

6-NÚZYÆL-720 RIVER KALD

3RD WATCH [WARM, PARTLY CLOUDY, SOUTHWEST BREEZE, THUNDERSTORM]

The sailors work efficiently as they pull in the gang-plank, and untie the riverboat from the wharf. They row out to the middle of the river Kald and the boat jerks toward downstream as the heavy current from the spring runoffs catches it. They continue to row very fast, so that the rudder can provide some measure of control, and the banks pass swiftly.

An hour passes in the rush downstream, until the Captain orders a landing at a small wharf at the mouth of the river Nephem.

“Folks,” Captain Josirath addresses his passengers, “I must ask all of you to go ashore with the pilot and non-essential crew until we can negotiate the bend to head upriver.”

Turning to Cornall, Amyleryn asks: “Cornall, where do we re-board? Are we to walk along the riverbank to watch where the Captain comes back to shore?”

“There’s another wharf in that direction, about an arrow’s flight away on the mouth of the river Nephem, where we will re-board,” Cornall answers.

“Ah, excellent.” Amyleryn answers.

Just as everyone gets ashore and the Captain casts off again, a group of soldiers on horses ride up from the direction of Tashal.

“Good day, milady,” the leader says to Amyleryn, “We have been told to warn everyone about bandits or outlaws in the area. They have already killed two young nobles and two artisans in Tashal last night. We know not which direction they fled so riders have been sent on all the major roads.”

The thunder, lightning and rolling clouds of the approaching thunderstorm give an ominous drama to his words and, before anyone can answer, it begins to rain.

Cornall says quietly to Terias, “Say nothing of your encounter last night or they will detain us all for questioning.”

A sly grin playing off his lips, Terias says with the rain water rolling off his face, “No idea what yer talking about Cornall.”

A little irked by being out in the rain, Amyleryn says: “Thank you for the warning commander. We will be extra vigilant. Do you know the names of those killed?”

“I know the names of the two nobles but not of the two artisans,” he answers, “they were Eamithar Bastune and Tugrith Dariune. The artisans had marks that indicate they were worshipers of Ilvir but their identity was unknown at the time I left Tashal. Now, by your leave, I will be on my way.”

Terias who was half listening to the conversation while speaking with Cornall, perks up when the guard mentions the two noble’s names and glances over to Amyleryn, but says nothing.

“Again, thank you Commander. Safe journey to you and your men.” Amyleryn says, and then watches them ride off.

Cornall says to Amyleryn, “Milady, those men down there, with the mules helping Captain Josirath, have a small shack by the

other wharf where we can get in out of the rain while we wait. This way, if you please.”

Speaking loudly enough to be heard by the rest of the party, Amyleryn says: “Everyone...follow Cornall. He knows of a place to get in out of the rain.” and then proceeds to take her own advice.

6-NÚZYÆL-720 KIBAN, KALDOR

5TH WATCH [HOT, CLEAR, SOUTH WIND]

It takes about a turn of the glass but the riverboat eventually ties off at the Nephem wharf. After everyone re-boards, the journey continues – although at a much slower pace.

The thunderstorm passes by the start of the fourth watch and late in the fifth watch, with much hard rowing, the boat ties off at the wharf of Kiban. Before you depart, Captain Josirath approaches Zedeon, Buryn, Felada and Amyleryn to collect the 20d fare for each.

Speaking to Zedeon and Buryn, Amyleryn says: “Each of you use 20d from the 50d I gave you each to carry.” To Felada she says: “Pay the Captain for the two of us, please.”

“Yes, milady,” Felada answers.

Addressing Captain Josirath, Amyleryn asks: “Is there an inn here in Kiban that you would recommend?”

“No, milady,” the Captain answers, “My crew and I usually stay at the seaman’s guild and Terias could stay there if I sponsor him as a merchant marine but he will probably wish to visit his temple. We venture not far into town and the only other inn I know of is the Riverman’s inn, which is certainly not a place for a gentle lady such as yourself. I would recommend that you find an inn tonight though and not wait until morning. The marrow is the start of the Kiban spring faire and the inns will be full for at least the next three days.

Amyleryn says, “Thank you Captain. We’ll do that right away. Good sailing.”

Zedeon follows Amyleryn’s directions, and awaits further orders

Terias listens idly to the conversation between Amyleryn and Josriath, his attention drifting over the town of Kiban itself and the people passing in close proximity to the group seeming slightly weary all the while. The Matakaea perks up at the mention of the Larianian temple, but remains silent not wishing to interrupt.

Looking down stream, Terias can see three more wharfs that are fenced in – probably owned by guilds or private individuals. Beyond the wharfs, he can see a stone city wall that ends at the riverbank in a guard tower.

Looking up stream, he can see the entrance to a bay with a partially completed guard tower at the end of a loose stone levy. Inside the bay, he can just barely see the wall of the castle around the side of the buildings. At the other end of the levy, is another partially completed guard tower joined to a wooden palisade.

Looking into the town along the wharf, he can see several unmarked buildings. Before the town streets the only

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pedestrians are the stevedores and the harbormaster talking to the Captain. Past the buildings on the town streets, there are many people walking by who all seem to be in good spirits.

A dawn of realization falls on Terias features. He turns to regard Zedeon and Buryn, and mentions, "Oi, you two remember that note we found on Zedeon's near twin a few days back? We should see where we can find the litigant and get that matter settled for him when we've some free time."

"I agree," Zedeon replies gazing at the town with squinted eyes. "Something is amiss with the whole matter, and I would like to find out the meaning of it all."

Zedeon takes a deep breath to calm him self, taking in the crisp air, deciphering the different smells of salt, wood, and freshly cut metal.

With a start, Zedeon also takes in the organic smell of a swamp. Turning to look across the river, he notices a vast swamp as far as the eye can see.

