

27-PEÓNU-720 [BRART, EBED, KADEN, JETHRUL]

Towards the end of the tenday, Scina Dariune invites you to dinner. Kaden asks if she can bring an escort and, when granted, invites Jethrul to accompany her. After dinner and the Earl's court, Scina speaks with you in private (except for the servants and guards that are always present). Scina says, "Here are the arrangements I have made that I would like you to consider. You have free passage on the riverboat captained by Josriath of Coryerdan. He will go where you direct as long as he is able to transport cargoes to make a living. One of my soldiers, Ebed of Awonn, is assigned to protect you on your journey and 200d will be provided to Kaden for his pay and maintenance for two months. A message has been sent to Evelice of Jarquane, an apothecary in Ternua, requesting that she give Kaden some instruction. Another message has been sent, regarding Brart of Tomar, to Huball of Bidurma in the village of Kolorn, who is hiring miners for an exploratory expedition later this summer. And finally for my own investigation, I have discovered several letters from Tesial of Holsare in Setrew that enticed my brother into trying certain evil magical rituals. I would like you to investigate further and see what can be done to bring her to justice. As far as I know, none of these things are on a critical schedule so you can take what time you need for each one. So, will you accept this mission on my behalf? Hopefully, I don't need to remind you that the misadventures of my family and the powerful individuals in Kiban are not for public discussion."

If you accept, he tells you Josriath of Coryerdan is expected at the end of the month so you have three days to prepare. "Is there any other information or resources that you may require?" he asks.

"It will be an honor to be on this quest. My sword is always at your service," Ebed replies.

"I feel honored to be trusted with your service," says Brart, "I don't no much about hunting, but I think, we should go to Setrew as long as the traces are fresh. Apart from some stray gargûns, I can't remember any misadventures here. Has somebody from your household ever been to Setrew? Some information might be helpful. Also, if there is a map available, I would like to copy it. I can remember things better if I painted them before"

"The only one that I know has been to Setrew, is my brother and I am afraid I cannot allow you to speak with him," Scina answers, "I don't think we have a map but I can have a scribe make one with the places he knows of." <http://duttond.topcities.com/Harn/Kaldor/map1.gif>

"Thank you, my lord. Kaden, can you think of anything else we might need?" After listening carefully, Kaden nodded politely toward Sir Dariune. "It's my honor to accept -- I thank you for all your generosity, and particularly the concern for my safety. I believe my companions will agree with me in journeying to Setrew right away to see what can be learned. Is there anything your advisors could tell us about Tesial of Holare's proclivities that could be useful? Also, forgive me if I give offense, for I surely mean none, but is it possible to either read or learn more of the contents of the letters sent to Tesial?"

"I take no offense as it is a fair question," he answers, "but I have nothing to tell you as these are the things I am sending you

to find out. As to the letters, they have proven to be an embarrassment to my family and a great danger to the kingdom so they will remain in a locked box until my father is better and can dispose of them. I have not read all of them myself."

"I am sorry for the pain wrought upon your house -- it has ever been good to me. I swear we will find the answers you seek." Glancing toward Brart with a nod, Kaden curtsied and left when dismissed.

"Perhaps a letter of introduction to your brother for me, sire." says Jethrul, "It may ease the formation of a relationship with him, that may be necessary to learn about these rituals. With the right 'key' a minstrel can find entry where others are rebuffed."

Sir Dariune turns to Jethrul with a frown, "We have not met before so I will assume that you have only heard of this affair through public gossip and have not been informed of my previous decisions. This disgraceful affair is not to be discussed with my brother and he will soon be leaving to prove himself in battle. Next, the rituals that he was duped into attempting have been determined to be a danger to the kingdom and any attempt to study or perform them will be judged an act of treason punishable by a slow and torturous death. Finally, the others present have taken an oath to not discuss the shortcomings of my family in public and such discussion may also be judged as treason. Although Kaden, as a friend of the family, has vouched for your character, this matter is too sensitive to trust to that. Before you leave this room, I must have your oath on what you hold most sacred that you will not discuss this affair nor the deeds of my family with anyone other than is in this room."

Initially Jethrul was surprised at the tone of Dariune's response, but as the noble continued, he realized that the man had misunderstood him, and attempted to placate him with his reply. "Nay, my lord, I only wished for your recommendation as a player. No more. Even so, I am willing to swear upon my lute or the goddess Larani if you prefer, not to discuss these affairs with other, nor to allude to them in song."

Looking appeased, although somewhat tired, Sir Dariune replies, "That is sufficient for my requirements. As to recommendations, I believe a man is proven by his actions. If you aid and protect Kaden on her quest, you will have the gratitude of the son of an Earl, and no doubt, my father the Earl as well. Now you may leave to rejoin the group as I am sure they are wondering where you have gotten to."

