

8-NÚZYÆL-720 KIBAN, KALDOR

2ND WATCH [COOL, CLOUDY, SOUTHWEST GALE, HEAVY RAIN]
As the heavy winds continue, the rain comes down harder.

With most of the matters having been discussed and settled, Terias jerks his head looking towards Ralif and then begins to step outside mentioning "Let's retrieve the bench for the lady. She needs her rest."

You get no more than a hundred paces down the road when a tall blonde man dressed as a Sarajin priest approaches you and asks, in heavily accented Harnic, for alms to help a visitor who is down on his luck.

Without consideration and noticing the man's holy vestments, Terias reaches for the pouch he is carrying with him and offers five denarii, "From one member of clergy to another, this what I can offer. If y'need further aid I'd recommend seeking out the Peonian temple in town. If you wish, we'll be heading there soon enough and you can join us. Otherwise may Larani guard you."

The priest starts when you give him Larani's blessing, then with a bit of a smirk says, "Thank you and may Sarajin grant you a strong right arm so that you may vanquish all of your foes until you reach the hall of heroes."

Terias simply grins hearing the priest offer a counter blessing.

The remainder of your trip to the house of Ralif's uncle is uneventful and you reach there just as the household staff are stirring from their beds and preparing the house for the day.

Once at the door, Terias stands to the side allowing Ralif a chance to handle matters.

Gwelea, the magistrate's housekeeper, opens the door at that moment and says, "Maister Ralif! I be zo glad ee 'ave returned. Yer uncle 'as suddenly taken ill and 'as gaw to 'is bade. I wuz jist gwain to fetch de doctor."

Ralif's face suddenly turns very grave as he digests the information he's just received. "Thank you Gwelea," says Ralif, "I'll be returning home immediately."

"I guess this is where we must part company, " he says, turning to Terias. "I'm sorry I couldn't come along on this adventure. Perhaps I'll be able to come on another one in the furture. In the meantime, if you need any assistance with anything, please ask - I'll help in any way I can." He puts his hand on Terias' shoulder. "Say farewell to Lady Amyleryn for me." Not waiting for Terias to respond, Ralif turns quickly and begins running towards his home.

Trying to gather his thoughts by the exchange and Ralif's quick parting, Terias barely manages, "Larani shield you and yours."

He then turns to Gwelea still a bit flustered, "Eh, erm apologies. I had come with Ralif t'retrieve a bench we were t'use at the Magistrate's allowance. Would it be possible to borrow it? Lady Odasart of Kiban is need o'transport on account of her grave injuries."

Once more Terias returns through the dark streets of Kiban to arrive at the bathhouse followed by two of the Rudethe servants

and a wooden bench. The three of them gently load Lady Odasart onto the bench and carry her through the dark streets to arrive at the temple of Peoni. The porter immediately leads them to the infirmary and helps transfer Lady Odasart to an empty bed. As the servants leave with the bench, the morning curfew bell rings.

After Amyleryn is settled in, Terias inquires with one of the Peonian clergy present, "Would you mind terribly allowing me some respite for a few hours? After the day and night I have had the chance would be most welcome. Please do not let me tarry longer then that as I've matters to see to." While the Matakea inquires he reaches into his pack and offers a five silver tithe to the church.

"Certainly my son," says the porter indicating another empty bed, "shall I wake you at the first of the third watch?"

"Aye, please." Terias replies as he heads over to the bed and begins to tug off his boots, "I'll be out like a log, so feel free t'give me a solid nudge when it's time t'wake."

Felada pulls a stool up next to Amyleryn's bed and dozes off while sitting up.

8-NÚZYÆL-720 KIBAN, KALDOR

3RD WATCH [COLD, CLOUDY, NORTHWEST GALE]

[OO: I haven't seen a message saying what Susi is doing since the bathhouse when she was talking to Lady Amyleryn. I'll assume she has come along and back fill it if you tell me later.]

One of the priestesses of Peoni, gently wakes Terias and says, "It is the first of the third watch master."

Groggily Terias wakes from the bed he looks to the priestess and offers a quiet nod of thanks. Slowly he dresses himself in the armor he cleaned the night before. Finally tugging on his boots he stands up straight.

Terias looks around to see Felada and Susi stirring looking slightly more refreshed than he feels. No doubt they got a couple of more hours sleep and where not trudging through the sewers.

Felada says, "If you will permit, we should go to the money lender first and then to the physician. I have taken the liberty to ask directions from the priestess."

After stretching out his back and raising his arms up high, Terias replies with, "Of course Felada. But I also need t'go immediately after to the Hall of the Mangai. Hrm let me find out when they meet."

Terias turns his attention to one of the passing priestesses and asks, "Pardon me, but do you know when the Mangai hold session? There was a matter with a gargun in town last night that's being settled this morn. I wish not to miss it as I had a hand in the matter." The Matakea then inserts right after he finishes speaking, "Oh and directions if you could please."

"I know not when they meet and probably none do but the members of the council. You probably will not be able to attend their meeting without an invitation," she says, "as to their location, the hall is next to the physician who I directed your companion to just now."

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Furrowing his brow in consideration, Terias says to himself, "We could try the Magistrate to request an invitation. Though it'll be like walking on egg shells. He's as formal as can be and I fear my tongue may see me lashed before admitted. Still t'is worth the effort. Though t'would go smoother if Lady Odasart were not held up." Facing Felada, Terias says, "Let us make our way to his place first to see."

Leaving the temple of Peoni, you turn left and travel the short distance to the Magistrate's house. The housekeeper, Gwelea answers your knock and immediately says, "I be zorry bit de vam-lee be nat zeeing visitors jist now."

Terias nods somberly and says to Gwelea, "Aye understood. I'd hoped everything was better. I shall offer a prayer and blessing to the Lady tonight."

Once the housekeeper has shut the door, Terias says without looking to Felada, "Looks like we've hit an impasse here. Since it's on our way, I suppose we can try the Hall on our own and see if fortune favors the bold."

Next, Felada leads the way back past the temple of Peoni, turning left before the gate in the city wall, and along the road past the ostler's commons to arrive at the money lender. A guard at the door says that Terias must leave his weapons at the door or wait here for the lady's return.

Terias says nothing; simply and slowly hands over his spear, dagger and shortsword in turn. He is careful to hand the hilt of the weapons to the guardsman. The Matakea then follows Felada inside the usurer and waits patiently behind her.

Entering the room, you notice that it is very crowded with a couple of guards, the master mercantylor and four clerks, studiously writing in ledgers.

"Good morning to you," says the mercantylor, "I am master Dorrall of Dalgla. How can I help you?"

"We have come to redeem this bearer bond," Felada says to him, holding out the piece of paper.

Master Dalgla takes the paper, examines it and then calls out to one of the clerks, "What is the current service fee for the mercantylers in Qualdris?"

"That would be 20d per pound, master," the clerk answers.

"Very well. I need 880d," Master Dalgla says and the clerk quickly counts out the coins and puts them into a bag.

As the mercantylor gives the bag of coins to Felada, she asks, "would you happen to know of a house that we could lease for a month or two?"

"I know of three such places each of approximately the same size and value as the other," Master Dalga answers, "but none of them have furnishings or other amenities. You can stay in any one of them for 75d per month."

"I will discuss it with my mistress and get back to you," Felada says.

Turning to Terias, she says, "Unless you say otherwise, shall we be off to the inn to pay our bill?"

Terias sincerely asks in response to Felada, "Would y'mind heading to the physician next? This way I can see if I can gain attendance t'Mangai Hall? Having been involved in yesterdays gargun matter they may let me in and I'd rather not miss it."

