

Shonté Daniels Writing Sample

Aleza enters a dimly lit room in the back of a restaurant. A group of people are already sitting for a game of poker. Among the group is Markus, a regular at the gambling table, and Gordon, the facilitator and dealer of the game. Markus is the best dressed of the entire crew, clad in a business suit, and penny loafers.

INT. BACK OF A RESTAURANT - NIGHT

MARKUS

Welcome, newcomer! Have a seat. What's your name?

ALEZA

(Surprised)

Wow, no security drones here?

MARKUS

Nah, we don't need a bot to know who's cheating.

GORDON

We've got plenty of precautions for that.

Gordon motions toward a gun on the table

ALEZA

Friendly bunch of people here.

MARKUS

Chill, Gordon. Let's try not to scare off the first new person we see, alright?

Markus stands and reaches his hand out for a handshake. Aleza stares at Markus' hand, then his face.

MARKUS

I'm Markus, and you?

ALEZA

Aleza.

MARKUS

Excellent. Aleza, have a seat. If you've made it here, then clearly you know how to play poker. We only play Archaic here. It's an oldie but goodie.

Gordon shuffles and deals the cards to each player. Markus motions for Aleza to sit at the table. Aleza walks over and sits next to Markus.

ALEZA

What's the minimum?

MARKUS

No minimum. We'll take anything you got. Din, scrap metal, anything that can be sold is good here.

ALEZA

Really, anything?

Aleza shows a blue microchip peeking out of her pocket. Markus notices and nods.

MARKUS

Yes, anything. Now, let's play. And tell us a little about yourself. How'd you come across that chip?

ALEZA

Believe it or not, I found it.

MARKUS

Friend, you have to be more specific than that. How did you find it? And where? Please excuse my curiosity. Chips like those are highly illegal.

ALEZA

Off a corpse, lying near a dumpster. I don't know who he was, but he hadn't been dead for long before I found him. When I tried to wake him up, I found it in his breast pocket. I thought better to take it

for myself than have the paramedics take it.

MARKUS

No use to a dead man! I say you made a good call. Care to place that chip on the table? Maybe make a wager with it?

ALEZA

Sure, if anyone has anything of value around here.

MARKUS

Oh, I do.

Markus unbuttons his blazer to reveal a small handgun.

MARKUS

It's completely unmarked. There are a few bullets in the chamber. It's unlike any gun I've seen around here. If you bet the chip, I'll throw in the gun. Fun, right?

ALEZA

Deal.

Others toss in the few things they own or fold for lack of valuable items. Drones, explosives, and robotic appendages litter the poker table. After a tense match, Markus is the victor, earning him every gadget on the table.

MARKUS

That was a fierce battle, Aleza! You know your cards.

ALEZA

(Sucking her teeth)

Yeah, well, not well enough, I suppose. Good game.

Aleza reaches her hand out for a handshake. Markus takes Aleza's hand and gives a furious shake. Aleza to sneaks extra cards in Markus' coat sleeve.

MARKUS

Now, I hope you don't mind, but we're going to have to pat you down before you leave. This is a common protocol for everyone. It's how we keep a group of trustworthy people in here, you understand?

ALEZA

Check all you want. I've got nothing to hide.

Aleza is patted down. Nothing is found in her pockets. Markus is patted down next. An ace of diamonds is found in his pants pocket.

GORDON

What's that, Markus?

MARKUS

What's what? Now, you know I don't cheat. Clearly something is wrong here.

ALEZA

You tried to steal my chip from me!

MARKUS

(Desperate)

No! I don't know where that came from! It must have fallen, and I just didn't notice. I swear I didn't use it.

Markus' arms sway, causing the other hidden cards to fall out of his jacket. Gordon points the gun on the table at Markus.

MARKUS

Gordon, how long have we come here together. Gordo, please, put the gun down. Let me explain myself first.

ALEZA

(Surprised)

Wait, don't have to kill him -

Gordon shoots and kills Markus. The room is quiet.

ALEZA

That was unnecessary.

GORDON

I know what you did.

ALEZA

...

GORDON

I never trusted him. Never liked him,
either. Won't be long before security
comes this way. Take your earnings and
leave.

Below is an excerpt from my comedy murder mystery game, [Murder at the Cat Show](#). In this scene the Detective arrives at the scene of the crime, the pool room of an old hotel and is greeted by the disgruntled Investigator, whose been impatiently waiting Detective to arrive.

