

**A Character Sketch from Allies and Adversaries
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by Andrew G. Schneider**

Peldras Gomin

Sorry to startle you. You didn't see me there, did you? That was the point. That's who I am. A fly on the wall, a speck of dust, a shadow, nothing at all. That's what it takes to be me. To stay alive and do what I do.

Peldras Gomin. Spiriani High Council. Spymaster. You've been asking around about me. Let's just say I'm pleased to make your acquaintance.

Shake my hand, child. It's the polite thing to do. I won't bite, or stab you in the back. There's no poison, this time. Heh, heh. Little joke in the business. There's always poison, of one sort or another. If it isn't on the cup, or in the blade, then it's in the words... Not here, though. You're just a cub, barely out of swaddling clothes. Unless you're hiding something?

That's the crux of the matter, isn't it. Secrets. My business to know each and every one, even the ones that don't matter. I could tell you who Tinaria Anolde ate for breakfast, or which Council member's set to betray us to the Druegarn...if there was a traitor. You do understand the difference, I hope. Truth and lies. Misinformation. Secrets don't mean a damn thing if they aren't fact. Any spy can uncover secrets. It takes a master to find the truth. You can put that in your little report book. Phrase it like this: That's what I spend my damned time doing nowadays, sifting truth from lie, looking for a pattern. Playing spider to catch the pieces of the puzzle.

Sounds good. Sounds like me. People who read it, if anyone does, will think that I'm dissatisfied with the position. That I don't get out much. And the people who know better will still wonder. Excellent.

Threw me for a loop there, kid. You've spoken to three Council Members so far, and I'm the fourth. Doing your little interviews. Profiles for posterity, you called them. Bull, I say. Between us, what's the real scoop? Who do you work for?

No, no. I won't haul you in. Not yet, anyways. I promised you an interview and here it is. In my line of work, your word is golden, because it's all you got. So talk to me kid. Tell me why I bothered to show, and why I keep talking. You got a talent for making people talk, I'll hand you that.

Fine. Later. You have your turn, after I take mine. Tit for tat, if you will. Ask your questions.

Going public within the Spiriani was a brilliant move, if you ask me. I'm a figurehead, and a focus. Honest folk need to know where to drop the secrets that're burning them from the inside out. I'm convenient, reliable, and I pay well. What more do you want?

You're making assumptions, kid. Bad news when dealing with Peldras Gomin. Like there, you assume the face I show in public is the same one I hold in private. If that's even me standing on the Ascarid steps during feast-day.

The scratch? I pulled a raid on Pillith's High Temple during the Dakass Luot. Bastard got the drop on me and my team, and I stumbled out of there with my throat in my hands and my life falling away. Sevars knit me up as well as they could, but there

weren't nothing doing about the voice. Almost appropriate, when you think about it. A Spymaster who can't talk above a whisper.

Enough questions, let's play straight. I like you, kid. Truth to tell I was going to just have them pull you in for even suggesting this little chitchat. Then I got curious. I don't get out much, right, so this could be fun. A nice opportunity to spread a few rumors. Mix things up. What do you think of that?

Yeah? I'll let you in on a little secret of my own. It's all lies. You can't believe a single word I said. Information is my stock in trade. I don't give anything away for free. Not even the name of my own mother... Especially not the name of my mother, come to think on it.

You're too nice for this line of work. This was only a taste of the shadows, a dip into the fathomless realm of the Great Game. Run, kid. Get back to the light, before you're devoured.

The Spiriani Spymaster's true name has been lost to time and the shadowy halls of the Spiriani spy network. Peldras Gomin, as such, has been the assumed name of every Spymaster since the start of the Dakass Luot.

The current Peldras Gomin is young and more than a little impetuous, having taken up the mantle of Spymaster barely a hundred years prior. Those who have seen him and walked away from the encounter all agree that he is short, only a little over five feet, and wears dark clothes that blend preternaturally into the shadows. From there, their descriptions differ wildly, for he is a master of disguise and has appeared differently with every viewing. For reasons unknown, his voice never rises above a whisper.

Peldras speaks rarely at Council meetings, preferring to sit and listen, weighing each course of action against his plethora of hidden plots and agendas. His opinion, on those rare occasions it's offered, only manifests itself in order to break ties. He firmly believes that inaction in any situation is the sure road to disaster.

Though he holds the best interests of the Spiriani people at heart, Peldras is a firm believer that one must fight fire with fire. As such, he prefers acting from the shadows, away from Council oversight and Council meddling. He has vowed that what the Spiriani do not know, shall not hurt them.

Despite his elevated rank, Peldras remains active in the field, believing that information gleaned firsthand is worth a thousand secondary reports. He holds no particular prejudices against any race or profession, as long as they are of use to him. When he appears to outsiders, it is always for a reason: Either to charge them with a particular task, or to extract some bit of information necessary to his schemes. He pays fairly for all jobs, and failure is met with a simple cessation of contact.

It has been said that Peldras has a secret hideout deep beneath the halls of the Ascari, for on those occasions where he doesn't want to be found, it is as if he never existed in the first place.