

**9-NÚZYÆL-720 KIBAN, KALDOR**

2ND WATCH [COOL, CLOUDY, NORTHWEST WIND, LIGHT RAIN]

After his talk with the Obasaran, Terias heads down to the ritual hall and kneels in silent prayer for an hour. With the hall so empty due to the late hour he keeps his thoughts inwards. After completing his worship the Matakea heads back to the room he shared before. He quietly slips into the bed chambers, trying not to wake the person sharing the room with him. Then carefully disrobed and slips into the comforts of sleep.

When Terias awakes in the morning, the room seems abnormally chilly and he continues to shiver even after he has his clothes on. After about a turn of the glass, he gains control of himself and the shivering stops.

Rolling out of bed, groggily, Terias feels his own head for a fever. He shakes it off and quickly dresses himself, muttering quietly to himself, "Last thing I need is t'be late, an' sick."

The Matakea makes his way down to the practice yard to see if the morning training is still going on.

He is in time for practice and, after an practicing for a turn of the glass, he feels he knows a bit more about how to use his shield. [+1 shield]

He then goes to the common room to break his fast with fried perch, sheep-milk cheese, goose eggs, pears, rice and small ale.

During the meal, Terias keeps his head down, not initiating conversation. Though he does listen while he eats heartedly after missing his evening dinner.

Nobody else speaks either, listening to the religious scriptures being read during the meal.

When the meal is complete, the Matakea takes a pear in hand and heads to the kitchen. Finding the spit boy by the stove, Terias calls out with a smile, "Oi, Chyrn, morn'n t'ya lad. Think quick." and then tosses the pear carefully to the boy, before continuing, "The Obasaran says I've double the load t'carry. Think I'll be able t'get this done in a single trip t'Alloia?"

"Dank ee, maister," the lad replies, "Ee better way be able to get by way wan trip as de tax be nat difficult...jist ockerd...especially if ee try to bide clain een de process. Do ee need 'elp finding ee way again and 'as Obasaran Kobb given 'is permission vor me to gaw way ee?"

Giving himself a once over, Terias grumbles and nods, "Aye, I just cleaned the leathers out too. Looks like I'll need t'buy a set of serge fer luggin' the composte. 'Ppreciate the offer lad, but I don't want t'take time from yer chores. Not t'mention I think I can find it. Road was pretty straight forward. Besides if I get lost, maybe I'll find an adventure a'sorts."

Terias then heads over and to the wagon, and begins to load it up. Once everything is inside he sets off for the village.

The trip to the village and back again is uneventful.

Once he's returned to the kitchen, Terias asks Chyrn, "Lad, do y'know if there's there time in the day t'go an' wash up?"

"I know nat yer meaning, master," he answers, "I can zhow ee where ee can clain up bit I know nat what ee be expected to do

during de rest of the day – nor where ur wain vor dey matter zo I cussen cut if ee 'ave 'nuff time."

"Sorry lad, I just meant t'ask if the temple had hours set aside fer cleanin'. Lead the way and I'll be right quick in doin' it." Terias says in response.

With a face of displeasure, he says as he shows you where you can fetch water, towels and a bowl, "Ah ee mean bath night. Well de next wan be tonight and aich ten day arter dey."

Terias takes note of Chyrn's face and remarks, "Looks like yer not one fer baths eh? Well I'll just wash my hands and face right quick t'try and get rid of some of the stink. Thanks lad."

Immediately afterwards the Matakea makes his way to the Silver Way Inn to meet with the three woman he escorted there the last night.

As he rounds the bend onto Dariune Road, Terias finds the road blocked by a number of soldiers relaxing over their morning meal before going on to other duties.

"Good day to thee, Matakea," one of the soldiers says as Terias tries to squeeze through.

"Aye and t'you lot as well. Larani shield you." Terias replies with a broad smile

Terias arrives at the inn and, when he enters the common room, Felada says, "Here he is now – exactly on time. Fair day, Matakea."

Terias says, "Aye good day to you ladies as well. So what's the plan fer the day? I know I need t'see that fellow Fonor of Stippa about tryin' t'get a job."

As Felada pays the innkeeper for herself and Matilda, she says, "I believe we can get what we need by visiting a woodcrafter, a metalsmith, a clothier, a lithographer and the market. I think I saw signs for all of those around Dariune Square. Do you know where this Fonor of Stippa is or what craft he is skilled in?"

A look of thought crosses Terias face and he lets Felada know, "Nay, I don't. Let me see if the innkeep knows."

The Matakea heads over to the owner and flags him down. When the innkeep arrives, Terias asks, "Pardon me Keep, I wanted t'ask if y'happen t'know Fonor of Stippa? He owns a warehouse here in Kiban. I was hope'n t'find work through'em."

The innkeeper sputters a moment and says, "Let me see if I understand you correctly...all you know of this man is his name and that he owns a warehouse, like many of the business owners in town, and you want to enter his employ. Have you thought long on this matter? Nay, I know him not. My apologies."

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When Susi and Felada awake, they perform their morning grooming and go to the common room to break their fast. Felada says to Susi, "Today is the day holy to Saint Laryn, sacred to pilots, seamen and shipwrights. Do you have any performances special to such as those? I am sure they are not all as course as those we met last eve and they are the life's blood of commerce."

# ACT 1 SCENE 8 PAGE 2

Susi says to Felada, "I am sure you are right about that...let me think about which songs would be appropriate....."

Susi says, after a moments reflection, "Yes, I do know some appropriate tunes, although it would be best to have a drum or bass to accompany me. Should we go somewhere and play some?"

"No, perhaps later," says Felada, "as soon as Terias arrives, we have a great deal of shopping to do in a short amount of time. Tonight during dinner will be more appropriate."

You enter the common room, seat yourselves and are served kippers, curds and whey, turtle eggs, stewed prunes, porridge and apple cider.

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When Amyleryn awakes, she remembers a very vivid dream where she can see Susi and Felada at the Silver Way inn and Felada says to Susi, "Today is the day holy to Saint Laryn, sacred to pilots, seamen and shipwrights. Do you have any performances special to such as those? I am sure they are not all as course as those we met last eve and they are the life's blood of commerce." Remembering the dream also recalls the headache she had at the time.

Muttering to herself under her breath, Amyleryn says: "I'll have to ask Felada about her speaking to Susi. Psionics. \*sigh\*"

Amyleryn decides that her enforced bed rest is a perfect opportunity to catch up on her prayers to Save K'nor. For the rest of the day...except for meals, anyone who may want to speak to her, and maybe a nap...she will pray to Save K'nor. Just regular prayers...not asking him for anything.

## 9-NÚZYÆL-720 KIBAN, KALDOR

3RD WATCH [COOL, CLOUDY, NORTHWEST WIND, LIGHT RAIN]  
Stepping out into the soggy morning, Felada glances off into the distance. She points at the rainbow she finds there and says, "Oh look, Peoni's smile."

Entering Dariune Square, you can see the sign of a woodcrafter on the far side of the square. Felada crosses the square to enter the shop and says, "We are looking to see what you have in furniture and eating utensils."

As Felada speaks with the woodcrafter, Terias keeps himself idly by the doorway, casually glancing about.

