



Interlude

or

Picking Up the Pieces and Bugging On

Mission title:	<i>Interlude or Picking Up the Pieces and Bugging On</i>
Mission log:	1-05
Mission Johnson:	(Herr Schmidt / Herr P)
Mission reward:	2 karma, 41 000 nuyen (collectively), special (Ricardo)
Participants:	Dr. Farsight, Jinx, Ricardo, Schneider, Vince

Table of Contents

1-05: The morning after	1
1-05: Meeting Herr Schmidt, leaving Herr P.	2
1-05: Getting the band together	4
1-05: The Gimp is a registered nurse	4



1-05: The morning after

It was early morning when an oddball crew arrived at dr. Farsight's door. Certainly, Ricardo, Schneider, and Vince made a motley assortment of ... unique individuals. Ricardo seemed uncharacteristically chipper, even tunelessly whistling a rendition of an old Maria Mercurial song. Vince rang the doorbell, trying not to look for the security camera that he knew was there - somewhere. Dr. Farsight buzzed them in through the security door almost immediately.

Dr. Farsight was downright haggard. In stark contrast to Jinx, who was fairly chipper – and quite ambulatory, to the rest of the crew's amazement. Well, used to be ambulatory, at least. The soyburger wrappers spread around her indicated that she had recently had a rather large meal.

Cogwhistle was still out cold, pining for the fjords or whatever it was. At this point, he had a clear bag of fluid hung from a convenient hook, slowly drip-dripping into his arm. "Fluids," was dr. Farsight's curt explanation. A colorful display was running on the wall screen, cryptically showing all sorts of medical information. Dr. Farsight only muttered something about "theta waves" and "REM sleep", and told everyone not to touch anything.

With some trepidation, Jinx called the attention of everyone present. Pushing her sleeves out of the way, she asked – "guys? Have any of you heard of getting tattoos without knowing about it after strange dreams?" From forearm to elbow, her arms were covered in a magnificent depiction of stylized flames.

Wearily, dr. Farsight pulled some more blood while mumbling about "nanites", and started to run a few tests. Vince had some strange, magical theories to offer – but the one true mage was still out, so no astral assaying was available. After an hour of sitting around and shooting the breeze while Jinx was trying to put a brave face on it all, dr. Farsight's tests were completed.

And inconclusive, except for the fact that she was apparently fit as a fiddle even after heroic amounts of intravenous broad spectrum antibiotics. Apart from a slight case of indigestion (and that might've just as well been the soyburgers from Sloppy Joe's), she was completely healthy.

"Right," said Ricardo. "As Jinx seems to be as healthy as she's ever been, apart from some inexplicable ink that we can't trace right now, I think it's time to get on with things."

Dr. Farsight made the call to Herr Schmidt, describing the amount of samples that he had so painstakingly gathered before the crew had booked it like a librarian out of the weird factory. Herr Schmidt seemed very, *very* pleased. A meeting place was agreed on, set for two hours later, precisely. Herr Schmidt was very particular about that.

After some haggling, it was clear that dr. Farsight and Ricardo would meet Herr Schmidt, with Jinx catching up on some rest and staying together with Vince. Schneider had other pressing matters to attend to – she had a lead on a van that might be able to accommodate Vince's significant bulk.



Joyed at the thought of not having to take public transport everywhere, Vince playfully shooed Schneider out the door at the mere mention of a van where he could actually sit. Ricardo's Toyota Elite, though sleek, was just barely large enough for an average ork, never mind Vince's extraordinary bulk.

With a slight air of disdain at the thought of a *van* of all things, Ricardo repaired to his Toyota Elite ("It's all in the name, chummers") together with a careworn dr. Farsight and his carefully packed bag of samples.

Vince sat down on dr. Farsight's couch, and pulled out his pocket secretary. He started tapping on the oversize keys with a surprisingly gentle hand, occasionally alternating glances at Jinx' resting form curled up and hugging a large pillow in one corner of the couch, and the prone form of Cogwhistle.

1-05: Meeting Herr Schmidt, leaving Herr P.

Ricardo and dr. Farsight pulled up at the appointed place precisely five minutes before the agreed time. Being late would be unforgivable, and being too early would be unconscionable – and would also indicate a certain lack of trust in their dear Mr. Johnson. Or Herr Schmidt, as would be more correct, in this case at least.