"As you wish," Felada says, leading the way outside so Terias can collect his weapons.

Felada heads down the road she was told is Chelebin Way and just as you are turning right on Dariune Road, you notice somebody on the west side of the crowded Dariune Square, shouting, "The world is about to end! Look to the moon!"

Terias looks to the west, trying to spot the particular person yelling. "All sorts", he mutters, then clarifies, "Y'get all sorts in larger towns eh Felada?" Terias then steals a glance to the sky as he continues to walk.

"Especially in these foreign cities," Felada says with a chuckle.

Arriving at the physician, Felada enters and pays the 177d owed. Leaving the physician, Felada leads the way around the buildings to get to the hall of the Mangai. She steps back so that Terias can enter when a woman in ragged clothes approaches Terias and asks, "Do ee know where zomeone uv limited means, bit a 'umble disposition, can find lodging?"

Terias offers a sympathetic smile and says warmly to the woman, "Ate, the Peonian temple would be more then willing to assist you in your time of need. I spent the night there myself. They treated me as a guest and didn't question why I was in the situation that required shelter."

She says, "Thank you, milord." Then hugs you, kisses you on the cheek and runs off down the road.

Terias feeling a little unsettled by the unwarranted attention, reaches into his pack as he steps inside the Hall. He rifles through his things carefully to ensure everything is still there.

He finds that one of his money pouches is gone. He did not feel it slip away so he is unsure whether it was stolen or if he dropped it. When he counts his money he finds 77d are gone.

The Matakea sighs to himself looking over his shoulder out the door, then places his pack back on. Looking to Felada, "Seems I've met a cut purse...or I'm just fool headed with my coin. Keep what you have close, it appears even my presence as a priest and warrior doesn't deter thieves."

Entering the Hall of the Mangai, you see a reception area with a clerk behind a desk, working on papers in front of him.

Terias shakes his head and makes his way to the clerk, offering a polite introduction, "Good day t'you good man. I am Matakea Terias of Forniad. Yesterday I was the first witness who spotted a gargun flee into the sewers. As well as was given leave to give chase after it. Magistrate Rudethe mentioned a meeting here today t'go over the events. I was wondering if I could be granted attendance on the matter?"

"Granted attendance? No, I cannot allow that," says the clerk, "give me the information you would like to relate and I will pass it on to those concerned. If they wish more from you, I will let you know."

Terias says, "Aye I understand. My belief was I may be needed and I did not wish to disregard the law. I simply wanted to let it be known of Lady Odasart's and my own findings whilst in the sewers.", Terias says a bit dejectedly, then adds cautiously, "One item of note was a khuzdul skull we had seen in passing, yet t'was gone on return. The Magistrate informed us a gargun skull was recovered by others at a separate location? If it wouldn't be to bold on my part, can I ask who claimed to have found it? And if there was any attempt to verify the skulls origins?"

"As long as you do not flee the town," the clerk says, "they will find you when they need you. In regard to your findings, tell me what they are and I will relay the message. I have heard nothing of a khuzdul skull but the gargun skull was found by Fonor of Stippa and it was his warehouse where it was found. Verifying the origin was not necessary, it was a gargun skull and there was a gargun missing. Since we have so few gargun running around loose, they must be the same."

".F.S", Terias mouths to himself hearing the name. After the clerk finishes speaking, the Matakea nods curtly.

Gathering his thoughts for a moment, he finally says in his best congenial manner, "Fair enough. I believe the gargun to be dead as well, but wanted to be sure the skull presented was truly that of a gargun. Lady Odasart's quite knowledgeable in the area of anatomy I believe if an expert is needed. She's also the one to speak with regarding what was uncovered whilst in the sewers. Because she's both a noble and better equipped t'explain what was found. For the next while she'll be recovering at the Peonian temple from an injury she received whilst we were in the sewers. And if I am needed I can be found at the Laranian temple."

"So what you are telling me is that we suddenly have an expert on garguns in town coincidentally when a gargun escapes in the sewers and you have a tale to tell but it is best told by a noble woman who is so destitute that she must accept the hospitality of the Guardian of the Meek," says the clerk, "It sounds to me as if you take delight in wasting my time."

Terias' demeanour shifts from being cordial to being cold as he places both his hands on the clerks desk, leaning forward to say bluntly, "What you have is a -noblewoman- first and foremost, who's station is above us lest you forgot. What you have is a noblewoman who is a learned follower of the Sage. What you have is a noblewoman who arrived from Hesby just the other day and has yet to establish herself. What you have is a noblewoman who risked her life and willing ventured into the sewers to aid this town and was found very badly injured in the late hours of the night and is recovering under the hospice of the Peonian temple until she can be moved while receiving the best treatment available in Kiban."

Standing upright and tugging down his tunic, "On the matter of wasting your time, I find it best not to make accusations without proof. Thus why I have remained vague and it is why I did not throw out my own theories - merely offered you the chance to dig deeper into this matter. The choice is yours. Larani shield you."

About to turn away, Terias glances back to the clerk, "By the by I believe I was robbed of some coin while traveling to the hall this day. Any point in reporting it? Or is it a part of city living I should learn to cope with. I can't be certain who t'was, but I have a guess."

"Now you are implying that we cannot deal with crime in our streets?" the clerk asks, "If you have proof of a crime you should report to the town watch but you should know you can be fined for making false accusations."

Shaking his head, closing his eyes and taking in a calming breath, "Pull from my words what you will. I asked what I could do as I have no proof.", Terias utters before he turns and leaves the Hall.

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Once Felada and Terias have gone off on their errands, Amyleryn says: "Susi, come sit with me." As Susi sits in the chair next to her bed, Amyleryn gingerly props herself up in a sitting position and says: "So, tell me about yourself. Tell me about the woman I've taken into my service."

Susi addresses Amyleryn, "Not meaning to sound overly cryptic or evasive my lady, there is really not that much to tell. I am a harper from Kiban, brought up by my Uncle. I was learned to sing and play the lute and recorder while at home. My family was fairly well off, but I left so that I might share my musical gift with others and avoid being married off to some local suitor. I would be welcome at home should I not be able to make it on my own, but I do not want to go back. At home, I was able to convince my Liege that if he were to treat the peasants better, that they would work harder on his behalf and he would thereby earn their respect and admiration. He did and what I said came to pass, in fact, my Lute was given to me as a gift in appreciation by the people in our region. I am here, in your employ, as I mentioned earlier, not for monetary gain, but to gather experiences that I might convert to verse and song, to share with others."

"Come, come. There's more to a life than that. Who is your Liege Lord?" Amyleryn asks.

Susi says that her liege lord is Earl Troda Dariune of Kiban.

Amyleryn continues: "Do you have any siblings? What God do you worship? Have you ever been in love? Is there anything you are afraid of? Do you have any interests in anything other than entertaining? What was your girlhood like?" Placing a hand gently on Susi's arm, Amyleryn says: "You see? There's a lot more to all of us beyond the mere recitation of our occupations."

Susi says to Amyleryn: "I have 2 brothers (one older than myself) and a sister. Given my occupation, I am devoted to the Goddess Halea, and while my devotion is high, my instruction beyond the basic is sadly lacking. In love? I have been in love often and give my love (not my body, you understand) to everyone, but I am not seeking a single attachment, perhaps someday, but, not in the immediate future. I love entertaining, and that is my single passion. I do love the city of my birth, Kiban...which is where I was brought up. My Uncle encouraged my musical interests, perhaps overly so....but I also

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learned to read and write while assisting them in their business dealings...they were mercantylers. I am not overly fond of snakes, My Lady, but beyond that, I have no known fear, but I must admit, I am not experienced in many things, and it may be I have some hidden fear that I am not yet aware of.

