

Shadow-Wrested!

by A. M. Pietroschek

World of Darkness



STORYTELLERS
VAULT

FICTION

World of Darkness – Shadow-Wrested

Vault version © André M. Pietroschek, all rights reserved

This is prosaic & foreign roleplayer sermon, not one more copy-catted plagiarism!

STORYTELLERS VAULT



FICTION



VÄSTGÖTAGATAN 5
SE-118 27 STOCKHOLM
SWEDEN

marks and/or registered trademarks of White Wolf Entertainment AB. All rights reserved.

© 2017 White Wolf Entertainment AB. All rights reserved. Vampire: The Masquerade®, World of Darkness®, Storytelling System™, and Storytellers Vault™ are trademarks

For additional information on White Wolf and the World of Darkness, please, visit: www.white-wolf.com, www.worldofdarkness.com and www.storytellersvault.com.



Disclaimer:

No warranties. My prose, rants, texts, and ebooks, are offered solely for personal contemplation purposes. The author and publisher are not offering it as legal, accounting, or other professional services advice. While best efforts have been invested in preparing this version and its sub-context, the author and publisher make no representations or warranties of any kind, and assume no liabilities of any kind with respect to the accuracy or completeness of the contents and specifically disclaim any implied warranties of safety, functionality, reliability or fitness of use for any specific purpose. Neither the author nor the publisher shall be held liable or responsible to any person or entity with respect to any loss or incidental or consequential damages caused, or alleged to have been caused, directly or indirectly, by the information, prose, ideas, and opinion contained herein. No warranty may be created or extended by sales representatives or written sales materials. Every personality is different and the worldview, moods, prose, and conclusions contained herein may not be suitable for your situation or anyone's well-being.

Helpful LINK:

[http://whitewolf.wikia.com/wiki/Vampire: The Masquerade 20th Anniversary Edition](http://whitewolf.wikia.com/wiki/Vampire:_The_Masquerade_20th_Anniversary_Edition)

Author's mindset: I write Pietroschek-Prose, and stemming from one more dysfunctional family background, born one more problem child, pariah, ex-criminal, university dropout, and ex-bum: I really think that expecting elite university standards from me is alike a Malkavian prank on my critic's expense. *Still this is not my diary, nor some therapist-couch sermon. It is the mature and wizened, oft-revised World of Darkness!*

- WoD Antagonists was a book with much potential. Especially for all storytellers who left the stream-lined, dished for money course and dared to craft or create their own stories and campaigns. Same on
- 'WoD Slasher', as playing it decently, playing a group of those killers who spawn forth an urban legend, only to subsequently play a bunch of young adults growing up in that kinda Sunnydale turned upside down, had rarely succeeded before. Actually, so far, it did not succeed at all.

It is comparably shocking and occasionally intimidating to witness how many mainstream ignorance-victims we can find nowadays, or how fiercely they cling to the delusion that what they are living is a free, adult life in our democracies. Yet who am I to burst their bubbles? Got plenty to do with my own problems, and the fact that my life expectancy is estimated below three years did not precisely make me more of a martyr or social engineer either. But I am still one of those who turn off TV, start some music and write some stuff. Or clean the bathroom, but I never earned a beeping cent with those chores. ;-)

The crows ate bat last night

"Hatred has a calm aspect, too. The depressed or exhausted serenity of an outrage which seriously overpowered the own stamina. And it is important to note that courage includes the word rage, as reacting to any already ongoing or spontaneous threat is a matter of vigilance and reflexes, not of academic contemplation or smart-mouthing. How to trust doctors and professors who prove themselves dumber than our psychiatry escapees or any mugger on the street? Dunno!" ~ Andrè M. Pietroschek reciting myself here...

The middle-aged man in designer clothing running down the alley right now was his own kinda paradox. His moves speaking of the basics of athletics practiced, but his sweating, panting, and stumbling spoke of lacking stamina, or a long phase without training. Behind him, in pursue, was a mob of bearded, younger orientals in the ugliest assortment of street-clothing one could imagine. And with an assortment of clubs, batons, axes, machetes, knives or makeshift weapons wielded.