Terias is only somewhat paying attention to Felada bargaining for "a hogshead barrel, three wood-frame beds, a broom, a bucket, a chair, five spoons, a trencher table with two benches and five bowls". His attention wanders and he looks out of the clear, diamond-shaped panes of the window to look at the shop signs along the square. The first looks like a gold colored pork sausage that is arranged in a very rude and suggestive manner. The second is a more normal sign for a lexigrapher. Further on, across a road and at the end of his vision is the sign of a sail maker and buckram worker. At the bottom of the sign, he can barely make out what he thinks to be "prop. F. Stippa."

His attention returns to his surroundings as the woodcrafter says, "Yes, goodwife, I can accommodate you and I have enough of what you want in stock that I can deliver it this evening. The total will be 238d."

Felada counts out the money and gives him directions to the house.

Stifling a yawn, Terias perks up hearing the end of the conversation. After the pleasantries have been exchanged, Terias inquires with the woodworker, "Pardon me, the shop across and down the road. Would y'know if that is one - Fonor of Stippa's?"

"Yes, I believe his shop is in that direction," the woodcrafter says, "He tried to sell me some of his buckram awnings once – claimed they were cheaper than my wooden shutters. Only thing is they keep not the dampness out as well. I would have lost many times the difference in cost when my wood started rotting. He is always looking for a way to make the most money from the least work – that one."

Nodding curtly, the Matakea replies, "Aye makes sense. Besides it wouldn't do well t'have someone elses wares on display over yer own eh? I'd heard he helped Kiban out kill'n the escaped gargun. Figured I'd go and give the man a hand shake."

"Well I have heard naught of any escaped gargun but that seems unlikely," he answers, "That is unless there was a reward offered."

Felada interrupts saying, "shall we be off to find a metalsmith?"

"There is a metalsmith just beyond the sailmaker's, mistress," says the woodcrafter.

Terias nods curtly to Felada, before saying, "Yes let's.", then turning back to the woodworker, he offers his thanks and a good day.

Once outside the Matakea informs Felada and Susi, "I'd like t'visit the buckram shop after yer done at the metalsmith. See if we can find Fonor there or his whereabouts."

Susi says to the Matakea, "Sounds good to me"

"That is all right with me," Felada says, "but if your visit is over long we will have to go on as milady expects us to be done as soon as possible and there is a lot still left to be accomplished. I will also need to get back the money I asked you to hold so we can make the rest of our purchases."

Terias simply nods, and reaches into his pack, trying to discretely pull the large pouch filled with coins. He then passes it over to Felada, and mentions, "If I y'feel I'm takin' too long at Fodor's feel free to carry on without me and I'll meet you all at the Peonian temple when I'm done. Elsewise I'll go with ya."

Your trip to the metalworker is uneventful and Felada asks about a copper ink well, three copper pans of assorted sizes, and five tin plates. The metalworker agrees to a price of 58d. Felada says the price is slightly higher than she expected but so is the quality of the workmanship. She agrees to the price and pays the man.

Felada pays the man, gives directions for the delivery of the goods and, turning to Terias, Susi and Matilda, asks, "Is there anything else you would like to inquire about before we move on?"

Speaking up, Terias asks the shopkeeper, "Master Metalsmith, would you happen to know your storefront neighbor, Fonor of

Stippa, the Buckram worker? I heard he was involved in finding the escaped gargun in one of his warehouses."

"I know not of any escaped gargun in his warehouses," says the metalsmith, "but he was complaining the other day about someone breaking into his cellar and stealing some of his wealth. Part of what was stolen belongs to the Ordo Septenarius and he cannot replace it. They are very upset with him, let me tell you. Master Stippa is as mad as Agrik and vows that if he finds the thieves he will have them before the magistrate as quick as a wink. Why do you ask? Have you business with him?"

Terias facial expression contorts as if mulling something over before he finally speaks, "Eh ... Ordo Septenarius.. the name's rattling in my head, but I can't place it. I'm fresh t'town so apologies if he's someone of import. That's also the reason I was looking for Master Stippa. I'd heard of his brave deed and since I just arrived, I was hoping t'find employ with'em before I tried elsewhere." While waiting for a response the Matakea quickly glances over to Felada, then rubs the right side of his temple slowly.

"There is no reason that you would know of the Ordo Septenarius if you are from out of town," the smith replies, "It is a local merchants' organization that collects money to support widows and orphans. It is a new idea and has probably not been tried elsewhere...or at least not by that name. As to the courageous deeds of Master Stippa, you must have been listening to too many tavern tales. I have never heard of him being all that courageous. Sneaky yes, courageous no."

The Matakea's demeanor changes to a slumped posture and saddened features hearing of the orphans and widows. He manages the words, "My thanks fer the know Master Metalsmith. Have a fine day."

Once outside, Terias turns to regard Felada and Susi as he stiffens up, "I'll pass on the visit t'Fonor fer now. Though I think we should have the lady's ear if the Peonians'll allow it."

As the group walks to their next destination, Terias asks Susi, "Since you're from around here, do you know of Fonor t'all? If so what's your thoughts on the man?"

Susi met him only once and he seemed to be an honest and trustworthy man. [+1 intrigue]

Susi says to Terias, "let me think for a moment....I cannot say I know the man well, I believe I have only met him on one occasion. I thought him to be honest, and have not heard others speak poorly of him....but, as I said...I only know him slightly.

The Matakea's disposition grows more concerned hearing Susi's response. He rubs the back of his neck slowly, but remains silent with his thoughts.

Felada looks about the square and spots a clothier directly across. Your trip through the middle of the square is again uneventful and you enter the clothier's shop. Felada asks the clothier what her prices would be for five heavy blankets and five light blankets. The clothier says the price comes to 150d.

While Felada decides on the price, Terias looks about the shop with some interest.

When the noblewoman's aide finishes her business, Terias steps forward and asks, "Master Clothier, do you happen to make hooded cloaks? I was thinking of buyin' one and wanted t'hear yer prices based on material. Colour wise I'm think'n red or white, maybe a mix'a both."

"No, cloaks are not the fashion here-a-bouts and have not been within my memory," she answers. "Is that what they wear where you are from? Most of the town's people have already gotten their outerwear for the winter. The only thing I have left are surcoats of linen and of silk. Neither are hooded. The linen one would fit you but the silk one is way too large. In your size I have cowls of beaver, linen and serge. All I have available is undyed and red is an expensive dye so it would probably triple the cost of anything dyed in that color and take a day or two to apply it."

With some interest in his voice, Terias inquires, "How much would the linen surcoat and cowl be? And undyed linen is white in colour?"

"The surcoat is 51d and the cowl is 6d," the clothier answers. "They are actually what we call off white or cream colored. To get true white, I would have to bleach the color out of them. I would be happy to do that for 3d extra but it will take a couple of days."

"I'll take a day to think on it then. If it's still here if I decide t'take it then t'was meant t'be. Good day t'ya Master Clothier.", Terias offers a slight incline of his head and a polite smile before leaving the shop.

After discussing the cloak, the Matakea inquires with the clothier, "Do y'know of Fodor of Stippa? The Master Buckram shopkeep? I'd heard of his involvement in capturing the gargun that got free. Was hope'n t'ask 'bout work see'n as how appears t'be a stand up fellow."

"I only know of him professionally," She answers. "He makes the buckram that I make some of my clothes from. He does adequate workmanship but I know nothing of his personality."

Felada pays the clothier 150d and once again gives instructions for the delivery. Turning to Terias, she says, "Let me know when you are ready to go. We have just the lexicographer and the food market to go. Then we are off to the house to receive what we have purchased. The lexicographer is across the way next to the woodcrafter."