"I would also like to explore this town, as it has less restrictions as the last, and talk to some of the locals. I'm sure I could learn a few things about their armaments while we wait for our next action."

When Amyleryn is done speaking, not interrupting what he knows will be a conversation towards them, Zedeon asks, "If there is no immediate plan m'lady, would you permit us to peruse this town, if nothing more to find out some information?"

Amyleryn says, "I don't see why not. We came here to nose about. But let us find an inn first, and get settled in. Captain Josirath says we need to find an inn right away, as a fair starts tomorrow and rooms will be scarce. Also, nobody is to go out alone. I want one of you men, on a rotating basis, to escort Felada and myself. The two of you not with me, are to go about in a pair. If everyone has their belongings, let's get moving." Shouldering her things, Amyleryn starts down the wharf toward town.

Speaking up Terias adds to the conversation, "Just a couple of additional items M'Lady. During the eve before the ship was under attack by two assaults. I nearly lost my life, but by Larani's grace the missile struck wide. When I turned to engage I saw two men drop before my eyes - dead. I've no idea who the saint was who saved me, but the two men - were the same in Tashal that were quite obviously singling at Zedeon. The ones with the yellow hand marking on them."

Amyleryn says, "That would seem to speak to the wisdom of not going about alone."

Terias continues, "The Captain mentioned that there was a temple in town, I'll of course stand guard for my watch and other duties, but would ask to spend my free time and evenings there."

Amyleryn says, "If you can do so without traveling about by yourself, or leaving another by themselves, then yes, I have no objection to that."

Zedeon says, "What could all this mean? Terias? M'Lady???" Zedeon's face turns to one of mass confusion.

Amyleryn says, "It means that either, someone has mistaken you for the Zedeon look-alike mutant that was killed, or our mission is known. Either way, I like it not. Stay alert."

Clearly apprehensive about speaking, Terias comments, "Erm.. apologies Lady Odasart, but the fella that looked like Zedeon was just that.. a man. He was killed by a mutant though."

He then quickly adds, "And you've a point I'd not thought of - about someone thinking Zedeon was one and the same so his life could be in danger."

On that note, Zedeon turns his head quickly, and walks back towards Terias. "M'life? Why me? I know no enemies Ma'Lady. An I don't want to bring ill to you M'Lady." A concern look crosses Zedeon's face as he whispers aloud, "All I wanted to do was help Lady Odasart and maybe later on in life become a famous weaponsmith in honor of my father... Not bring trouble to her..." The concerned look turns to a more sad look as he takes a deep slow breath.

"Hush Zedeon." Amyleryn says, and, smiling, touches him lightly on the arm for just a moment. "It is just that sort of possibility that prompted my caution about not traveling alone."

"Yes, M'Lady, apologies for thinking a'loud. What you have us to do next? Shall we find a place of rest?" Zedeon asks, looking back at the town, and then at the rest of the party

Watching Zedeon with a raised brow, Terias lifts his right hand and slowly raises it palm facing downwards in an attempt to settle Zedeon. "Oi, oi Zedeon, calm yourself. T'is nay you they're after t'was likely your twin. Unfortunately your looks are what's drawing their eye so we'll need to be careful with ya."

Then Terias adds with a sly grin, "Besides I've seen you with the spear a'yers and your no slouch my friend."

Zedeon says, "As for my free time, I would like to see if we can find any information on the past happenings and what little we know now. And if there is any time left, maybe chat with some of the smiths here." Zedeon says, his confused face turning to a more relaxed look

Amyleryn sighs and says: "We are going to have to work out some sort of schedule for people to get around without looking completely obvious. The first thing we have to do, is find an inn. Tomorrow, I will have to go to the castle to pay my respects. After those two things, we'll see about having a look around Kiban. The fair should provide a perfectly good reason to be doing so."

Beyond the end of the wharf and past the unmarked buildings, you reach the main town streets. There are less people out than there would be during the day in Tashal but, many more than you would expect for this time of night.

Looking to your right, you see the road curve north to go around the bay but none of the buildings in that direction are marked. In the middle of the bay you can clearly see the castle.

Looking to your left, you can see that the road goes approximately 400 feet to a stone wall, where it turns north to follow the town wall. Only two of the buildings are marked. About half way to the wall on the left side of the road, the building has a round, blue sign with a sailing ship. On the other

side of the road is a square sign with a fisherman in a boat. In the lower right corner of that sign is a thistle.

Looking straight ahead of you, the road curves gently to the right and the last thing you can see before the road curves out of sight is a well. The only sign that you can see in this direction is round, white above, blue below and contains a large anchor.

http://www.duttond.topcities.com/Harn/Kaldor/guild_badges.pdf

Speaking to the party, Amyleryn says: "We'll head left and follow the wall. Less likely to get lost that way."

Following the road to the town wall, you turn right. The road continues to turn right toward the center of the town and then turns again left. There are roads branching off to the left and right before the first bend in the road, and left and right again after the bend. Up to this point the buildings have been unmarked. The first building, after the second right branching-road, has a red diamond sign with three interlocked gold rings. The last building, before the second left-branching road, has a square sign showing a silver road passing through mountains and a thistle in the lower right corner. The sign also has, written in Lakise, "Silver Way Inn; Illion of Bydarf, Prop." Further along the road, where it once again turns right, you see another building sign showing a sword and shield.

Spying the inn sign, Amyleryn says: "Ah. Here we go. For those of you who cannot read Lakise, the writing on that sign" and she points out the sign she's talking about "says: 'Silver Way Inn; Illion of Bydarf, Proprietor.' Actually, the word 'Proprietor' is abbreviated, but that's what it means. Let us see if Illion has any rooms we can get." and she heads for the inn.