'Long-haired idiot!' stated the bald, thug-like semi-brute witnessing the spectacle of cheap street slasher style. Twitching, as if proverbially struck by a thought, he faked a smile and yelled: 'Sir, are you Terrence J. Mather, the famous occult artist?'

Terrence was still running for his life, the bearded mob of desert dwellers in close pursuit, when he heard his name being shouted.

'Help! Those robbers must be stopped, call the police!' escaped from the lips of Terrence Jeremiah Mather!

That moment the alley resonated with vibes the sensitives among mortals could perceive. For one moment it was nearly mistakable for coincidental magick! But only one effect manifested. All involved, except the blissful fool Terrence, froze in their movements for an instance.

The Islamist bunch of hotheads stopped to discuss, if someone could really be that stupid, or if searching him for designer drugs could be smarter than killing him for what some criminal offer paid on its own. The skinhead stopped, as he was simply gawking in utter disbelief. At least he looked pretty dumbstruck for some seconds.

Then reality remembered its course, and the manhunt turned back into a choreography of crime written by consequence.

'Yeah. Given that not even our asylum escapees are that ignorant about street savvy I supposed you must be Terrence J. Mather indeed.' proclaimed the bald semi-brute, while his hands wrested something from his jacket.

The pursuers, who had by now reached the other two guys in the alley, turned their attention from their supposed target to the item held by the skinhead. It was a cellular phone.

One from the group strode over, reached for the smartphone, and spoke an inquiry about whom he is speaking to. Terrence, still flabbergast about not being the center of attention, wrestled with his own ego. The skinhead did not seem extraordinarily worried, as if expecting a specific outcome for the situation at hand.

Murrak, still holding the smartphone and pressing his right ear to it, took his own phone, a more modern smartphone, from his cargo pant pocket, the one specifically made for phones, and juggled both phones in a routine of bluetooth-alike data transfer.

Kemal, one of the pursuer gang getting bored, considered it the perfect moment to babble: 'You some kinda Nazi, running around like that?' while staring at the skinhead.

'No, of course not, as if there is anything to hate about foreigners. Really, it is just the cheapest haircut available, and I am not a big earner...' replied the bald guy in a way suspiciously routinized.

Kemal spoke something in a foreign language, and turned towards another member of his crew for a moment. 'Yeah, we know that, Farruk just told me yours is the outdated Samsung Galaxy S6, man, while we already have the upper-league Samsung Galaxy S 8!'

The bald man frowned. Terrence looked around in his own attempts to solve a social puzzle his ignorance and lack of streetwise had conjured-up, and Murrak gave back the cheap phone while he gestured to his crew.

'We gotta new deal, and got already paid. Lets head back and get some good dope to smoke.' stated Murrak, resulting in what seemed like appreciation from his crew.

Feeling superior and untouchable about the other two dudes they turned around and simply walked away.

'Was that a street-gang?' wondered Terrence J. Mather.

'No, merely a bunch of locals from the darker side of the law.' spoke the bald guy.

'Didn't we inform you about NOT taking any step away from the route you received?' inquired the skinhead soon thereafter.

'Yes, but it was such an atmospheric walk, and I was tempted by the detailed street-art on the walls.' verified Terrence.

'Wonderful, now the Kairouan Brotherhood will know all about this meeting within 24 hours.' frowned the skinhead.

At the mention of that name Terrence lost control about his mimicry for a moment, staring at his new acquaintance.

'Lets go to a near safe-house. We already had sufficient risks of street-crime!' proposed the skinhead.

'Agreed. And, if you don't mind, would you tell me whom I am accompanying by now, and whom I have to thank for preventing a robbery moments ago?' insisted Terrence, nonchalantly so.

'The name is Anderson Cappado, and like you I share a certain heritage of the blood.' blurted the skinhead, while walking down into another alley.