As he listens to Felada, Terias gives a quick nod before saying, "Aye I should be fine t'go. You won't need me at the house though eh? Figure I'll stop in and see if I can speak with Lady Amyleryn. Then after head t'the temple."

**9-NÚZYÆL-720 KIBAN, KALDOR**

4TH WATCH [COLD, CLOUDY, NORTHWEST STORM]

Crossing the square again, Felada says, "well the rain has stopped but the wind has certainly picked up."

A woman approaches Terias and says, "Be ee interested een zome zpecial company, deary? I be zartin I can give ee mort more pleasure dan dicky lot."

# ACT 1 SCENE 8 PAGE 4

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Looking annoyed, Terias says firmly, "Nay, and I'll ask y'keep yer distance."

"Alright, alright, dere be no raisin to get testy, gov'nor," she says as she moves on.

Arriving at the lexicographer, Felada asks about the price of a dozen quill pens, a pint of black ink and nine square feet of parchment.

The lexicographer says that will total 23d.

When Felada finishes the purchase, Terias inquires the same way he has with the other shopkeepers, "Pardon Master Lexigrapher, I was wonder'n if y'knew of the Buckram crafter, Fodor of Stipper? I was hopin' t'find work through him and wanted t'know what sort he was before approachin'."

"I know of him but I am not the type of person who tells stories about my neighbors," he answers. "I expect them to pay me the same courtesy and to tell not the fanciful tales about me. By that holy symbol you wear, it appears you are a Save Knorian, as am I. If that is so, you should know the value of unsubstantiated rumors and how damaging they can be."

With a bit of a sheepish grin, the Matakea replies, "Aye fair enough, but I'm a Laranian and we enjoy our gossip now and then. Sometimes y'can find a grain a'truth buried in there. Question is whether t'is worth diggin for or not. Still I'd nay think someones opinion on another would be rumor. Unless yer follow'n the adage of our mum's - not t'speak unkindly of another."

"Well I consider freely giving forth opinions on ones' neighbors rude at the very least and I will say no more on the subject," the lexicographer says.

Taking the point, Terias says bluntly, "Aye, t'was good speaking with ya."

Felaea pays for her purchases, gives directions for their delivery and heads for the door. Once outside she says, "the only stop left is the market for food. Will you be dining with us tonight and do you have any preferences in food?"

As they walk to the market, Terias responds, "Nay I'll be at the temple for dinner t'night. Will we be moving the Lady into the new abode or getting things settled fer her fer t'morrow?"

"What would you advise?" Felada says, "On the one hand, milady does not want me to pay for an inn any more than I absolutely have to but on the other hand with all the deliveries being made and all the preparations necessary, she is likely to be severely discomforted if she moves in tonight. I would like to plan on staying at the inn one more night and moving her in the morning but I will only do so if you agree."

Terias scratches at the growing scruff on his chin, before answering Felada, "I don't have much insight into her mind, but I was think'n she won't want t'be there if the place is unfinished. Since she's nobility an' not t'mention injured - she'll want proper rest. T'save on coin though if the basics are in place by t'night and y've got the keys t'lock up, then sleep at the house. Else, aye visit the inn. What other choice have ye? Certainly not Susi's favorite location - tha sailors tavern." With those final words spoken, the Matakea grins sheepishly in the Harpers direction.

Susi makes a noticeable grown.

"That is what I will do then," says Felada, "As soon as I finish at the market, I will reserve rooms at the inn for one more night."

Your trip to the market is uneventful and Felada shops for 2 straw pallets, 5 ounces of soap, 2 lbs. of bacon, 1 ten-lbs. bale of barley, 8 loaves of wheat bread, 4 dozen eggs, 10 lbs. apples, 10 lbs pears, 5 lbs. ham, 1 gal. honey, 5 lbs. cabbage, 5 lbs. carrots, 5 lbs. lentils, and 5 lbs. wheat for a total of 93d 1f.

Not having much to contribute to the shopping in the market, Terias keeps his eyes on the crowd, staying nearby Felada while she collects the items she wants.

Felada pays for her purchases, arranges for their delivery and heads in the direction of the inn. Just before you arrive at the inn, you find the road blocked by a mason and his crew, moving a load of stone. It is a half turn of the glass before the way is clear so you can get by. Arriving at the inn, Felada makes reservations for herself and Matilda.

The innkeeper looks at Susi and says, "If you plan on staying here tonight, you will have to pay in advance since you skipped out on paying for last night."

Susi says, "I apoloogize for last night...would you except our original agreement of me playing for room and board?"

"Yes, as I said, if you pay in advance," says the innkeeper, "you will need 20d for last night and 20d for tonight if you want to stay."

After making sleeping arrangements, Felada leads the group to the house. She leaves Matilda there to receive deliveries and then heads for the temple of Peoni to report to her mistress.

Terias informs Felada as they both walk, "I'll be coming with you to the temple. T'see if I can gain an audience with the lady."

## 9-NÚZYÆL-720 KIBAN, KALDOR

5TH WATCH [COOL, CLOUDY, NORTHWEST WIND, LIGHT RAIN]

As you travel to the temple of Peoni, you hear a town crier crying, "Gambling tables at the Crossed Pikes have been accused of cheating. Property has been assized until the proprietor appears before the magistrate to answer the charges."

Arriving at the temple, Felada asks the porter if you may see the Lady Odasart and you are allowed to enter. Felada greets Lady Odasart, saying, "I have made the necessary purchases but the deliveries have not all arrived. I will need to stay at the Silver Way Inn again tonight as that appears to be the only respectable place in town. The other inns cater only to women of negotiable virtue. We should be able to hire a cart for you in the morning. How has your day been, milady?"

Amyleryn laughs out loud at the 'negotiable virtue' quip, then says: "That was almost delicate. I'm going to have to remember that phrase." Continuing: "Very well, the Silver Way Inn it is."

"Felada, dear, earlier at the Silver Way, did you say to Susi...let me think on this" and Amyleryn is obviously marshalling her memories, then continues..." Today is the day holy to Saint Laryn, sacred to pilots, seamen and shipwrights. Do you have any performances special to such as those? I am sure they are

not all as course as those we met last eve and they are the life's blood of commerce."?"

"Yes, I believe I did," Felada says with a slightly hurt expression, "I did not know that milady mistrusts me and feels I need to be followed. Was my statement of any importance?"

At Felada's inquiry, Terias' stoic demenaor and rigid 'at-attention' stance breaks as his eyes glance about looking over the people around him.

Amyleryn gives Felada a stern look and says: "Felada, after all of the..." and she pauses for the briefest of moments searching for the right word "situations...that I've gotten us into and out of over the last while, I had hoped that you would know by now that I trust you without reservation." Amyleryn relents and gives Felada a warm smile.

Her expression turning serious, Amyleryn gestures for Felada and Terias to draw close so that what she is about to tell them will not be overheard. "Earlier today, I was napping and the conversation between you and Susi came to me as a kind of dream."

Doing as instructed the Matakea steps closer to Amyleryn listening to her story with an expression of interest.