Amyleryn says, "See? That's a fine start. That you can read and write is a very good thing. Tell me about your family."

"Earl Troda Dariune of Kiban is your liege lord, eh? Is your vassalage personal, or circumstantial...that is, you live here and he's the noble who rules here, so you are his vassal by default?" Amyleryn asks.

Plainly gathering her thoughts, Amyleryn says: "Here's the first bit of information for your future tale telling. For now, you will not reveal this to anyone...not even your family."

With a pause for effect, she says: "The Earl has not been seen in public in quite some time. As he has a claim, along with others, to the Throne when King Miginath eventually dies, the Earl's 'disappearance' has more than a passing interest for certain people elsewhere in the kingdom. Those people...who will remain nameless for now...sent myself and the others here to Kiban to discover what, if anything, has happened to the Earl."

Amyleryn continues "I decided to take you into my employ for two reasons. First, your knowledge of Kiban and the people who live here, will help the rest of us to operate here with a lot less notice. Second, being a minstrel, you will be able to be in places to overhear potentially useful information without arousing undue suspicion. Naturally, you will report to me all that you hear."

"That's enough for now." Amyleryn says. "'See if you can find some breakfast for us. Afterward, I'll tell you the tale of Terias' and my adventure in the sewers."

Susi goes back to the Silver Way Inn, where she was playing to earn her keep. She asks the innkeeper, "Would it be possible to obtain a breakfast for Lady Amyleryn and her companions, she has been injured and is at the temple seeking medical assistance?"

"Of course," says the innkeeper, "you can have as many breakfasts as you are willing to pay for. They are 5d each. How many should I prepare for you?"

Susi says to the Innkeeper "I will take 4 meals please" She pays for them out of her money. When they are ready she will take them to Lady Amyleryn.

The innkeeper arranges for the preparation of four meals with ham, soft boiled goose eggs, soft cheese, blueberries cooked millet with cream and cider. All served on china dishes with clean linen napkins. Two of the serving girls helps Susi carry the food so that they can return with the dishes.

8-NÚZYÆL-720 KIBAN, KALDOR

4TH WATCH [COLD, CLOUDY, NORTHWEST GALE]

Appearing to be a bit nervous about Terias' fierce outburst, Felada leads the way to the Silver Way Inn, in silence. Once there she pays the bill of 100d and quietly asks Terias, "should we keep the rooms?"

Seeming completely at ease, as if the previous dealing had washed over him, Terias replies kindly to Felada, "Considerin' the cost of the place the money lender mentioned is the same per month then this is per day, it'd be wise t'move in now and sleep uncomfortably until it's furnished. This still time in the day to even find some comforts like a blanket and such. But I'm guess'n it's something for the Lady to decide. I'll probably be at the temple either way if she'll have it." Terias then looks upstairs and back to Felada, "Let me go and gather my things, I left'em with Zedeon."

In the room, Terias finds his belongings on the bed but there is no sign of Zedeon or his belongings. He picks up his pack and longbow, then returns to the inn reception area.

"I believe I have done what is required of me," says Felada, "where should we go next? Do a little shopping before the stores close? Hire a cart for milady's transportation? What would be your pleasure?"

Slinging his bow over his shoulder as Felada speaks to him, Terias' eyes settle on her once she's asked him their plans, "Well I'm think'n we should report to Lady Amyleryn. Pickin' up a cart will do us little good without a destination in mind. Not t'mention take up space in the Peonian temple."

While the pair walk back Terias' eyes scan over those in the immediate vicinity, keeping his guard up to anyone passing close by.

As you make your way through the crowded streets, staring at the passersby just causes them to stare at you in return. You arrive back at the temple uneventfully just as the clergy are serving pottage and small ale to those in the hospital.

Felada says to Amyleryn, "Milady, I have collected the money, paid the physician and the innkeeper, gave up our rooms at the inn per the Matakea's suggestion, and learned from the moneylender there are three buildings available for rent at 75d per month but they have no furniture, linens or anything. Even if we cannot afford to buy a cart, we should be able to hire a cart and a housekeeper and rent a house for less than it would be to stay at the inn. What may be your instructions?"

"Yes," Amyleryn says "we will rent a house and hire a housekeeper. Set it up to be month-to-month."

"I want you to go look at all three of the houses. The criteria I want you to use to select one of them, is...the top priority...the house needs to be sound and maintained in good condition. We don't want it falling down around our ears and have to spend large sums of money on upkeep. In the category of maintenance and upkeep, I include vermin...or I should say, a lack of vermin insofar as is possible."

"Second priority, the surrounding neighborhood needs to be considered. I don't want us to be living in a neighborhood that is obviously crawling with assassins and cutpurses, or downwind from a tannery." Here Amyleryn gives Felada and Terias a grin.

"Third priority, I'd like it to be as close to the center of town as possible. I'll be bedridden for quite a while, so I'll be sending all of you on various errands. I don't want most of your time taken up with getting from one place to another."

"As for a housekeeper," and Amyleryn addresses Felada "you know as much as anyone alive about the qualifications needed. If more than one potential housekeeper has suitable qualifications, select the one that seems to you to be the most discrete." Holding up a hand to forstall comment from Felada, she says: "I know, determining a person's discretion without knowing them for a long time is practically impossible, but do the best you can."

"Once a house has been rented, and a housekeeper has been retained, buy beds and linens for those of us who will be living there. Nothing elaborate mind you... including mine...just warm and comfortable. The cost should include their delivery to the house. We will need lighting for after dark as well. Other furnishings and supplies can be acquired as we determine the need."

"After the beds and linens are on their way to the house, acquire those writing materials I mentioned, and hire a carter to carry me to our new residence. Also see if you can find something I can put on my lap as I lay propped up in bed, that will serve as a surface to put parchment or vellum on so I can write without poking holes through what I'm writing on. A short, smooth piece of plank would do, if you can't find something purpose-made for a reasonable price."

Putting a hand on Felada's arm, Amyleryn says gently: "My dear Felada...I've given you much to do in a short time. If not for my headstrong stubbornness while down in the sewers, I would not have to demand so much of you...I'm sorry."

Looking around, Felada says, "Where has that minstrel gotten to? She does not appear to be very reliable does she?"

Amyleryn says, "She went in search of breakfast for us. I did not expect that she would go to Tashal to get it!" and she chuckles. "In the expectation of her returning with breakfast at any moment, I have declined the meal offered here in the temple. I won't starve if I miss one meal, and in any case, there are others here who need it more that I do."

* * *

Once inside the temple the Matakea looks around trying to spot any recognizable faces. When the opportunity presents itself, he inquires with any of the attending and available clergy, "Sorry t'bother. I was wondering if you'd seen either a Sarajinan priest or a woman arrive this day?"

Terias goes on to further describe the woman who he encountered on the street outside of Mangai Hall as best he can.

"We have seen the priest earlier but not the woman you describe," the cleric answers.

Terias chimes in after Felada has finished speaking, "Lady Amyleryn, only one thing of import was gained from visiting the Hall as the clerk would not grant me entry into the meeting. The one who found the skull was the owner of a warehouse it was supposedly in. His name is Fonor of Stippa. Your mind is far sharper than mine so you've already made the link, but for clarity, t'is the same initials on the handkerchief we found."

Amyleryn states: "I suspected that something like this might happen. I'm disappointed, but not surprised. I want you to find

out what you can about this Fonor of Stippa. Be discrete. I don't want him to know he's being watched. If he owns a warehouse, he must deal in goods of some kind. Find out what that is. Also, see where he lives. See what you can find out about how prosperous he is, who his associates are, what kind of influence he has in and around Kiban. I'm coming to the conclusion that whoever is responsible for what we found in the sewers, is connected to the 'disappearance' of the Earl. Fonor of Stippa may be a false lead, but we won't know until we check him out."