The duo reached the entry door of an urban apartment complex, and Anderson drew a small chip from his pockets.

'Security door.' was all he said about it.

'I know similar ones, just not made from cheapest plastics.' mentioned Terrence.

'Please, go in.' said Cappado.

The duo entered the building and made their way up some stairs to a specific door on the first level corridor.

'Defect elevator?' wondered Terrence.

'No, high-tech elevator, but additionally a kind of suicide box every criminal knows to avoid.' corrected Anderson.

Terrence sighed. He had studied sufficient psychology to know that empirical knowledge of underworld customs and habits met common sense, when the functional side of streetwise was the topic. It was just that he knew as well that academic analysis could predict certain crimes in a detail which made even veteran criminals swear it was due surveillance or a traitor. A cultivated fellow he decided against burdening his new acquaintance with such insights though.

They entered an apartment of smaller size, and the antiquated looks of last decades' technologies special offers. Terrence wasn't impressed, but he was a true artist and psychic sensitive, so he knew it was above the hellholes most junkies and squatters took as hideouts.

A woman, by eyesight in her late twenties, awaited them, giving a casual greeting to both of them.

'Yeah, yeah, introductions!' recited Anderson. 'Marina this is Terrence J. Mather, and Terrence, this is Marina Rafastio.'

Exchanging looks with Marina Cappado asked: 'The others are on-guard?'

'Certainly.' verified Marina.

Lighting a cigarillo, which instantly gave his toxic stench to the room, Anderson faced the supposed occult-artist. Meanwhile Marina, with a look of disgust on her face, went to open a window.

'Let me give you the swift and brutal summary of why we had to invite you here.' spoke Anderson, smoking to overplay some expression which failed to look fitting due facial features.

'So I won't like what is coming...' second-guessed Terrence, who witnessed a saddened look on Marina's face, but showed no reaction about it.

'We are family, by blood, and I hope you know what that means. Problem is it doesn't change the fact that we had to call you in, as you drew unwelcome attention unto us! Wherein US means us all, each of us, not just us three.' Told Anderson.

'The problem's root here is that a major change of power-players had occurred recently, and that resulted in us losing a very reliable back-up source, and new foreign threats from Italy, Tunisia, Egypt and Syria roaming the city.' continued Cappado.

'Given the new situation, and our recent losses, we had to secure each person we formerly could leave in peace, as our means to compensate for minor mistakes have been blasted into oblivion.' were Anderson's next words.

'I dunno, why you are named Mather, though I suspected the name being as fake, as my family name Cappado is fake, but we had to worry about you not even knowing why you found it so easy to be a good-looking gentleman, an occult-investigator, and the whore-hound of the latest art galleries all in one.' said Anderson.

Terrence intercepted: 'The nightly lord or lady protecting us was destroyed, or diablerized?'

Anderson started to smile, when hearing that question, and Marina gave a relieved sigh, recognizable to Terrence by her casual way of doing it.

'The established nightly regency was recently assaulted by an unexpected alliance from the South and the East. After a first struggle, so it seems, they managed to bring the blunt of the enemy forces down, into the lower ranks of society.'

Terrence shuddered. 'I heard rumors which spawned some of my own suspicions.' he confessed.

'Bad news to you is we belong to a more independent side-arm of the family tree, so we had very few masterminds we could ask for any reliable information.' stated Anderson with a frown on his face.

'I see.' replied Terrence.

'Given the welcome-committee you attracted earlier I hope I do not have to tell you that some body armor and self-defense tools could be wiser than dying a convinced pacifist kinda death?' inquired Anderson Cappado.

'No, I already realized that. Care to tell me HOW you made them refrain from attacking?'

'As I told you they are hoodlums, they live here themselves,' and it was clear they had loot of the monetary kind on their minds. Hence calling one of the crime bosses and reminding of certain neutral zones was all it needed. And as I had time to type while you entertained them with athletics...' chuckled Anderson.

