed it and responded, "Yes."

The two of them used their Ankh and staff to scan the artifact, searching for signs of magic. Inpu frowned as he felt nothing from the object; it did not have the same pull as

when he was human. He scanned deeper and thought he sensed something subtle within. It disappeared when he tried to find it again. Glorfindel had a similar expression of disappointment, sensing nothing from the Ankh in question.

Glorfindel sighed and lowered his staff. "Sorry. It looks like this was just a wild goose chase."

"Yeah." Inpu lowered his Ankh. "I thought I sensed something, but got no results."

Just before he dispelled his Ankh, a thought came to Inpu.

This town had people with fragmented souls, pieces just outright missing.

As a matter of fact, most of them were elderly or close to dying.

Dying.

Death.

"Say, Glorfindel?" He inquired. "Assuming that this Ankh we were looking for did have a piece of Anubis' power, what chances are there that someone took that power beforehand?"

"You mean, if there was another chosen like yourself?" Glorfindel gave it some thought. "It's *possible*, but not very

probable. There's maybe a droplet of the world's population who'd have an affinity to the powers of Anubis."

"You sure?" Inpu rubbed his muzzle.

Glorfindel opened his mouth—

A crashing sound came from behind.

The two spun around, holding their Ankh and staff forward. There, a dozen people stood there with their eyes rolled back. The museum clerk stood at the center, holding onto a broom. Though she had a frail expression, her grip on it was enough to crack the broom a bit. They all fan out, surrounding the two at all angles. They sauntered with a snake-like silence, though they did not grow closer than thirty feet to them.

"I'm reconsidering it now." Glorfindel gripped his staff tight.

**"You will come with us,"** the museum clerk commanded. Her voice had a slight echo to it while being deeper.

"Hmm." Glorfindel frowned and glared at the clerk. "Your voice. It's not yours. You're being spoken through."

**"You will come with us,"** the clerk repeated.

"No! Tell me who you are first!" Glorfindel retorted.  
"Who are you?!"

"**You will come with us.**" The clerk and the others took a single step forward.

Glorfindel readied his staff to counter with magic.

Inpu grabbed his arm and shook his head. "Don't attack."

Glorfindel was stunned, anger over his face. "Why!?"

"Because we'd only be hurting innocent people, even if they're being controlled," Inpu responded. His ears folded back.

Glorfindel hesitated but then lowered his guard. Perhaps this was best; attacking would not change the situation, but being 'captured' would lead them to whoever was causing this.

Inpu turned to the clerk. "We will come."

The clerk simply smiled back and stood aside. Inpu and Glorfindel stepped forward, reaching the circle where the group surrounded them. They unhanded them their staff and Ankh, though they were wary of the Ankh itself. Inpu then felt a tug as his necklace was removed, dispelling his illusion and catching him by surprise. Before Glorfindel

could react, he felt a tug on his hair until his human mask was pulled out. It revealed his kitsune visage of green and white fur, topped off with golden blonde hair.

The clerk smirked. **"No disguises."**

"Wh—"

**"Come."** The museum clerk led the way, with Inpu and Glorfindel dragged along. **"The leader will meet with you."**

Inpu frowned but nodded.

# # #

Despite it being broad daylight, there was no commotion for Inpu's or Glorfindel's appearance. Inpu looked over with a side-eye at his kitsune mentor. Without his mask, he looked comical with a vulpine head on a human body. Judging from Glorfindel's frown, he did not think so.

While they were being escorted, it was then that the crowd around them grew larger. Among them were the hotel clerk, janitor, and painter, all having their eyes rolled back as well. Inpu gulped, feeling like the both of them were about to be lynched as the crowd formed into the hundreds.

It only grew when they were led into a park.

The crowd then fanned out, preventing any sense of an escape route for Inpu or Glorfindel. As they looked around, Inpu spotted the chalk-drawing little girl. Her eyes rolled back and acted the same as the crowd now. He tried to hide his emotions and glanced at Glorfindel, who gave him a reassuring nod. This should not continue.