Terias nods curtly then asks, "Aye. Best way to learn about him is directly. I'm thinking employment of some sort for him. What do you think of that m'lady?"

Amyleryn says, "Hmm. That might work. Before you try to gain employment with Fonor though, I'll need you to accompany Felada while she makes these expenditures that will require her to carry a lot of money on her person. After that's done, go ahead and see if you can find work that will put you in a position to find out what Fonor's up to."

Changing subjects, Amyleryn says to Terias: "If you wish to stay at the temple of Larani, you have my permission to do so. Just make your decision now, so Felada will know how many beds to purchase."

Looking between Amyleryn and Felada, "No need to decide, I'd prefer to stay at the temple."

"If I am to be spending large amounts of money, I will need someone to protect me from thieves," says Felada, "Why, just a short time ago the Matakea was robbed of some of his money. Though he appears to be too humble to mention it."

Stiffing up as Felada mentions the cutpurse, while holding back a frown, Terias retorts, "Aye, I didn't want t'trouble Lady Odasart with it. I plan t'head to the watch barracks and report it. Don't expect much to come of it though." The Laranian warrior-priest then adds, "I'd be glad to escort you about Felada, but considering how easily I was taken for, I may not be the best choice."

"And when were you planning to tell me about your mishap" Amyleryn asks, a little of the fire still in her eyes from her tongue-lashing of the Peonian cleric. Relenting, she says: "Terias...and you too" including Felada and Susi "..., I need to be informed of absolutely everything that happens to each of you. In this case, a loss of money can affect when we have to redeem another of those bearer bonds. Given our mission here...and my inability to actively contribute to the investigation...no detail is too trivial to mention."

"That you can be made the fool, just shows you to be human," says Felada, "You can still provide physical protection as I have seen you fight and you lack not of courage when needed."

Looking around as if she has just noticed something, Amyleryn asks Terias and Felada: "Where is Zedeon?"

In response to Amyleryn's question, Terias mentions, "Eh he wasn't in his room, nor were his things. I'd hoped he'd come here or was on errand for you, Lady Odasart. Speaking of departures, I'm thinkin' Ralif's left us. His uncle fell ill and he took off in a hurry to see to him, wishing us all well as he did."

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Amyleryn says, "Well, Ralif was not in my service, so his departure is not serious. I hope the Magistrate regains his health."

Continuing in a more serious tone, Amyleryn says: "Zedeon, on the other hand, is another matter. Either he got lost trying to find out where we had gone, he's been kidnapped, or he has gone off without my permission. If we see him again, he'll have some serious explaining to do. For now, I'll give him the benefit of the doubt."

"Felada, get bedding for five people. For me, for you, for Susi, and for the housekeeper. The fifth set of bedding will be for Zedeon if he returns with a plausible excuse for his absence...otherwise, it will serve for a guest if we have one."

After looking to Amyleryn's hip, Terias mentions "M'lady, I can try again to ease the pain in your wound by communing with the Lady. Though I imagine Peonian cleric could further aid you .. if you made the proper tithe and inquiry."

As an afterthought, Terias tells Amyleryn, "Hrm now that I mention it m'lady, the invocation I performed last eve only allows for healing once on a wound. Best t'go with the Peonian clergy or if don't feel comfortable stay with the physician."

While Felada and Amyleryn discuss matters, Terias fidgets about then a look crosses his face as if he were struck by a thought. He reaches over and lifts his longbow off his back. After toying with it for a few moments he bends the wood and slides the string off the ends tucking it away into his pack. Then grips both his spear and unstrung bow with his right hand.

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Susi and the serving girls from the Inn arrive with four large meals. One of the clerics looks at this and says to Lady Amyleryn, "You should be ashamed of yourself...taking advantage of the charity of others and then having such finery brought to you. Yes, I know you are of the nobility and deserve such but others are here simply because they cannot afford anything else."

Rounding on the cleric, Amyleryn erupts: "Cleric or no, you will hold your tongue and not speak to me in such a tone again! I suggest that in future, you ascertain all of the facts before speaking and placing yourself in jeopardy!"

Calming slightly, Amyleryn continues: "It would have been a simple matter for you to have found out that I arrived here at the temple in the very early hours of the morning, when there was no other place to go at that hour."

"I would think that the evidence of your eyes," and she indicates the splint contraption she's wearing "...noting that I'm trussed up like a bird ready for a holiday meal...might make you wonder what happened to me." With a slight pause for effect, she goes on: "It happens that some idiot brought a gargun to the freak show at the fair yesterday, and let the thing escape. It fled into the sewers, and the Matakia" here indicating Terias "and I went in after it. I was injured in the process. The gargun is now dead. It was a female, and if, by chance, it had been pregnant and not disposed of, in a short time the sewers would have been infested with them, and people would be disappearing. I'll have a little respect from you, and everyone else, for taking on a job that

should have been done by the town watch...the doing of which got me injured!" and Amyleryn's eyes are smoldering.

Calming further, Amyleryn says: "I will be leaving the temple just as soon as my maid" indicating Felada "can make arraignments for a place for me to stay. When I asked my new retainer" gesturing to Susi "to get us some breakfast, it was my intent for her to get some of what everyone else was having...not this feast. I will be speaking to her about this in private once we've left the temple. In the meantime," turning to the two serving girls who are holding the food from the inn "you lot...go with one of these other clerics and give that food to the neediest persons here in the temple. When you've done that, bring me and my companions a portion of what they normally serve for breakfast here. Move!"

Turning back to the cleric who had spoken, Amyleryn, her voice heavy with sarcasm, asks: "Do you have anything further to say to me?"

With fire in her eyes, the priestess says, "That is a fine way to express your gratitude for our help. If you think being of the nobility permits such venomous remarks, I will inform you that most of the clergy and volunteers at this temple are lesser sons and daughters of nobility so take not any airs upon yourself for that. As to your fanciful tales of monsters and what you and this noble cleric have been up to, I choose not to believe you...save it for the minstrel's tales. If you are so fine and mighty, you should have a great deal of friends to provide their hospitality at all hours of the night and you should have better control of those who look to you for guidance. I will have you know that we do not pander to the nobility's habit of breaking the fast with rich foods. We can only afford one meal a day and do not wish to make our patients, who are not used to such delicacies, to become ill from what they eat. You must tell your maid to work fast because, after I tell the head of our order about your conduct, you will most likely be asked to leave. We are required to help those in need but you seem to have confused need with convenience and are determined to value your needs above others'."

You hear a gasp of shock from the doorway and a female cleric approaches saying, "Lertovana! You speak above your station." Turning to Lady Odasart, she continues, "I am Pelnala Elane of Carandaen, the head of this temple. While it is true that we do not allow consideration of social status to change our aid to the needy, we do value the relative need of our guests and the rules of hospitality. If she has not introduced herself, this is Lertovana Celenian of Taunmaller, our healer. Like myself, she is the daughter of one of the local manors and she has difficulty dealing with the fact that her gentility should not effect her service to Peoni. As to the situation of the moment, while the patient may remain, everyone else must leave and I must ask you to leave any future communications with me to be passed on. That includes servants, retainers, even the ones with the food...take that back from whence it came. Lertovana, you are to spend all of your free time until further notice, in prayer with the patients and the only topics of discussion will be our religious beliefs and the rules of hospitality. Do I make myself clear?"

"Yes, mam," says Lertovana Carandaen looking obedient but clearly unhappy.