Once outside, Kaden speaks with Brart, "Well, what do you think? Dangerous days, these. The minstrel that sang of you -- my my, so fearless..." at that, Kaden ribbed the miner playfully. "I spoke with the minstrel, named Jethrul of Krarisen, some days ago, and he is eager to accompany us -- how pleasing, sweet notes to entertain us on a boring ship voyage! I had no idea then, though, for where we would sail -- would you accompany me to the Riverman to give him instructions on where to meet us?"

"As long as he doesn't realize I'm that fearless miner he's singing about," Brart replies, "I'm happy with it. I wonder if all those heroes' tales started liked that."

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"Why no..... um, of course not." Kaden flushed red and it would probably be pretty easy for Brart to tell that she already opened her big mouth about it.

Brart asks, "While we are on the way, do you think we will need anything on our voyage? I've got a quite generous gift for equipping our journey and I haven't got the faintest idea, what we might need. So far I've never been away from the support and shelter of the miners' community."

Kaden frowned. "I'm not sure, myself -- I'm in much the same situation. I have pretty much what I need to keep myself happy, but... shouldn't the ship have pretty muchly whatever we need? I think maybe we won't need to make any purchases until we actually get to where we're going. Then we might need to buy food, weapons, clothing, or anything like that. But I think for right now it would only weigh us down. Who knows, though, what other folks might need. The only thing I can immediately think of is a stash of trail rations, perhaps some torches or at least a lantern, and anybody that might want to buy a weapon, for it surely will be a dangerous journey."

01-KELEN-720 ON THE RIVER NEPHEN ABOARD THE BARABELETH

2ND WATCH [COOL, CLEAR, SOUTHEAST BREEZE]¹³

You report to the docks to board the riverboat Barabeleth before dawn, where the captain, Josriath of Coryerdan, greets you. Captain Josriath tells you that he only has two cabins, one of which is his and he needs it to properly run the ship. The other cabin is available for your use and will accommodate four people. You will have to make your own arrangements for the privacy of the lady. The ship is approximately twelve paces long and four paces wide. The cabin contains just enough room for four hammocks and two footlockers under each hammock. Those unable to bunk in the cabin will need to settle in with the crew in the cargo hold.

Brart enters the boat rather cautious thinking water is something to get rid of and out of your work place, not swim on... Jethrul's suggests that Ebed might enjoy the company of the sailors, and that perhaps Kaden should have one of the two hammocks furthest from the cabin door, with some kind of curtain (unused sail?) as privacy.

Kaden had been leaning over the railing, looking out at the new town -- perhaps, her journeys WOULD actually start; she'd begun to doubt as she'd tarried in Kiban for so much longer than she had intended -- when she saw Mobon approach. She welcomed him with a smile as he reached for her hand.

Mobon comes aboard carrying his bag and weapons. Setting the excess load down as far out of the way as practical, he warmly greets each of his former companions, offering a stout handclasp and a "Well met, friend!" to the men and a lighter clasp, accompanied by a "You are even lovelier than I remember!" to Kaden.

Curtseying in her brand new dress, Kaden was impressed with the soldier's courtly manners. "And you look ever as strong! So then, welcome aboard sir," she said as she stood once again. "Fancy you my new dress?"

Mobon introduced himself to the Captain who says, "Why so formal lad? I mind ee vrim a month ur two ago, pale as a ghost and feeding de fishes on our yark ride down de Kald. The town

criers uv Tashal be still lukin' vor ee and yer two companions bit, as ee saved my ship, I figure it be noan uv my business."

"Of course...my apologies." Mobon replies with a rueful grin, "Let's just say it's been an interesting month or two, shall we?" After a brief thoughtful pause, he adds, "So, the criers are looking, eh? What, pray, is the word on the docks and in the taverns as to what happened?"

"Mostly I yer dey ee be wanted vor questioning 'bout de murder uv two young nobles. As to de tavern gossip, 'nuff time 'as passed vor dey to be long onto other subjects by now," he answers.

"Well..." says Mobon, half to himself, "We'll have to see about clearing that up, won't we?" Then, returning his full attention to the captian, he adds, "My thanks." and moves off to settle in for the trip.

At Jethrul's comments, Mobon frowns slightly and says, "Would it not be more proper for us to give the lady her own room and all bunk together with the seamen?"

Jethrul recoiled at the idea of sleeping with the sailors when there was a perfectly good cabin. "I think that you will find the sailors' quarters are rather cramped. An unnecessary extra three bodies will not cause the sailors to look upon us with favor. And beside there is the captain's view of us to be considered. If we hove off and sleep with the sailors, he will consider us as sailors rather than as passengers."

"I doubt the captain will think less of us, even should we choose to sleep in a dingy towed behind the boat." Mobon says, "Silver is silver, after all. However, if you wish to occupy the room, I'll not gainsay you as long as Kaden does not object. For myself however, I shall seek quarters elsewhere." he continues, "I have sailed as crew on this very boat and have no difficulties with such accommodations."

