

[[Excerpt of Prototypical Historical Fiction Regarding the Quotidian Quorum, as penned and performed by the Amphibious Autocrats]]

The Crystal Falcon

DRAMATIS PERSONAE:

DARK AND MYSTERIOUS STRANGER\*: Wears a black trench coat with matching fedora. Stays at least 6 feet away from other characters at all times. Shifty eyed. Human.

DIPLOMAT MARCO: Talkative, a leader, but not necessarily one with authority. Bowler hat. Frog.

DIPLOMAT EDGAR: Nervous about the mysterious stranger. Strangely hatless. Frog.

DIPLOMAT LEOPOLD: Easy going. Fedora. Quiet. Frog.

\*Archivist Note: This would have been understood in amphibian culture to be a stereotypical Masked Quotidian.

INT: Private Investigator's Office

Marco: You don't mean...

He takes a step back in shock.

Edgar: It was youse! YOU'RE da thief!?

DMS: I thought it was obvious???

Marco steps forward, supplicating, his voice plaintative.

Marco: But WHY? Why not just tell us when we came in here?

Edgar: Fo' that matter, why even tells us at all? Why give us the run around? We musta been half way to here and ratland with all the crime scenes you been taking us to.

Edgar steps forward, a fist raised threateningly.

Edgar: You foolin' with us?

In a low rumble, Leopold speaks for the first time, as all three gape in shock.

Leopold: It's as I thought: there was a misunderstanding. He thinks we hired him to teach us.

The Dark and Mysterious Stranger lets out a surprised "caw" and immediately tries to speak over it.

DMS: Caw-se I was hired to show you hows I did it. Why hire me otherwise?

Marco: TO HELP US RETRIEVE THE FALCON! How COULD you we PAID you! We shared so many secrets with you!

Edgar: I thoughts we was friends, after that business with da bank robbery. And da mob. And those crooked cops. Da Coalition needs dat Falcon or its OUR heads and you just lied to us?

The DMS springs up from his desk chair with a look of righteous indignation on his face.

DMS: What! Slander! Lies! Friends of the black feather NEVER lie. What is even the point of lies!? The truth is hard enough to find as it is, why fake it! Lies!

Marco: What would you call it then, exactly, to promise us the return of the Falcon when you had no intention of doing this at all.

Dark and Mysterious Stranger proceeds to have near hysterics, scattering paper, pens, and various knick knacks all over the desk, letting out the odd angry caw. This stops the instant Leopold rumbles for his second speech in as many hours.

Leopold: Cool it. I know you didn't lie. We held up our end of the bargain. You held up the first part of yours. Now it's time to deliver the rest.

The Dark and Mysterious Stranger straightens his trench coat, adjusts his fedora and sorts a few papers.

DMS: Well. Yes. Of course. The Falcon is in the box on my desk, gents, and I always intended to deliver it to you upon completion of duties.

Marco rushes forwards, elbowing Edgar out of the way, examining the box.

Marco: The Falcon! It's here! But... Why? Why steal it just to return it?

DMS: What? Why would I wanna keep it? Big heavy boring object I already gathered data on? Lucky you guys came by in the first place: saves me the trouble a having to break back in to return it.

Marco gapes.

[[END EXCERPT]]

[[BEGIN PERSONAL NOTES]]

JR NOTE: I trust you understand why these sorts of records worry me, IA. Outside our borders lie creatures we cannot possibly hope to understand, lessened as we are. Our ancestors struggled with it, with the cost of their confusion being animosity and near violence. I doubt it will stop at "near" in our current state.

We MUST interact with the outside world. If we keep our heads in the sand like those Egg Heads want us to, then the violence comes inevitably to us. We need to understand what's out there, in order to not cause misunderstandings that lead to violence.

You are the most careful Agent I know, IA. I wouldn't dare risk a coup without you to back me, to point out the dangers. If you tell me that it's riskier to stand up to the Leader, I'll believe you. But I'm being straight with you when I say I fear the unknown a hell of a lot more.