

**02-NÚZYÆL-720 OVENDEL, KALDOR**

6<sup>TH</sup> WATCH [COOL, OVERCAST, NORTHWEST WIND, LIGHT RAIN, 2 ½"]<sup>5</sup>

Terias offers a salute to Sir Orot as the company is dismissed and then heads with the group to the inn. Once inside he gazes around at the patrons and finds an empty table. Terias kicks out a chair and sits on the edge looking to catch the eye of a sever or the innkeep, while the others amble in.

Following him into the empty common room, Herot, Cyben, Moile, Buryn, Zedeon and Waede take seats about the three tables. The innkeeper bolts the door after checking to see if there are others and says, "I am sorry but dinner is over. I might be able to find some bread and one round of drinks before I close for the day. How can I help you folks? Will you be needing lodging? Private rooms are 50d, shared rooms are 25d per person and sleeping in the common room is 15d per night. Two drinks and morning and evening meals are included with the private and shared rooms."

"If you can rouse your staff to fix a late meal and prepare a bath, I would be happy to share a room with Mistress Moile," says, Herot.

Moile simply giggles and nods.

With a stern glance, Cyben says, "in that case, I will sleep in the common room and fast for the night."

Waede, looking a bit concerned, asks, "How much would it be to sleep in the stables? Lady Harabor will no doubt pay for the stabling of the horses."

"That will be 5d for yourself and 5d for the horses," answers the innkeeper.

With a bit of a snort, Terias states gruffly, "Aye I'd like to get this dried muck off me and have a meal. No telling what we'll come upon tomorrow and I'd rather do it with full strength. So if one of these two'll share a room I'll take one. Unless you've one in waiting?"

Terias looks over to Buryn and Zedeon expectantly, shifting his attention then to the innkeeper before either has a chance to respond.

"Well, we were expecting a coach earlier but at this hour it does not appear they will be arriving," the innkeeper answers. "There is a huntsman that you can share a room with. He has been waiting a couple of days for a group he can travel with through the wilderness to Tashal – safety in numbers, you know."

"I'm just glad we're going to continue." Zedeon turns to Buryn and asks, "What say you Buryn?"

"Sure, I'll be sharin' a space wit ye," Buryn says. He looks at the innkeeper. "'N' I'll 'ave a bath, too, an it please you. Git the muck o' battle from me. What'll it cost me fer dat?"

"As I said, 25d," answers the innkeeper. With a bit of a long face, he adds, "I think we can offer the baths at no extra cost."

After everyone else has made their requests, the innkeeper says, "I will see to your rooms, meals and baths. If you need anything else, just let me know. My name is Cahar of Glolaan."

"Thanks to ye, Master Cahar," Buryn says.

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After the innkeeper returns with some mulled ale, Herot says, "While we wait, perhaps we could discuss the divisions of the spoils. Since Terias, Buryn, Zedeon and I all participated in the combat, all should have a warrior's share. Of course as is only right, Lady Harabor will be due a third of my share and Lady Odasart will be due a third of each of your shares. I believe Buryn collected some weapons and Terias collected something off the one that looked like Zedeon. I collected 34d in coin, a mang, a handaxe, a pike, a glaive, a sling, a scale cowl, a staff, a longbow, a mace, some gray resin, and a brown liquid. Since the mace is a noble weapon, I would like to have that for Lady Harabor's share and the mang and pike for my share. Since this is a wild and dangerous area, any weapons we cannot use might be bartered for our lodgings, if the innkeeper can be persuaded. What say you?"

Buryn says, "I found an axe, two short swords, spear, 'n' a crossbow wit ten bolts." He glances at Herot. "I got me own sword, and spear, but an axe is dead useful, an' I figger the swords c'n go t'Lady Odasart. I like your barterin' idea, well enough."

A look of remembrance crosses Terias face as Zedeon and Herot mention the dead man he'd inspected. He reaches under his sleeves and pulls out two folded papers. Spreading them out on the table, he un-creases them with his hand and looks up at Zedeon, "I'd forgotten about these. That wasn't a creature I found this on, but one of the innocent people those foul things had killed. He looked identical to you. But by your reaction before I'm guessing he wasn't related."

Terias mulls over the decision on what to take before speaking, "I'd like the scale cowl to replace my cloth one as I've got two decent weapons myself. And to the Lady Odasart, I'd offer the glaive."

Herot sputters as he drinks his ale wrong, "I should have mentioned, the scale cowl is a bit on the small size," and he holds it up for inspection. (size 4).

With a grin and a nod, Terias says, "I've a thick skull so that won't do. I guess I'll take the longbow. Then find a teacher for it when we have the time."

Looking around the inn for a brief moment Terias continues on, "And aye, I agree with Herot's plan to try and barter the rest to the keep. As fancy and fine as this inn is, I'd rather save my coin for what's needed then what's wanted."

"That creature we fought, what was written on the papers he carried," Zedeon asks Terias

Zedeon turns to the group and says, "I am concerned as to what exactly this creature was and had on him that was my look-alike. I also had a quarry for you my friends. On the way here, my guild side of me started thinking. Would anyone enjoy a specially crafted weapon tailored to fit perfectly?" Zedeon grins at his own idea.

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Terias inhales loudly through his nose stiffening up, but speaking quietly now, "Anyhow what was on these papers was that this fellow was about to go and claim a nobles throne or his bounty and land. He was the last heir. Shame he didn't get to see it through. Least we should do is return this letter back to the litigant and let him know what happened. It's only proper."

Zedeon turns towards Terias and replies, "The look I show'd you may not Have shown and feelings, but a concerned feeling I did have."

Zedeon looks at the letter and says, "As per the letter, although returning It would be a good idea, I am interested in the whole situation to much to just end the topic. Might we find out more about this?"

Terias simply replies with, "If we've time when we're in Kiban we can speak with the litigant after returning the letter, but I don't think we're going to have time to head to Megyle."

Later Terias asks Zedeon, "You were talking about weapons craft. I'm not sure your skill nor where you'll have access to make something, but I'd hear more of it. Just keep in mind you're dealing with a priest who tithes a portion of his earnings to the Lady, so coin'll be tight."