After any reaction from Felada and/or Terias, Amyleryn continues: "I awoke from that 'dream' with a vivid memory of the conversation and a beastly headache <sigh>. As it happened, a fellow Shek P'var...of the Savorya convocation...came to pay a visit to his nephew, who is here recovering from something. Savoryan's have knowledge and skill with psionics, and he was kind enough...for a small fee...to check me for psionic abilities. I already knew I have prescience. He confirmed that, as well as the ability to start fires, move things without touching them, listen to things said at a far distance, and several other things also. I trust the two of you remember the two incidents of fires just starting by themselves and the bucket of water in my face?" she asks with a wry smile.

The Laranian warrior priest rubs the stubble forming on his right cheek, as a look of discomfort on the subject of psionics and magic rears plays off of the noblewomans lips.

Amyleryn continues, "Well, it seems that the cause of those occurrences is most likely myself. At first glance, having those sorts of abilities would be very handy to have. But as a Shek P'var, until I can gain a measure of control over these abilities...which for a while, will occur at unexpected times...I dare not use my spells except under dire circumstances. You've both seen some of the things I can do. Can you imagine the chaos if a psionic episode were to occur while I was casting a spell?" and she shudders.

"To top it all off, I'll be laid-up for who-knows-how-long. I'll give what leadership I can, but the pursuit of our mission will mostly rest with the two of you and Susi. I don't like it, but there it is."

"Speaking of psionics, the Savoryan would be willing...for a fee that I would pay for...to test either or both of you for as-yet undiscovered psionic abitties. I won't insist on you doing this, but I feel that your knowing about any such abilities in advance

of their manifesting would be very beneficial. Surprises, in a thing like psionics, are something I feel are best avoided. It's quite painless. What say you? Will you consent to be tested?"

"Yes, milady," Felada says with an expression between excitement and apprehension. "Where do we find this man?"

After waiting for Felada to respond, Terias simply says, "As long as his witchcraft doesn't stir anything inside of me, aye t'is fine by me m'lady."

Speaking to Felada, Amyleryn says: "His name is Master Killassan of Nillta, and he's a lexigrapher. His shop is on Dariune Square. Look for a sign with a quill and parchment."

"Yes, milady," Felada says, "we met him earlier today when I was getting your writing materials for you."

Addressing Terias, Amyleryn says: "What he will do only reveals what you already have, but not yet made itself known to you. In fact, he can't cause any of these things to manifest. They have to do so on their own. The point of finding out if you have any psionic abilities, is to know in advance that they're there within you so that if and when they manifest, you'll know what's happening. As a fighting man, think of this as similar to learning about the possible options available to a foe before you have to face him in battle. Your chances of victory go up as his ability to surprise you goes down."

Still appearing apprehensive, Terias offers a cut nod and says nothing further on the subject.

To both of them she says: "Two things. First, when you see him, explain how you know of him and the testing he agreed to do at my request. Be as polite to him as it is in you to be, and make sure he knows that the whole process is entirely at his convenience...then follow his directions. Second, it is possible...perhaps even likely...that either, or both, of you have no psionic abilities at all. This is neither good nor bad. The whole point of the testing is to know for sure, yes or no. He may have to try testing you more than once to be sure...Shek P'var spells don't always work when you want them to, as my adventures in the sewers attest. Also, casting spells is fatiguing...whether they work or not...so any re-testing will likely have to occur at a later date. I authorize as many re-tests as are necessary to positively determine whether you do, or do not, have any psionic abilities."

"We will see him as soon as possible on the marrow," Felada says, "as it is too late in the day for that now."

Speaking to Felada, Amyleryn says: "When you come for me tomorrow, be sure to make an appropriate donation to the temple for the care and quartering they've provided me."

"Certainly, milady," Felada answers.

Once Amyleryn is done speaking with Felada, he steps up and asks in a formal tone, "Lady Odasart, I wish to report to you on a matter concerning Fodor of Stippa, if you'll hear it now that is."

"Go ahead." she says.

Terias lowers his voice as he glances about in an effort to see who's near, "Well the short of it m'lady is we may've accidentally

# ACT 1 SCENE 8 PAGE 6

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stolen from him." The Matakea grows more serious as he informs Amyleryn of why he's found, "Apparently t'was his cellar we were in. He is a master who plies his trade in buckram. The creature we saw may've been a guardian of sorts. Nay a demon like I'd thought. Peoples views on Fodor have been mixed. But the one solid thing I found was about the words carved in the cabinet - 'Ordo Septenarius'. T'is a merchants fund fer widows and orphans. Apparently everythin' we found in it t'was to go to them." A sigh escapes Terias' lips and he shakes his head, "He may be up t'no good, but taking from those in need doesn't sit well with me t'all."

Amyleryn gives Terias a non-committal look and asks: "What evidence do you have that this 'Ordo Septenarius' is really a benevolent organization for widows and orphans? If it is, why have none of us heard of it before? Such a cause would be worthy and it would make sense to foster it all around the kingdom. Even if this 'Ordo' is what it said it is, do you have proof that the bearer bonds we found were actually intended for the use of the 'Ordo'? From what you've said, it sounds like this Fodor is not trusted by all. Would it make sense to entrust such a person with such sums as we found?"

Terias says, "What I was told about the fund was done so from a person who didn't care fer Fodor. He said t'was a trial the merchants put together here t'see if it would work. As fer trust and respect I imagine each person has their own tastes. I'm will'n t'wager I'm nay liked by all. Mayhaps he was the most neutral choice or the most powerful.", Terias responds with a helpless shrug.

Amyleryn continues, "If it turns out that the bonds ARE intended to be used to help widows and orphans, then we'll have to find a way to make restitution. Until that is found to be true, I intend to use them to further our mission. If we fail in that, the kingdom could very well go down in bloody ruin and the bonds will be the least of anyone's worries."

At this Terias just nods without interjection.

Amyleryn says, "As for the 'guardian', I know of no such creatures used by anyone who follows Save K'nor. Are such beings used by the church of Larani?"

The Matakea thinks for a brief moment, then shakes his head. He simply retorts as he stiffens up, "Not that I know. Then again many believe that anyone that can cause fire with their minds or cause light from nothin' without the aid of the Gods are practicin' witchcraft and are evil. I think y'prove that quite the opposite Lady Odasart."

Chuckling briefly, Amyleryn then says: "I see the church of Larani teaches it's people diplomacy."

Turning to Felada, amyleryn says: "Felada, do the followers of Peoni make use of creatures with fangs, claws, horns, cloven hooves, and bat-like wings?"

"Oh no, milady," Felada says in a shocked voice, "We are taught perseverance, patience and sacrifice to overcome our tribulations. Even the protection given us by the Laranians is accepted un-asked for."

A smile crosses Terias face as he replies, "Aye we're the Shield t'any storm that rains down on Peoni and Her flock."

Glancing at the dimming light of the windows, Felada says, "If it please milady, we should probably be getting on to our evenings lodgings. I am sure the Matakea will be late for dinner if he does not leave soon."

Amyleryn says, "Very well. Tomorrow when you come for me, we will stop at Master Killassan's shop to arrange for your testing, then on to our new residence to get settled in. I appreciate the care the Peonians have given me, but I long for some privacy. Good evening to you both."

When the others leave, the Peonians serve Amyleryn her evening meal: frumenty for an appetizer, slot for an entrée, cheat (whole wheat bread), beer (dark brown color. nutty aroma. quite smooth texture. quite sharp, malty taste , sweet aftertaste) and date slices with spiced wine for a dessert.

\* \* \*

Felada and Susi head in the direction of the inn and their trip is uneventful. The innkeeper tells Susi that she cannot stay until she pays her bill and pays in advance for tonight.