"Pardon me for just a moment Pelnala Elane...and forgive me if I've addressed you incorrectly. I've never met the head of a temple of Peoni before." Amyleryn says. Turning to Felada, she says: "I've given you plenty to do. Go see to the doing of it. When all is ready, come back and fetch me. I'll be alright here in the meantime. The rest of you...do as the Pelnala instructs. Shoo."

Susi accompanies Felada asking her, "Is there something I can do to assist you?"

"Certainly," Felada answers, "I will be interviewing a new housekeeper and looking for craftspeople to furnish a house. You can help in evaluating personalities and guiding me to the stores. I foresee we will need a water barrel, three wood frame beds, two straw pallets, five heavy blankets, five light blankets, a broom, a wooden bucket, a chair, five tin plates, three copper pans, five wooden spoons, five ounces of soap, a table with two benches, and five wooden bowls. For milady's writing kit, we will need a pint of black ink, a copper ink well, nine square feet of parchment and a dozen quill pens. Therefore, at the very least we will need to visit a carpenter, a clothier, a metalsmith and a lithographer. If you would, please give some thought as to where we can get the best bargains for those things and let me know if there will be anything else we will need."

"Yes, milady," says Felada, "and if I am unable to get it all arranged today should I stay at that inn that we were in last night?"

With a sigh, Amyleryn says: "While that inn has good service and is clean, it also charges accordingly. Susi is from Kiban. See if she can direct you to an acceptable place to stay that will be a bit less costly. If there are no such places...then yes, stay at the Silver Way."

Turning back to the Pelnala and the Lertovana, Amyleryn says: "My thanks to you Pelnala Elane, and, if you will accept it, my apologies to you Lertovana Celenian. Perhaps if I start over, with a modicum of calm, the Sage of Heaven will grant us understanding."

"I am the Lady Amyleryn Odasart, eldest child of Sir Dalfougo Odasart, holder of Hesby Manor in Meselyneshire, and grand niece of Lord Fugys Odasart, Royal Weaponcrafter. I am in Kiban on some affairs of my great uncle Fugys."

"On my way to Kiban, my party was attacked by a group of mutants. We dispatched them with no loss to ourselves, and continued on here to Kiban."

"On our second day here in Kiban, yesterday, a female gargun escaped from the freak show at the faire and fled into the sewers." Going off on a slight tangent, she says: "The gargun's escape happened in broad daylight in front of a crowd of people. I'm surprised you haven't heard about it by now...the accounts of the escape must be all over town, and being told in taverns on the way to all of the neighboring shires."

"I have to say that I was shocked at the indifference of the town watch to the creature that was now beneath the streets of Kiban. It made no difference to them when I pointed out the possibility

that the gargun might be pregnant, and the consequences if she gave birth down there."

"Even though I am a stranger to Kiban, and could have conducted my business and left Kiban to it's fate, I take my responsibilities as a noble seriously. When it became obvious that the watch wasn't going to do anything, the Matakea Terias and I pursued the gargun down into the sewers. The gargun is now dead."

"Since I've been in Kiban, I've been treated rudely and with a disrespect that wouldn't be tolerated if a serf were treated in that manner back home. I've endured the unbelievable stench of the sewers, gotten very little sleep in the last two days, and received a fractured hip for my service to a community that apparently doesn't know the meaning of the word, gratitude."

Addressing the Lertovana directly, Amyleryn says: "I hope you can understand my outburst of temper, and accept my apology. I've had to struggle with my temper for a long time, and though I've been mostly successful in this, I am fallible and have my limits. I'm sorry."

"I accept your apology and give mine as well for losing my temper," says the Lertovana, "That is not our way."

Amyleryn says, "I accept your apology as well. Thank you."

Turning to the Pelnala, Amyleryn asks: "Pelnala Elane, what is going on in Kiban?"

"Well, that is quite a tale you tell and I have neither the ability nor the interest in judging the truth of it," the Pelnala says, "We try to keep ourselves separate from the intrigues of the community so that we may remain impartial in our hospitality. However, if even half of it is true, I can understand how trying it can be. I pray that we can help you maintain your tolerance and patience while you are here with us. Please keep in mind, that while I have asked Lertovana Celenian to instruct you in our ways, that is not a license to indulge in gossip...she has no need to know of what goes on outside the temple...The Guradian of the Meek will protect us from the dangers of the world or will teach us to accept what befalls us with courage."

* * *

Terias offers a slight and polite bow to Amyleryn when dismissed and heads outside to wait for Felada and Susi. Once the two women meet up with him, the Matakea asks, "So off to the money lender about a townhouse? Anything further Felada? For my part I'd like to visit the Watch barracks to report the theft of my coin, then before the day is done head to the Larianian temple to let them know I intend to stay the night and onwards."

"I suspect the moneylender and the housekeeper will be all we can do today since, if this is like other towns, most of the shops will be closing by then. Once Susi recommends a place to stay and you accompany us there it should be safe enough for you to leave us." Blushing a moment, Felada says, "listen to me dismissing you like I was her ladyship, herself. Of course you are free to leave when you please."

"Nay yer act'n as her voice, so y've my full attention Felada." Terias says in all seriousness.

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Susi says to Felada "The only Inn that would suit Lady A's status would be the The Silver Way Inn, however, for information gathering purposes, the Riverman Inn might be a better choice, it's a bit of a dive, but it's a favorite of sailors.....and we may be able to find out information from them....it's also closer to the docks and we may be able to get some deals there on the supplies that we need."

"Very well," says Felada, "as long as you think it will be safe for two women on their own."

Susi says to Felada, "I think we should be safe enough, now shall we set about on our errands?"

As the three walk the streets, Terias glances over to Susi and says, "I do not believe we have met formally. I am Terias of Forniad. A Matakea and Ataken in the Order of the Lady of Paladins. Currently in service to Lady Odasart."

Once the others have left to deal with the money and lodging, Amyleryn gets as comfortable as her injury allows and tries to catch up on her prayers to Save K'nor. After she gives the God thanks for things in general, the focus of her praying turns to a request for enlightenment on psionics.

Once she finishes her hour-long prayer, she notices a visitor to the patient in the next bed, who says, "Trust me cousin, we of the Savorya know much of such psionic talents and they are perfectly natural. Once you gain a modicum of control, you will even enjoy them as a sort of minor magic...although they can be a bit wild and hard to control."

Hearing what is said at the bed next to her, Amyleryn speaks up and says: "Excuse me, but I couldn't help but overhear what you just said. I am the Lady Amyleryn Odasart and I am of the Lyahvi convocation. Who might you and your cousin be?"

"Well met, milady. I am Killassan of Nillta, one of the local lexigraphers," he answers. "I am a viran of the Savorya convocation myself. My cousin and apprentice is Mestynyl. Is there ought that we can do to serve you?"

"And well met to you as well, Master Killassan." Amyleryn replies with a smile. "And to you also Mavari Mestynyl. Actually, I'm hoping that you CAN help me with something. The good people here at the temple have allowed me to stay in this infirmary while my lady's maid is arraigning a residence for us. I had a bit of a mishap, hence my presence in the infirmary. While waiting, I prayed to Save K'nor. Some general thanks, then I asked for Divine intervention with regard to psionics and myself. No sooner had I finished, then I hear you speak of psionics to your cousin."

Amyleryn blushes and says: "I must remember to be careful about asking the God for things, as a carelessly phrased request could cause unexpected harm." and she casts her eyes down momentarily.