Zedeon washes up and retires to figure the coin and time cost of anyone that suggests a weapon

Grinning at Terias's interest, Zedeon says, "I do know of your coin situation, but I believe that with a little time, practice, and a few more encounters like we just had, and you might be commin' out with 'ore than just a weapon. Do we have time to discuss this further, or shall we wash away today and start again t'marrow?" Zedeon

Nodding to Zedeon, Terias says, "Aye, let's save it for road talk tomorrow and get some rest now."

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By the middle of the watch, the innkeeper has prepared baths for those who requested them and, a half turn of the glass later, the inn's staff serve oro (fried artichokes) for an appetizer, charlette (curded beef soup), dilled veal balls for the entrée, accompanied by flore frittours (fried squash flowers), ending with curd flan for dessert.

You finally make it to your beds by the middle of the night.

## **Meanwhile at the manor:**

Sir Orot accompanies the ladies and their servants to the manor and, after introducing them to Lord Drojar Dasarayne, says, "I found out what that disturbance was on the Olokand road. These ladies company and the coach that preceded them were attacked by foul ivashu. Nobody from the first coach survived but the ladies' retinue were able to dispatch the creatures. We burned the bodies and the wreckage."

"I am sorry to hear that this happened on my demesne," says Lord Dasarayne, "You will, of course, accept my hospitality for the night. I will just be a moment rousing the servants to prepare rooms and a meal. Sir Orot will keep you entertained until I return, then he must be about his other duties."

Once Lord Dasarayne has left, Amyleryn asks Sir Orot: "Sir Orot, have ivashu been a problem in this area lately?"

"These are troubled times, milady," he answers, "and Ovendel is the last bit of civilization before the wilderness. We have heard rumors of attacks on the charcoalers and woodsmen nearby but we thought they were attacked by outlaws. This is the first indication we have had of isashu."

Amyleryn says, "I'd say that this solves that mystery, and creates another. Thank you for your assistance. I won't keep you from your duties any further."

After Sir Orot has gone about his duties, Amyleryn will turn to Lussie and say: "It is my understanding that the church of Ivashu is not illegal in Kaldor, but is highly discouraged. Is that correct?"

"Yes, that is correct," Lady Harabor answers.

Once Lussie has responded, Amyleryn will continue: "Buryr recognized the mutant that attacked our coach as a serf that ran from the land. The serf wasn't a mutant when he ran, so something more sinister is going on hereabouts."

"You may have noticed that, on this journey, I am a bit quieter than you have known me to be. This is my attempt to find out how you will operate when you leave my company," Lady Harabor says. "When it comes to religions, I would advise you to speak very carefully, now and in the future. There are three types of law within the kingdom: vendetta law, the king's law and cannon law. Vendetta law deals with relations between one clan and another and what is allowed is often due to the size of one's clan. The King's law deals with relations between a person and society. What is allowed is what is written in bylaws and the King's proclamations. Finally, there is cannon law and what is allowed is dictated by the religious leaders."

"The reason I am explaining this is that, if you are accused of something in cannon law which is not a violation of vendetta law or the King's law, you can be punished by any non-proscribed religion. More specifically, if you speak blasphemy within the hearing of the Ilvirians, you can be punished by them without recourse to your clan or the King's men."

"It may turn out that they have something to do with our concerns but if you speak against them without strong evidence that they have broken vendetta law or the King's law, you may find yourself spirited away some night, never to be seen again."

"I would have you consider this, if the ivashu found here are the results of the Ilvirians, is it not likely that there are Ilvirians nearby to watch their handiwork. They are generally not interested in the ivashu being killed but they could very well be concerned with those speaking out against them and trying to get their religion proscribed."

Amyleryn says, "Your points are all well taken, and I will keep them uppermost in my mind. At the moment my thought is that someone outside the Church of Ilvir has taken secrets from them and perverted said secrets for some purpose as yet unknown. I've never heard of someone turning a person into an ivashu. The Church of Ilvir could be an ally for us in this matter."

"In that case, I apologize for my assumptions," Lady Harabor answers, "I had not considered that possibility. Although the

politics of religions are still tricky to handle and require caution.”

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By the middle of the watch, the manor staff have prepared peas and onions with sippets for an appetizer, mutton olives for an entrée, accompanied by many cabbages (cabbage with marrow), followed by honey omelets for dessert.

You finally make it to your beds by the middle of the night.

**03-NÚZYÆL-720 OLOKAND, KALDOR**

2<sup>ND</sup> WATCH [COOL, OVERCAST, NORTHWEST STORM WIND, LIGHT RAIN, 2 ½” ICE]<sup>6</sup>

As dawn breaks with strong winds and light rain, everyone breaks their fast and prepares to continue the journey. The ladies at the manor have smoked sausage, turtle meat and goose egg omelets, raspberries, flatbread and small ale. The residents at the inn have corned beef hash, curds, duck eggs, peaches, coarse rye bread and cider.

When Amyleryn awakes, she has a blinding headache which lasts for a turn of the glass.

At the inn, Terias watches as one of the serving girls walks through the door to the garden – only the door was never opened or changed.

Terias does a double take. Then in almost a ritualistic manner he rubs his eyes, furrows his brow and finally shakes his head, "Nay I had nothing to drink last night. By the Goddess what manner of sight did my eyes behold."

Glancing around the inn Terias waves over one of the other barmaids, "Oi lass, which girl just went back there through the garden?" Terias then goes into as much detail as he can to describe the serving girl he saw.

"I see'd no sitch girl and dere be only de two aw's yer," she answers. "Een fact, dey description fits nat iny uv de village girls aither. It must 'ave bin a traveler sitch as yersel."

Raising up from his seated position Terias then asks, "Well if she went back there and doesn't work here, you mind if I go an take a look at the garden?"

I mind nat bit it is nat vor me to cut. Ee weel 'ave to ax de innkeeper," she answers.

The innkeeper apparently overhears and says, "You are free to look at the garden from the doorway but I cannot allow strangers to wander around in it."

With a curt nod to the innkeeper, Terias says, "Fair enough" He then moves to the door and opens it looking out over the garden.

Looking at the walled garden, Terias can see the same woman bending over to smell one of the blossoms of a flowering rosebush. The vision of her gradually fades and within moments she has vanished. The blossoms on the rosebush also fade away to be replaced by the rosebuds of last autumn.

At first Terias watches the peaceful scene unfold, but as the woman disappears his mouth falls agape. He quickly bows his head and crosses his right hand over his chest, forming a sword,

"Lady I know not what I saw, but if t'was a vision I'll take it to heart tonight in prayer."