Stepping into the reception area, you look around to see a very clean and very well maintained inn. Looking into the common room, you can see several diners who, by their clothes, appear to be nobility or wealthy merchants. Even a couple of young ladies fawning over older men, are dressed in the height of fashion. Instead of the usual trencher tables, benches and mugs of ale, you see round tables covered in table cloths, padded chairs and glasses of wine.

The innkeeper spies you and says, "Yes, may I help you?"

Amyleryn says, "Yes, you may. I am Lady Amyleryn Odasart. These people" and she gestures to the others in such a way as to let the innkeeper see her signet ring "are in my employ." Indicating each in turn, with a pause between each to allow a greeting, Amyleryn says: "My maid, Felada of Yaandy. Terias of Forniad, Matakaea of Larani. Zedeon of Jaheraka, journeyman weaponcrafter. Buryn of Tevanan, my father's chief hunter."

Amyleryn says, "Do you have two rooms...one for myself and Felada, the other for Zedeon and Buryn?"

"Yes, milady," the innkeeper answers, "a private room for you and your maid will be 20d per night and includes morning and evening meals and two drinks. A shared room for your retainers will be 20d each and includes the same meals and drinks. The evening meal without lodging is 3d."

Turning to Terias before the innkeeper can reply, she asks: "Terias, is it your intention to seek lodging at the temple?"

Terias offers a curt nod to Amyleryn, stating, "Aye m'Lady. Though I'll need directions from the good keep here."

"Yes, that is easily done," the innkeeper says. "When you leave, follow Querina road left until you come to Dariune Square. Cross the market square and follow Dariune Road northeast, it's the widest road. Dariune Road will end at several burnt-out buildings. The road in front of those is Shebra Way. Follow that to the right and the temple will be the large building on the left hand side."

After Terias and the innkeeper have replied, Amyleryn says: "Also, dinner for the five of us, please."

"Step right this way," the innkeeper says as he leads you to a table that can seat six.

For dinner, you are served, oro (fried artichokes) for an appetizer, rota (barley and fruit) for soup, a choice of entrée (nomblys de roo [venison]; "humble pie" [spiced tripe]; lamproi [baked lamprey]; smalle byrdes [bird stuffed with dates and mustard]) accompanied by currant rice with carob cream, wastel (first quality bread), and beer (dark brown color, citric-pear aroma, smooth texture, balanced malty-kippers flavor that stays to the end). The desert is faun tempere (gilli flower pudding).

Terias requests the venison when it's his turn to order. During the meal he scarfs down his portion eagerly, seeming quite content once finished.

When it is Zedeon's turn, he requests the smalle byrdes. While eating, Zedeon scans the room they are in. If there is not much table conversation and the one he is sitting at, Zedeon will try to listen in on another conversations, if any, without being too obvious.

From the next table he hears, "A traveler told me the other day that the village of Blutroch had been wiped out by a mysterious disease which causes people to break out in red blotches. Make sure you stay well clear of anyone with red marks on their skin."

Followed by, "Oh, daddy, there is nobody in Kiban with red splotches and I speak not to strangers, as you have taught me well."

"M'Lady, in hopes not to inform those whom shouldn't know, what is your opinion on this other.... Bear?" Zedeon's face turns to one as to show that part of his sentence was false, but only to the table he is at. "Do you think there are more of these animals around M'Lady?"

"Bear? What Bear?" Felada asks with a squeak. She then recovers herself and continues, "I am sorry...I speak out of my place."

Leaning towards the center of the table Zedeon speaks to the group. "What I meant to say, is this animal that has certain similarities to a certain person sitting at this table. Also, I'm not sure if any of you have over heard, but apparently there is some sort of disease going around... Tis giving the infected red spots..."

Zedeon leans back and takes in the atmosphere and the conversations.

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Amyleryn says, "A disease, eh? Now that's exactly what I had in mind when I said to keep your ears open to conversations around you. Good work Zedeon."

"Thank you ma'am" Zedeon replies.

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At the table, Terias holds himself up until Amyleryn takes a seat, then he settles down on a chair. Immediately after he questions her, "M'Lady, now that we've arrived what's the plan if I may ask? Are we to poke about first or go straight to a meeting with the Earl himself?"

Terias glances to Buryn and Zedeon studying their expressions in a questioning manner, then returns his attention to Amyleryn.

Amyleryn nearly strangles holding back from breaking out in guffaws, managing to keep it to a socially acceptable chuckle. Smiling broadly as she breathes deeply, unshed tears of laughter making her eyes shine, Amyleryn says: "Please, give a girl a little warning the next time you're about to say something so funny!"

Regaining her composure: "Only the King can go straight to a meeting with an Earl without making an appointment first!" Amyleryn says, a big smile still on her face. "No, I'll need to go to the castle, identify myself to some low-level factorum, say that I'm paying my respects to the Earl and his family, and request an audience at the Earl's convenience...which may be never, if my uncle's worries have substance (this being said in a low voice so as not to be overheard)...then leave gracefully after letting them know where I'll be staying. The assumption in these situations is that, if an audience IS granted, a messenger will be sent to inform me about when it will be."

Continuing, she says: "I appreciate the high esteem you all hold me in...a good general policy to have when dealing with nobility of any degree...but there is a hierarchy within the nobility, just as there is among commoners. It would not surprise me if Earl Dariune's castle constable turned out to be a Baron...which greatly out-ranks my father, to say nothing of myself."

Amyleryn pauses in her discourse to order the lamproi.

After everyone has ordered and the innkeeper has gone to get their meals, she resumes quietly to avoid being overheard: "My visit to the castle is really to get a general impression of how things are going. When things are as they should be, there is an overall sense of comfort among the staff. Yes, some individuals will be a little tense for their own reasons, but all in all, things will be getting attended to in an 'as things should be' manner."

