

Writing Sample - Elle Sillitoe

Casting bio and sample barks from historical-fantasy *Minecraft Frontiers*

CHARACTER BIO: Canus Minicius aka 'The Silver Spider', fence, aged 52

Born to a ploughman and stablehand working on an unimpressive farm situated close to the mainland south-east shore, Canus was raised in abject poverty, living off the small scraps fed to goats and pigs. Following his father's sudden heart attack, Canus was tasked with ploughing the fields from sunrise to sunset, a life which he reluctantly accepted. Described as stiffly formal and polite, Canus spoke with a brittle coldness that made him appear apathetic to his inferior position in the uncaring world. However, every night, as the last ribbons of sunlight would die on the horizon's edge, and as the stars would rise in their place, Canus spent his hours quietly brooding about a greater life on some distant shore. His appearance was strange: a slender frame with long, narrow arms that hung awkwardly rigid; his eyes, small and beady, sunk into dark circles that aged him by years; his tan skin etched with the marks of a relentless sun. After his mother's death from heatstroke, Canus left home at 17 to pursue the silk trade, where he worked as a silkworm and spider breeder, earning the nickname 'The Silver Spider'. At the age of 23, he had finally made enough money to buy passage to the island of freshly colonised Elpida, and seek his fortune in the new world.

Upon arriving, Canus worked 3 more years in the silk trade before his business slowed and money started to dwindle. Growing despondent, Canus began to frequent the taverna, meeting Iris - the intrepid leader of the Explorer's Guild. Growing close, Iris persuaded Canus to invest his remaining savings in the guild, claiming they would retrieve ancient treasure from the dark recesses of the jungle, a gambit which turned out to be extremely successful. Eventually, the guild stumbled across a chain of caves with deep strains of gold and Canus was quickly able to accrue a small fortune. As the size of his greed grew with the weight of his gold, Canus began to steal from the guild's treasury, an act which would go unnoticed by all except Iris. Appalled by his treachery, Iris covertly filed a report with Atticus Blane, the head of the city watchmen, and waited for Canus' arrest with bated breath.

Unbeknownst to Iris, Blane was completely corrupt, having been put on the payroll of the powerful Salvian family many years prior. Instead of arresting Canus, Blane instead showed the report to the elusive Augustin Salvian, who decided to invite Canus to a meeting. Canus arrived with a calm demeanour that betrayed no emotion but internally he was terrified. Augustin was impressed by Canus' discreet manipulation of Guild funds and offered him the position of family accountant with the stipulation that the report would be published if he ever stepped out of line. Intrigued by the wealth and connections that the Salvians offered, Canus gladly accepted. Iris' assassination was swiftly organised and approved by both parties.

The position was well suited to his talents, and Canus continued to impress the Salvian family with strategic investments, quiet manipulation of coin, and brokering of deals. Following the eventual capture and subsequent execution of Augustin Salvian by the Senate, Canus was promoted to Master Advisor, currently acting as a mentor to the young Julius Salvian and guiding the handling of the Salvian legacy.

Sample dialogue: Canus talking to the newly recruited player-character

1. Ah, fresh blood.
2. Be careful not to wander.
3. Stay safe, new recruit.
4. Do watch your step.
5. Don't forget, a spider has eight eyes.

Canus responding to the player-character selling an item (high relationship)

1. Excellent catch.
2. It's always a pleasure taking weight off your hands.
3. Oh, this is an exceptional find.
4. I wonder who this belonged to... No, don't tell me. A spider hears nothing.
5. Excellent. I know just the perfect buyer for this.

Canus responding to the player-character purchasing an item

1. That little gem slipped into my hands a few days ago.
2. A perfect choice, I assure you.
3. Be assured that all purchases are completely confidential.
4. I hope you enjoy that item, I know its previous owner did.
5. If anyone asks, you certainly didn't buy it from me.

Canus catching the player-character stealing an item

1. Slippery fingers you've got there. Careful they don't get cut.
2. I saw that, you know. I've got eyes everywhere.
3. Best be warned that the Salvians aren't particularly forgiving.
4. If you're going to try and steal, I suggest you at least practise first.
5. Stealing from a master thief seems like an ironic way to die.

END OF WRITING SAMPLE