After a few moments reflection he closes the door and nods to the innkeeper, "Just appreciating the silence of morning and sight of your rosebush. Seems you take great care of it. Anything special about it?"

"Tis lovely, is it not," says the innkeeper. "There is an old folk tale about it...something to do with a lady being accused of murder...but I remember not the details."

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Herot says, "As a result of last night's conversation, I give the longbow, arrows and 34d to Terias. Buryr gets two handaxes. Lady Harabor gets the mace. Lady Odasart gets the glaive and two shortswords. Zedeon, since he has not spoken up, gets the remainder of a sling, a long scale cowl, a staff, and a crossbow with bolts. He can, of course, choose what his third portion is to Lady Odasart but I would recommend the crossbow and bolts. The nobility will find it much easier to explain away possession of such a coward's weapon.

"I spoke with the innkeeper about barter and he was not interested – in fact he was quite insulted – so you will each have to pay your agreed upon amount for room and board."

With a bit of a grumble, Terias says, "Maybe we can sell the rest in town before we move on - to refill our purses?"

"Of all the greedy...and from a Priest of Larani, no less," exclaims Herot. "Since I gave you all the coin we found, your purse is more full than it was yesterday and you have a longbow and arrows as well. With the exception of the innkeeper, the people in this 'village' have probably not seen as much coins as you have in your purse throughout the whole year."

Keeping himself at ease, but watching Herot sternly, Terias retorts with, "Aye t'was your plan to begin to trade these things off.. all I did was expand on it. And we divided up the shares so if you're upset with how it unfolded you let me know. You might be able to afford the lavish life, but most of us aren't as well to do. We're gods respecting folk, making regular tithes to the our faiths. And clergy's not above that. So when I come across coin I'll do my best to keep it for a real purpose other than a night of lust."

With a strained smile, Herot replies, "Be at ease, my friend. I am not saying anything about the division of the spoils as I believe it to be just. I am also not saying that the way of the seven coins is for the likes of you as I believe it to be beyond your comprehension. I am just suggesting that if you get permission from Lady Harabor to linger here and if you get permission from Lord Dasasayne to pester his peasants and offer them weapons, the most that you will get for your bargain is a chicken or two."

Not shifting his position much Terias explains, "Likewise with you and the Lady's virtues. We must accept our limits, but if you do wish an education I'll gladly spend some time. As to this town, I've nay been here before, but if there's no shops then your point's made. T'is odd to have such a fine inn like this without folk to afford its .. luxuries"

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With a loud, "Hah!" Herot says, "Good return! Nay, I will have none of it. I have had enough of that from the fine lords that are my masters. I am quite happy in the worship of my Lady and need none of yours. As to the inn, I suspect they get more business from Elomia, Mistress of Commerce, than they do from Peoni – meaning there are enough merchants and nobles passing through here to make their profit. I believe this is the last inn before the wilderness and wealthy travelers wait here for a large enough group to provide them protection. Now there is a way you can make a profit! I believe I heard the innkeeper bedded you down with a traveler who might pay for your protection on his way to Tashal." The last is said with a huge grin on Herot's face.

Terias with a thoughtful nod of consideration, "Aye well I'm not a mercenary, but I remember the innkeep saying the same last night, I was just in no mood to talk. I'll see if the fellow wants to come along with us and then ask Lady Odasart if she would mind another traveler. After all another pair of eyes is always a good thing on the roads through the wilds."

Terias moves off to find the roommate from last night at another table, "Morning there fella. Names Matakea Terias of Forniad. We're heading to Tashal." He motions to the group behind him with his hand, without turning his attention away from the merchant, "The innkeep mentioned you may be traveling as well and might have of need a group. If you're interested I could speak to the Lady I'm journeying with on your behalf."

"Well met. My name is Alegur of Thatain and I am a hunter by trade," he says. "I would be interested in traveling with you, as traveling through the wilderness alone is a dangerous affair."

Just before the group is prepared to depart Terias approaches Amyleryn bowing formally, once he's been acknowledged he asks, "Lady Odasart, I've met a hunter by the name Alegur of Thatain at the inn we bedded at. Apparently he plans to travel to Tashal and I thought it only proper to offer an invitation to him. Though I told him it would hold no weight without your approval. Another set of eyes on these roads would be invaluable."

Amyleryn says, "Hmm. I'll have to ask Lady Harabor first, but I'm inclined to agree to let him join us on this part of our journey. If Lady Harabor agrees, see if you can pump him for any knowledge of strange occurrences like the mutants we fought while we're traveling."

Amyleryn says, "Milady Harabor, if I may? A hunter named Alegur of Thatain has asked to travel with us on the next leg of our journey for his safety. As a hunter, he may know a few things about odd things going on in the wilderness. If you agree, I've told Terias to pump him for information as we go on our way. What say you, can he travel with us?"

"By all means," Lady Harabor answers, "have him join us."

Going back to Terias, Amyleryn says: "Lady Harabor agreed. Have him join us, and see what you can find out."

Overhearing the approval from Lady Harabor, Terias dashes off back to the inn to retrieve the hunter. Once inside he belts out, "Oi Alegur, we're ready to head out, don't tarry about."

## 03-NÚZYÆL-720 OLOKAND, KALDOR

3<sup>RD</sup> WATCH [HOT, CLEAR, CALM, FOG, 1 ½ SNOW ACCUMULATION"]<sup>3</sup>

By the start of the third watch, everyone is prepared and the journey continues. The weather has turned hot and the snow is rapidly melting. When you leave Ovendel, there are no more villages or farms – indeed no signs of civilization at all. The Heru "road" has become a muddy track that is overshadowed by dense forest on either side. It is with a sigh of relief that the company reaches a manorial village by the middle of the day.

Lady Harabor tells you to stand easy, "Since I see not an inn or tavern, I will ask at yon manor if they can provide refreshments." She strolls off and, a few moments later, returns with a noble woman and her household staff. The servants are carrying a couple of trestle tables, benches, drinking bowls and pitchers of mulled ale. A large majority of the villagers that you see are women.

Lady Harabor introduces Lady Odasart to Lady Dasiea Ralgruty, who says, "I am truly sorry I cannot invite you into the manor but ours is a small manor and we are doing repairs on damage caused by the winter weather."