Exiting his sleek, white-and-pearl Toyota Elite, Ricardo couldn't help but caress the car for a moment as he walked over to Herr Schmidt. He could get used to sleek sports car. For now, the Toyota Elite was excellent as a symbol of his taste, his elegance... and it didn't have room for Vince. Ricardo felt a twinge in his conscience as he admitted to himself that *that* wasn't necessarily all bad...

Haggard, but well turned out and businesslike, dr. Farsight took the lead initially in the transaction with Herr Schmidt. Dr. Farsight showed the samples he had taken, and explained the test results that he had brought on chip – displaying the relevant results on his pocket secretary before delivering the chip itself to Herr Schmidt.

"Und ze blood of dose ... afflicted? Vas it possible for you to retrieve some of zat as well?" Dr. Farsight answered the question to the negative. Though he didn't admit it to Herr Schmidt, he didn't trust the man enough to give him blood samples of his fellow runners. Or, if truth be told, the team of friends that they were rapidly becoming. Science was one thing. Handing over potential ritual samples completely another.

Herr Schmidt seemed somewhat disappointed with this, but seemed quite satisfied with the rest of dr. Farsight's work. Ricardo smoothly inserted himself in the transaction. It was time to talk cold, hard credits.

To dr. Farsight, the conversation between Ricardo and Herr Schmidt was rapid fire German, the staccato pitter-patter of the language completely unlike the flowery undulations of Sperethiel.



One language was made for elves. Another was made for ordering people around. Yet, despite this, dr. Farsight thought that Herr Schmidt and Ricardo was getting on like a house on fire.

After the requisite haggling, dr. Farsight was relieved to see credsticks change hands. He was way overdue on some quality sleep, and was looking forward to a nap before going back to watching over Cogwhistle. To dr. Farsight's amazement, the conversation continued.

The conversation dragged on for almost three quarters of an hour more. Both Herr Schmidt and Ricardo had long since dropped any professional pretense, and were chatting like old friends. At one point, they both glanced over to dr. Farsight, Ricardo gesturing and Herr Schmidt nodding. As if they were agreeing on some obscure point. Or evaluating. Dr. Farsight didn't know which option he liked less.

At length, Herr Schmidt broke out in a big smile, and almost embraced Ricardo. Raising his finger in the universal gesture for just a moment, Herr Schmidt walked over to the nondescript VW van that he had obviously arrived in. Shortly, he returned with a rectangular box perhaps the size of a lunch box. Ricardo opened it, and dr. Farsight had the brief glimpse of a dagger of an old style.

Very serious now, Herr Schmidt was scrutinizing Ricardo's reaction to the dagger. Evidently, both Ricardo and Herr Schmidt liked what they saw, for the following handshake was, if possible, even more heartfelt than the previous exchange had been. With a lot of waving, Ricardo walked towards his Toyota Elite, unlocking it with a casual flick of his access card. Dr. Farsight didn't waste any time getting into the car on the passenger side.

Safe inside the car, Ricardo's smile slipped slightly from his face. Dr. Farsight had a glimpse of a profound worry. Trying to keep the situation light, dr. Farsight quipped: "Nice knife." Ricardo's glance was a thousand yard stare, as lost as the stares of combat veterans. He flipped open the case again, showing dr. Farsight a glimpse of the dagger.

The dagger was magnificent. The pommel was silver and wide, flowing smoothly into an upper crossguard. The handle was almost Roman in style, inlaid at the pommel with two silver lightning bolts and in the handle proper with a stylized silver eagle. The lower crossguard was silver again, and the blade tapered gently to a point. The dagger's sheath, right next to the knife in the box, continued the theme of silver and black. Dr. Farsight caught a glimpse of unfamiliar writing on the blade of the dagger – Gothic or even Runic writing boldly inlaid in the blade.

"What does that mean?" Dr. Farsight pointed at the blade's writing. Almost despite himself, Ricardo answered in a low voice. "It's German. It means 'My Honor is Loyalty'." Ricardo snapped the box shut, startling both himself and dr. Farsight with the sudden noise. With a decisive movement, he reached over to the glove box and stashed the box there. "Right. We made out like bandits with Herr P over there. 41k, in fact. And, if we come across more, he might be willing to buy that as well, provided they're unique samples. The offer still stands on the blood samples, though. He said that the reward would be ... substantial."