On the topic of berthings, Kaden seemed a bit uncomfortable at the thought, but mostly from surprise, not from any objection to their company. "I confess, I've not actually, er, had this sort of situation," she said, breaking her characteristic smooth chatter. "But, I trust you lads. As long as I can have some sort of privacy, that's fine with me. Mobon will protect my virtue, I'm quite sure." She grinned at the man, knowing the comment would likely make him color.

As you settle in while trying to stay out of the way of the twenty-five crewmembers, the ship casts off at dawn. Along the right bank of the river, you see serfs working in the fields and you can smell the rich, black, newly plowed earth. The trip down river is uneventful and you reach the docks of Ternua by the end of the fourth watch.

"Shall we find an inn for dinner?" After the hours spent on board the craft, Jethrul was interested in stretching his legs and something different to look at.

"Agreed!" Mobon says enthusiastically, "But first, we have a matter to discuss. Previously, I went armed in towns and aboard as a man-at-arms under the aegis of Jak of Odasart. In his absence, I must be employed, at least as far as others are concerned, in order to bear arms amid towns. I do not propose to charge others in our group, but need someone to step forward

and claim to be my patron, as I am wary of traveling unarmed in these perilous times."

Jethrul says, "But surely you are free? You can carry your shortsword with no trouble. I fear that none of us has the cachet to allow more chivalric weapons."

"Free I am." Mobon answers, grinning, "But is any lawful man free of the wishes and dictums of his betters? In many towns, the wearing of armor, or arms greater than a dagger, is proscribed even for freemen unless they be employed as a guard. I have encountered this before, and been aggrieved by it's consequences. Greatly would I prefer the comfort of my arms, if one of you could but accommodate me."

Captain Josriath, hearing your comment about the inn, says, "We weel be yer vor a couple uv days while I sell my cargo and get another so ee might as well get some rooms at de inn. If ee do dey rate away while my crew be unloading, dere better way still be rooms available. As soon as ee know where ee want to gaw next, let me know so I can get a prapper cargo."

Taking the captain aside, Mobon says, "Captain, I was wondering if you might assist me with something. Pray, do you restrict yourself to the carrying of goods for others alone or do you also engage in speculative ventures, purchasing items hither in the expectation of a greater return yon?"

"My cargos be usually paid vor by a mercantylor doing de speculating. Ow-zum-iver, pert uv de pay vor aich uv de crew be liberty chests vor dey to do dier own speculating. What do ee 'ave een mind?", he asks.

"Well..." Mobon says, "I have a bit of money that I'd like to try and multiply if possible, but I know nothing of trade and so forth. I thought, if you knew of such things, that we might enter into a partnership where you buy cargo with my funds and take a portion of the profits, if any, as a fee for your expertise."

"We can do dey as long as ee understand I baint a mercantylor. Win ur lose ee weel 'ave de same rixs as I do. When ee decide where ee weel be gwain next I weel buy some cargo. 'ow mort do ee want to invest?" the Captain replies.

"Well, that depends on how we are going to work this." Mobon says, stroking his chin thoughtfully, "Am I buying into your total cargo for a share of the total profits or are you going to use my money to buy a separate cargo?"

The Captain answers, "Well, I 'ave sex tons uv cargo space and I find what cargo be available at aich port. Dat be shipped as freight and us cussen speculate way it. Any leff over space be filled way speculative cargo. Wain I sell de stuff, de crew be paid way wages, shares of de profit and liberty chests. As a member uv de crew, ee weel get liberty chests dey ee can use bly I cussen advise ee on dat. I weel use de money ee give me to pay vor de cargo and return dey amount plus yer shares uv de profit ur loss. De exact numbers weel depend on 'ow mort ee want to invest."

"Reasonable enough." Mobon agrees, nodding, "Shall we say a crown to start?"

The Captain answers, "My current cargo consists uv drie tons uv wagon axles worth 528d, one ton of dried pears worth 330d and one ton of pavilion tents worth 320d, totaling 1178d. I have sixty shares as owner, twenty shares as cap'n and sixteen shares as pilot. My bosun 'as seb'n shares making the capital value uv aich share 'bout 11d. So I weel use yer crown wain I buy de next cargo and give ee twenty eight uv de owner's shares. Now if ee weel excuse me I need to be 'bout my work."

"That sounds fine." Mobon says, offering his hand to seal the bargain, "I'll have the money for you first thing tomorrow morning. Thank you." When the captain moves on, Mobon rejoins his companions and waits until they are ready to disembark.

"Well gentlemen," Kaden says simply as she nods toward the gangplank down to the dock. "Shall we? I'd like to see what this town is all about."

Hailing a passerby on the docks, Mobon asks directions to a good inn. Turning to Kaden, he asks "Perhaps you would be willing to claim me as a bodyguard, Kaden, and settle the weapons issue?"

"Well, certainly, I'd be honored to have your protection," Kaden said with a winning smile. "Though I'm not sure my word would be bond enough here to allow you to peacefully keep chivalric weapons; I am but a freeborn lass myself, of no great nobility, though I did live at the castle in Kiban for most of my years."