Amyleryn says, "Glad to meet you Lady Dasiea. Are there villages or other manors within a half-day's travel down the Heru road towards Tashal?"

"Well, we are a bit isolated but you should be able to reach Heru by night fall. There are not any other communities between here and there. Tashal is another half-day's travel beyond that, through more civilized country.

With the other men, Buryn keeps watch as they take turns at the table. He has a wary air about him and seems disinclined to talk.

Amyleryn says, "Thank you, Lady Dasiea, that's good to know. I also thank you for your hospitality."

As the group enjoy the refreshments, Terias speaks with Alegur, "Had you traveled the area much? I'm guessing you did to reach Ovendel."

"Well, this is my first trip of any distance from Olokand where I grew up," he answers.

Continuing on Terias asks, "On your way to the village had you seen anything odd t'all? Or was it safe passage for ya?"

"It is all pretty odd to me...dealing with foreign places and foreign people," Alegur says. "I think the oddest thing was the balding, well-dressed khuzdul that I met at Greaven. He is the one who told me how it is unsafe to travel through the wilderness alone. He said if you wander in the forest, you will end up as dinner for beastmen. Even the new roadwardens of the Mangai are all corrupt and cannot be trusted...or so he said."

Terias nods slightly at Alegur's words, "Well I'd not go so far as to say all of the roadwardens and foresters are so. Though there's always a chance for a black sheep to get into the flock. T'is why Larani and Her virtues help to shepherd men. Perhaps something for you to think on yourself Alegur, if you aren't devout?"

"Oh, I am very devout to Peoni," says Alegur, "and I pray everyday for her patience."

With a broad smile Terias replies, "Good to hear, I think just as the two Sisters do, we will get along well."

**03-NÚZYÆL-720 HERU, KALDOR**

4<sup>TH</sup> WATCH [HOT, CLEAR, CALM, FOG, ½" SNOW ACCUMULATION]<sup>3</sup>

After your brief rest stop, you continue your journey through more of the tunnel of trees and over the rough path called the Heru road. While being a bit dark and ominous, your journey is uneventful. By the end of the fourth watch, you find yourself at the bridge to the palisade of Heru.

[http://duttond.topcities.com/Harn/Kaldor/Heru\\_common.jpg](http://duttond.topcities.com/Harn/Kaldor/Heru_common.jpg)

The guards posted at the town side of the bridge, tell you the coach must remain outside the palisade as the roads within are too narrow to accommodate it. Lady Harabor gives Waede enough coins for stabling and asks him to care for the coach and horses.

A guard calls forth a young lad and tells him to guide you to the Blue Keg (which he tells you is the only inn of the town). The lad leads you through some twisted streets to the gate at the palisade and then through some more twists and turns to the market area. Crossing the market past the few permanent stalls, he leads you to the inn. He pauses a moment and Lady Harabor gives him a penny for his efforts.

You enter the common room just as the innkeeper is lighting beeswax candles at the tables. There are three tables in the room, each with a number of stools and a tablecloth. Judging by the tablecloths, the beeswax candles and the hardwood floor, you can tell this is another quality inn.

The first table has six stools. Three occupied by men eating their meal and discussing business. The fourth contains a man leaning against the wall and fast asleep.

The second table has four stools and is empty. The third table has four stools. One is occupied by a woman who is either asleep or passed-out.

Before the innkeeper approaches them, Amyleryn tells her men: "Zedeon, sit at that table with the four men and keep your ears open for anything of interest. Do not mention the mutant attack. Bury, you go with him...same instructions. Terias, fetch one of the stools from the table with the sleeping woman and put it at the empty table, then you and Felada sit at the table with the sleeping woman. Felada, if the woman wakes up, engage her in conversation and listen for anything odd or of interest regarding strange occurrences. Do not mention the mutant attack."

"Oh no, milady," Felada answers, "I must help in serving you."

"I will accompany him," Cyben says.

"As will I," Alegur says as he takes the extra chair back to its original position.

Offering just a simple acknowledgement to Amyleryn, Terias sets to work retrieving the stool and putting it at the second table as instructed. He then heads over to the third table and settles down on one of the remaining stools. As Cyben comes to join him, Terias eyes settle inquisitively on the sleeping woman, but he says nothing.

Offering just a simple acknowledgement to Amyleryn, Terias sets to work retrieving the stool and putting it at the second table as instructed. He then heads over to the third table and settles down on one of the remaining stools. As Felada comes to join him, Terias eyes settle inquisitively on the sleeping woman, but he says nothing.

Indicating the empty table that now has five stools at it, Amyleryn addresses Lussie: "Milady, shall we?"

Looking at the remainder of the company, Lady Harabor says, "No, that will not do at all. Moile, if you would be so kind as to share Bury's cup at the other table. Zedeon can share Lady Odasart's cup and Herot can share mine."

The innkeeper says, "Welcome to the Blue Keg. What can I get for you?"

"We require an evening meal, some drinks and rooms for the night...I believe five shared rooms should be sufficient. Our ladies maids can have their meal in your kitchen after they have served us."

"Yes, milady," says the innkeeper.

After waiting for Lussie to speak to the innkeeper, Amyleryn points out Zedeon, Bury, Terias, and Felada and says: "They're with me. I'll pay for what they get."

"When it comes time to pay," Lady Harabor says, "speak to Ralithina Moile for the remainder of the bill."

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The evening meal consists of Appetizer: parsnip ryalles for an appetizer (Parsnip mousse with almonds and wine) and cobages (cabbage and almond soup) for soup. For the entrée, you are offered a choice of canelyne (caneline beef pie), roseye (fried loache with roses and almonds) and nekkesan (turkey neck pudding). The entrée is accompanied by lemonhyt (lemon rice with almonds), wastel (first quality bread) and the house beer (dark brown color, rich fruity aroma, quite smooth texture, and roasted malt flavor with chocolate overtones that stays to the end).

Prior to eating Terias bows his head and thanks Larani for the safe passage thus far and the serving of food. Terias takes the occasional glance at the unconscious woman furrowing his brow with some concern as he does. During the meal of which Terias eats heartily, he speaks with Cyben and Alegur, "I tell you these past two inns have had some fine meals. Not sure how you held out so long in Ovendel, Alegur, your purse must've taken a beating. So have either of you been to Tashal before?"