Ricardo's searching gaze hit dr. Farsight full force. "I don't think we need to share that particular tidbit with the others, though." Dr. Farsight nodded. "I don't think so either."

Ricardo started the Elite, its holographic display lighting up the lightly armored windscreen in front of him. Dr. Farsight looked around, but the VW van with Herr Schmidt – *now Herr P*, he reminded himself – was long gone. The drive back to dr. Farsight's apartment was quiet. Both Ricardo and dr. Farsight had things to mull over.

1-05: Getting the band together

Just as Ricardo's Elite was pulling up in front of dr. Farsight's apartment, Schneider got out of a robotaxi. The automated taxi pulled out and disappeared down the street in a quiet humming of an efficient electrical engine. Schneider looked like the proverbial cat that had gotten the bird. She was heavily laden with some Indian-Mongolian fusion takeaway boxes, only just managing to balance the stack of boxes while she waited for the two in the car.

Schneider only raised her eyebrows eloquently to Ricardo and dr. Farsight disembarking from the Elite. "And here I thought I was late in getting back," she quipped as dr. Farsight unlocked the door and opened it for his friends.

"Food! Finally!" The *basso profundo* of Vince greeted the trio as they entered the apartment. Jinx stretched from her corner of the couch, eager for some real food now that all side effects of the broad spectrum antibiotics had let go. Cogwhistle was out of it still.

Schneider distributed the boxes of piping hot food, and they all dug in. Between mouthfuls of food and the occasional glance over to the unconscious dwarf, they all got up to speed with recent events, and started formulating a plan...

1-05: The Gimp is a registered nurse

Before they could start implementing their plan, however, it was clear that they needed to hire a medical professional of some sort – dr. Farsight recommended getting a nurse with experience in dealing with comatose patients, and preferably some level of biocontainment. If he were to be honest, it was getting time to bathe and take care of Cogwhistle's ... bodily wastes, and that being a drek job (in this case, literally), he would be more than happy to let someone else handle that.

A nurse seemed to be a good idea – to him, at least. However, it would have to be a nurse whose discretion had to be assured, and someone that when once bought, they *stayed* bought. Luckily, Mario the Plumber, their fixer, thought he could get hold of some slag that fit the description.

A couple of hours later, the doorbell to dr. Farsight's apartment rang. Vince, unobtrusively placing his bo stick out of sight but within reach behind the door, went to open. "Mr. Mario sent



me”, said the electronically distorted voice. It emanated from what was very obviously a man in a skin-tight shiny latex suit.



The suit was tight enough that it was clear he wasn't carrying any external weapons under his one-piece suit. To be crude, one could clearly see that not only was it a man, but also that he was probably not Jewish. He carried a smallish latex bag with him, containing only a credstick, a ruggedized pocket secretary, a medical electronics kit with some relays and adapters, an enema kit complete with collapsible water buckets, and a liter of an industrial-strength disinfectant.

Vince was slightly taken aback, but let the man into dr. Farsight's apartment. Dr. Farsight quickly took over – a couple of hours of rest had done wonders for dr. Farsight, and he had regained much of the spring in his step. Dr. Farsight, not even batting an eyelid at the unusual getup of the nurse, quickly gave a detailed rundown of Cogwhistle's condition.

With a practiced eye, the nurse asked the right questions and did a professional, efficient, and thorough examination of Cogwhistle. Dr. Farsight certainly didn't seem to entertain any qualms about leaving Cogwhistle to this latex nurse's tender mercies. Transferring over the requisite nuyen, the nurse was hired for a few days' care of Cogwhistle while the crew started preparing to go off and do their thing.

As the group geared up, the nurse carried a reclining chair over to Cogwhistle's side. Synchronizing some internal cyberware to the medical transmitter he had brought with him, the nurse then connected himself to the sensor array that dr. Farsight had set up.

The group left shortly after that. The last they saw before the door was closed and locked by dr. Farsight, was a comatose Cogwhistle in his hairy birthday suit, an array of two buckets, one filled with water and another about a fourth full, and a whistling nurse connecting things up. “I hope the drek doesn't hit the fan,” dr. Farsight chuckled as they went off into the rainy Seattle night.