"If, on the other hand, something is seriously wrong, everyone that is met, will be edgy. Replies to questions of any nature will be curt, terse, and answered in a barely civil manner, or with an exaggeratedly cheerful manner, either intended to get a person to move on as quickly as possible. People who are not being talked to directly, will usually avoid making eye contact unless their expressions are obviously a silent plea for help. This is what I'll be looking for. If I actually get an audience, all the better. I'll be able to get a more accurate impression...but I don't expect to get one."

"You can all use this same technique as you nose around town."

Terias then offers the following, "Apologies for being so gruff, I'm the sort to go straight at it. Though it would be good to let the temple know how long to expect me. I imagine they'll tie me to some chores as recompense for my lodging, but you'll have my full attention even if it means bedding here."

Amyleryn replies, "Tell them that you can do chores for your upkeep, but that I will require your presence for at least some of each day...and that I haven't told you how long you'll be in town. That has the advantage of being true. If the head of the temple here expresses a desire to meet me, say for a meal, tell that person that you'll ask me. I do want to meet the priest in charge here, but I want them to do the asking."

Addressing the whole party, Amyleryn says in a low voice: "After I've made my trip to the castle, the lot of us will stroll around town. Remember, there's a fair tomorrow, so no one should take any more notice of any of us than would be expected for strangers at a fair. Myself, Felada, and Zedeon will be in one group, Terias and Buryn in the other. Terias, you will have to be available for this, so make what arraignments are necessary at the temple. Ask casual, leading questions to get people to mention current rumors and such. And keep your ears open to conversations near you. There will be a lot of nonsense, but a few grains of truth may be there to be teased out. After we get back to the inn, we'll compare what we've heard and see where to investigate further. Any questions?"

Terias shakes his head simply as he says, "Nay t'was clear Lady Odasart."

6-NÚZYÆL-720 KIBAN, KALDOR

6TH WATCH [HOT, CLEAR, SOUTH WIND]

Once the evening has ended, Terias gives a polite bow to Lady Odasart and then heads in the direction the innkeeper gave him to the Laranian temple. On the way there Terias looks about Kiban with idle curiosity, keeping himself alert.

Arriving at the holy grounds the Matakea introduces himself to the guard posted and states, "Good eve, I'm Matakea Terias of Forniad, Ataken within the Lady of Paladin's on errand with Lady Odasart. I was hoping to speak with an Obasaran or the like regarding lodging."

Your trip through town is un-eventful and the town is as quiet as the stillness before a storm. The temple porter shows you to a bed that you can share, telling you that you can make any other arrangements after the morning mass when everyone else awakes. Your bed partner mumbles something in his sleep but you cannot make out what he is saying.

7-NÚZYÆL-720 KIBAN, KALDOR

2ND WATCH [WARM, PARTLY CLOUDY, SOUTHWEST BREEZE, THUNDERSTORM]

In the middle of the night, you are briefly awakened by the crash of a thunderstorm.

When Amyleryn is awakened abruptly by the thunderstorm, she watches as inn's water pitcher flies across the room and smashes itself to bits against the wall. At the sound of the breaking crockery, Felada awakens and says, "What is it milady? Is something wrong?"

Amyleryn, asks, "Were you dreaming just now? If you were, what was it about?"

With a wide eyed look, Felada says, "nothing milady."

After Felada has answered, Amyleryn says: "There's nothing to be concerned about. The water pitcher just flew across the room and smashed against the wall. I believe I've mentioned to you before that some people can make things happen just by thinking about it...remember that napkin that caught fire at our table at that inn a few days ago? I know these things are possible because I have a small ability in the way of prescience myself. It's possible that the occurrence with the napkin, and just now with the pitcher, may be additional abilities of mine that I didn't know about, or...it may be you, my dear. That is why I ask people around me what is going on in their minds just as things happen. I'm trying to find the source."

"Oh, not me, milady," says Felada, "I am a good girl, I am."

Amyleryn smiles fondly at Felada and says: "Of course you are. Mark what I say...in and of itself, being able to command...Psionics...is not a bad thing. What can be bad is how one uses such abilities. Think of it in terms of my mace. If I were to raise it against the Crown, that would be bad. If I raise it in defense of the crown, that would be good. It remains a mace in either case. For now, I'll assume that these occurrences are newfound abilities of mine unless something happens to make it obvious that the cause lies elsewhere. Good night Felada."

Amyleryn says, "Unlike my training as a Shek P'var, I have no idea about how to properly deal with these mind powers...Psionics I believe they're called. If you think about the two incidents that have occurred...if left uncontrolled those abilities could be quite dangerous to everyone around. Also, keep in mind that being able to do those things when you desire to do them, is a very powerful ability to have at your command, so don't be afraid of it."

Amyleryn continues, "So...the first thing that needs to be done, is to determine who it's coming from. Then we need to work on a way to train the abilities so that control over them is gained."

"In the morning, I'll tell the innkeeper that when the thunderstorm woke me up, I got out of bed to get a drink of water and dropped the pitcher. That may be closer to the truth than we know just now. I will, of course, pay the innkeeper for the breakage. So, try to get back to sleep if you can. Everything will be fine."

"Yes, milady," Felada says as she settles back onto her pallet.

At day break, the thunderstorm rages on. Everyone meets in the common room to make plans for the day and break their fast with fried perch, goose eggs, soft cheese, raspberries, and coarse rye bread.

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In the middle of the night, Terias is briefly awakened by the crash of a thunderstorm. He is sure he is awake when he hears someone next to him say, "It all begins today at the faire." Terias cannot see the speaker of the cryptic message.

Rubbing at his face with the palm of his hand, Terias appears clearly perturbed by what he's heard. He then lies his head back down on his bed and slowly drifts back to sleep.