Alegur answers, "I was lucky with your arrival and had only arrived on the day before but, yes, traveling has been much more expensive than I expected. I was told travel to other places is less dear but this route has a lot of gentry and wealthy traveling to the Olokand Tournament each year and very little selection on places to stay so the inns are able to charge more. The Mangai should look into it and regulate the prices, if they do not already. However, as to traveling to Tashal, this is my first time traveling anywhere and I know not of it."

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“These inns are an abomination at best. Peoni teaches that we should offer our hospitality freely to those in need and not charge for it like some merchant. I am originally from Kiban and traveled through Tashal on my way to Olokand,” answers Cyben. “I was only there for a couple of days so I saw very little more than the temple they have there. In front of the temple is Kald Square which is a very pleasant place to walk in the summer. Across the square on the right is the King’s castle and the main gate to the city. Across the square on the left is a horrid little inn with the pillory in front. It is bad enough to pay for hospitality but to have someone suffering for their indiscretions just out side the window...” Her voice trails off with a shudder.

After the meal, the men at the first table get a board game from the innkeeper (fox and geese) and play for a turn of the glass before retiring to their beds. When you are ready, the innkeeper shows each of you to your rooms as well.

Once in his room Terias kneels by his bed, cupping his hands and placing his forehead against them. Slowly the Matakea begins praying in a quiet rhythmic fashion, then under his breath he says, "I know not what I saw at the inn back at Owendel, but if t'was a vision from You M'Lady or task You wish me too endure all I ask is for clarity on what it is You need of me and it shall be done."

That night he dreams that a tall maiden, clad in a white gown with red trim, meets him in the garden at Owendel. She sits beside him on a stone bench and says, “What happened here is not your concern at this time but there are other events here that will be your concern in the future. The vision you saw was an indication of your developing ability to see what happens around you in a world unseen by others. You should heed the visions and protect yourself when necessary, but do so without fear.” [+7 piety points]

## 04-NÚZYÆL-720 HERU, KALDOR

2<sup>ND</sup> WATCH [WARM, PARTLY CLOUDY, SOUTHWEST GALE, LIGHT RAIN]<sup>4</sup>

When Amyleryn awakes in the morning and gets out of bed, she feels dizzy for several minutes.

When Terias awakes, he shivers with the feeling that he has been here before and has awakened in this very bed.

Once he finally finds his strength, Terias kneels by his bedside and begins prayer in deep reverence to Larani. As a result of the Matakea devotions he misses the morning meal.

Everyone breaks their fast with beef steak, curds, duck eggs, currants, gruel, buttered cocket (cheap white bread) and apple cider. The innkeeper apologizes for the poor quality of the bread but the baker’s five-year-old daughter wandered off last night. After a long search, he found her unharmed but he was unable to make his bread in time for the morning delivery.

When you are ready to leave, the innkeeper delivers one bill to Moile and another to Amyleryn (the latter is for 100d for five people).

Amyleryn huddles with Felada and sees that the bill is paid.

Just before leaving Terias approaches the innkeeper and asks, "Sorry Keep, I missed the morning meal and was wondering if there's any bread left for the journey I could have?"

“Certainly, sir,” answers the innkeeper. “I am sure we can put together a plowman’s lunch for your travel. A short time later, he gives Terias a bundle with cabbage, ham, cheese and bread.

With a firm clasp on the innkeeper’s right shoulder as he receives the food Terias says, "Larani bless you good man!"

## 04-NÚZYÆL-720 TASHAL, KALDOR

3<sup>RD</sup> WATCH [COOL, OVERCAST, NORTHWEST STORM WIND, LIGHT RAIN]<sup>5</sup>

By midday, you reach the Heru Gate of the city of Tashal. This is the largest city you have ever seen with a huge crowd of people milling about. The guards at the gate appear to recognize Lady Harabor and motion you forward ahead of the peasants waiting in line.

“Welcome back, milady,” says the guard captain. “If you will allow me to quickly search your belongings for contraband, I can have you on your way in no time. Tis not that I believe you have any contraband but that is where my duty lies.”

He finds nothing untoward but he takes note of the crossbow in the coach and the mang at Herot’s belt.

“We had a bit of trouble in the wilderness beyond Heru but nothing we could not handle,” Herot tells him.

While waiting for the search to proceed, Lady Harabor tells Lady Odasart, “I believe this is where we will be splitting up. You will want to find lodgings before meeting with your uncle and I will be continuing on to the castle.”

Amyleryn says, "If something important comes up, how would you prefer I get in contact with you, Milady?"

“You should send a messenger to the castle gate,” she answers, “and I will set up a time and place when I can meet. However, only send for me if it is something important as I will be busy as Her Royal Highness’ lady’s maid.”

Turning to Alegur, Amyleryn says: "This is where we go our separate ways. Thank you for your company, and safe journeying to you."

“Thank you, milady,” answers Alegur. “The company of you and your companions has been most gracious. I bid you a safe journey as well.”

Reaching out his arm to clasp the hunters, Terias says, "Aye Alegur, if you ever have need of me feel free to seek me out. Just send word through the Laranian temple. You were a stout traveling companion."

Even this brief conversation proves to be difficult due to the crowd around the gate. Agents of the various inns are yelling “Iron Bell, the finest inn in town!”, “Stay at the Tower Inn – the finest foods and the best beds”, “The Spurs always provides a rollicking good time” and “The Garb and Flail – quality service at a reasonable price.”

Addressing Waede, Amyleryn asks: "Waede, given all of the claims being made by these...agents...I'm inclined to select the Garb and Flail. Have your travels as a coachman brought you to Tashal before, and if so, what do you know about the Garb and Flail?"

"Only wance, milady," Waede answers, "and dey wuz where I stayed. I found it to be a quay-it place dey mostly caters to farmers and riverboat captains. Dicky trip, I weel be staying at de Raid Fox Inn vor de night at Lady 'arabor's command and den returning een de morning."

"Thank you Waede. I was hoping you might have known of the Garb and Flail." Turning to Felada, Zedeon, Buryn, and Terias, Amyleryn says: "That settles it then...we'll take lodgings at the Garb and Flail."

Zedeon gives off a shiver as he seems to come to out of a really really long daydream. He scans the area looking as if he had just woke up

Terias straightens up as he addresses Amyleryn, "Lady Odasart, speaking of sleeping arrangements, would it be possible for me to spend the night at the temple here in Tashal? I'll meet up with you lot in the morn."