When they stopped, Inpu called out, "OK, we're here now. Who are you, and what are you doing to these people?! Show your—"

"We meet again, as I wished."

Inpu and Glorfindel flinched and twisted their heads to the right. There, they saw Melody standing there with a grin. Her eyes, instead of rolling back, stared at both with bemusement. Inpu widened his eyes, gasped, and stepped forward, though he got yanked back.

"Melody?!" Inpu struggled to break free, only to stop when he noticed Glorfindel's expression of patience.

"You're behind this?!"

"Of course." Melody smiled. "After all, I'm much like you."

She closed her eyes, a soft glow emitting from them. She then opened them, revealing crimson eyes like Inpu's. Glorfindel raised an eyebrow, intrigued by all this.

Melody stepped forward, black fur in the shade of the Nile's soil sprouting and spreading over her body. Her nails grew longer and took on a golden sheen. Her shoes ripped apart as her feet stretched out into digitigrade feet-paws, with another tear from behind as a black fluffy tail revealed itself from her dress.

Her clothes ripped off and dissolved into the air as she changed more. At the same time, a brown leather skirt with a golden lining formed around her waist, replacing her previous skirt. A thick leathery collar with gold lining formed around her neck and spread over her upper body, covering her breasts. A series of triangles formed around her collar's neck. Sandals formed around her feet-paws, with the platforms taller than Inpu's. Golden curves formed around her eyes, with extensions forming at the inner part of her eyes. Unlike Inpu's eye symbol around his eyes, her spiral was thicker while not completing its spin, and the protrusion on the other side was a pointer. Lines also did not extend from the outer part of her eyes.

Melody's mouth stretched out into a muzzle, making her teeth pointier. Her nose blackened and flattened above her mouth, having the shape of an upside-down triangle. Her hair grew longer, stretching down to her hips, while it blackened and formed golden highlights thicker than

Inpu's. Her ears moved up her head, stretching into triangular shapes while fur grew around it, black outside and gold inside. Melody's muscles also grew somewhat defined, particularly on her abs where the gold Ankh symbol formed. Thick leathery bracelets formed on her forearms while gold rings formed on her ankles.

Melody grinned and tapped her muzzle, an Anubian jackal in the same way as Inpu.

"So," Glorfindel remarked, "the Ankh at the museum blessed you with a piece of Anubis's power."

"Yes, though I didn't realize that it was merely a piece. At least, until I met you." Melody turned her gaze to the stunned Inpu. "It makes so much more sense now. Now I understand what I need to do to make everything so much better."

"So much better?!" Glorfindel folded his ears back. "All of these people here are missing chunks of their souls!"

Melody frowned and balled her fists. "That was a mistake."

"A MISTAKE?!" Glorfindel glared at her, his eyes staring daggers. "You don't CHOP off people's SOULS—"

"They were dying! All of them!" Melody approached the little girl, kneeled, and patted the top of her head. "This

one was run over by a car a month ago while walking home." Melody stood up and patted a hotel clerk on her shoulder. "She had a heart attack four months ago while reading." She shook her hand-paw with the painter. "He fell from a platform seven months ago, breaking his neck. I healed their bodies, but their souls were already leaving for the afterlife! I forced them back in with my power, reviving them, though a piece always slipped away."

"Wait." Inpu blinked and fidgeted his ears. "You tried to save them?"

"Yes. From this curse of death." Melody laughed, though it held a great deal of bitterness. "Do you know just how unfair death is; How it comes to those who least deserve it? Do you know just how much damage it can cause to the living, seeing their loved ones dying too soon? Would you say that anyone here deserves to die?!"

Glorfindel remained silent for a few seconds. "It is the nature of all worlds—"

"No, no, no." Melody shook her head. Her eyes narrowed into a glare. "I have the power of Anubis or at least a part of it! I can fight back against the curse that is death! It's somehow fitting, though I doubt you'll understand."