'So we got a cold-war dished, and started in one of its bonus hot-spots. Needless to tell me I won't do the public lifestyle for a while. Still you might rejoice on learning that I earned that place myself, I was not on a mission for any master or mistress of the night, nor else.' spoke Terrence.

'Then you are aware that we must scout the original battlefield of the first clash, and watch out for any change in the power-scale we can find out about?' opted Marina.

'I am unaccustomed to the street-life, but I am not yet lobotomized.' snapped Terrence J. Mather.

'Good. We will rest or meditate with one of us on guard. Just in case we are in for a strenuous job.' decided Anderson.

'Do we all know how to do the success boosting?' wondered Marina.

'Yes, a simple rite I learned years ago.' answered Anderson.

'Indeed, I am quite a career-maker for an artist after all.' replied Terrence.

'Then lets opt for one boosting observation skills, one boosting combat prowess, and one boosting the sensing for anything purposely obscured from prying eyes.'

'It's a plan.' agreed Anderson.

'We can try.' chanted Terrence.

With that the trio did, as agreed unto, and regrouped four hours later to smear a blood-drawn occult symbol unto the ground.

'Do you feel it, too?' inquired Anderson.

Marina nodded instantly.

Terrence hissed: 'Yes'.

The mystical blood which made them of a special, though dark, origin began to surge and for a while the trio was focused on gestures and stared at the symbol on the ground. Once their supposed 'magic' was worked they prepared themselves to leave the apartment, and subsequently the building.

In the ruins of a darkening battlefield

Street-life is always a treacherous and risky ordeal. The laws of mother nature know neither witching hour nor festivity days. And neither do the laws of this world fall to propaganda or brainwashing. Death works 24/7 unto all mortals, with zero need of a regard for species, color, political or religious indoctrination, and actually anything else. It feels like putting the own life on the line, for it is putting the own life on the line.

The trio had used the midday hours to rest and prepare. Now the afternoon was the best so-called time-window they could make use of. Night would allow fiercer predators & parasites to victimize whomever they would get. Aplenty in each city left for dead to avoid media attention on another political disaster burdened unto the populace.

Marina was the most allergic to violence. For she lacked even the ignorance which allowed Terrence to endure the wrecking of his self-celebration gone money-mill. And all three knew the secret and unspoken burden of knowing that behind the sugarcoating and empowerment had to be the one preternatural power which allowed them to get away with it for a while.

Many revenants aka blood-born had experienced their own moments of truth, when the overwhelmingly powerful dark ones were proven to be just as screwed in their own ways. And it did not end there. The blood of the Rafastio flowed through their veins, and it did not need a genius to realize that there is no nightly elder named Rafastio. Which meant they were trapped among lowlifes and outcasts in the invisible war.

'Look at this!' alerted Anderson.

The trio came to a cautious halt, nigh crouched in their attempts to investigate into the pinpointed direction.

'That blade sure is expensive!' confirmed Terrence.

'And it is touched by... It is special. Alike the Athame in legendary witchcraft, or alike a silver bullet has a special effect on werewolves in the movies.' analyzed Marina.

'Shall we risk it?' asked Anderson, his index finger pointing towards the blades' edge.

'You mean tasting it?' asked Terrence.

'Yes, that is what he means, in case you know the familial incantation.'

'Of course I do!' stammered Anderson and Terrence in nigh unison. Male pride, warm wax in skilled women's hands.

'Who goes first?' wondered Terrence.

'I'd say the careful one. Marina.' admitted Anderson.

'Hui, a streak of wisdom in a proletarian street-tough?'

'A streak of realism in an aged, crippled, and surviving former street-tough I would say.' answered Anderson.

Terrence J. Mather watched with obvious curiosity. Though all which was to see was Marina moving the index finger of her left hand parallel to the blade's edge, and then licking the same index finger. Anderson and Terrence were in the midst of exchanging puzzled glances, when a shadow came down unto T.J. Mather!

Slowed due their utter disbelief both males were unable to react much faster, when Marina, who had instances ago licked her finger, jumped Terrence in a frenzy and ferociously, savagely bit his neck. A Sound of surprise and pain came from Terrence, and a gasp from Anderson Cappado.