Amyleryn raises one eyebrow and says: " 'You lot'? Terias, you need to give heed to how you phrase your speech. Back in Hesby, such informal address can be overlooked most of the time, but here in the seat of the kingdom...I'm assuming you were speaking to Zedeon and Buryn, but as I'm part of the general group you were addressing, a casual bystander could overhear what you said and assume you were being disrespectful to a noblewoman. That occurrence would force me to take action against you to maintain my authority. In my case, authority came with my birth, but it is easy enough to lose, and once lost, is hard to regain. The regaining of it would be hard on all of those around me for some time. Do not make such a situation necessary."

Dipping his head in a somber manner, Terias offers, "Aye I was referring to Buryn and Zedeon when speaking. I didn't think you'd be joining us. You've my apologies none the less m'lady."

"Enough lecturing. Yes, you may stay at the temple of Larani if such accommodations are available to you. You'll have to ask directions of someone, as I have no idea where the temple is located. I suggest asking one of the gate guards. The rest of us will have breakfast tomorrow at the usual time, and then go to my uncle's mansion, which is right over there," and she points to a fine-looking building across Kald Square "in case you don't rejoin us before we leave the Garb and Flail."

"Understood Lady Odasart" says Terias, Terias offers a bow in her direction to be dismissed. Then he heads over to one of the gate guards inquiring about directions to the Laranian temple.

Turning back to Waede, Amyleryn asks: "Waede, can you drive the rest of us to the Garb and Flail...after you've attended to Lady Harabor's needs, of course...so we don't have to carry all of our things through these crowded streets?"

"I be truly sorry, milady, bit dey weel nat be possible," answers Waede. "I trust nat my rote to its location and Lady 'arabor wud nat like me driving 'er coach drue de narrer streets uv de city. I be sure de lad bawlin' de inn's wares weel show ee de way if ee tip 'im a denier. Dey be 'is means uv support."

"Very well, I understand." Turning to Zedeon, Amyleryn says: "Zedeon, please go fetch the lad crying for the Garb and Flail."

Addressing Felada, Buryn, and Terias, Amyleryn says: "Gather your things from the coach...we'll be walking from here. Terias, we'll see you tomorrow." she then gets her things together. When Zedeon returns with the boy, she'll say: "Thank you, Zedeon. gather your things from the coach." Turning to the lad, she asks: "What's your name, boy?"

"Uvkias uv Aelin, if it please dee, mam," he replies.

Zedeon hustles to the coach and makes haste to get back to Amyleryn. He returns eager to see what to do next

Doing as Amerlyn bade them, Buryn gathers his belongings--though he was carrying most of them with him--and returns to her side, still looking about warily.

Amyleryn says, "Well then Uvkias, there's a penny for you if you lead us to the Garb and Flail."

"Oh, ees, mam!" he exclaims, "Rate dicky way bene gentles."

\* \* \*

Inside the gate, Terias notices a thief at the edge of the crowd cut a purse string and run off down an alley with his prize. It happens fast enough that he is unable to say anything before the incident is over and, with the thickness of the crowd, it probably wouldn't do any good anyway.

Looking supremely uncomfortable in the press of people, Buryn keeps scanning the crowds, his expression wary.

He grabs at the hilt of his sword, but relinquishes it with a sigh, shaking his head, then grumbles to the others, "Keep your valuables close. Just saw a thief make off with someone's purse in broad day."

Amyleryn asks, "I suppose there was no time to raise the Hue-and-Cry?"

With a shake of his head, Terias states "Nay, no point Ma'am. Both the thief and victim were lost in the crush of folk the moment in happened."

Amyleryn says, "Felada, keep a close watch, but don't move a hand to the purse, or you may show a watcher just where it is and make it's loss more probable."

"Yes, milady," she answers while she struggles to not look as suggested.

Meanwhile, also inside the gate, Zedeon notices two people on the other side, one is watching the crowd and the other is looking directly at Zedeon. The one looking at Zedeon scratches his left ear with the little finger of his right hand. When nothing happens, he repeats the gesture several times, each time getting more pronounced. After awhile, their expressions change when they notice a stocky man standing in a doorway. They smile and follow him into the doorway.

\* \* \*

The guard says, "Well, you follow Heru Road...yes, that road over there...until you reach the Mangai Market Square. Cross the square to the southwest corner where there is a well. From the well, follow the road going directly south until you come to a fenced grove of trees...that is the back of the temple's courtyard.

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Follow the fence around the left-hand road and it will bring you to the entrance on the south side."

Terias follows the direction with his eyes, mouthing each of the steps as the guard describes them to get to the temple and then nods shortly to him, "My thanks fella."

Terias follows close to the group near the back watching the others as they travel. Once they split, Terias offers a bow to Lady Odasart and continues on his way to the temple.

## 04-NÚZYÆL-720 TASHAL, KALDOR

4<sup>TH</sup> WATCH [COLD, PARTLY CLOUDY, SOUTHWEST BREEZE]<sup>7</sup>

Just as you are ready to follow Uvkias, you notice several youths of about his age throwing mud and street garbage at an old woman dressed in ragged, homespun robes.

With a snort of annoyance Terias yells out at the children, "Oi lads, be gone with ya before I show you the backside of my hand!" He then moves to aid the old woman, concern lined on his features.

One of the lads shows the back of his hand while making a rude gesture and they all run off.

As Terias approaches the woman, he can hear her mutter, "I only wanted to gaw to de shrine and pay 'omage to de serpent dey dwells below."

Throwing a frown in their direction, Buryn does not leave the party, but looks ready to bite. "Pickin' on der 'elpless. Need a less'n," he growls, half under his breath.

The Matakea lips curl into an amused grin at the children, then he looks at the woman and as he speaks his face contorts into confusion, "You alright there miss... eh what shrine are you speaking of?"

"Why Ilvir, kind sir. 'ow many serpent gods do ee know uv?" she answers.

\* \* \*

At the same moment, there is a crier coming out of a side street shouting, "Anyone who witnessed the lights in the sky over the Chelebin's Refuge last night should report to the temple of Save K'nor."

Speaking distractedly to Zedeon, Amyleryn says: "Now, that sounds interesting. I should go to the temple anyway, as I haven't been to a service in much too long."