"Melody." Inpu's voice was soft. "Anubis doesn't kill or stretch lives; it's unnatural. He weighs their hearts, judging if they deserve paradise or the underworld. He can't force old life to continue; only start life anew."

"That means he chose to be part of the problem!" Melody flexed her nails before stomping toward Inpu. She swung her claws at him, striking his nose. He yelped, with it already bleeding from contact. "He *chose* to curse us all with death! I *refuse* to continue it. Instead, I save them from death! All these people would've died if it weren't for me!"

"That's not living." Glorfindel shook his head. "They're just continuing on as hollow husks or as zombies; ones that you can control."

"I can fix that! I can still fix that!" Melody pressed her nose against his and growled. "This is only happening because I only have a mere part of a greater whole! But you," she turned to Inpu, "you have another portion. With yours on top of my own, I'll drag everyone's souls back from the afterlife! Everyone will live! Even if that's not enough, I'll hunt down more and more until I have full power over death itself!"

Without warning, Melody slammed her palm against Inpu's chest, digging her claws through his wide collar and piercing his skin.

Inpu suppressed his scream, with only his tail becoming stiff and the fur standing up showing how he felt. He closed one of his eyes, feeling Melody's powers entering his body like worms digging for food. A golden light emitted from the impact point, to which Melody responded by moving her hand-paw back slowly. She grunted, the wormy feeling becoming tendrils and tugging Inpu's power out of his body. She moved her arm back, and a golden sphere appeared from Inpu's body.

At that moment, he felt split in two. He never desired to become a god, even if he liked having magic or being in this form. He never entertained the thought of ruling over anyone, even as a joke. Perhaps he should relinquish it and let someone else handle becoming like Anubis.

On the other hand-paw...was this really right?

Inpu glanced at the zombified townsfolk.

"No!" Inpu gritted his teeth and pulled his power back into his body. Melody blinked and strained, her grip slipping. Inpu screamed out, ripping the golden light away from her and letting it fuse back into his body. "You can't have it!"

"Huh?!" Melody growled and folded her ears back. "What do you mean?!"

“Though you may have been chosen by that Ankh, you’re not worthy of taking Anubis’s place!” Inpu broke free from the zombified human grip. “You claim that you wish to fight this curse of death.” He took a step forward, with Melody stepping back. “But your actions show that you seek to control all life! Everyone you ‘saved’,” Inpu swung his arms at the townsfolk, “are nothing more than your puppets!”

Melody shook from rage and exposed her gritted teeth. “You—”

“They’re husks that you control!” Inpu extended his arm out to the townsfolk with his Ankh. At once, it flew out and went to him, which he caught. “And when not under your control, they go on with nothing to do other than obsessively paint walls, clean floors, or draw on the sidewalk! What kind of life is that!?”

Melody flinched at the last sentence. “You-you have *no idea*—”

“You don’t deserve to be Anubis, you who have no value for life!”

Inpu aimed his Ankh at Melody and summoned three golden bolts. He fired them off at her one by one, with her summoning a golden energy shield in response. The first

one exploded on contact, cracking the shield. The second one pierced through, shattering the shield and knocking Melody back. The third one impacted her chest before she recovered, knocking her against a tree. It cracked and fell on impact, though Melody groaned and stood back up.

“People of Hillford, seized that jackal!” Melody pointed at Inpu! “Pin him down!”

The people of Hillford stepped forward—

A fire formed around Inpu and Melody, though it did not burn the grass beneath it. One of the townsfolk tried to step through the flames, but it burned her clothes and skin upon contact. Instead, they surrounded the fire while staring at the two Anubian jackals. Melody blinked in confusion, only to spot Glorfindel and his glowing eyes. He grinned despite still being held in place.

“You think I can’t do magic without my staff?” Glorfindel chuckled. “Sorry, lady, but this is between you and him.”

Melody gritted her teeth and fired golden tendrils at Inpu. He raised his Ankh, summoning his golden energy shield and dissolving the tendrils upon contact. Her eyes widened, baffled at how Inpu broke her attack, and she summoned black smoke, which engulfed both. White light

pierced through and dispelled the smoke, with Melody opening her mouth in shock. Inpu remained coldly angry, holding onto his Golden Scales instead of his Ankh, breaking the illusion.

