

## a vigil for a fellow wizard

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## a vigil for a fellow wizard

by [Bee\\_4](#)

### Summary

There is a strange foreigner at the Vigil. Pixlriffs goes to investigate.

### Notes

See the end of the work for [notes](#)

When Pixlriffs heard that there was a strange foreigner at the Vigil, he mostly expected an emissary or a pilgrim, still unfamiliar with the proper rites. In many ways, that's what he got, stepping outside his quarters to check to make sure the foreigner had not accidentally committed some great sacrilege Pix would have to repair. It was a foreigner, and he could certainly be described as strange.

Nonetheless, the Mezelean King, wearing plain clothes and muttering as he tries and fails to wrap a candle, is not quite the same thing as a strange foreigner.

“Are you alright?”

Joel turns around, startled. “What? Oh yes, I'm fine. Nothing to see here, Copper Dad.”

Pix half-grins, half-grimaces. “Please don't call me that,” he says. “Do you need help? You know that making the candle yourself isn't a requirement, don't you?”

“I need it to be three colors. Green and also green, but a different green that time, and yellow.” He makes another frustrated noise as some of his dyed bee's wax breaks in his hands. “Also, we may not do funerals, but I know it doesn't mean much unless you build it.”

That's not really how the candles work, Pixlrieffs wants to explain, but the man looks frustrated enough. It's the act of placing it on a shrine and lighting it that holds the soul; the candle itself need only be colored so the soul can recognize it. Still, the man is clearly grieving, at least a little. There's very little other reason for a king of a country that doesn't normally care a whit about death to be badly wrapping a candle in front of the Vigil. May as well let him build the candle if that means something to him.

"Alright. Let me know if you need help. And, please ask where to put it? I assume they don't have a family shrine?"

"A what," Joel says. He makes a quiet, excited bounce as he finally gets the wax to start layering like he'd wanted it to.

"If they don't have a family shrine, the candle is normally lit at the foot of the vigil. Beneath the ruler that would best guide them to family," Pix explains.

"Oh," says Joel. "I guess that would be me. Is this candle lumpy?"

"Only a little. Your candles are here—"

"Don't worry. I think you showed me this before." Joel turns his candle in his hands, and Pixlrieffs can't help but wonder why two shades of green and yellow were so specifically wrapped. Like a gradient, Pix thinks, or like stepping stones. It's a bit hard to tell, given that the candle is *quite* lumpy. (This is also something Pixlrieffs knows better than to try to tell Joel.)

He's quiet as Joel lights the candle. He's quiet as Joel places it at the foot of his section of the vigil. He's quiet as, for some reason, Joel says: "Sorry if I forget you. I hope you're not too lonely."

Joel stands up again after a while.

"Scar deserved a funeral, I think. We don't normally do them in Mezelea and I guess he's not DEAD, dead, but he deserved one."

Pixlrieffs realizes with sinking finality: he has no idea who Joel is talking about. For anyone else, that may be usual, but for the Copper King—

"The Vigil will remember him," Pixlrieffs says, instead of asking any of the questions he has.

"Good," Joel says. "Or, probably good? I don't really know. I didn't even like him that much, to be honest, but no one else will remember him. I'll probably even forget now that I'm not dead anymore."

"...what?"

"I've been having very strange dreams," Joel says, and as true as it feels, it also feels like a lie. "Well, that was very not fun—my candle is crooked! You let me put up a crooked candle. Well, now I just feel silly."

Pixlrieffs doesn't say anything. His mouth feels dry, for some reason. The flame on Scar's candle looks strangely red.

"...hello? Pixlrieffs?"

"Right," says Pixlrieffs. "Are there prophets in Mezelea, by any chance?"

“Don’t be silly. People can’t see the future, Pixlriiffs. What, are you going to start talking about the *demon* next? *Please.*”

...Pix, actual prophet, very much doubts that. He also suspects he’ll see Joel in the future. But there’s no reasoning with the Mezelean King when he’s like this, so Pix just shrugs. “I was just asking. I always like learning new things, after all.”

“Well, you don’t have to be weird about it. My hands are all sandy now. You’re the sand person. You know how to fix this, don’t you?”

“You mostly just live with it.”

“Well that’s annoying.”

The subject clearly dropped, Joel starts chatting quietly as he prepares to leave the way he came. When Pixlriiffs glances over Joel’s shoulder, the candle is still burning red. For the life of him, Pix can’t determine the significance.

## End Notes

this is another "i wrote it after session 6 but i think it works after session 8" kind of fic. also i don't know how to spell mezalea so i just guessed. this one has a LOT of my empires headcanons, come ask me about them sometime!

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