Continuing: "I asked the God for intervention with regard to psionics because I am myself psionic. I have prescience, though I have had no training in it's use. What prompted my request, are some incidents recently that may mean that I may have additional psionic abilities. On two occasions, some small things spontaneously burst into flame, and on another occasion an object moved of it's own accord. Now, untrained prescience is

bad enough, but uncontrolled telekinesis and pyrokinesis could make me a hazard to myself and anyone around me. What I need is to be tested...if such a thing can be done, and your comment to your cousin seems to indicate that it can...to see if I do indeed have other psionic abilities. If so, then I would very much like to be trained to control my psionic abilities before I do harm to anyone. Can you help me Master Killassan?"

"Well, there appears to be two parts to your question, revelation and development," Master Killassan says. "I can cast Talesien's Eye and, if I am successful, it will reveal your dormant abilities. This will require time and effort so I must charge you a fee of 12d per attempt and I can only afford one attempt per day. As to development, psionic talents go through several stages. The earliest stage is dormancy when you know not that you have the talent and at that stage you cannot learn to better the talent by any means...even if you discover what the talent is, development still proceeds at its own speed. Once you have gone beyond dormancy, you can practice or be taught like any other skill but it requires three times the effort. This will require supporting me as your instructor and you will have to undergo days of meditation. Until you can reach a great deal of control, the psionic episodes you describe will become even more frequent. As you can see, it is not an easy path and having psionics is a very mixed blessing."

Amyleryn says, "I can certainly afford 12 pence per attempt until we know. It is worthwhile to know, even if the knowledge does not confer control. If the source of the incidents is not myself, then it must be one of my traveling companions...and knowing that is worthwhile as well."

"If it is determined that I am the source of the incidents, then I must get control and I would like you to take me on as a student."

Amyleryn gets a wry smile on her face and says: "Mixed blessing, indeed. As a Shek P'var, you can appreciate the chaos that could result if a psionic episode should occur during the casting of just about any spell!"

"Yes...quite," Master Killassan says. He takes the proffered coins and adds, "of course I must also mention, I can only train you in talents I already have and am sufficiently skilled at. For other talents I can tell if you have them but you will need to find someone with the talent to teach you."

"I understand, thank you." Amyleryn says.

He takes your hand and concentrates for a minute. He says, "Your dormant talents include the ability travel in the spiritual world, the ability to move objects without touching them, the ability to create fires, the ability to attack someone with your mind alone, you have the healer's touch, the ability to see events in remote locations, and the ability to see and travel through Barasi points to visit other worlds. Quite a formidable set of talents. The only talent I have in common and can teach you is the healer's touch but as I mentioned that will have to wait for it to develop further on its own."

"My goodness!" Amyleryn says, clearly surprised at the extensive list of abilities. After a pause to absorb this information, she says: "Well, that answers my question. Thank you, Master Killassan."

Changing tack slightly, Amyleryn continues: "I suppose it's possible that the incidents I spoke of could also have been caused by one or more of my traveling companions. My lady's maid is comfortable with the doings of the Shek P'var because of our long association. I will not command her to be tested, but if you and her are willing, I would be happy to pay you to test her for any psionic talents she may have. Would you be agreeable to doing that at your convenience if she consents to be tested?"

"Whatever I can do to be of service, milady," he answers. "My shop is on Dariune Square under the sign of the quill and parchment."

Amyleryn continues, "As for the rest of my companions, I don't know what their views about the Shek P'var are, so with them I'll leave well enough alone."

Changing the subject entirely, Amyleryn says: "Once I've gotten a suitable residence established, I would be honored if the two of you...and your spouses if you have them...would come to dinner at my home. Nothing fancy. I tend to be too frugal for ostentatious display. Noble I may be, rich I am not, I'm afraid." and she gives the two of them a rueful smile.

"I will reserve my decision until the time comes and I can check my social calendar," he answers. "And with that being said, I must get back to my shop. It has been nice meeting you, Lady Odasart."

* * *

Once more Felada leads the way to the money lender. She discusses the relative attributes of the available buildings and finally decides on one. [133]

"It is not what I would like for milady but it is the best available," she says quietly to Terias and Susi.

The moneylender tells her that he only knows of one housekeeper that is available on such short notice and he sends one of his apprentices to fetch her.

When she arrives a short while later, you can see that she is in her early teens, has brown hair, and brown eyes. In a pleasant voice, she says her name is Matilda of Verl, "I grew up on a large manor nair 'ere. I can cook and clain bit I know nat 'ow to zew. I ax only vor room and bait and a denier a day."

Looking to Terias and Susi, Felada asks, "Is there anything either of you wants to ask her?"

Susi says to Matilda "Do I know you, or do you know me?"

"I doubt that someone freeborn such as yourself would know any of the kitchen staff and I have only been granted my freedom recently so, no, I think not," Matilda answers.

Terias seems a bit off balance by the question, then eventually strings together a few questions, "Eh.. well.. that is.. hrm alright. What was it yer family did? And whose manor did you grow up?"

"My parents be zerfs zo dey do farming vor a living and I be vrim de Taunmaller manor. I wuz given left to zeek my fortune wain milady cumm'd yer to join de priesthood," Matilda replies.

Building up on a roll, the Matakea in Terias takes root when he asks, "Some folk think it pry'n, but consider'n I'm a member of the Laranian clergy, what worship do you take part in?"

"I worship de Lady uv Industrious Labors and de Ripe 'arvest. Be ee trying to find a worshipper uv Larani to cook and clain? If it please ee, I dink ee weel be long een gakin vor zitch a wan," she answers with a smile.

With a firm shake of his head, Terias says contently, "Nay, I just want t'be sure y'have a faith. And Peonian is truely the most virtuous in the Pantheon"

Then finally Terias asks Matilda, "How are y'with keep'n secrets an' handle'n the odd sight? .. That's somethin' I know Lady Odasart values." He glances over briefly to Felada, almost grinning, but resumes his full attention to the potential hire.

"I do nat gossip and ees fay keep de business uv my employers to mezel'. As to odd sights, I 'ave 'ad my zhare uv those. I jist awp dey weel nat cause ee to turn me down," she answers, looking concerned.

After hearing Matilda, Terias responds, "Good t'hear. We all have our secrets t'keep. T'is what trust is. Though you've peaked my interest. What's crossed your path? Anything in recent days?"

With a shy look on her young face, Matilda says "Well dere be dey which I know uv and dey which I know nat uv and I wud nat like to cut anything dey weel prevent ee from 'iring me. De only raizin I weel cut anything be cuz ee broft up de subject vust and, arter ee 'ave 'ired me ee be entitled to know what to appec." She looks to Felada for a decision.

"I think we can safely hire her," Felada says with a smile, "She cannot have experienced anything worse than we have already seen."

"Very well, goodwife," Matilda continues. "Uv de dings I know uv: I can zometimes zee dings dey be 'appening een far away places, I can zometimes tull if someone, ur something, be 'eaded vor danger, I can ztart fires jist by dinking 'bout it, I can move dings by concentrating on dey and I can zend doughts to others even wain dey be out uv sight. Other dings dey 'appen to me be dey I zometimes get 'eadaches ur dizzy zpells, and zometimes dey around me get dey as well. I get feelings uv jamais vu, which I be zure ee know be a zavise uv wonder and newness 'bout zomething I 'ave dude 'undreds uv times."

Terias seems satisfied, and a bit taken a back by what was said. After a moments silence he turns to Felada and asks, "Eh, now to the shops or the inn then?"

"I think to the inn as the shops are probably closed by now," Felada says. Pulling Terias aside for a moment, Felada whispers, "I would be obliged if you would take at least half this money with you since I have just as much chance of being robbed as you do and that way we will still have half as better than none. I am trusting the minstrel knows her town but, the idea of staying among a bunch of rowdy sailors, concerns me a bit."

