

Quinn Anthony

Most people in Shady Springs think of the Temple of the Shadowy Text as a curious throwback. They come to services, when they bother, because that's how they grew up, or as a social occasion. They all come to the annual Festival of Tomes and participate in the sacred rites, but they care more about the food and the bookselling. They don't really think of the Librarian as a real figure in their lives. And they barely tithe at all.

What they don't know is that the Order of the Shadowy Text is not just some cultural institution claiming divine authority arbitrarily. No, you are the heirs to potent magical traditions. It's just, you're also duty-bound to keep your magic secret from ordinary folk. Too many run-ins with witch-hunters and violent governors in centuries past, perhaps. It's frustrating, really, to lead the Order, but not get taken seriously. If only it wasn't also against your oath to use magic to steal. Then maybe you could afford to maintain the Temple properly. But then you'd be no better than the fallen mages you keep down.

But then again, when your Order has used magic in major ways, it hasn't gone well. Over a hundred years ago, the Librarian, your divine patron, appeared to your predecessors and made great promises. They would open a path to another world via a great mirror, and you could invade and take their resources and wealth for your own. It's uncomfortable to think about now, but those were different times, and your predecessors jumped at the chance, working with the government to supply armies. At first it went well, meeting little opposition. But then, somehow, the people of the other world managed to shatter the mirror with your armies stranded on the other side. The war memorial in town has huge lists of those presumed dead.

Interestingly enough, the gate to the other world didn't close completely. Every now and again, someone would show up, confused, by the sacred pool at the Temple. For whatever reason, it was usually kids. You'd show them magic, show them the temple, even sometimes take them with you on missions. Mostly, you wanted to learn everything you could about their world and the magic that brought them here. You never learned all that much that was practical, but you still enjoyed it. Life in the Order does get lonely, if nothing else. The one you miss the most is Noshi Sutherland. They were a dear child, keen and attentive, and with a real potential for magic. But they stopped crossing over years ago, and you've not seen any kids come across since.

You have met the Librarian a few times. They're a bit sheepish about the whole thing. Maybe if they were better at being infallible the Temple would be doing better. But they've helped you develop your magical skills, which has been important in your constant secret struggle against the fallen mages. See, some magic users don't follow your code and use their magic to steal from those in need and to corrupt governments around the world. It's your duty to protect those without magic from their corrupt attempts. You're glad to do it. It just doesn't pay well.

But now you've been drawn here, to what's obviously the Divine Library. You don't know what the Librarian has planned, but there must be knowledge here beyond anything the Order knows. This could be a great opportunity. Except the Library seems to be in danger. These two weird trees seem to have taken it over, denying the Librarian their rightful place. Perhaps that is why you've been brought here, to set things right. You must seize the moment and do your Order proud.

Notes

- Shadow Magic doesn't seem to work very well in the Library, at least not right now. Something about the Library's magic is blocking it. Only the simplest of rituals will work.

People You Know

- Noshi Sutherland: a kid from the other world, now grown into a teenager. A quick learner with a real potential for the shadow arts. You're happy to see them again.
- Reinier: The Librarian, a divine figure and the patron of your Order. They have taught you many useful magics over the years, though they were also responsible for that doomed invasion over a hundred years ago. "Reinier" is, like, their secret mystical name or something.
- Cass Peterson: a local high schooler in Shady Springs whose parents take them to services relatively often.
- Kendall Rodgers: a freelance travel writer who you've found hanging around the temple at odd hours now and again. You've wondered a time or two if they could be a fallen mage, but they seem innocent enough.
- Ash Summers: works at the local convenience store. Stopped coming to services after they graduated high school.

Goals

- Restore control of the Library rightfully to the Librarian.
- Find a way to get more money for your Temple.
- Convince Noshi Sutherland to come with you when you leave.
- Make it back out of here safely.

Items and Sheets

- A mirror shard passed down in your Order as a memento of the failed invasion.
- Some runes.
- "Shady Springs" bluesheet.
- The "Revelation of Shadows", a ritual of shadow magic