Even if Melody had that power longer, Glorfindel taught Inpu well.

Inpu stepped forward, bridging the gap between him and Melody. She tripped and fell back, inching away in a fearful attempt to widen the gap. She only stopped when Glorfindel's flames rubbed against her back, blocking her. Inpu approached, towering over her with a cold rage on his face.

"SOMEONE! ANYONE! HEEEEEEEEELP!!"

Despite her cry, not even the zombified townsfolk dared to help Melody.

Inpu slammed his palm against Melody's chest. "Your time as Anubis has ended!"

Inpu ripped the golden light, the one-seventh piece of Anubis's power, out from Melody's body. He expected a struggle, but it felt no more difficult than plucking an apple from a tree. In his mind, he did not wish to claim it for himself, but he had no choice; the only one around whom

he could give it to was Glorfindel, and he was not sure if it and Glorfindel's power was compatible.

So, Inpu absorbed it into himself.

"NO!!!" Melody's eyes went wide in fear and horror. "You-you—"

The fire faded, with Glorfindel approaching Inpu and Melody. "Awesome job. I taught you well."

Inpu would have swelled with pride, but three things happened simultaneously.

First was that the power he absorbed into himself pulsed within. He grunted, pressing his palm against his chest, wondering what would happen. Inside, the two pieces of Anubis became one, with it changing his body to contain its amplified strength. He didn't not change too much, but it was still noticeable. Glorfindel could not help but chuckle that Inpu, whom he once outsized by five inches, was now taller by one.

Second was Melody coughing and choking, her body changing from her Anubian jackal form to human. Her human clothes returned, but were torn, along with much of her previous looks. The lone exception was her blonde hair, with her bald instead as though shaved. A notebook also materialized on her stomach, her powers no longer

keeping it hidden. She kept coughing for a few seconds, paled, and stopped with her body went limp.

Third was the surrounding townsfolk. All 724 of them collapsed onto the ground, as if their puppet strings had been cut. Instead of standing up again, freed from control, they lay there dead.

“Oh, God,” Glorfindel whispered.

Inpu widened his eyes in absolute horror, seeing all of their souls floating out from their bodies. They had holes and missing parts, some more than others. Only one soul, Melody's, remained whole as it left her body. It hovered over her notebook as though it clung to this plane of existence. Inpu picked up the notebook and touched her soul, with a feeling of melancholy flowing out from it.

Inpu focused and sent her soul to the afterlife.

“My God.” Glorfindel bent down to each of the dead townsfolk. “I-I never seen anything like this.”

Inpu walked over to the shattered soul of the nine-year-old girl and touched it. At once, panic and fear echoed from it, with him seeing an image of an oncoming car. He kept a stoic expression while sending it to the afterlife, letting it reunite with the rest of it. He turned to Glorfindel and suppressed his sadness.

"We have work to do."

# # #

It took ten minutes for a surviving member of Hillford to discover the bodies.

At first, the police did not believe her when she told through a mix of screams and panic that hundreds of dead bodies lay in Hillford Park. One was believable, ten was extreme, but almost half the population had to be a sick joke. They sent a patrol officer to check on it just to humor her.

When he came and confirmed the call, every officer from every department rushed to the park.

They checked every dead body for signs of suicide, but a quick examination disproved that theory. For most of them, it was almost as though they came to the park and dropped dead. Each of those also had a peaceful expression. The lone exception was a bald lady, who had a pained look, with signs of clinging to life in her last moments. Her cause of death was also different from the rest.

Not too long after the police arrived, the media reported this news. They questioned the officers and other members of Hillford, but they found no answer as to why

this happened. They reported the tragedy, the Mass Deaths of Hillford, with it spreading like wildfire.

Nobody noticed two figures entering and leaving the lone museum throughout the chaos.

Nobody also noticed the lone car leaving Hillford.