Terias nods slowly as Felada speaks, then offers in return, "Aye, makes sense Felada. Once were at the inn, I'll step inside an' see

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what it's like. If it doesn't seem safe I'll either stay the night there too or we'll head t'the more expensive inn. Better t'lose yer coin t'an honest thief. Not t'mention ones safety's worth the additional coin.""

8-NÚZYÆL-720 KIBAN, KALDOR

5TH WATCH [COOL, PARTLY CLOUDY, NORTHEAST BREEZE]

Felada, Matilda and Terias follow Susi through the streets as she guides them to the Riverman Inn. It is mostly an uneventful journey as the townsfolk are all hurrying to their homes for their dinner.

Just in front of the inn, a woman approaches Terias and asks, "Wud ee care vor a little dap and tickle, deary? Zomeone to warm yer bade vor de cold darkmans, perhaps?"

Noticing the women accompanying Terias, she steps back and says, "Ooo! Be ee nat de confident wan. Dree at wance? Yer now, ee ladies cussen ply yer traade yer unless ee 'ave paid yer dues to de guild."

As the woman rambles on, Terias seems to grow more annoyed, "Does the symbol around my neck mean noth'n too ya? I'm a Matakea within the Laranian clergy and I happen t'be act'n as an escort to these fine women. Neither of whom are about to ply yer- trade. Now if yer about done, we'll be on our way in."

"If ee be like de other priests I know, it means ee be rail choosy and I appear to be nat bene 'nuff vor ee. As vor yer fine ladies yer, no wan weel believe it zince ladies uv bene reppy-tation do nat gaw een dere, bit gaw rate ahead. I weel nat ztand een yer way," she says giving an elaborate bow and stepping aside.

Leaning in towards Felada, Terias mentions in a low voice, "I'm nay finding this place right already. Y'give a nod inside an' we'll be on our way."

* * *

You enter the inn common room to find three tables. The first has two men seated at it. The better dressed of the two has a plate of food and a mug of ale in front of him. The other has nothing in front of him.

The second table has a small man seated in front of a plate of food and a mug of ale.

The third table has five people: two roughly dressed men, a native tribesman and a well dressed man and woman. All have a mug of ale in front of them and the man and woman each have a plate of food.

You hear the roughly dressed man at the first table say, "That crazy man has been seen in the square again...yelling about the end of the world."

One of the roughly dressed men at the third table spies you entering and says loudly, "ah, the entertainment has arrived."

From behind the bar, the innkeeper says, "what can I get for you folks?"

Terias ignores the barb from the seated men and he moves straight ahead to the bar to chat with the innkeeper, while doing so he keeps an eye over his shoulder to Susi and Felada, "Aye Master Keep. These two women were look'n have a meal an' spend the night. -Alone- on both scores. Will they be left to

themselves here or can y'suggest somewhere more proper goodman?"

Glancing at his companions, he realizes that there are three women...Matilda has followed along since she is now in their employ.

The innkeeper says with an angry look, "we do not want your type in here. A bunch of do-gooders like yourselves will just cause trouble here. Go and take your patronage elsewhere."

"Do I look the fool to be crying the wares of the other inns?" the innkeeper says, "Be on your way I said."

With a wide grin, almost looking ready to start something Terias informs the innkeeper, "Aye y'do - if yer tell'n us t'shove off, but not t'where."

Pulling a club from behind the counter and making it ready, the innkeeper says, "Your opinion is not worth a rotten egg to me. I did not realize that it was the habit of priests of Larani to insult honest shop keepers. Now are you going to leave of your own accord or do the lads and I need to show you to the door?"

Susi says to Terias "Perhaps I could sing or play for part of our expenses? Do you think that would be a good idea....or should we stay together? Perhaps if I distract the patrons here with a song, you could mingle among them easier."

After speaking to the innkeep and returning to the two woman, Terias seems a bit apprehensive about Susi's question and tries to respond delicately, "Eh well, I don't think the fella was mean'n a harper fer entertainment if y'catch my drift. But yer more then welcome t'chat with the keep t'find out. Nay sure how much sailors fresh from port'll know 'bout Kiban either. T'would have been better t'talk with locals. Still worth a try. Folk like t'drink an' gossip regardless."

Susi says To Terias, "Well, you make the call if you feel this place is safe enough, I will ask the innkeeper if I could play for a fee."

At that moment, the man who had spoke up at the third table, grabs Susi and pulls her into his lap. "Be nice and I will pay for your dinner. You have no need to sing for your meal," he says with a leer.

Terias' attention shifts towards the third table, while still speaking to the innkeeper, "Looks like y'took too long. There's trouble t'be had." With that said the Matakea moves over to aid Susi, at the same time motioning to Felada and Matilda to step to the entry. "Unhand the woman and we'll be on our way.", Terias states in a clear and bold voice.

Matilda looks confused by your motioning but Felada quickly grabs her and leaves the inn.

When she is not released, Susi tries to pull away, kicking and using her strength and athleticism to break the hold. If she breaks away she will place herself between Terias and the door.

Susi tries to pick-pocket the stranger if she is able to do so unnoticed.

Susi breaks away from the man but is unable to take his purse with her. The man, the innkeeper and Terias all notice her attempted robbery.

The man yells, "Why you little thief!" and swings his fist at her.

The innkeeper watches Terias and appears willing to attack if Terias does anything other than leave.

Watching in disbelief at Susi's action, Terias' jaw drops. He then grits his teeth in annoyance, looks to Susi, the man and finally the innkeeper and says with a snarl, "Rotten eggs? I think y've got enough here in abundance. Y'lot enjoy yerselves."

The Matakea then backs away to the door ready to lash out at any stray attackers.

When Terias goes out the door, the innkeeper turns his attention to Susi and says, "Now what about you? Are you going to leave with your friends or stay here until the watch arrives to take you to have your hand cut off?"

Once outside Terias still visibly angered by the events that just transpired beckons to Felada and Matilda, "Bah, let's be on our way quickly to the Silver Way Inn. Seems Susi's found her place in there. I'll have none to do with that cutpurse."

Susi follows Terias out. She has to hurry to catch up to them as they head north up Astlin Road.

The Matakea leading the way hears someone coming up the rear and turns to regard Susi. He sneers first, stands his ground, before blurting out at her, "What I saw back in that inn t'wasn't just daft, t'was wrong. I had near eighty silver stolen t'day an' now I'm thinkin' it could'a been your sticky fingers who did the deed. So y'look me square in the eyes and tell me t'wasn't you or y'sod off now. Best be warned I see y'do something like that again I'll make sure the watch knows." Terias' eyes then narrow to watch the harpers next action.

Susi, looking into Terias eyes, says "I have no problem looking you in the eye and telling you I did not attempt to take anything from you. That man back there made inappropriate remarks and physical contact with me...my thinking was HE should be punished somehow, so I made a feeble attempt to get back at him.

Shaking his head Terias voice seems softer, but still a bit rough, "You've much t'learn of my faith then. The Goddess Larani is known as the Unwilling Warrior and so too are the followers. I'd given the man the chance to release you on his own will before I intended separate you both. If he decided to attack me for that then I would have defended. And what did you expect from sailors, brutes and mercenaries? T'is like playing with fire and expect nay t'get burned. Yer lucky the innkeeper wanted y'out of there else y'd have found yerself in the gaol and without a hand t'play yer music."

The Matakea then continues along the road saying to Susi, "I'll take ya at yer word, but make sure to keep it true."

Had he done something similar to you, you would probably have fought him, I am not capable of that, so I did what I could. Had he not wronged me first, I would not have bothered with him at all. But as to trying to take anything of yours, I did not!