Felada goes to the common room for a dinner of arbolettys (a spiced cheese dish) for an appetizer; sorrelye (sorrel soup with figs and dates) for the soup; a choice of entrée: custard lumbarde (marrow and fruit tart), porpoise pudding (oat-stuffed pike), mawmenye ryalle (spiced pork in nutted wine sauce; accompanied by vegetarian custard lumbarde (almond and fruit tart), wastel (first quality bread), ale (golden-amber color. light nutty aroma. softish texture. quite bitter flavor. that lead to a bitter finish) and blak perys (pears with carob cream) for dessert.

\* \* \*

Terias heads toward the temple of Larani and his way is blocked by a ragged and dirty beggar who stares at Terias and says, "The mark is upon you, beware the bringers of chaos!"

He then dances away crying "I see seven, and I see nine, all they had will be mine, mine, mine! The star within the circle, is the sign of death. Bweware the man who is not a man."

The Matakea watches mystified by what he is watching and listening too.

When the beggar is out of sight down an alley, several shadowy figures can be seen surrounding Terias and one of them confronts him, "We have a message for you. Keep your nose out of what does not concern you or you might wake up one morning at the bottom of the river. Why do you not try your luck somewhere else, eh? I hear Tashal is lovely at this time of year."

He is dressed in leather with a club in his hand. There is a shoulder patch showing a rope and pulley. After he says his piece, they all turn and walk away into the shadows. As the leader leaves, Terias notices that he drops a piece of paper.

Mumbling to himself as Terias moves cautiously to the parchment, hand on the hilt of his sword, "Why do I seem t'get all the crazies come'n up t'me in this bloody town." Keeping his head held up to look out for any ambush, the warrior priest snatches up the paper and continues on his way.

Once Terias reaches the gate and is safely within the confines of the temple, on his way to the dining hall, he eyes over the paper with some interest.

The note reads, "An hour after sunset on the 10<sup>th</sup> at the hall of the Mangai. All members of the inner council will attend. Signed Karison Dariune.

A broad grin creeps onto Terias' face as he folds the paper over and tucks it safely into his pack.

As usual, dinner is a quiet affair while one of the priests reads scripture. The meal consists of dried pea puree with sprouts for an appetizer; a choice of entrée: mutton olives, lenten stew, or roast wood pigeons; accompanied by rapes (lentil crisps), wastel (first quality bread), ale (pale color. fruity orange-like aroma. soft texture. citric, decidedly hoppy flavor. that stays to the end) and stuffed dates for dessert.

Terias enjoys the meal, choosing the roast wood pigeons. He doubles up on the ale and dates seeming quite content to be in the company of his peers.

When the meal is complete and his fellow Laranians disband from the dinner hall, Terias asks the person seated next to him, "Before y'head off, do y'know - is there someone in charge of the armory I can chat with? Was hoping to buy some things - a surcoat or cloak and such."

"Why that would be me, Matekea Lonandy of Bydarf at your service," he answers, "We are a small congregation here with four Matakea counting you and three acolytes. As to a surcoat, while you are working here, you are allowed an allowance of 7d 1f per month for clothing and 52d per month for luxuries. A leather surcoat is 151d and a linen surcoat is 51d. We have no cloaks and have not for as far back as I can remember."

"Well met, I'm Matekea Terias of Forniad. An Ataken with the Lady of Paladins Order.", the blond haired, fair skinned, blue eyed young man replies in a formal manner.

Leaning back in his chair as he talks, Terias lets Lonandy know, "I've only just been here at the temple fer the past few days and the work I'm doing is just carry'n the refuse t'Allioa - so I doubt I've earned my allowance yet. I've some coin t'spend so I can pay fer the leather surcoat. Y'happen t'have any leather sleeves? Since the vest and surcoat'll do a good job of covering up my body, I worry my arms'll be exposed."

With a bit of a smile, Lonandy says, "Of course the price I quoted was including the sleeves. As a visiting priest you are allowed red on the collar and cuffs and it would be difficult to have red cuffs without sleeves."

"Aye true enough, be odd t'just wear the cuff's round my wrists," Terias says with a chuckle.

Then with a look of consideration, the Ataken brings up, "Also speak'n of my chore, carrying the days left overs tends t'leave me ripe. Is there any rags I could buy for the task? That way I don't sully my day t'day clothes."

"You can have a loan of some pauper's rags to do your chores," he answers, "I will see to that as well. Just return them each day when you have finished with them so they can be cleaned each tenday."

A pleased smile crosses Terias lips as he says, "You're a good man Matakea Lonandy! Now Lady Odasart won't have t'turn her nose up t'me when I see her after my chores."

Terias asks one final question of his fellow clergyman, "Last thing, though y'may not know. Is there anyone in the temple with the time t'teach me how t'use a longbow? I managed t'collect one from as spoils of combat, but no idea how to even load an arrow into it. I'd rather not shoot my eye out trying to figure it out on my own."

"There is nobody at the temple that could teach you," Lonandy says, "but my cousin is a bowyer fletcher. You can pay him to teach you. His name is Martiusir of Bydarf and his shop is down by the docks."

The Matakea nods his head a few times, mouthing the name to himself, before replying, "Ah my thanks. I'll be sure t'let your cousin know y'sent me his way. I just realized t'is been a while since I last tithed, t'was the Peonian church I gave to recently. Who can I see fer that? Or is it you too?"

"There is a tithe box in the alcove at the entrance to the temple which is watched over by the porter," he says with a yawn. "Now if you will excuse me I will be off to my bed."

After the discussion, Terias is off to his bed as well.

**10-NÚZYÆL-720 KIBAN, KALDOR**

2ND WATCH [COLD, CLOUDY, NORTHWEST STORM]

During the night Terias dreamt that he went to the water barrel in the kitchen to get a drink. When he looked at his reflection he saw another man's face. Lady Odasart walked in at that moment and with a start said, "Master Killassan, what are you doing here?"

When he woke he had a headache for about a half a watch.

After slowly getting out of bed in the morning, holding his steadily as he does, Terias gets himself dressed. He mutters to himself, "Could be a sign t'see this Killassan fella. Hope it's nay an ill omen." The young man heads down the stairs to the practice yard to join the others.

Then after the morning prayer and meal, Terias seeks out Lonandy, with a smile, "Good practice this morn'n eh? I came t'offer y'the coin fer the surcoat and ask after those rags we spoke about last eve."

"Yes it was but by the number of times I got past your guard, you seem to have been distracted," he answers. He takes your money and goes off for a short while. He soon returns with a leather surcoat stained white with red collar and cuffs and a ragged surge tunic.

Once the Matakea has all matters settled with Lonandy, he ventures into the kitchen to collect the refuse, however just before beginning his work he stops to peer into the barrel of water with a bit of apprehension.

All he sees is his own reflection.

Shaking his head, Terias begins changing out from his leathers into the rags supplied by Lonandy. As he does so he chats with his friend Chyrn the spit boy, "Lad, how y'do'n this morn'n? I've

# ACT 1 SCENE 8 PAGE 8

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a headache myself and didn't have but a sip last night. I tell ya what won't help. The smell from the refuse here."

With a smile and a chuckle, the lad says, "I be doing fine mezel' Do ee need me to fetch de physician?"

Terias says, "Nay, nay, just grumbling 'bout it. T'is all but gone anyhow.", Terias replies, as he waves his hand dismissively.