At day break, the thunderstorm rages on. Everyone meets in the common room to break their fast with beef steak, soft cheese, curds, sea-grapes, and corn bread. Quiet reigns during the meal as one of the matakea reads from the scriptures.

After the meal, Terias is introduced to Obasaran Kardyanid of Kobb, who says, "You wished to speak with me?"

Terias rises and dips his head respectfully to Kardyanid, before speaking politely, "I did Obasaran. I'm nay sure if you were given my name, but t'is Matakea Terias of Forinad. I'm an Ataken within the Order of the Lady of Paladin's on errand with Lady Amyleryn of Odasart. I'll be in Kiban for the next while and if there's space I was hoping to remain at the temple. Of course, I'm one to carry weight and no doubt you'd expect it - so I wanted to see what tasks or chores were needed of me. My only request is that I still have time to maintain my duties with Lady Odasart. If it's nay possible I understand."

"Let us see," says the Obasaran, "If I understand you correctly, what you want is to pay for hospitality with labor instead of money and you have chosen the temple so that you can perform your religious duties as well. If that is correct, the amount of labor required will be in relation to how onerous it is. I propose that during your stay with us, you wake with everyone else at the first of the second watch. There will be a turn of the glass in weapons practice and another in prayer. You will then break your fast for an hour and then collect the wastes to deliver them to Allioa village north of town for their compost. If you do not dawdle, you should be able to return the hand cart to the temple and be free to serve your mistress by the end of the second watch. It has been my experience that the nobility are never prepared to start their day before that anyway. You must return for the evening meal by the middle of the fifth watch to ensure your bed is not given over to another's use. Is that acceptable to you?"

Seeming relieved Terias bows his head yet again and answers, "Aye more then fair Obasaran. If my work comes short for whatever reason I'll pay what is owed. T'wasn't in my experience to use for room and board at temples so I'd not thought of it."

"Find the spit boy in the kitchen and he will direct you on where to go this morning," Obasaran Kardyanid says.

Terias offers one last incline of his head, saying respectfully, "Aye Obasaran." He then heads over to the kitchen glancing about for the lad in charge of turning the rod to cook the meat.

When Terias finally spots him, he calls out, "Oi lad, Obasaran Kardynaid's tasked me with taking the waste to Alloia village. Can you point me where t'go? Oh the names Terias of Forniad by the by." As he trails off he offers a sheepish smile to the boy.

As the lad jumps up from beside the hearth where he was dozing, Terias notices that he is missing his left arm. "I be Chyrn uv Morable, if it please ee maister. De dung cart be jist dicky way out de back door uv de kitchen," he says.

Chyrn leads Terias out the back door to a two wheel cart with poles at the front for pulling it. It is filled with full chamber pots

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and kitchen garbage that is too far gone to even be given to the poor. The smell is rank.

Terias chokes back a gag as he takes in the first breath of the compost, then immediately switches to breathing through his mouth. He grabs hold of the poles turning his back to the cart and readies himself to pull it along the road at the young lad's direction.

Chyrn then leads Terias out the gate of the temple yard and turns right to follow the road to a stone gate in the wooden palisade around the town. He waves at the guards who allow Chyrn and Terias to pass without question, while standing as far away as possible without leaving their posts.

Once outside the town, the road then turns right again and proceeds to a village. Chyrn stops at the first house on the right, where a tinker stands next to his cart and asks a peasant farmer where lodging can be found. The farmer tells him that lodging during the faire is scarce indeed and he should inquire at the Shebra Gate for permission to camp in the North Common.

Turning to Chyrn, the farmer says with a smile, "Well now. It zim'th ee 'ave a new mule." Turning to Terias, he says, "I be Berusen of Verswin. Pewl de cart around yer to de dung 'eap and I weel empt it vor ee."

Introducing himself to the farmer as he follows the instructions, Terias replies, "Well met, The names Terias of Forniad, a visiting Matakea or mule - whichever you choose to use."

Glancing around the town curiously and then back to Berusen, he asks "I'm guessing the towns been seeing its fair share of folk with the faire eh? Anything of note?"

"If ee be meaning de village uv Alloia, nothing unusual iver 'appens. De miller be zometimes zuspected uv zhort weighting 'is zacks bit nothing iver comes uv dey and I zuspect zitch zuspicious be common een ivery village," he tells you as he is unloading the cart. "If ee mean een de town uv Kiban, I know nat. I 'ave as little dealings way town folk as dey do way me. I find live to be less complicated dey way."

Terias chuckles gruffly and nods a few times at the words of Berusen.

As the farmer unloads the cart, a small group of soldiers arrive on foot. The leader looks at Terias and asks, "Who might you be and what is your business at our town?"

Stiffening up in the presence of the soldiers, Terias replies curtly, "I'm visiting with the Laranian Temple in Kiban. Matakea Terias of Forniad, an Ataken within the Order of the Lady of Paladin's. I've been tasked with delivering the wastes here daily."

With a bit of hesitancy Terias inquires, "If I may ask, is there a reason you're on alert? Something I should watch for on my walks to and from the village?"

"Nothing that you would notice," says the soldier. "During the faire we have a lot of foreigners in town and some of them take the opportunity to get into mischief that they would never think of doing where they are from but, you being one of the foreigners, you would not know foreigners from locals. Good day to you. I suspect I will be seeing you later."

"Aye you're right I won't, appreciate the know though. A good day to you." replies Terias.

After the cart is emptied and the soldiers have been dealt with, Chyrn leads on an otherwise un-eventful trip, back through the town gate to the temple yard.

Terias gives Chyrn a pat on the back, "Appreciate the help lad, would've been lost without ya. I'm going to try to was a bit of the stench of me and head off. I'll be seeing y'round."

After cleaning himself up quickly Terias sets off hurriedly for the Silver Way Inn.