Anderson had kept his wits about it though, as his next action was a roundhouse-kicked aiming at Marina's head from the front-side. Clad in his Kevlar-reinforced working gear, including the modernized working boots, he hit alike an oversize brass-knuckled-fist.

A disgusting sound was heard, when his foot impacted with Marina's face. But instead of seeing her propelled backwards she and the unlucky Terrence she held clawed tight were only shaken through. Before Anderson could even ground his leg again Marina was in motion. Preternaturally quick her right hand grabbed the pant on Anderson's kicking leg and wrested him around with a swing of unbelievable brutality. Whatever glared through her eyes that moment, it was not Marina.

Cappado was ripped off the ground, making a short yet involuntary flight to collide with a car parking in the side lane of the road. When he came to his senses again the supposed freak-out was over. He deduced that from the fact that Terrence and Marina, both bloodied and battered, were chit-chatting about his fat belly and the extra rounding of his back bumpers!

'We must wait for Marina. I had to smack her head pretty hard to knock her off.'

Marina added a cheery giggle to the statement, and grinned joyfully, as if unaware of her fresh blood still covering most of her face.

Anderson knew that internal damage was hard to heal for each of them, and after that display of ferocity he had no doubt that Terrence was forced to hit her fiercely. The wound at his neck was nigh closed by now, so Anderson concluded that he had been unconscious for more than one minute at minimum.

Meanwhile Marina declared her love to the darkening sky. Seemingly not yet recovered.

'That was not the blood of a recently created vampire!' agreed Cappado and Mather.

And with that they both tested a less greedily-measured portion of the remaining fluid on the blade. The first surge felt like a drug kicking in aka symptoms beginning to manifest. Still contrary to Marina neither Terrence nor Anderson felt a frenzy effect. Both were in a lucid calm known to the mentally less retarded males of their age.

'With this blade still here we gotta get away soon!' announced Marina.

'Nice you are yourself again. We flee?'

'Yes' spoke Terrence. 'We cannot be certain what happened, but we can be certain that kinda power league has means to secure a scene before the sundown.

'Or that whatever could take-out such a power may come back to snatch the trophy' contemplated Anderson.

'Car or low-profile?' inquired Marina.

'Dunno.' admitted Anderson.

'No car, draws more risk-raising attention, not just due stealing one.'

'Lets go!' decided Marina.

The trio knew they were in over there head, and withdrew with the best blend of vigilance and low-profile they got mustered. Later that evening they would rely on their minds, and on their memories about the tasted blood, to pool-up their insights and decide their course. But first their mortality had to withstand the seriously impairing clench of fear, as a part of them realized the threat was overtly powerful, and freaked-out at the mere notion of being unable to do anything to evade or neutralize it. Halfway back homewards they were intercepted by a carload of guys in suits:

'The deal we make is; You hand us the blade now, and we supply you a hideout for this night only!'

Apocrypha of Bedlam & Bloodshed

'Gimme that, and here you go!' summarized Marina while testing her humorous stares on Terrence.

'I would speak a toast to our unknown host, but sadly we ran out of both, service providers & champagne.' humored T.J. Mather.

Shuddering visibly Anderson added: 'Yeuch! That is so French cliché.' proud of throwing in some cheap movie notion disguised as cultural open-mindedness.

'When they renamed French fries into freedom fries the world went darker for poor Anderson Cappado!' mocked Marina.

With no need of withholding information, as all they found out was easily available to any decent investigation, even by mortal standards, they started their first little brainstorming on their latest discovery.

'So we found suspiciously zero from a larger late-night-skirmish until the totally secret magick of our familial side made us discover the one piece of evidence, Marina's lolly'. Summarized Anderson.

'Oh, so cute, you remember Kojak!' interfered Marina.

Countering the puzzled look on Terrence' face Anderson stated: 'Telly Savalas, TV series star, as the lolly-licking skinhead detective!'