Once the Matakea is ready, he piles the refuse into the wagon with a nearby shovel, asking Chyrn, "Say do y'know the guild that has the sign fer a rope'n pulley?"

"Dey wud be de ztevedores. Dey be de ones dey load and unload de zhips," he answers.

The Matakea nods curtly then says, "Aye I thought they would be loaders of sorts. Figgered warehouse. Glad I asked."

Offering parting words to young boy, Terias asks, "Ppreciate if y'could y'watch over my leathers till I return?"

"I weel witch over dey bit I be zure nobody weel bother dey yer een de temple," he says.

Chuckling at Chyrn's remark, Terias retorts, "Oh aye, course it's safe. Just meant that someone didn't think t'was a donation or t'was trampled on if it were in the way. That sorta thing."

He then sets out cautiously to Alloia, but a bit quicker than usual.

As you head toward the gate, a beautiful young woman pauses as she is passing you to say, "You look not like the sort to be wearing such rags. Have you fallen on hard times or have you been robbed? My mother is Adda of Scintle, the clothier off Dariune Square. I am sure she can make some clothes more appropriate to your station."

While the woman speaks to Terias, his demeanor changes and he straightens himself up. The warrior priest cum garbage peddler moves to fix his hair with his hand, but thinks better of it and lowers it back down. The young man with a bit of a twinkle in his eyes let's the lady know, "I appreciate the kindness an' concern lass. I'm a Matakea stay'n at the Laranian temple. The smell that's probably offending yer nose isn't from me, it's the refuse I'm push'n. I thought I'd be smart enough t'nay sully my proper clothes do'n the work. Though if I knew I'd be see'n the likes of you on my way I'd have thought twice on possibly ruin'n my good name."

Then interjecting on himself behalf with a lopsided smile, "Which is Terias of Forniad, by the by."

With a smile and a bit of a blush she says, "I am Yeanela of Scintle. When you are once again presentable, I would be pleased to introduce you to my mother. Well good day to you."

Shortly after you leave the woman to go her own way, you pass a shop with a sign of an apothecary. A young woman is coming out of the shop saying, "...and if you do not pay my master his due, he cannot prevent unfortunate things happening to you."

She glances your way, does a double take and then runs off down the road to the southwest. She looks slightly familiar but you are not sure from where.

Terias watches as she runs off, his eyes focusing on her intently.

When she disappears into the crowd, he shakes his head. The Matakea begins to push the wagon, but stops, decides to move it off to the side and approach the shop. Once at the door, he does his best to conceal his frame and as a result rags, poking only his head inside, "Master Apothecary, can y'tell me the lasses name that just ran off from here? She looked right familiar t'me."

"Lady Peoni why am I so afflicted this day," the apothecary says, "Be on your way beggar. You are scaring off my paying customers."

"Lady Peoni has answered with one of her sisters flock, I'm a Matakea on errand. I heard her threaten ya before take'n off. Now would y'be so kind as t'tell me who she was?" Terias then says abruptly.

"That is the problem with giving in to one of you thugs," the apothecary answers, "soon you all want a piece of me. Now be on your way before I call the watch. Or perhaps, I should have the Lia Kavair provide the protection I am supposed to be paying for. How are you set with your guild?"

Terias snorts in annoyance, before uttering, "I think y'have wax in yer ears, I said I'm a follower of Larani. What y'pay thieves t'do, I offer in kindness. If y'wish t'slap that away so be it."

The Matakea returns to his cart, still annoyed by what unfolded and continues to the village.

You arrive at the village without further incident and take care of your business without trouble. On your way back, you had just passed the temple of Peoni and are in front of the mason's shop when someone chucks a bucket of garbage at the middle of the road and some of it splatters your rags and bare legs.

Terias sighs, then calls out, "Oi! Watch where y'toss yer garbage!" Then deciding to play up the incident a bit, "Y'messed up my finest!"

You arrive back at the temple without further incident.

Once in the kitchen, Terias offers a nod of greeting to the spit boy as he collects his leathers. Then he heads to wash up the mess not just on his legs, but also the smell on his hands and face. On his way out of the temple he returns the rags to Matakea Lonandy offering his thanks.

The Matakea then makes his way straight to the Peonian temple.

Upon arriving Terias requests an audience with Lady Amyleryn from the first member of the Peonian clergy he can find.

"What is this pertaining to? If it is very important, I will ask the head of our order," she says, "otherwise I suggest you return at a more decent hour for visiting."

\* \* \*

In the middle of the night, Amyleryn is awakened by a cry of pain. Looking around, she notices the priestess, Lertovana Celenian, who appeared to be doing a bed check to see to the needs of the patients. Just as she was passing Amyleryn's bed, she grabbed her head, called out and fell to her knees.

Sitting up, then moving as best as she can, Amyleryn goes to Lertovana. Holding her close, she asks: "Lertovana, what's the matter? Are you alright?" Muttering under her breath so that even Lertovana can't hear her, Amyleryn says: "Save K'nor, this

would be a good time for that healing touch Master Killassan mentioned."

Your prayer appears to be unanswered as the Lertovana says, "I know not...just a splitting headache for a moment. I must attend to my prayers. Thank you for your concern but I am sure I will be alright in a moment."

"It has t'do with the reason we came t'Kiban. Which makes it a matter a'grave important.", Terias replies.

"Very well. Wait here for a moment," she says and hurries off.

A short while later she returns and tells you, "You are allowed a short visit but try to keep it short so that you disturb the other patients as little as possible.

Terias simply nods to the priestess and then makes his way over to Amyleryn. Before crouching beside her bed, he bows, saying "Good morning m'lady."

Amyleryn says, "Good morning. Terias. What brings you here this early?"

In a low whisper the Matakaea then says, "I bring good tidings. Seems I managed t'do what I intended by shaking the apple tree. Had a few fruits fall into my lap." He reaches into his pack and retrieves the folded parchment he recovered last night handing it to Amyleryn to read.

Unfolding the parchment, Amyleryn reads: 'An hour after sunset on the 10th at the hall of the Mangai. All members of the inner council will attend. Signed Karison Dariune.'

Quickly reading the piece of parchment, then hearing out Terias, Amyleryn says: "Today is the 10th. I need you to go and see what you can tonight. I doubt you will be able to get into the hall of the Mangai, so conceal yourself where you can observe all who attend and do your best to memorize their faces...we need to know who we are up against. You will have to be careful...not only with regard to the conspirators, but since it will be after curfew, the town watch as well."

Pausing for a moment, Amyleryn continues: "I'm not happy that the Earl's son is involved in this affair, but I'm not surprised either. As much as we might not like it, the King is quite old and could die at any time. The Earl's line has a strong claim to succeed to the throne. If Earl Dariune's son could replace his father, he would also inherit the claim to the throne as well. I don't doubt that this is just the sort of thing that my great uncle was worried about and why he sent us here to look into things."

Terias appear uncomfortable as Amyleryn tells of her plan. When she finishes explaining the intrigue behind the nobles actions he informs her, "M'lady, if I may mention, Laranians aren't known for their stealth. I wear these white vestments so that both enemy and friend alike can see me from afar. To add to that being new to town I won't know any of the folk I see going in. Not t'mention those I do know I can't seem to recall.. I saw a woman I recognized this morn, but couldn't place her face."