Terias' trip through town is uneventful. The few people he can see out are headed toward the gate at the east side of town and the market square he passes through is empty. He arrives at the Silver Way Inn just as his companions are finishing their meal at the end of the second watch. The innkeeper sniffs in Terias' direction but says nothing.

Taking notice of the innkeep, Terias frowns to himself as he approaches the group's table. He then offers a humble bow to Lady Odasart before addressing her, "Good day to you m'lady." Then Terias looks to the others and repeats himself, "Good day to all as well. Forgive the smell if it still lingers on me, I was given the quickest of chores, but the most foul as well. Next time I'll wash up better."

Taking an obvious sniff in Terias' direction, Amyleryn's nose wrinkles a little and she smiles. "Tasked with taking out the night soils, eh?" and she chuckles. "Coming from a small rural manor, I know how it is. You're right about the need to wash better. Our activities will put us in contact with various nobles and high-ranking officials, so it won't do to be remembered for how one smells."

Amyleryn continues, "Today, we're going to take advantage of the faire to have a look around, listen for rumors, and generally keep our eyes and ears open. We'll split up into two groups...Terias and Buryn in one, Zedeon, Felada and myself in the other. Meet back here at midday for a quick report, then end up the day back here again where we can go into as much detail as we need to about what we've learned. Any questions?"

Zedeon says, "No, M'Lady. I think 'is will be a new experience. And I shall be wary of anything I come across"

Terias speaks up after Amyleryn makes the inquiry, "Not a question on my end, just something I plan to do. I'll go with Buryn and visit the litigant here in town to let him know about Zedeon's look alike we found dead on the road that t'was on his way to visit."

"Sounds like a reasonable thing to do." Amyleryn says. "When you tell the litigant, pay attention not only to what the response is, but to tone of voice, body language, facial expressions and other such clues that tell you what they're really feeling upon receiving the news, and not just the words you'll hear."

Sounding a bit unsure as he speaks, Terias responds with, "Eh, alright m'Lady. I usually like to look into their eyes. Can tell a lot that way. I'll keep what you say t'hear though."

Terias calls over to the innkeeper and states with a wry grin, "So's I don't offend your nose any further, I'll nay come too close

to ya. I was wondering if y'knew where the litigant was in town? His name's something like Cristoff, or Crissen or some such.

"If you are speaking of Crissam of Devis, his shop is across Neph Street from the entrance of the castle," answers the innkeeper. "I know not any litigant with the family name sounding like Cristoff. However, you will most likely not find him at his shop until after the faire. Most of the shop owners close their shops to either set up a stall at the fair or just visit to see foreign goods."

After listening to the innkeeper answer, Terias simply says, "Aye that's the one I spoke of. We'll give him a try and if that fails we'll take a poke about the faire."

Speaking up, Amyleryn asks: "I've never been to Kiban before. May I assume that the faire is set up in one of the commons?"

"Yes, milady," says the innkeeper, "It is in the west commons. When you leave the inn, turn left through Dariune Square and left again to the Querina gate. Outside the gate, go left once more to the west commons. You cannot miss it as you just have to follow the crowds."

Saying to Felada and Zedeon: "Let us off to see the faire." and Amyleryn heads for the door.

With a motion to Buryn from his right hand, Terias says, "If your done stuffing yourself, let's get a move on."

Terias and Buryn step out of the door of the inn and find they can go east (the direction they are facing), west, north or south. To the west (around the north side of the inn) the road goes about 200 yards to end in the town wall. To the north (the road Terias traveled last night), the road goes to Dariune Square. The road to the south is the one that leads to the river (where they arrived in the town). The road to the east (the only one Terias has not traveled) is a short road leading to a small enclosed park or courtyard.

Terias says to Buryn after glancing around, "Let's head over to that garden or park. The nicer the area the more likely we are to find the castle and from there the litigant."

The courtyard, you find, is enclosed by five buildings. The one at the street to your left has the three-link gold chain on a red diamond of a jeweler. The next, going sunwise, has the heather of a tavern but no other markings. The next has no markings. The next has a square green field, two crossed pikes and, overall the large butterfly of a brothel. The last building on the right hand side of the street is unmarked.

Crossing his arms as looks over each of the buildings, Terias shakes his head about to turn back the way he came.

A woman standing in front of the brothel says, "It is a bit early is it not? Hang on a moment and I will rouse one of the girls to see to your pleasures."

The Matakae turns to regard the woman and replies in kind, "Nay let them sleep. We're looking for the litigant's office. Would y'be kind enough to point us the way lass?"

"A litigant!" the woman shrieks. "There is no litigant here. What do you think we have done to you that you are looking for a litigant?"

* * *

Saying to Felada and Zedeon, "Let us off to see the faire," Amyleryn heads for the door. Following the innkeeper's instructions to make three left turns and follow the crowd, Amyleryn leads the way to the faire.

Zedeon follows Amyleryn and stays behind Felada as well... As they walk around, Zedeon concentrates on listening, looking around every once and a while.

7-NÚZYÆL-720 KIBAN, KALDOR

3RD WATCH [HOT, CLEAR, SOUTH WIND]

The thunderstorm passes on just as you leave the inn and you can now hear quiet conversations about what the crowd is eager to see at the faire: new foods, new drinks, the freak show, the livestock auctions, the jousting tournament and grand melee, the wrestling champion and all sorts of other new sights and experiences.

Upon hearing mention of a freak show, Amyleryn says quietly to Felada and Zedeon so as not to be overheard: "We will have to go see the freak show. I wouldn't be surprised if we saw things like the mutants that attacked us. If so, then we will surely know that something sinister is going on around here. If not, then we should be entertained."

"Sounds like a good plan," Zedeon replies "M'lady, we might find more information as to their motives as well"

The north part of the west commons (where you enter) is taken over with livestock pens and two large auction rings. The first auctioneer is just starting the bidding for a small herd of fifteen lambs. The bidding starts at 24d a head and the auctioneer is asking for 32d. At that moment he notices Zedeon looking at him and says, "I have 32d. Do I hear 43d?"