"That probably would be best," chipped in Jethrul. "It would seem odd, a minstrel having a guard. An apothecarist is much more likely." Disembarking with the others, Jethrul asked, "Shall we go exploring?"

"The weapons of chivalry hold little appeal for me, simple soldier that I am." Mobon reassures Kaden, "Those I have will do nicely, can I but carry them. It may not become an issue, but I need only know that, should you be questioned, you will reply in the affirmative that I am in your employ. That should do us nicely."

01-KELÉN-720 TERNUA, KALDOR

5TH WATCH [HOT, CLEAR, STILL, FOGGY]¹⁴

Stepping off the gangplank and looking down the town's main street, the first thing you notice is how foggy it has gotten. Strolling along the road, the signs on the shops appear and disappear like ghosts: signs on opposite sides of the street with large belt buckles on a wooden background (which Mobon identifies as metalsmiths), a diamond shaped sign with a poppy bud (which Kaden identifies as an apothecary, possibly the one she was sent here to meet), a sign of a silver mug filled with golden drink (the thistle above the door identifies this as a tavern or inn), sign of a wagon wheel, a sign of a peoni flower (obviously a temple of Peoni), a sign with the image of a barrel, a diamond sign with three candles, a sign with a tunic, a sign with a stone keep, a sign with a round smiling face (from the thistle above the door another tavern or inn) and a sign with an urn. As the sun approaches the horizon, the shopkeepers are closing the shops and hurrying off to their dinner.

Mobon eyes the swirling mists warily, resting his hands lightly on his hilts.

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Kaden smiled, inhaling deeply of the air in Ternua. Did the very air smell different here, or was it just a trick of the heavy fog? Her head fairly buzzed with the possibilities that lay before her, as yet unsullied by strife and expecting nothing but adventure. Noting the storekeepers closing up their shopfronts, Kaden suggested they secure lodging for the night. "Shall we visit the tankard, or the happy friar?"

"The silver tankard looks more to my liking. Especially if the ale is as golden as the sign. But given how late it is, we may have to make do with what has rooms to spare.", answers Jethrul.

"That is agreeable to me." Mobon says, "And, as to quarters, should they be short, perhaps our good captain might be prevailed upon to allow us to pass the night aboard." Wearing his armor and carrying his falchion (left side), short sword (right side) and dagger (chest harness), Mobon leaves his shield, spear, bow & arrows and arrow bag on the boat.

Bart follows silently, leaving his tools on board, but carrying his sketchbook in his bag.

Entering the tavern that you later learn is named the "Silver Mead Club", it takes little time for your eyes to adjust from the gloomy weather outdoors to the rush lighting inside. You see a number of locals (apparently peasant farmers) drinking and talking in the shabby common room. The conversation dies upon your entrance and the tavern keeper says, "What can I get ee volks?"

"Hello," Kaden said with a smile. "A round of ale for my fellows and myself. And I'd like to know whether you have rooms for the night." While waiting for his answer, Kaden took stock of the place and its inhabitants.

"Yes miss, four ales coming rate up", he says as he starts drawing the ale, "I be sorry bit, since I only 'ave a taverner's license, I be only allowed to provide lodging to dey een de stoolball game (who be considered employees) ur common room lodging wain de Happy Man 'as no vacancies."

Jethrul frowned, he was the one who had led them to the wrong inn, "Looks like we should be at the Happy Man. But since the ale is on it's way, we might as well make the most of it."

Pulling up a seat, Mobon eases into it and waits for his ale. "Aye." says he, "A cool draught will go well. I'd not worry as to the Happy Man for, were it full, would not the overflow be even now appearing here? And, should *our* happiness for the night not be found there, we know were to come." He grins amiably at Jethrul.

"Ah, noble soldier, it is good to see you in such good spirits," Kaden remarked as they sat to enjoy their brew. "You seemed to take the sea journey well; are you accustomed to such travels?"

"Thank you, good keep," she said, unperturbed by the news. "But perhaps you can direct me to Evelice of Jarquane? I've some business with her." Kaden took a big gulp of her ale, which tasted particularly good after the voyage. "Tell me about the stoolball game; when is it, and who do you favor?"

"If ee jist cumm'd vrim de docks, ee passed er place on de way yer. Otherwise, er place be 'bout 'alf way to de docks on de rate 'and side," he answers. With a wry smile, he says, "As to de stoolball game, it starts een 'bout an 'our and ee can participate

bit only if dere be no misunderstandings 'bout what weel be expected uv ee. A stoolball be a leather ball as big as yer 'ead, filled way dried peas. A willing girl stands on a stool at dey side uv de room and, vor a penny, wan uv de customers can pitch de stoolball at er. If dey knock er off de stool, dey win a prize. Now de gentry play vor a kiss ur a cake bit yer, de winner gets de privilege uv paying vor de girls affections een a room upstairs."

Mobon raises an eyebrow at that, but quickly masters himself and limits his commentary to a slight, disbelieving shake of his head. He would not be winning anything in that game, he thought to himself.