"I believe deir next mass be de day arter tomorrow, if ee be gwain to be een de city vor dey long. I 'ave a cousin who worship's Save Knor," says young Uvkais.

"I say we go" says Zedeon eager and excited.

Amyleryn laughs at Zedeon's enthusiasm and says: "Very well then, we'll do that." Still chuckling, she asks: "Uvkais, is my recollection correct...the temple is up the road north of Kald Square?"

"I know not, milady," he answers.

Amyleryn follows Uvkias. As they walk along, she asks him: "So, Uvkias, what's the news around Tashal just now?"

With a lopsided grin, the lad says, "Other dan what de crier is saying? De pawnbroker, Armenton uv soril, wuz arrested by de temple uv Lorani vor being in league with demons. 'e 'ad bin overheard talking to 'is cat and feeding it 'uman blid een its mulk. More dan wan witness proclaimed dey 'e 'ad 'eard de cove telling 'is cat to 'drink yer bloody mulk'".

"Bloody milk?" Zedeon whispers with a a confused look on his face.

The Matakea mutters something about the city, but it's not coherent enough for anyone around him to catch.

Sticking close to the others, and still looking around warily, Buryn snorts a sudden laugh.

\* \* \*

You arrive at, and cross, the market square without further incident. Just as Terias is turning south and the rest are continuing west, a man dressed as a priest of Halea, and obviously drunk, asks Lady Odasart, "You want to come back to the temple and do some worshipping? You look like you could last for a bit before passing out from the pleasure."

Before Amyleryn can reply...

Terias turns back to face the group eyeing over the man in annoyance, "Fool, you speak to a noblewoman show some respect least you lose your head more so then you already have now."

Hearing that Zedeon stands a little straighter awaiting the mans reaction.

Buryn steps forward to intervene if the Lady needs it.

"No need to get up in arms, governor. I meant no harm" the man says as he moves off into the crowd.

Noticing Buryn's move, Amyleryn says...after Terias has run the fellow off..."Thank you, Buryn."

With a bow of his head, Buryn murmurs, "Milady," and they continue on their way.

Amyleryn says, "Thank you Terias. You've saved me from having him thrown in the stocks, or worse. I'll see if Lady Harabor's financial overseer...you remember that she is a Hlean...can quietly have him disciplined, if a description of him leads to the correct person."

\* \* \*

A short walk down the west road brings you to the building that Uvkias indicates is the Garb and Flail Inn. Blocking the way are two men fighting with shortswords. Two other men stand by, one on either side, and appear to only intercede to keep the fighting fair.

When they get to the Garb and Flail, Amyleryn gets a penny from Felada and pays Uvkais, saying: "Thank you, Uvkais...you're a good lad."

"Thank you, milady," he says, tipping his cap and returning back the way you came.

When you finally manage to enter the inn, you see a oddly shaped common room with two tables. The nearer table has four

stools, one occupied by a sleeping farmer. The other table has two benches occupied by two men in discussion.

As soon as the man facing the door sees you enter, he stands and exclaims, "Buryn! What a surprise! It is me, Josriath, brother to your poor dead mother." With Uncle Josriath standing 6' 2", weighing 217 pounds and sporting a large bushy red beard, it would be difficult for Buryn to forget him if he tried.

"Uncle!" Buryn says in surprise and steps forward. His own lack of height--5'2" and spare frame--is much more evident as is his dark complexion. "I didna know yer was here. How ye be?"

"Fine, fine," Josriath answers, "I have just finished selling my cargo and, in a couple of days, I will find another cargo to Kiban. So you finally left the village to seek your fortune. That is good, lad. But where are your manners? Introduce me to your lovely companion."

Hearing the commotion in the common room, the innkeeper approaches from the room beyond and says, "Welcome folks. What can I get for you?"

Amyleryn says, "I am Lady Amyleryn of Odasart, and I need a room for the night for myself and my servant." and she indicates Felada. Indicating Zedeon and Buryn, she continues: "These other two men are with me, but they'll be making their own arraignments."

"Welcome, milady," says the innkeeper, "I am afraid our hospitality is very humble but we will accommodate you as best we can. The room, evening meal and a glass of wine will be 6d for each of you."

Turning to Zedeon and Buryn, he continues, "And what can I get for you? We only have the one private room but I can provide a straw pallet in a shared room, the evening meal and two pints of ale for 5d each."

"That'd be well for me," Buryn says and glances at Zedeon. "n' you? Care t'share?"

"Sounds fine to me," Zedeon replies.

Handing off the innkeeper to Felada for the arraignments, Amyleryn hears the exchange between Buryn and his uncle, and at Josriath's last comment, raises one eyebrow.

"pologies, Uncle," Buryn says, and his dark face darkens further in embarrassment as he gives a small bow of acquiescence. He steps back and gestures to Amyleryn and continues, "Milady Odasart, dis be my uncle, Josri'th of Coryerdan. Uncle Josri'th, please meet Lady Amyleryn of Odasart."

"Why bless my soul, I can see the resemblance to your mother," Captain Josriath says with a nod of his head. "When last we met, you were but a toddler. I am pleased to become reacquainted, milady. If there is naught I can do to be of service, please let me know."

Zedeon says, "And I'd be with her, me name being Zedeon. Nice establishment you have here."

"My, are you not the brash one," Captain Josriath says, "Do they not teach you manners where you come from? In civilized society, we do not interrupt the conversations of our betters. You

will have to save your compliments for the innkeeper. I just stay here between cargoes."

Amyleryn says, "You have me at a disadvantage, since, as you pointed out, I was a toddler at the time, but I don't remember you. I'm sorry. We shall have to start over. You mentioned selling cargos. Are you a caravaner, or a riverman?"

"Captain of the riverboat Barabeleth," he answers, "hauling cargoes from Kiban to Olokand and all points between, at your service, milady."

Amyleryn asks, "May I presume that you take passengers as well as cargo?"

"Yes, milady," Captain Josriath answers, "but never any of the gentry. We have not special accommodations for passengers so travel is a bit on the rough side."

Amyleryn says, "I can deal with it. I'm not as delicate as all that."

Amyleryn says, "I don't know if I'm going to Kiban or not, but my greatuncle, Lord Fugys of Odasart, is going to be sending me somewhere, so I thought I'd ask you just in case. If I do end up going to Kiban, or beyond, there would be five of us. Do you have room for that many passengers?"