Going over to the auctioneer, Amyleryn asks him: "Excuse me. What is the process whereby someone offers a bid on things being sold at auction? I ask because these two people" indicating Felada and Zedeon "are in my employ, and do not have my leave to be bidding on anything just now, and I do not want any misunderstandings."

Leaning towards Amyleryn, Zedeon whispers "We are buying lambs? At least we will be set for provisions for a while." Zedeon stands ready, listening for Amyleryn's next action.

"WHAT!?!!" the auctioneer says, clearly startled by her direct approach. He then turns to the crowd and says, "My lords, ladies and gentlemen, we will have to start over on the bidding for these animals...AFTER this un-enlightened lady and her retainers move to another part of the faire that has more in the area of her experience...I would suggest the wool market."

There are several moans and giggles from the crowd.

He then turns to the other auction area and yells, "Hey, Crissam, hold up on the bidding for a moment. We have a lady here who knows no better that to make false bids and interrupt with fool questions."

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To Amyleryn he says, "Can you find your way, 'milady' or do I need to have some of the watch help you along?"

At first startled, a smile starts to spread on Amyleryn's face, and she says: "I hadn't realized that they raised such rude people here in Kiban. Or perhaps I'm viewing the freak show and not the livestock auction?" and she has a wide smile now and an almost saucy stance.

"You obviously know a lot about rudeness..." says the auctioneer.

Someone in the crowd says in an aristocratic tone of voice, "The lady hast the manners of a Gargun! Be on your way so the bidding can start. We have not all day to muck around with foreigners."

"Cease with these pathetic theatrics," says another, "I am sure m'lady's attentions can be more cheaply bought elsewhere."

Getting a sad face, Amyleryn sighs and says: "Apparently no one in Kiban has a sense of humor either." Turning to Felada and Zedeon, she says: "Come. We need to move on before I need to have some of these people sent to gaol for disrespect of a noblewoman." and she heads away from the auction.

* * *

Terias listens, clearly amused by the woman's antics, then he shakes his head, "Oi lass come now. I'm after the litigant long before I even got here. Nothing to do with you. Now do you know where he may be or not?"

"No, I know not any litigants and I wish not to know any either," she exclaims. "They usually get their deed done then they want to cheat you out of your fair dues with some legal trickery. That is the ones that are not so bent that they 'only want to watch'...now how sick is that, I ask you?"

Terias flatly listens to the woman ramble on then says, "Seems you have your fair share of problems. Though if you're thinking of a different path the Lady is always willing to help you turn over a new leaf."

Not waiting for an answer Terias jerks his head to Buryrn and makes his way back where he came.

As they stroll back, Terias tells Buryrn, "Well let's explore a bit around the square and if we find nothing head to the faire .. which I believe is on the way."

You arrive at Dariune Square and there is much less traffic than there was a short while earlier – all of them headed toward the city gate. You follow the crowd out the gate to the west commons and the livestock market. You arrive in time to see Lady Amyleryn in a heated conversation with an auctioneer, just as the auctioneer says, "Hey, Crissam, hold up on the bidding for a moment..."

Hearing the name shouted over the crowd, Terias glances to Buryrn and says while looking about, "Looks like the Lady is stirring something up. See if you can spot that Crissam, could be the litigant we're looking for."

Once Terias has Crissam in his sights, he approaches and asks, "Apologies good man, are you the litigant Crissam of Larchean? If so I have a letter to deliver to you and some ill news."

"I am the litigant Crissam of Devis," he answers. "If I am the one you seek, you will have to be quick as I will need to start the auction as soon as they remove that troublemaker over there."

Reaching around for his pack Terias says speaking quickly, "Aye, aye. The names Matakaea Terias of Forinad. On the way from Olokand to Tashal we happened upon some folk that were killed on the road by some fell creatures. One of them was bearing this note. I thought it only proper to see it to the final destination. Perhaps you will be able to deliver word to his family and give them some peace." Terias pulls free the parchment and hands it over to Crissam.

Crissam takes the letter and examines it closely then says, "This appears to be a letter from me to a Kanard of Larchean, sole surviving heir of a Baron Larchean. I hope you did not pay money for that as, I can assure you, it is a forgery. I know neither Kanard of Larchean nor a Baron Larchean, recently deceased."

Handing back the letter, he says, "Now if you will excuse me, I have to be about my duties. Good day to you gentlemen."

Terias stares blankly for a moment, almost dumbfounded then finally says, "Aye seems were done, good day to you."

Turning to Buryrn, he continues speaking before walking off "Huh. Seems there's not much more to be done. Poor fellow was killed for naught it seems. Let's just poke about the faire and see what we find."

* * *

Amyleryn, Felada and Zedeon meet Terias and Buryrn at the south end of the livestock area, just as a messenger speaks quietly to Buryrn.

Buryrn turns to Amyleryn and says, "Milady, my great uncle sends word dey 'is crew be short a man. By yer leave, 'e axs if I can travel way 'im for a short while to larn de way of a riverboat sailor."

"Hmm. Ordinarily, I might be inclined to refuse, as I'm providing you with suitable employment already," Amyleryn says "but I don't recall that you ever testified in that poaching case. The King's justice must take precedence over your duty to my father represented by your serving me. Sailing with your uncle will take you back to Tashal frequently, so you will be able to give your testimony when they're ready for you to do so."

"Therefore, you have my permission to take employment with your uncle until your part in the trial is done. After that, if you wish to continue working for your uncle, you will have to return to Hesby and get my father's permission."

"Give Felada what remains of the fifty pence I had you carry and be on your way. Nephew or no, riverboat captains wait for no man. Thank you for your service, and good luck."