Kaden laughed, long and hard. "Ah, no, I think I'll pass on that! My mum'd no doubt have something to say on that topic!" Kaden took another drink of her ale, and paid the keep for their tankards. "Thank you again, it was very good."

Kaden offered one arm to Jethrul and the other to Mobon. "Well, my fine 'escorts,' shall we be off to see what it is that makes the Happy Man so joyous?"

Jethrul slipped his arm over Kaden's proffered one, "Indeed, the Silver Mead Club is happy enough; the Happy Man must be a merry place. And possibly more appreciative of fine lute playing."

Taking the other arm, Mobon says, "Sounds good to me!"

As the group is talking together, they see a young man walk in that they might have notice from the boat. He is of medium height with brown hair and striking blue eyes. His clothing is of decent quality, but maybe a shade darker than would be expected. His moves are very fluid and graceful. They notice that his only weapon is a dagger, of beautiful quality and style.

Mobon smiles and nods to the newcomer and says, "The ale's good, friend, but if it's lodging you need, this isn't the place. We're off to the Happy Man to seek quarters for the night!"

Juebin nods back to Mobon "Well if you don't mind then I will tag along with you, since I am also in need of lodging for the night. And where is this Inn we seek?"

01-KELÉN-720 TERNUA, KALDOR

MIDDLE OF 5TH WATCH [HOT, CLEAR, STILL, FOGGY]¹⁴

As you step back outside into the fog, two peddlers approach with their cart. One starts to tell you all about how great his pots and pans are. The other looks directly at Jethrul while rubbing the right side of his nose with his left hand and placing his right thumb in his right ear and waving his fingers up and down.

It was impossible for Kaden -- or anyone else, for that matter -- not to notice the strange gesticulating going on between the peddler and Jethrul. Edging away from the scene, Kaden moved so that Mobon was between her and the cartmen, then frowned and threw a questioning look at the three of them.

Bart just watched with amazement.

Jethrul ignored the first, he had no need for pots and pans. The actions of the second were more interesting. At first Jethrul thought he must have a smut on his nose and reached up with his free hand to wipe it off, but the man's actions with the other hand made him think that the man was trying to make a fool of him. So instead Jethrul put his thumb on his nose and waved his

fingers with a smile on his face. In doing so he almost collided with Kaden, who was pushing herself away from the man, and his gesture was cut short as he tried to maintain his balance.

As soon as Jethrul makes his gesture, the one peddler stopped signaling and the other reached out and shakes Jethrul's hand (a rather moist handshake). Both peddlers then push their cart off into the fog. Moments later from the opposite direction, you hear someone shouting, "Yer now! Who 'as strolled off way me cart."

Jethrul looks in some horror at his hand, and looks around for something to wipe it on, "What was that all about?" His palm is now stained a bright yellow.

After watching the strange scene unfold bemusedly, Mobon is galvanized into action by the shouting. "Stop, thieves!" he calls, plunging into the fog after the 'peddlers'. His shortsword slides into his right hand and he holds it low along his thigh, ready for instant action but not risking accidentally wounding a passerby in the mists.

The minstrel stayed with Kaden as the others ran around in the fog, "looks like we caught the end of some robbery.

As soon as he enters the fog, Mobon immediately comes to a halt running into the cart. The "peddlers" are nowhere to be seen. Mobon quickly scans the cart, looking to see if it appears the same as he last saw it (i.e., not with big gaps where armfuls of merchandise were suddenly grabbed up and run off with when the villains fled). Realizing the compromising nature of his position, he decides that publicity is his friend. "To me, friends!" he calls, scanning the fog around him in case the 'peddlers' should seek to ambush him, "I've found the cart! To me!" As far as he can tell, the cart is intact with nothing missing.

Juebin moves with the rest of the party as they move to Mobon's call. He is not sure what is up but knows it is much safer to stay with the whole group then to try and find his way in this fog. Brart tries to keep up.

Mobon stands watch over the cart, wary of ambush in these shifting mists, and continues to call out every few seconds until the owners appear, "hail, pot merchant...I've found yer cart. To me!"

Brows knitting, Kaden moved with Jethrul to Mobon's position, following his voice. "Never a dull moment, aye?" Kaden said as she emerged from the mist."

"Certainly interesting tonight. More fun than stoolball I'm sure." And then he asked Mobon, "Did you catch up with the miscreants?"

"They fled, but I have the cart here and the wares seem largely intact." Mobon said, "Ho! Potseller...to me!"

As the party converges on the cart, they are joined by various locals answering the hue-and-cry and by a small thin man who identifies himself as the owner of the cart. Turning to Mobon, he says, "Dank ee sir, I be een yer debt."

"Think nothing of it, my good man!" Mobon replies, giving the man a friendly clap on the shoulder, "Men of conscience cannot suffer thieves among them, eh?" Glad that no one jumped to any unfortunate conclusions, Mobon looks about for his companions.

