



Schneider and Silly Bargains

Mission title:	<i>Schneider and Silly Bargains</i>
Mission log:	1-06
Mission Johnson:	
Mission reward:	<i>Special (Astral Perception, Flame projection, Infection)</i>
Participants, first part:	Schneider

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1-06: ... and then there was light

Consciousness was a gradual thing. Schneider could still remember the elf bitch in the dominatrix outfit, right up to her lover becoming her ex-lover because of dr. Farsight's extreme bow acupuncture, the elf bitch subsequently screaming like a banshee (the evil spirit, not the thunderbird vehicle), and plunging her elf *athame* into her elf heart right between her skanky elf boobs. As far as Schneider was concerned, that's what the elf bitch richly deserved for trying to fragging with her crew.

Schneider could remember the burning, electric sensation right before the insanely powerful magic blast snuffed out her consciousness like a candle in a Category 5 hurricane. But she could not remember travelling to the heath where she now lay. Deciding that this was getting old, she sat up in the heath and had a look around.



A white, mossy stone marker was some distance off to her side, apparently haphazardly placed. The fine mist obscured any other landmarks. Stamping her feet for warmth, she made her way over to the stone marker, hoping to find some mark, something to signify where she was now.

As she came closer, it was apparent that the stone marker was covered in sigils. Some of the sigils were finely rounded, carved into the rock with precision and elegance. Others were more clumsy, far more uneven in their finish, and completely different in appearance – almost runic and linear to the rounded elegance of the most prominent writing. Yet others were mostly crude pictograms depicting stick figures, apparently hunting some strange animals she didn't recognize. The moss obscured some of the writing. Disinterested, Schneider spared only a cursory glance on the stone marker.

Suddenly, it was as if the sun had broken through the cloud cover, or as if some joker had put a spotlight directly on her back. If it had been a *cold* sun, or a spotlight emitting *cold* light. The



turned around. Some of the light mist seemed to have inexplicably withdrawn, revealing a dry, red, mound of sand some distance away.

On that mound of sand, she could just barely make out some figures, flickering and moving in the wind as if they were somehow less substantial than she. In a heartbeat, the sky fell dark as if the unseen sun had impossibly disappeared.

1-06: Meeting the Silly Buggers

The group of four suddenly stood in front of her, as if having approached her without the niceties of *walking* over to her. One second there, the next right in front of her. And they had brought the night with them. It was bitterly cold, and the wind had died down to nothing from one heartbeat to the next. Their theatrical flair didn't really impress Schneider. Defiantly, she crossed her arms and glared at the group of entities in front of her.



They looked *old* somehow. And weary. The lightning in their eyes and the light inside their weird shadowy tentacle-hair crawled tiredly around the outline of their heads, their faces kept in a permanent rictus, an obscene parody of a smile. Small motes of dust, shining with their own



luminescence, occasionally fell off their robed bodies. They outlined the darkness with weak, uneven light.

{We | This group | Association} have a proposition for {you | small group | collective}.

The thought impinged on her consciousness as unobtrusively as the noise of fingernails on a blackboard. Schneider grimaced with annoyance. Wasn't there even a *glimmer* of originality on the part of these silly buggers?

{We | Collective | Corporation} will grant power in return for {services | favors | obligations}.

"So it's you lot that have already given Jinx her tattoo, eh?" Schneider almost spat in derision. Almost. Prudence reigned her distaste in somewhat – but just barely. This was all moronic, silly, *stupid*. And Schneider *hated* stupid.

*{We | Collective | Aggregate} have grown in size recently from acquiring
{smaller collective | particle | appendix} in proximal vicinity.*

They seemingly paused, perhaps trying to ascertain whether the answer was good enough. They were ... confused, judging from the increased flickering and agitation of their tenebral tentacles. Schneider didn't give them any rest, any respite. "So, who are you guys anyways, and why would you do this?"

*The {machine | enemy | mechanism} is coming. {We | Collective | Association}
offer power for {you | small group | collective}'s {allegiance | joining | fusion}.*

"Oh my goodness, you're dense aren't you?" Schneider's annoyance was quite vocal. "So, exactly what powers are we talking about here?"

*The {essence | being | power} will grant the ability to {see | observe | adjudicate}
that which is not seen, projection of {energy | fire | living light}, and to
integrate into the {collective | organism | aggregate} others.*

Well, at least *that* wasn't quite as stupid and inane as the rest of it had been. Schneider considered the suggestion for a few moments. "And I suppose saying 'no' isn't an option, not really?" Though rhetorical, the question seemed to agitate the entities – but no response was forthcoming. They really *were* stupid, weren't they?

"Very well. I accept."

The power flowed into her like a torrent of cold water, of untold potential. Her consciousness shrank to a small pinpoint of light as she could *feel* the otherness, the essence of the entities, enter her very soul, her essence of being. Everything faded to black again.