- <http://www.trilulilu.ro/video-cultura/telly-savalas-some-broken-hearts-never-mend-subtit>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oZFo7HXR8Wo>

'Thanks. So it means we were late on the news and someone had already cleaned up, of course. Plus we know it was someone not precisely trained in any form of sorcery?' came from Terrence.

'Yeah, probably that. Or could mean someone had much to clean up or was focused on not being seen cleaning up. Plus: Could be a team or crew, no need to expect a solitary, when the stakes are high.'

'Stakes high, fangs bared...' mused Marina.

'Yes, an appreciated reminder.' spoke Terrence.

'Maybe it was just this one clash among power-players and all calms down now. Still we don't even know, if any side won out, or, if it was just a duel among some more progressed people.' fumbled Anderson.

'We have a little, helpful game among artists. Kinda muse-boosting. I always found it comparably easy, though others complained about their minds having problems assessing the pattern and participating in the flow.' stated Terrence, with a streak of predatory innocence on his face, and a barely camouflaged smile.

'Seeing her is not banging her, T.J.!' interfered Anderson.

'Excuse me?' reacted Terrence.

'Victoria, from Latin, means kinda victory. Smiling alone won't make it a realized success.' explained Anderson.

'Indeed, but the ease by which the smile came tells me I am ready for the ritual I mentioned.' boasted Terrence.

'Men!' scoffed Marina.

Invisible Forces and camouflaged threats

Eager to return to their own hideout the trio was at a disadvantage due to the unwelcome stay in some not yet identified bosses safe-house having wasted twelve additional hours of time. When they finally set eyesight on their own apartment again it felt like a real homecoming.

'Give me your handbag!' insisted a blonde woman in cheap office clothing.

'What? No!' infuriated Marina.

The female stranger looked perplexed for one moment, and then repeated the commanding prose: 'Gimme your handbag!'

'WTF?' wondered Anderson.

'How rude!' judged Terrence.

'I said no! Leave me alone.' retaliated Marina.

'Kneel! Yes, the master has arrived, kneel!' shouted a male stranger clad only with sneakers and a jeans.

Anderson, Terrence, Marina, and the blonde woman blinked, with disbelief forming on their faces, and began to kneel before the self-entitled master.

'That is better! You are my little bitches now. Yes. And the guys in the block thought I am one for the loony bin. Ridiculous!' celebrated the triumphant stranger.

'There he is! Get him.' came a shout from a bunch of hooligan-like musclemen.

The 'master', flabbergasted right out of his triumphant posture, began to run like a rabbit from the hounds. The musclemen in direct pursuit of him. Abandoning his newly gained lackeys without a thought wasted unto their well-being.

Five minutes later the trio had reinforced the door and the window of their apartment with something suspiciously resembling police riot shields. Luckily none were reported stolen, so that impression must be a matter of artwork.

'Mainstream ignorance is a weapon!' babbled Anderson.

'Ill-termed statement.' scolded Terrence.

'Bah.' evaluated Marina.

'Seriously, whatever contaminated the water-supply acts alike to the mystical blood we are using to fuel our sorcery. But the more dangerous part is that salary slaves and office tyrants were pumped up with it. It means average people, along with their freaky but intimidated mindsets, can temporarily meddle due the powers given them. Or unleash their TV sedated wishful thinking on whomever encounters them.

'I'm feeling funny.' were Anderson's words while slowly collapsing.

'He gets the mindless grin, it's a disease affecting his central nervous system!' worried Marina.

'Don't be silly, we have no scientific evidence about... Supposedly overdose of elder kindred vitae, in the heights of a fight for survival, dripped into the water supply of an ill-maintained, less lucrative to politicians city part... Oh, oh.'

'If it was a vampire, and if it was only one!' shuddered Marina who still peered at Anderson lying on the ground.

'Willy Pascal!' stammered the shady and sweaty form of Anderson from the floor.

Marina's eyes bulged, a clear sign of code-red kinda alarm on her face now.