Kaden smiled at the merchant, then nods her head toward the Happy Friar. "Shall we be on about it, then?" she asked, grinning as she watched Jethrul wiping his hand off in the dirt on the ground. "And perhaps we should be a bit more watchful for cutpurses in this fog...."

Slipping his shortsword back into its sheath, Mobon checks the security of his own purse, glancing around as he does so.

Noticing the direction of Kaden's glance, the potman says, "If ee be gwain to de 'appy Man, perhaps dere be a way I can repay my debt to ee. De innkeeper be my brother and I may be able to ensure ee get rooms, possibly at a splits discount."

"Why, that would be splendid, friend!" Mobon says, breaking into a grin, "What luck! For indeed, we were just discussing our prospects for lodgings this late in the day. Lead on!"

To know one in particular Juebin says, "maybe my luck is changing for the better." Wearing a big smile he follows the others to their nights lodging

01-KELÉN-720 TERNUA, KALDOR

END OF 5TH WATCH [HOT, CLEAR, STILL, FOGGY]¹⁴

Following the tinker, you reach the Happy Man inn and it is immediately obvious that this is a much better place than the Silver Mead Club. The tinker introduces you to his brother the innkeeper who tells you they are almost full, "as a favor to my brother, we can make some sort of arrangements. How many rooms will you want and should they be shared or private? The private rooms are 20d per night and shared rooms are 15d per night. Since you are recommended by my brother, the evening meal and two drinks are included."

"Ahh, now this is more like it!" Kaden exclaimed as the group walked in the door, apparently unconcerned with drawing attention to themselves. "For my part, I don't mind sharing a room, long as I can have a corner to myself and a bit of privacy, particularly if you are short on space. I wouldn't want to impose on your generosity, good keep."

Mobon frowns slightly at this, then says, "That hardly seems proper, Kaden. If a private room is available, you should take it. Someone else will rent it if you do not." Mobon waits for her response. If she persists in sharing a room, then he will suggest she share it with him, and pay for both of them.

Kaden shrugged. "'Tis true, I'd prefer my own space. I am an honorable woman. But sometimes honor competes with the coin purse. I'd be cutting my pennies in half just to have a room to myself, when I've shared space with you gentlemen the whole journey through so far without a mishap or misstep. I am a simple girl, and it seems an extravagance to spend so much."

"But there is a difference between being simple and being common. Your reputation must be worth more than 5 pence. And surely it is not your pennies that you are saving but Lor..." Just in time Jethrul remembered not to say the name of their patron. "Uh, Mobon's, that you are saving."

"True enough. As long as there's no objection -- after all, the money our patron's given should be spent in agreement -- then I'll take the private room, and thank ye'all", answered Kaden.

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After you answer, the innkeeper says, "you will no doubt want to wash up...", looking pointedly at Jethrul's hand, "...dinner will be served in an hour. Tonight we are having a choice of Potrous or Rota for the first course and a choice of Canelyne, Luce Wafers or Nekkesan for the main course. The main course will be accompanied by Rapes and Amyndoun Seaw followed by Bolas for desert."

Brart just says: "whatever you'll recommend..."

"No," the innkeeper replies, "I would not presume to know your tastes and I do not make menu recommendations to menials."

When it comes time to discuss food options, Kaden will choose Rota and Canelyne.

"The Potrous and Luce Wafers for me. And a wash up is definitely in order." He eyed the yellow on his hand with some wariness, holding the hand out so he wouldn't brush his clothes or other people with it. Before washing, he will have a closer look to try and identify the substance, and after washing to see if it had left any mark, or skin rash, in reaction to it. "That was an unusual meeting, it was as if they were waiting for me, the way the man looked straight at me and gave some signal. And then marked me. Yet I knew him not, and have not tarried in Ternua before. Perhaps they have mistaken me for someone else."

(Washing his hands prevents the stain from rubbing off on other things but does not remove it from his hand. It doesn't appear to be irritating his skin or otherwise harming him and seems to be some sort of vegetable dye. The only die Jethrul has had any experience with is what his father used to mark sheep but he never paid enough attention to tell if this is the same sort of dye.)

Noticing the stain still marring his palm, Kaden pulled Jethrul over. "So you've been marked -- we'll need to guard well tonight. A footpad could be watching for you to roll you as an easy mark."

Kaden examined his hand to see if she could recognize what sort of substance he'd been marked with. Her knowledge of alchemy leads her to believe that it is some sort of vegetable dye however her knowledge of herblore does not reveal what plants are used to make it.

Turning Jethrul's hand over, Kaden made small "hmmm'ing" noises as she examined it. "Definitely some sort of vegetable dye -- whoever that fellow was, he intended to mark you from the start. No idea what kind of plant it was made from, though. Probably nothing harmful, but you never know of course. Let me know if you start to feel ill at all."

"It gives no pain, but the marking I don't like. I fear it will not come off until the skin wears off and I am not willing to rub my hands raw. I could wear gloves to keep it hidden, but I can't play in gloves," Jethrul answers.