* * *

The trip to the Silver Way Inn is uneventful and you enter the common room to see a very crowded room. The innkeeper has set up extra tables and the three least crowded have three people (each table will seat six).

The innkeeper sees you enter and says, "Ah you have found your way back. What can I get for you?"

Stepping forward Terias announces with a smile, "Good eve Master Keep. I myself would like directions to the Watch Barracks to report a crime. And these three women require lodging and a meal for the evening. Is there space available?"

"They can have the last three beds I have available if they are willing to share a four person room with another. As before, lodging and meals will be 20d each. As to the town watch, you follow Querina road to Dariune Square just like I told you before on your way to your temple. Following Dariune road, you take the second right and the town watch is the small building in the alley. The large building behind it is the watch barracks so they can direct you if you loose your way."

The Matakea nods slowly as he's told the prices, then offers in return after being given directions, "My thanks Master Keep."

Turning to Felada, Terias remarks, "Wel if sharing a room with a fourth's fine by ya, I'll be take'n my leave."

"As long as the fourth is not a drunken sailor, we should be fine," Felada says. "You will be here by the start of the third watch tomorrow so we can attend the market, will you not?"

Hearing the quip, the innkeeper exclaims, "Never do we have such at this inn!"

Still chuckling from Felada's remark, Terias manages with a sheepish grin to the innkeeper, "At twenty silver a head I imagine not."

As he makes his way out, Terias lets Felada know, "Aye start of the third I'll be here."

Terias leaves the inn and follows the innkeeper's instructions to find the watch barracks across the alleyway from the physician. He enters the office to find the duty watchman sitting at a desk.

"May I help you?" the watchman asks.

"Aye." Terias says as he steps towards the desk, continuing "I'd like t'report a theft of coin off myself. I'm near certain who t'was. While out this morn a woman approached as I was entering the Mangai Hall. She asked fer some help. So I gave her directions t'the Peonian temple and in return she embraced me quickly and made off into the crowd. T'was odd. So I checked my pack and sure enough I was miss'n a pouch with seventy seven silver in it. When I went t'the Peonian temple after I found she hadn't been. So t'was clearly a ruse to get close t'me."

Clearing his throat and stiffening up, Terias then states, "First time it's ever happened t'me. If there's anything t'be done I'll give my full name and clerical rank and a description of her as best I can. Probably could try drawing her from memory if that'd help."

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"I can take the details and enter them into my log," says the watchman, "but unless you are accusing somebody in particular, there is not much that can be done. The fact that someone embraced you in gratitude for your help is not sufficient to accuse them of theft and, unless you can have one of the townspeople vouch for your character, you have no proof that a theft has even occurred."

Terias nods curtly and then acquiesces, "Aye fair enough on all counts. The most I have to vouch for me and my word is my actions. I tried to aid Kiban when the gargun was loosed into the sewers and I set after it with Lady Odasart."

Seeming sincere as he continues, Terias says, "Still this could help another soul in the future so I'll give y'the report.", he then states clearly, "My name for the record is Terias of Forniad. I'm a Matakea and Ataken with the Order of the Lady of Paladins." After he goes into detail describe the woman as best he can. Once finished he remarks, "I'll be residing at the Laranian temple if there's anything further you need from me in the further y'need from me in the future. Good eve t'ya goodman."

With the report filed Terias heads towards the Laranian Temple, his stride more confident than earlier.

On your way to the temple, you have to carefully go around the street cleaners beginning their night's work. The rest of your trip is uneventful and you are stopped by the porter at the gate. "You will need to go before the Obasaran to explain yourself," he tells you.

"Aye, understood.", Terias says in response, seeming a bit uncomfortable with the prospect.

You are led before the Obasaran as the last time. He continues what he is working on for a few moments and then looks to you, "Matakea Forinad, if I recall? I apparently did not make myself clear at our last meeting. If you are going to stay here, you must perform your chores regularly and attend services without fail. If you are unable to do this for any reason whatsoever, you must send a message here so that arrangements can be made in your absence. We will not be having this discussion again. The next time you disappear without explaining yourself, you will be turned away. You are too late for dinner tonight but you can still spend an hour in prayer before you retire to the same bed you used before. In the morning, you will have twice as much to haul away to the village."

With his hands behind his back, form rigid and head bowed, Terias simply nods as Kardyanid berates him. Eventually the Matakea speaks up, lifting his gaze, "Aye Obasaran, I've no excuse. I leant my hand last eve to the Gargun who escaped to the sewers with Lady Odasart. I lost my head and should've sent a runner here. I'll do my best not to t'let it happen again."

Rubbing the back of his neck, his voice unsure Terias says, "If you wish and whenever you've the time Obasaran I'll give you a report on what t'was found, but t'is nothing of substance. And tied to it some personal or spiritual matters I'd like your wisdom on."

"Now would be best, rather than interrupt me a second time but if you have nothing of substance, keep it as brief as possible," he says.

Terias speaks quickly as he tells the Obasaran, "Aye, well when we were down in the sewers we found something more than the gargun. T'was a demon like beast. Cloved feet an' horns. It gave Lady Odasart a thrashing. She'll be recovering fer a while now. Once I had her safe, I went back t'look in on the thing, but t'was gone. Have y'ever heard of such a thing Obasaran?"

"Once I've more concrete, I'll gladly share it. As t'my own person query. I've seen quite a bit in recent days. Things not natural. T'is pressing on me on how t'handle it all."

"Ah, well, there are many odd creatures in the world and I am by no means knowledgeable in all of them...or even most of them," the Obasaran answers. "As to how you should deal with such situations, that depends on many things. Was the creature you found wandering the sewers or did you find it in someone's cellars? Did it attack you without provocation or was it defending itself from your own attack? On the first, anyone can have any sort of creature to guard their property from thieves as long as it is not a danger to those who do not trespass. On the latter, any creature can be expected to defend itself against attack. If you see someone immediately in danger, you should do what you can to render aid...and if the victim's actions were at fault, you should ensure they are brought to justice. Otherwise, you should report to your superiors the existence of such a creature so they may judge its appropriateness. The exception is servants of Agrik, Morgath and other dark gods. However, even then you must be absolutely sure they are of such a nature or you may end up paying reparations for damages to someone's property. You should never judge an unfamiliar creature merely by their appearance. Not every thing that is of fair appearance is good and not everything that is of hideous appearance is evil. You should judge each situation by deeds and deeds of their master. Does that answer your concerns?"

Terias nods curtly, seeming invigorated by the talk, "Aye more than Obasaran. The creature we found was trapped inside of a circle and it seemed t'have been summoned or held there by a skull of what Lady Amyleryn said was Khuzdul. But aye, it did nay attack, merely threatened. Though t'was not in anyone's cellar. Still as you said it may not have been 'evil'. Just appearances wise it looked not natural and most foul. And that's what caused us to react. As the Lady is known by... 'the Unwilling Warrior'. I'll be sure to keep that sentiment close to my heart in the future." Then he adds, a slight conflicted smile appearing on his lips, "But I hope not to see one of those things again."

* * *

For the evening meal you are served, leche lumbarde (wined date confection) for an appetizer; sorrelye (sorrel soup with figs and dates) for a soup; a choice of: galantine pie, roseye (fried loache with roses and almonds), vyand de ciprys ryalle (spiced minced chicken relish) for an entrée; accompanied by vegetarian custard lumbarde (almond and fruit tart), wastel (first quality bread) and beer (amber color. enticing citric aroma. light texture. nutty flavor with slightly sweet aftertaste.); followed by fruyte frittours (parsnip and apple fritters) for dessert.

After dinner and polite conversation, you are shown to your rooms.