# # #

Inpu and Glorfindel sat in the car and drove it away from the town. Night came with stars shining above, though Inpu kept a light on for his side. Glorfindel sighed and frowned, turning the wheel. Inpu sat on the shotgun seat, reading through that notebook Melody had. Their thoughts remained clouded from the day's event.

They both had their jackal necklace and human mask back to maintain their disguise, Inpu's necklace required some modifications. His height increase would be noticeable, so Glorfindel added a perception filter layer to get people to ignore Inpu's height. It also struggled to maintain the guise, with Inpu's power growing more powerful to contain it. Glorfindel struggled to amp the necklace to a level where it could be maintained again.

"At this rate, if you take on one or two more pieces of Anubis's power, even that necklace won't be able to hide

you,” Glorfindel commented at the time. “If only I had more power.”

Inpu read Melody’s journal in silence, flipping through the pages. When his focus on the page wandered, his mind flashed to the hundreds of dead bodies they left behind. He shook his head and read harder, pushing that thought back.

Though he only replaced one tragedy with another, his heart broke in two after reading the journal.

Each page detailed how someone Melody knew died, starting with her father; He suffered from lung cancer and passed away from it when Melody was eight. A year later, a drunk driver crashed his car into her mom’s. She was taken to a hospital but still died. Her uncle, who took guardianship of her, died when the factory he worked at exploded.

Not to mention how someone in her middle and then high school died every year.

Or how that last year, she was diagnosed with lymphoma.

“On the last page here, she explained that it reached terminal condition,” Inpu said. His voice was toneless. “So, as a last request, she was taken to Hillford to visit its

museum. It listed her wish to touch the Ankh before she passed away."

Inpu raised his wrist, summoning the magical display. It showed two Ankhs along with the Scales and a new option. Before this, he would be curious, but now he felt nothing.

"It's a shame that she happened to be chosen," Glorfindel said. He made a turn, approaching a city to stay at. Inpu already called his museum and explained what happened along with his request to abort the Hillford's Museum visit. They grumbled but granted it, though the hotel rooms must be taken out from their pockets. Glorfindel continued, "Otherwise, none of this would happen."

Inpu sighed. "It makes me wonder if I did the right thing. Taking her power, I mean. If I could convince her that death was not a curse, nor is it something to be feared, then maybe-

"My apprentice, there was no convincing her." Glorfindel shook his head. "It's hard to change someone's mind that they're wrong when they're certain that they're right. Not that it excuses trying to stretch their lives beyond normal, taking control over them, or even splitting their souls into pieces in the process."

“No, it doesn’t.” Inpu lowered his head. “In a way, she was cursed; cursed to live while others died around her.”

The two silently drove on, with Inpu wondering what was in store next. He felt much stronger than before, guessing he had become more powerful than Glorfindel, but would still need some training for his power; Glorfindel just knew magic better. There was also doubts he harbored, and a thought came to mind:

Unless he really needed to, he did not want any more of Anubis’s power. The cost for this one has already taken almost half a town, and there was nothing he could’ve done about it.

# About Author

Thank you so much for taking the time to read my story! I really appreciate it. If you enjoyed it, then you'll definitely want to check out my gallery accounts at:

<https://www.furaffinity.net/user/foxgamer01/>

<https://www.deviantart.com/foxgamer01>

<https://www.weasyl.com/~foxgamer01>

<https://furrynetwork.com/foxgamer01/>

I have a lot of great content there that I think you'll love.

Also, if you're interested in supporting me and my writing, please consider visiting my Ko-Fi and Patreon accounts at:

<https://ko-fi.com/foxgamer01>

<https://www.patreon.com/foxgamer01>

Every little bit helps me to keep creating and sharing my stories with the world.

Lastly, if you have any questions or comments, please don't hesitate to contact me at:

[foxgamer01@hotmail.com](mailto:foxgamer01@hotmail.com)

I'd love to hear from you and answer any questions you may have.

Thanks again for your support, and I can't wait to share more of my work with you soon!