Kaden frowned, puzzling over the dilemma. "Let me see that again," she said as she studied his hand. "I had so looked forward to hearing you play." Kaden reflected on her knowledge of herblore and on her knowledge of alchemy but neither gave her a solution to remove the dye.

Kaden shrugged with resignation, after racking her brain for information. "I'm sorry, friend, but my knowledge fails me. I'm

afraid I can't think of anything that would remove the foul stain. Perhaps it's best that you wear the gloves tonight, playing or no."

"Gloves will be hard to find at this time, perhaps you could wrap a bandage over the offending hand, and I will try to buy some gloves on the morrow. Sadly, that will mean that there will be no lute tonight."

Kaden nodded. "I'm glad to bandage you as if you'd been injured; but perhaps it's best to bandage them both. A bandage on the hand that's been marked may stand out just as surely as the mark itself."

"Nay, just the one hand. If you bandage both I fear it will attract even more attention. One injured hand could happen any time, but both would be of more interest."

After Kaden had bound the hand, Jethrul asked with some hesitancy. "I have another favor to ask of you. As I can't play, I must pay the innkeeper, but I have few pennies. Could I borrow some to cover the our expenses until I can see a jeweler on the morrow?" He gestured at the gold ring on his finger, indicating to the alchemist that he was not without funds, just without coin.

Kaden put her hand on Jethrul's arm in a gesture of friendship. "Say no more, it is done."

"Potrous, and Canyne with Amyndoun Seaw would be fine for me," Mobon answers the innkeeper, "Though I know not these Bolas. What are they, good host?"

"They are a dessert of wild plums and stuffed pears," the innkeeper answers, "It is one of the specialties of the house." "They are a dessert of wild plums and stuffed pears," the innkeeper answers with some pride, "It is one of the specialties of the house."

"Well, then..." Mobon says, "I shall particularly look forward to sampling them." Turning to Brart, he continues, "You might favor my selections, friend Brart. The Potrous is a spicy egg concoction that really gets your mouth interested in what's coming next. Canyne is a beef pie and Amyndoun Seaw a hearty vegetable gruel, which together make for a bracing meal after a long day's travel."

Juebin turns to Jethrul and Brart, "I need someone to share are room with if either of you are interested. I have no use for a room all to myself." With his now content look about him, he will also turn to the Inn Keeper " I will also have the Potrous for my first course, Canelyne for my main course accompanied by Amyndoun Seaw. Can you have someone show me to my room now so I can also wash up before dinner?"

"I will show you all to your rooms as soon as I find out what rooms you require," answers the Innkeeper.

"I would be happy to share a room with you." Jethrul hoped that the merchant might be a quieter sleeper than the more physical fighter and miner, but also was interested in knowing more about the man himself.

He will turn to Jethrul "thank you, I didn't want to have to spend the money for a room all to myself. I don't know about you but I am ready for a good meal after we freshen up." Juebin will also look at Jethrul's hand as the others do to see if he has any knowledge of the like.

The innkeeper says, "So far I have a private room for the lady at 20d and a shared room for the minstrel and the merchant at 15d each." Looking at Brart he continues, "I assume your menial will be sleeping in the stables and eating in the kitchens which will be included as part of the fee for the private room." Turning to Mobon he inquires, "By your garb, you may be for hire but you are no one's menial so will you have a shared or private room?"

With a smile, Mobon replies, "Actually, I had planned to share a room with my comrade here," he nods toward Brart, "who is no more a menial than I. Less, truth be told, since I am in service to the lady and he is about his own business." Mobon goes out of his way to keep his tone light and friendly, giving the innkeeper the benefit of the doubt for an honest mistake.

Noticing Ebed standing quietly in the background, the innkeeper asks, "and what about you...are you with these people as their menial, hireling or are you by yourself?"

Kaden answers, "He is a soldier in my employ, good keep. I should think he'd take a shared room, but would like if at all possible for it to be close to mine, considering the protection he is charged with giving me."

Ebed speaks up to say, "A shared room is fine for me."

"Yes, quite," replies the innkeeper, "so we have one private room and five beds in shared rooms. That will be 95d."

"Hey Brart," she said as they were settling up. "You're holding on to *the money,* right?" (emphasis at **)

"Sure," Brart replies, "It's intended for a good purpose, not for libelous landlords."

Overhearing this remark, the innkeeper says, "If my inn, or my management of it, is not up to your requirements, you are free to sleep elsewhere. Part of my responsibility is to ensure that your betters do not have to suffer the presence of riff raff. With your common appearance and crude manner, it is not my fault if I mistake your station in life. I suggest you voice your displeasure with lord Verdreth and I will even help by introducing you to his bailiff. Now you should either pay for a room, talk to the bailiff or leave. Which do you decide?"

Kaden stared at Brart as if he had two heads. "Is our lodging not a good purpose? Or would you prefer we sleep in the trees? This man is already giving us a good deal."