INT. HOTEL POOL ROOM - DAY

The Investigator is huddled near a pool, testing water samples with various liquids she has in her bag full of chemicals.

INVESTIGATOR

There you are! I was beginning to think you reserved a room to sleep here.

DETECTIVE

Hey, this is my first time in this stupid hotel. I needed a map just to find the pool room.

INVESTIGATOR

Well, you're here now. So get to work.

DETECTIVE

You're in a sour mood. What's wrong?

INVESTIGATOR

You're here. That's what's wrong. Boss only calls you when things aren't going well.

DETECTIVE

I can leave if you want.

INVESTIGATOR

Oh, shut up. You know Boss would ream me out if I told you to leave.

(Exhausted)

I'm sorry. I'm just in a bad mood.

DETECTIVE

We are dealing with a murder here.

INVESTIGATOR

Murder? Tsk. I'm still calling this a suicide. If you think it's a murder, you'll have to find some clues that state that.

But, it's not just the case that's bothering me.

DETECTIVE

You're doing a good job. You always do a good job, even in difficult circumstances.

INVESTIGATOR

Thanks, Detective. Part of me thinks you're lying to make me feel better, but maybe that's just my self-doubt talking.

DETECTIVE

Boss put you on the case because she knows you can do it. She believes in you, and I do too.

INVESTIGATOR

Alright, cool it with the positivity.

(Pause)

But thanks. I really appreciate it. Anyway, you've got work to do.

DETECTIVE

Is there anything important I should know before starting my investigation?

INVESTIGATOR

Yeah, plenty. Let's talk.

The following excerpt is from my visual novel, [Odella's Myth](#), available for free on [shonte.itch.io](#)

EXT. FOREST - DAY

Princess Veren is on a journey across the land of Aeris. Her protector, Kindra must keep Veren safe during their travels across the wild lands. This scene is a few days into their travels.

KINDRA

Hey...hey!

VEREN

...Huh?

NARRATOR (VEREN)

A strong voice jolted me awake. I opened my eyes to see Kindra.

KINDRA

It's sunrise. Sleep too late and the beasts will catch up to us.

VEREN

What monsters? We haven't seen a beast since we started a few days ago.

KINDRA

That's not entirely true...but we've been lucky because we've been moving in the daylight. We should head out to the sanctuary, and hopefully make it by night fall.

VEREN

Will we be walking all day?

Kindra smirked.

KINDRA

Depends on how your legs hold out. I'd say we'll be stopping to rest in two hours.

VEREN

Kindra, you've no faith in me...At least give me three hours.

NARRATOR (VEREN)

Kindra chuckled and walked ahead. We weren't so friendly at first; we barely knew each other. As a royal guardian, Kindra was tasked to protect me through my pilgrimage to the three sacred temples across Aeris. Most days I only saw her from behind, her bow strung across her back, hitting against her long, black braids.

So far, we've only faced one "beast," a wild boar intent on goring us. Kindra rushed me behind a tree while she killed it with a few arrow strikes. She teased me and blamed my pink coat for catching the animal's attention.

Option 1: Remove Coat

Option 2: Keep coat on

NARRATOR (VEREN)

[Remove Coat] I couldn't handle any more embarrassment, or wild boar attacks, so I took the coat off and kept it in my bag. I'll wear it when I make it to the sanctuary.

NARRATOR (VEREN)

[Keep Coat] As much as I wanted to, I knew how important my clothing was to Odella's tradition. It's annoying, but it's important to keep it on.

???

Excuse me!

NARRATOR (VEREN)

I turned to see an old woman sitting near a willow tree. I thought she was wearing a long, white robe, but as we moved closer, I saw that wasn't entirely right.

OLD WOMAN

Young ladies, could you please help me. I sat down here to rest, thinking I'd be able to lift myself back up, but I cannot. I just need a little lift.

NARRATOR (VEREN)

Kindra kept calm and took a step toward me.

KINDRA

Okay, what do you suggest we do?

Option 1: Ignore the old woman

Option 2: Help the old woman

VEREN

[Ignore the old woman] Let's keep moving.

NARRATOR (VEREN)

As we walked past the woman, I could hear her complain before trailing off.

OLD WOMAN

Just like the future queen to ignore someone like me. I shouldn't have expected more from you.