"We can accommodate that many," he answers. "The fare would be 1d per person per league and it is 20 leagues to Kiban by river. If any of your fellows have any skill as mercenaries, I can hire them to guard the cargo. Their wage would normally be just free passage or we can work out other arrangements to include one or more liberty chests."

Amyleryn asks, "Please explain 'liberty chests'."

Amyleryn says, "Three of my party could do guard work. Since I don't know where I may be sent, don't wait on us. However, if I'm sent in the direction of Kiban before you're due to leave, how would I get word to you?"

Before he can answer either question, the other man sitting at the captain's table says, "I want not to interrupt your social life but I have a business to run and must get back to it."

Captain Josriath says, "yes, of course." Turning back to Lady Odasart, he says, "If you will excuse me, milady, we will need to continue this conversation later."

\* \* \*

Arriving at the Laranian holy grounds, Terias moves through the gates looking around a bit awe struck by the wonders as he moves through.

Eventually he stops a passing Matakea, "Apologies if you're busy, but I just arrived. The names Terias of Forniad with the Order of the Lady of Paladins. I'm traveling with Lady Odasart and we've a stop here in Tashal. I was hoping there might be some room for me for the night. Anyone you can direct me too?"

"You will have to ask the guard at the door of the temple," the Matakea says as he rushes on.

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Terias steps into the portico and introduces himself to the melana who is standing guard. The melana tells him to wait here while he fetches the Obasaran. While he waits, Terias examines the intricate wall carvings (which depict the story of Saint Ambrathas) and the pair of fourteen foot tall bronze doors embossed with the Hyvrik.

A short time later, the melana returns with a man, dressed as a master priest, who says, "I am Obasaran Isaafan of Kapuata. How may I be of service?"

Terias bows his head reverently towards Isaafan, he then introduces himself, "Well met, I'm Matakea Terias of Forniad with the Order of the Lady of Paladins. This is my first visit to Tashal as I am traveling with Lady Odasart on errand. I was hoping I might find a place to board and pray at the temple this eve before leaving in the morning Obasaran."

The Obasaran answers, "You will have to do your share of the chores and abide by the temple rules...for example, we dine in silence while scriptures are read by one of the matakea...but, yes, we can offer hospitality for the night. You can share a bed with Melana Iras of Falesh here."

"Yes of course", Terias replies understandingly.

As a side consideration Terias asks, "I've also some coin to tithe from what I've earned on the journey here if you are the one to take it?"

"I can take care of that," Obasaran Isaafan says. Looking inside, he says, "You. Ashesa. Come hither."

As the Ashesa comes over, Terias reaches into his pack and produces five silver for donation then hands over to Isaafan.

A lad approaches and the Obasaran says, "Show this visiting matakea upstairs to Malena Falesh's room. Once he has deposited any of his belongings there, show him to the kitchens so he can help with the preparation of dinner. Then you can be about your other duties."

Terias swallows hard seeming distant for a moment at the request cooking duty, but says nothing.

The Ashesa says, "Yes, milord." Nodding towards Terias, he says, "This way milord."

He then leads Terias into the most magnificent hall he has ever seen. At the far side of a room as large as the whole of Halperin temple, is a 24 foot tall alabaster statue of Larani. At her feet are human-sized statues of the ten Knights of Tirith bearing a huge checkered shield on their shoulders. The left and right sides of the room are curtained with rows of benches between carved columns that reach into the darkness of the ceiling.

Terias walks with lead feet as he takes in the sights of the temple. When he passes the alabaster statue he bows his head reverently and signs a sword on his body with his right hand. Then he gazes in awe of the ten statues as he moves by each one of them.

The Ashesa immediately turns left and climbs a spiral staircase. At the top of the stairs, he crosses a small hallway to a door leading to a small bedchamber containing a chest, a double bed, a small table and two chairs.

While settling into the room, Terias says, "Words don't describe the beauty of this temple Ashesa. T'is a tribute to Larani like no other. Even a night here will content me for a long time to come."

Once his bow, sword, spear and pack are tucked away Terias, looks up to the Ashesa, "We'll guess I'm ready to get onto chores. Names Terias of Forniad by the by."

"I am Orthelen of Ewen, sir," says the lad, "I am pleased to meet you."

When Terias is ready to continue, the Ashesa leads him back down the stairs, across the great hall, past the right side of the statue, through a door to a dining room, and turns left through a door to the kitchen.

Addressing a rather muscular woman who appears to be in charge of the kitchen, he says, "Valaran Velial, the Obasaran has sent this visiting Matakea to help out." He then returns out the door.

Dipping his head respectfully to Velial, Terias offers, "Well met Valaran, I'm Terias of Forniad. I'll warn you I've had some bad times in the kitchen, but whatever task you need I'll do."

After being assigned his chores by the Valaran, Terias works slowly and meticulously. He inspects each of the food items for odd smells or apparent defects such as mold, bruising and browning. While doing his tasks he speaks with the Velial, "On my way to the temple I heard a few things being bandied about the streets. One was that the church took in a fellow.. a pawnbroker I think it was - for worshipping the dark faith. You mind if I ask what that was?"

"We always have to be on the lookout for heretics, my boy," Valaran Velial answers. "If one gets past our vigilance, they are like gangrene in a festering wound...soon you have to cut the whole limb off."

"Aye true enough." Terias says, but then adds "Was he executed already then or was he pressed for information? It'd be a large production in Hesby to find one person, I'm guessing in Tashal it could lead to others."

"I am guessing but, how many people are in your village," he asks with a chuckle, "maybe a hundred in a good season. Tashal has over eleven thousand people. That is not counting during the summer fair when the population doubles with all the visitors. No he has not been executed yet and he was just arrested last night. They will let him stew a while, imagining the worst things possible, then he will be tortured to reveal any accomplices."

Changing topics as the current discussion runs dry, Terias inquires, "I also heard about some lights over town. The Sages flock wants to interview people about it so there sounded like there might be something to it."

"That I cannot tell you about," he says. "I heard the rumors as well but I know nothing of it. As to the Sages, they always want to know one thing or the other but what they actually learn and of what use they put their knowledge only the Lady knows."

Terias says nothing, but nods and offers a gruff chuckle at the Valaran's words.