"Yes, milady," Buryrn says, "as you command." He gives Felada 50d and follows the messenger back towards town.

Watching Buryrn as he goes out of sight making his way toward the wharves, Amyleryn says to the others: "I wonder if our paths will ever cross again?"

* * *

Continuing down the faire grounds you see two venders of ale, two venders of meat pies, one tinker selling copper pans, a vender of beer, a vender of wine, a potter, two venders of herbs, a vender selling silk shirts, a woodcrafter selling wooden toys, a vender of pottage and a vender of beef jerky.

Stopping at the wine vendor, Amyleryn asks the vendor: "What do you have by way of red wines?" She is looking for a Merlot, although a Malbec or a Shiraz (Syrah) would be good too.

"You obviously know your local wines but what I have here is bull's blood wine from the far off Thardic Republic. Of course it is not actually made from bull's blood but it is a full bodied wine that is sometimes used, mixed with spring water, in sacrifices to the Gods instead of bull's blood. The Thardians think anyone drinking wine not mixed with water are barbarians, which is why their wines have a much stronger taste. I am sure you will enjoy it for a mere penny per glass," says the vendor.

"I will try it, thank you." Amyleryn accepts the wine after Felada has paid the vendor and takes a sip. "Mm, I see what you mean. It is almost a cordial."

Turning to Felada, Amyleryn asks: "Would you like some wine Felada, or would you prefer to stop by an ale or beer vendor?" She thanks the vendor(s).

"Oh no, milady," says Felada, "I am not drinking the blood of no bull. I would like a pint of small ale though, if it please you milady."

After drinks have been procured for the two of them, Amyleryn lets her nose determine which of the two meat pie vendor's products have the most savory aroma. Speaking to the vendor, she says: "Mmm, your pies smell wonderful! I'll have lamb if you have it...beef otherwise."

After the pies are taken, she says: "Thank you. Do you have a shop, or do you just make your pies for the faire?"

"No, milady," she says, "I be de wife uv wan uv de freehold farmers uv Crillon jist over dere." She points to the village just to the west of the faire ground commons. "My zon be de rasselin' champeen, Crusher Bydarf. Ee weel see 'im zhortly if ee continny een dicky direction."

Amyleryn says, "Bydarf. Are you related to the keeper of The Silver Way inn?"

"Only by marriage," she replies. "'e be my 'usbands brother bit 'e believes iz'zel to be uv a 'igher ztation dan us due to 'is fancy inn. Us zeldom zpake to aich other. Why? Do ee know 'im?"

Amyleryn says, "Myself, and those traveling with me, are staying at his inn."

Pausing for just a moment, Amyleryn continues: "Being an innkeeper is an honorable profession, but farming is just as honorable...if not more so. As a noblewoman, I never allow myself to forget that without farmers, no-one eats...from the king on down! Your brother-in-law would do well to think on that."

Amyleryn continues, "I don't know if it is a proper thing to ask, but I will anyway...your brother-in-law's inn is very nice, but is somewhat expensive." Amyleryn gives the pie maker a wry

smile. "I expect to be in Kiban for a while. Do you know of another inn, or a place to rent here, that we could stay at? Nothing fancy, just clean, and with reasonable rates."

"Truth be tull'ed," she answers, "Kiban ant as many inns as it needs – especially during de faire. Other dan de Silver Way, dere be de Wall Witch Inn and de Riverman Inn. De Wall Witch Inn be vool uv workers on de town wall – masons, carpenters and zitch. De Riverman Inn be vool of cutthroats and dieves. Ee could easily get robbed dere bit it be nat a place vor comfortable lodging. Other dan dey, dere be a number uv guildhalls dey provide 'ospitality to deir members – masons, timberwrights, mercantylers, ztevedores teamsters. Den uv course dere be the Crossed Pikes, what most wud call a mutton zhop except I dink dey wud be an insult to bleeting cheat. No, if ee 'ave lodging tarl, it be best to keep what ee 'ave."

Amyleryn says, "Thank you for your advice. We'll stay where we are then."

Taking her time drinking her wine and eating her pie in order to enjoy them fully, Amyleryn continues to walk through the faire until...

At this point a ragged, one-armed beggar says to Amyleryn, "Alms vor de poor, milady?"

Amyleryn smiles at the beggar and says: "I'll give you a penny in exchange for the news, gossip and rumors that have been floating around Kiban for the last tenday. Felada, give the man a penny."

Having settled into the sights and sounds of the faire for most of the trip, Terias suddenly grows more alert as if coming out of a stupor or remembering something. While Amyleryn speaks with the beggar, he glances around the area wearily.

As Felada warily gives him a penny, he says, "Dere 'as bin wisht goings on at de castle. It be vool uv demonologists and necromancers dabbling een dey dings dey be better leff alone. Dere 'ave bin ztrangely robed figures prowling de walls late at darkmans accompanied by zounds uv weird chants and 'owls."

"May de lady bless ee," he adds as he hurries away into the crowd.

Amyleryn's eyes light up at the beggar's tale, and after he's gone on his way, she turns to the others and says: "Now we're getting somewhere! I wouldn't be surprised if the things he said about the castle are associated with the mutants we encountered on the road. Now, more than ever, I've got get us invited inside the castle." Getting a business-like tone to her voice, she says: "Be especially alert to anything you hear that might be even remotely connected to mutants and the goings on at the castle."

She continues walking about the faire.

Looking at Amyleryn with a smile, Zedeon says, "I hope so M'Lady. Seems like we were goin' in circles there for a moment."

Zedeon keeps a keen eye on the crowd, scanning from conversation to conversation.

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Terias right hand slowly moves to the hilt of his sword where it rests while he walks around the faire. On occasion he looks over his shoulder watching the ongoings behind him.