'Below the Naruto porn!' coughed-up Anderson.

'That ninja fox dude banging all those retarded chicks worshiping him?' escaped from Terrence' mouth.

But meanwhile Marina had attached the neon-blue plastic wrapping to the tablet PC, and began typing commands or clicking items, in her own mixture of touchscreen meets USB cable keyboard.

One moment later the video started, and a couple of serious gay-pride-enthusiasts, easily noticed with their own society-impairs-our-egomania-issues, began warning about a handful of conspiracy theories and how easy it is to infiltrate the urban water supply.

[Content filter]

The two well-trained adults performing in this video were so poor that they could only afford minimal underwear. Having no money for education or better technology their only choice was their second job, animal handling park ranger. Yes. That is why now and then one or the other wanted to talk about his rooster. They were both former farmboys who really loved the natural waking calls given by their roosters. And, as a sign of gratitude, they licked and massaged their roosters, whenever they had earned enough money to visit the farm... (The author was raised in Catholic fashion, and is an occasional homophobic & gay critic! Henceforth only high sales numbers encourage him to write a minor sex scene from Evil Sodomite Empire into any of his purely fictional works.) **[/Content filter]**

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xu-Mj9GcANU> (Video with Spanish subs)
- Lyrics: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sxCGXF-mPww>

Millions of people were forced into schedules. To keep their jobs, to pay the bills, not to end in jail or psychiatric care once again, because the tougher ones at bum shelter robbed 'em and kicked 'em out... No matter, if by enemy or accident. The city part was brought to the edge of crisis with a trick so cheap that every junkie, fraud, or desperado could muster it!

And it worked, the unholy Quaternary of pub-wisdom, sports, amateur porn, and dumbest cliché aka zombie apocalypse took over the neighborhood before any resistance could identify the threat and go into formation to counter it.

The trio wanted to find out what was really going on. The revenants knew the Kairouan Brotherhood was involved, and that at least their lower foot-soldiers would have their own mind's impaired by their own political and religious indoctrination. It was painstakingly clear that a violent change came alike an enormous wave or thunderstorm, threatening and harming all their lives. No gunshot stops a disease. No cheap magick ritual reverses a major twist of fate. Outside of Hollywood a hollow-headed pledge to duty only got oneself killed, or worse!

Something had been mixed into the traditional mixture of disgust, disrespect, and barely veiled hostility of Kemal, Murrak, and Farruk, when the trio entered the local Shisha bar. Something they knew was shining from their own eyes, too. Bitterness and the wrath only helplessly watching the enemy win tends to spawn forth.

'Welcome!' announced the proprietor.

'Tea?' inquired the waiter.

'Gladly, sir, mine with honey, please.' replied Anderson to the waiter.

'We call it Kismet, you know?' stated Kemal, Murrak, and Farruk in unison.

'Yes, alike Latin *alea, iacta, est!* God has thrown the dice, we must live with the result.'

The End (basic version)

Bonus content - a poem in my prose & a haiku

Shaman of the Charnelyard, revised

© Andrè M. Pietroschek, all rights reserved

freestyle prose poem

Death, by its mere presence, takes more than our pride away
and humbles the less ignorant while Death's disciples stride
across this big earthly charnel yard, global fields of decay

The brain it fevers, though our course remains quite clear
from memories or depression to actual visions of the dead
as threshold ventures drain us, but are worthy beyond fear

The widows mantle of pure sorrow, it can be blessed indeed
maelstrom like it draws us into the final charade of life
blessed by the only rider who looks good on a white steed

Even the insects wrested from those graves the obscure lore
amino acids in a morbid way of brain to brain data transfer
A tribute now to Herbert West, reanimator of an older score

The magick of the moment, I felt it drained and neutralized
the human hubris, now in scientific costume, shuns it still
For cherished by survivors, priests, and killers it's prized

Stalker Haiku

© Andrè M. Pietroschek, all rights reserved

See a lurking foe
Who is too cruel to care
A living nightmare.