Amyleryn says, "You mean to tell me that Laranians go off to battle without sending scouts out to locate the foe, and then

sneak up on them to determine their strength and maybe even their intentions? Amazing!"

Changing topics, Amyleryn says: "Describe that woman as best as you can."

Appearing a bit perplexed, Terias informs Amyleryn, "Well let's be clear. The military would. These could be soldiers or mercenaries who follow Larani. Laity. They could also be Peonians or other faiths. As an Ataken to the Order of the Lady of Paladins I am bound by the chivalric code. That means victory is secondary only to honour. However, in this case I'm nay planning an assault, so t'is fine. I'm just pointing out my strength over weakness is all." With that he grins slyly, fixing his surcoat.

Terias then tries his best to conjure up the woman outside of the apothecary to describe her to Amyleryn.

She appeared to be in her late teens and she is as skinny as a fence rail. Shorter than Terias (but then most are) with dark blonde hair in a page-boy cut and hazel eyes. She is dressed as a freeborn and she appears very agile (quick).

While she eyes it over Terias goes on speaking softly , "I was visited by six men last eve on my way to the temple. The leader spoke up an' told me to stop poking my nose where it didn't belong and t'head off to Tashal. I noted he bore a patch with a rope an' pulley - a member of the stevedores." Motioning to the parchment with a sly grin, Terias adds, "When they left me he was kind enough t'drop what you're reading now."

Shifting gears to more practical matters, Amyleryn says: "That those stevedors didn't simply try to kill you then-and- there, tells me that the people who sent them are not ready to make their move yet...they were unwilling to risk a big disturbance that might alert the guardsmen and/or your fellow Laranians to the fact that something is going on behind the scenes." Giving Terias a wry smile, she adds: "I'm sure that you're happy they didn't try to kill you as well...and I am too...but it says to me that there is time to find a way to disrupt their plans." and a look of confidence plays across her face. "For right now, go to the Silver Way inn and make yourself available to Felada for anything she has yet to do before she hires a cart to come and fetch me." She adds, holding up the parchment note: "Thank you for bringing this to my attention so promptly."

Terias nods curtly, then states, "Aye Lady Odasart. Two others things t'stir on. First, just before the men surrounded me a crazed beggar approached. T'was likley a diversion. He was acting a fool and rhyming words about a mark being on me, but what stuck was the line 'the star within the circle is the sign of death.' Reminded me of what we saw down below. Had I not been so distracted by his ravings as he ran off I'd of questioned him."

Amyleryn says, "Do you think you would recognize him if you saw him Again?"

Thinking deeply before he speaks, Terias informs Amylern, "Aye, I'll try to draw him from memory before it fades when I've some time. I'll try the same with the lass."

# ACT 1 SCENE 8 PAGE 10

He cannot recall any details about the man...just another beggar in the streets.

Holding up his index and forefinger to count, the Matakea then adds, "Second, did you have a chance to ask the Peonians for a blessing of good health? If 'The Restorer' smiles upon you, your recovery may be far swifter than by a physician's hand alone."

Amyleryn says, "I think if they thought I needed such, they would have offered already." Making a sweeping gesture to indicate the whole infirmary, she says: "Besides, I'm on the mend, and by the looks of things, there are plenty of other people here that need the help more than I. Thank you for the concern, though."

Tilting his head slightly from side to side as the noblewoman responds, Terias, with a lowered voice and a bit of mischief, "Aye, aye all are equal under the eyes of Peoni. But consider'n the nature of our task not t'mention churches are quicker to choice and action with the right .. 'incentive'... on those two counts they might find it in their hearts t'seek Her blessings."

## 10-NÚZYÆL-720 KIBAN, KALDOR

3RD WATCH [COLD, CLOUDY, NORTHWEST STORM]

Your trip across town is interrupted by a young lad (pre-teen) who asks, "Master, could you tell me where there is a metal smith that makes descent nails. I have gotten lost and my master will be angry if I am much later."

"Afraid not lad, I'm new t'town myself.", Terias says helplessly without a moment's thought, then adds with a smile, "Put some hussle in your step that'll earn you some points if yer late. All the best."

When you arrive at the inn, Felada is just finishing the breaking of her fast and, seeing you approach, says, "Welcome Matekea. You look a bit flushed. What is the weather like today? I will be ready to go as soon as I settle the bill for Matilda and myself. Susi did not stay her last night and seems to have lost interest in our plight. Perhaps she stayed at the Riverman's Inn as she recommended to us."

Felada's remark causes Terias to laugh gruffly and then nod once, "The weathers cold and a storm could be coming. When it hits, it won't be a day t'be outside."

Asking Felada, the Matakea glances about, "So what's the plan fer t'day besides seein' that Killassan lexicographer 'bout probing our minds?"

"I believe milady mentioned visiting the lexicographer after we joined her," Felada says, "so, by your leave, I think we should drop Matilda at the house so she can begin her work then find a stables where we can hire a cart for milady."

The innkeeper adds, "One of my nephews, Cabrysar of Bydarf, works in the inn's stables when he is not off wrestling at the fair or in some tavern brawl. You can hire him to pull a cart for you if you can find him sober enough."

Terias perks up as he says, "Crusher? I had a go with him in the ring. Strapping lad."

The Matakea makes his way out of the inn, heading with the two women to the rented house.

Felada first goes to the stables to find Cabrysar. She arranges to hire him and a cart for 1d per watch and tells him to have plenty of cushions and meet her at the temple of Peoni in a turn of the glass.

On the way to the house, you pass a rough looking man, standing in the shadows and watching the hall of the Mangai intently.

Terias makes every effort to take note of the man, not acting very subtle as he does.

"Be on your way," the man says, "There is nothing to concern you here."

Upon arriving at the house, Felada tells Matilda to move this here and that there, "...start a fire in the hearth and get a kettle of pottage started in case the lady of the house wants something to eat before dinner."

While waiting on Felada, the clerical warrior removes his sketchpad from within his pack and begins to draw preliminary outlines of the man in the shadows and the woman he saw earlier in the morning. As time permits Terias begins to fill in the details from his memory as best he can, focused mainly on their faces.

[http://www.duttond.topcities.com/Harn/Terias\\_Sketch.jpg](http://www.duttond.topcities.com/Harn/Terias_Sketch.jpg) [+1 drawing]

Before departing Terias shows the sketches to Amyleryn's maid, asking "What do y'think Felada? Does it look close to the fellow we saw in the shadows outside the hall?"

"What fellow?" she asks. Looking at the drawing she smiles gently and says, "I mean not to offend, but that drawing could be almost anyone."

"True, he was in the shadows.", Terias says in agreement, then adds, "Still I was working on trying to pull some details." Then as a side comment coming to mind he says, "What of the woman, does she seem familiar to you?"

"She looks a bit like the innkeeper of the Riverman Inn," Felada answers.

Looking over his own sketch again, Terias eventually nods, "Huh. Good eye fer detail Felada. Mind if I carry y'round with me t'act as my memory. Seem the Riverman's nay just seedy, t'is shady as well." The Matakea then tucks away the sketchpad back into his pack and continues outside with Felada.

Continuing on to the temple of Peoni, a well dressed (although very provocatively dressed) woman asks Terias, "Would you know the location of the Crossed Pikes brothel? I am to teach them the skills of Halea."

With a playful smile, Terias lets the Halian know, "The rigors of bein' clergy eh? I crossed paths with one when I first arrived to Kiban, looking for a litigant. I'm nay sure how many are in this town. But this one t'was east of the Silver Way Inn, where the park's at."

