

Skyrim – Solemn Remembrance

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Dialogue – Xandar the Mage

Note: Xandar is a disembodied mage that is part of the Book of Shadows side-quest. He spends his days as a magical orb of energy reading books and floating around.

Player: Who... what are you?

Xandar: My name is Xandar. I'm a sorcerer from Winterhold, or I guess I kind of WAS a sorcerer as you can see.

Player: I was actually sent here by someone from Winterhold. Do you know Zdro?

Xandar: Zdro? Hmm, doesn't sound familiar. Maybe he wasn't there when I left. Say, can you tell me what year it is?

Player: It is the Fourth Era, 201.

Xandar: 201! Good heavens! I've been here a hundred years! Oh, I'm so old now. I wish I had my youth and good looks again. This is so depressing.

Player: What exactly happened to your body?

Xandar: Funny story! I was doing an incantation from the Book of Shadows, when all of a sudden my body started melting. Ha!

Player: What happened next?

Xandar: A strange sensation. My body and mind began to separate. Next thing I know, I was actually staring at myself!

Player: So if your mind separated from your body, that shadowy Draugr I just killed...

Xandar: My old body? Correct. To be fair, he kind of turned into a jerk after we broke-up. Typical. I have no hard feelings for what you did.

Player: Can you teach me any magic?

Xandar: Why, yes, There's a tome on the table that will teach you XANDAR'S LIGHT! *ahem* Sorry, I'm just too proud of myself sometimes!

Player: You wouldn't happen to know where the Book of Shadows is, do you?

Xandar: The book? Why, of course!

Player: Well? Or do you want me to do an errand for you first?

Xandar: Errand? Don't be ridiculous. You look like you've run all over the world doing errands. It's on the table over there.

Player: Do you mind if I take it?

Xandar: Take it, by all means! It's caused me nothing but trouble. It got me into this mess. A warning: it starts off boring, but then gets... VERY scary.

Player: Is there anything I can do to help you... or put you out of your misery?

Xandar: Please, no. I don't mind being in this state. I am, as it were, immortal. Having all the time in the world, I end up doing nothing most days.

Journals Explanation

These journals serve as backstory and are scattered throughout the dungeon in the level. The context is that there were three siblings, Sardash, Aylin, and Volroth, and they were all children of the ruler of the Whispering Vale. The Whispering Vale is an ancient, lost civilization.

Journal – Aylin's Diary

Text: There is a war coming, and Sardash and Volroth have had long disagreements as to how to handle it. It has been this way for a week. They argue long into the night and become more venomous in their words when they think no one is around. This morning I caught them arguing before breakfast. Volroth whispered something I could not hear, and got such a reaction from Sardash as if inflicting him again with some old exasperation. Sardash shouted with a voice I never heard him use before, and when he stopped, the room still rang with violence. Volroth stood there obstinate, with a smile like a thrown-down gauntlet.

Things have changed so much since Volroth's return from exile. I wanted so dearly for him to have changed, to have learned to be at peace with himself, but he arrived as cold and as unyielding as ever.

I still want to remember him as the shy, sweet boy who one summer evening, when I could have sworn I heard a howling wolf, comforted and reassured me there was no danger. I recall being bewildered at his gentle, almost womanly smile, and feeling embarrassed at myself for being so afraid. I will always remember that moment. I'm not sure when, but I like to believe there was a time when someone or something could have helped him, something that could have affected the course of his emotional life, but nothing was there. Instead, Volroth was left to face the world alone, as he believed. In his selfishness, he convinced himself no one could understand or relate to him, and so became more isolated from others.

Conjurers of the blackest arts have been meeting with him late at night. I noticed them first arriving several months ago. I know I should bring the matter to Sardash's attention, but I want to try first to speak with Volroth on my own accord.

Journal – Volroth's Journal

Note: This is Volroth's journal, which can be found in the final tomb of the mod. It describes some of the events leading up to the downfall of the Whispering Vale and gives a clue to the player as to what happened.

Text: I have returned home after many years. Everything should seem familiar to me, but there is always something slightly off, so that every now and then I am assaulted by the feeling that I have taken the wrong path, the wrong horse, and that I am in a place where no one knows me and where I ought not to be. These walls in the home of my father no longer welcome me as they did in my childhood. My father died in my absence. I was not there at his funeral. A servant asked me if I wished I had been there, and I had to lie and said I wish I could have said goodbye. I have no regrets about anything, and even after all the events that led to my exile, I have the strange absence of malice toward my father. I feel nothing for these people. Sometimes, I'm convinced they are all puppets or illusions made to entertain me by some greater power.

Sardash, on the other hand, if anyone can make me feel anything it is he. When I'm not around him, I have the flickering of sentiment, but when I'm in his presence, my mind is occupied with grotesque revenge fantasies.

The story goes like this: a long time ago, two boys were going to buy a present for their father, the ruler of the magnificent Whispering Vale. One boy worked hard for months, collecting every bit of coin he could find, working hard labor jobs unfit for the son of the ruler to buy his father a finely crafted dagger. Another boy, not caring, or even forgetting about the birthday, scooped up a puppy from a peasant for almost nothing. I will end the charade here and say this: my father never, not once, wore my dagger. He could have worn it to dinner that night and that would have sufficed. But that worthless, ill-bred dog, he never let that dog out of his sight.

It occurred to me, shortly after, that my father did not love me. Instead of pining and scrambling to get into his favor, I amputated some part of my spirit so that it no longer troubled me. That was when the revelation occurred. To this day, I can almost not forgive myself for not seeing it before then.

Everywhere, there is a loneliness and desperation among people. I see it in their eyes and their faces, in their movements and the tone of their voices. They are all clinging to each other to distract themselves from the emptiness that consumes them. It disgusts me when they openly display this weakness. They rely on others because they fail to see the strength within themselves.

My exile honed that strength, forged it into something new, and with this knowledge, I plan to bring the Whispering Vale to the glory only I can help it achieve.