"Ah, there are many that think that you just drop your clothes and lie on a pallet but there is a great deal more to truly giving of pleasure," she answers, "Thank you for the directions. Drop by in the next couple of days and I will show you what it is like to

fully experience pleasure...at a discounted rate even. Good day to you."

The Matakea says nothing, simply offers a smile and short nod.

The rest of your journey is uneventful and you find Cabrysar waiting at the entrance. Felada tells him to wait here and you enter the infirmary and go to Lady Odasart's bed.

Once they've arrived at her bedside, Terias offers a polite partial bow and informs the noblewoman, "M'lady, your chariot awaits."

"Ah, at last." Amyleryn says. "The good folks here at the temple are kind and generous...as is their wont...but it will be good to be in a place of my own." and she holds out her arms for Terias to help her out of the bed. Once she is standing, she will hang on to Terias with one hand for balance while she finishes dressing. Cutting off Felada before she can protest, Amyleryn says: "Yes, yes, I know. You should be helping me dress, not someone else...let alone a man...but if you'll see to the donation to the temple while I'm dressing, we can be on our way sooner." Giving Felada a warm smile, she finishes, "Thank you for all of the...irregularities...I put you through."

"How much should I give them, milady," Felada asks.

"I'm not sure." Amyleryn says. Thinking for a moment, she says: "How about a sum equal to what I would have spent if I had stayed at the Silver Way inn...with meals...for the same amount of time I've been here? Do you think that would be fair?"

"That should be most fair, milady," Felada says and she goes off to speak with the temple clergy.

While Amyleryn dresses herself, Terias tries his best to maintain both himself and the lady as steady as possible and at the same time keeping his gaze averted.

\* \* \*

**Interlude (and introduction)**

As Rideim prepares to leave the house he has another disagreement with his step mother.

"Your decision to become a mercenary like your brother and not become a farmer like your father, will break his heart. The very least you can do is try not to get killed," she says. "The other day at the faire I sold some pies to a lady and her champion. Her champion had just bested your brother at wrestling. What you should do is go to her and ask politely to join her service and have her champion to train you. She said she was staying at your uncle's inn, the Silver Way Inn."

Rideim goes to the Silver Way Inn and finds he has just missed them as they have just paid their bill and left. "I overheard them say they were going to hire your brother to pull a cart for them at the temple of Peoni," Uncle Illion tells you.

At the temple of Peoni, Rideim finds his brother standing by a cart full of cushions. "They just went inside," Cabrysar says, "come, I will introduce you."

You enter the infirmary to find a tall man dressed in the robes of a priest of Larani, standing next to a bed with a noble woman

with a cast around her hips. Next to the bed is another woman that appears to be the lady's maid.

"By your leave," Cabrysar says, "this is my brother Rideim of Bydarf. If you will permit the three of us," gesturing to include Terias, "we can carry you to the cart."

"Well met Rideim! Are y'as wily in the ring as your stout brother 'Crusher'?", Terias says with a broad smile, shifting his gaze over to Cabrysar and mentioning, "T'is only been a couple of days but we should have another round soon."

As Rideim raises his eyes to meet Rikoro's, the beginnings of a smirk begin to show itself at the corners of Rideim's mouth. Quickly glancing back to Cabrysar, and while returning his gaze to Rikoro, spake "hail, m'lord. I fear I spent more time behind the plow than my brother." Pausing for a second, he then continued "On market and fair days I have held my own in Crillon". His face begins to beam with pride as he begins "Once I bested old Oiel the Ox...", but then notices Amyleryn, he quites down as she...

Looking up into Terias' face, Amyleryn says: "Terias, isn't that the fellow you wrestled? I think you need to make more formal introductions...we now know Rideim of Bydorf,"and she turns briefly to Rideim, saying: "Well met Rideim." then back to Terias "but they do not know any of us, and I suspect that 'Crusher' is not the name his parents gave him." and she arches one eyebrow as she falls silent.

"Aye m'lady, familiarity gave way t'formality. Apologies.", Terias answers back apologetically.

Quickly glancing downward, Rideim responds "no, m'lady, my given name is Rideim." My mother bid me seek out Lady Odasart and Matakea Terias that I might serve them." Briefly pausing, and continuing to look downward in the deference that the years of a peasant's upbringing can establish, he continued "m...m'lady, I seek to serve as a man-at-arms." Rideim then fell silent, while slightly lifting his gaze to see the faces of the woman before him.

Looking back to Rideim, Amyleryn asks: "By the looks of you, you are a freeman. Do you then have no liege/vassel relationship, or, if you do, do you have your liege's permission to seek employment as a man-at-arms?"

"m'ilday I be a freeman's son", Rideim continues to keep his head in a respectful nod, however, his eyes move upward, allowing him to see Amyleryn's face as they speak.

Giving Terias a brief glance that might have a little displeasure in it, Amyleryn says: "I am the Lady Amyleryn of Odasart, daughter of Sir Dalfougo of Odasart, holder of Hesby mannor." Gesturing to Terias, she continues: "This is Terias of Forniad, a Matakea of the Church of Larani." Indicating Felada: "This is Felada of Yaandy, my lady's maid...and my friend." and she gives Felada a warm smile.

Amyleryn says to Rideim: "You have introduced yourself," turning to 'Crusher' "but I'll wager that your parents didn't actually name you Crusher. What is your name?"

# ACT 1 SCENE 8 PAGE 12

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"My given name is Cabrysar, if it please thee milady," he answers.

The Matakea's attention returns to Amyleryn, inquiring, "If you're ready m'lady the three of us should be able to lift you without much trouble."

The introductions concluded, Amyleryn changes the topic. Speaking to the three men, she says: "If you three men would be so kind as to assist me out to the cart, I'll be most appreciative." As the men move to help her out to the cart, she says to Felada: "Felada my dear, please make sure that I haven't left anything behind. Then after you've made the donation to the temple, join us outside...we'll wait for you."

"Yes, milady," Felada says.

As the three men are assisting Amyleryn out to the cart, she says to Rideim: "So, you seek employment as a man-at-arms, eh? Do you have any skill at combat...perhaps with a village militia...or do you seek to be trained in the fighting arts?"

After assisting Amyleryn into the cart, he responds, "I have had some training with the militia, mostly in the use of the spear and shield."

He continues, a smirk of pride slightly revealing it across his face, "I also have learned the sword." The corners of his mouth began to drop, as he continued, "But I don't know these things very well, Zubain the Yeoman, always bested me when he trained us, and he was older than me by half. I need what training I can get, m'lady."

"Spear and shield is good." Amyleryn says. "I have some experience in armed combat, but not...I suspect...good enough to teach. In any case, my expertise is with chivalric weapons, and I certainly can't be teaching that to non-nobles. My injury wouldn't allow me to instruct someone in the art of weapon's play anyway. I'm afraid I can't help you."

Turning to Terias, she says: "Terias, are you good enough at the fighting arts to teach? Does the church allow you to teach fighting to someone not of your Order? If so, are you inclined to take on a student? Your call."

Appearing to offer a helpless look at Amyleryn's question, Terias states, "I'm nay sure if I've a right t'teach someone outside the Order, m'lady. T'is something I'd have to ask on. Never taught anyone either. And if Riedeim here already knows the basics, there's not much more to learn besides through practice and experience. And in that case it'd cross both ways."