Brart hands over the money.

Mobon watches the exchange with some amusement, while quietly withdrawing 15d from his purse and passing it to the innkeeper.

Shaking her head, Kaden paid her portion and that of Jethrul. It wouldn't do to continue the discussion in front of the innkeep, so she remained quiet.

The innkeeper has one of his journeymen show you to your rooms while he returns to his other business.

After you refresh yourselves with the provided pitcher of water, towel and washbowl, you return to the common room for dinner. The other guests appear to be either nobility or clerics of Larani, much more than you would expect for such a small town.

After the excellent meal, there is a short period of conversation and after-dinner drinks, then by ones and twos everyone goes off to their bed.

02-KELÉN-720 TERNUA, KALDOR

2ND WATCH [COOL, PARTLY CLOUDY, SOUTHWEST WIND, LIGHT RAIN]¹⁷

In the morning, you awake refreshed and break your fast with various pastries, breads, cider and wine. Some of the nobility and clergy that you saw last night are breaking their fast as well and the conversations that you overhear are mostly regarding their plans for the day and their journey back to their homes.

"So, friends!" Mobon says cheerfully during breakfast, "perhaps we should make our plans for the day, eh? We have a day or two, I believe, until the captain is prepared to depart. Has anyone any specific agendas here or shall we just take our leave and explore the highways and byways of Ternua together?"

Juebin answers, "I have no plans at all and would like to explore with your group if that is ok? I have never been anywhere outside of the city so anything would be a grand adventure." Looking a little young at this point he will add, "I hope you don't mind if I find this all very exciting, being out on my own is feeling very good."

Clapping him on the shoulder, Mobon exclaims, "Mind? Why should we mind? Life should be a grand adventure of wonders and pleasures and everyone should see as much of it as they can. 'Twas nothing else that took me my self from forge to field and beyond!"

Having a smile on his face with the camaraderie of the soldier Juebin will add in "Well I do look forward to some adventure and to see what is out there for me to discover."

Jethrul answers, "I have no trouble with that. What I'm doing is not very private, just getting some coin and dealing with this smirch upon my hand.

"I need to see a jeweler, as I'm low on coins, and then visit the alchemist, to see if he can do anything about this mark, " Jethrul held up the bandaged hand, "And if he can't then I'll need to buy some gloves."

"I should like to visit both of those places myself and would gladly accompany you." Mobon says, "Unless, of course, you seek privacy in your transactions friend Jethrul."

Juebin replies, "I would also like to tag along with the two of you if it is ok. I would like to see what is available at these establishments."

I fear that there will not be too much adventure in visiting a jeweler and a apothecary in this small town. Of course I would have said the same about crossing the road from one tavern to another, and look what happened there", says Jethrul.

"As for my part, you are welcome, Juebin. And in terms of plans for the day, I should like to visit Evelyce of Jarquane, the apothecarist here; I believe she may have some training for me. Any who wish to accompany me, your countenances would be most welcome." Kaden finished off her breakfast in fine style, rather enjoying this traveling business so far.

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02-KELÉN-720 TERNUA, KALDOR

3RD WATCH [COLD, PARTLY CLOUDY, NORTHWEST STORM, LIGHT SNOW]¹⁹

After asking one of the servants of the location of a jeweler and of an alchemist, you are told the town does not have a jeweler but does have a silversmith (she gives directions down a nearby side street). The town also does not have an alchemist but does have an apothecary, Evelyce of Jarquane, about half way to the docks on the right hand side.

Traveling through the light dusting of snow, you easily find the silversmith, who turns out to be a small woman with auburn hair. She has not opened the outer awning and counter arrangement that is common to most shops, no doubt due to the chill in the air. However, the door is unlocked and you enter to find her busy at her work.

Kaden popped into the store behind Jethrul, eyes scanning the place with twinkling eyes -- that she could someday afford such luxuries! "Hello good woman," Kaden said with a smile, then moved aside to let Jethrul go in front of her.

"Good day, Mistress Silversmith" added Jethrul.

Looking around the room, Kaden sees the wares arranged on shelves at the back of the room out of reach from the counter at the front (if it was open) or the counter where she is now standing. The assortment of items includes beads, a bowl, cups, goblets, marbles, plates, spoons, rings, amulets, necklace chains, bracelets, broaches, combs, earrings and anklets.

"Good morning to you. Is there something I can help you with?," the silversmith answers.

"Yes indeed," answered the minstrel, slipping the gold ring off his finger, and handing it across to the silversmith. "I am in need of some coin, say about 200 pence. I have this ring here, which you mayhap could exchange for one of that amount lesser value."

"I am sorry but I do not have that much in coin and I do not work with gold," she answers. "May I suggest 100d in coin, a dozen seven-dram rings and a cup?"

"A cup! A silver cup? I've never had a silver cup before. Sounds like a fair exchange to me." Jethrul took the cup, coins and rings. He put the coins and most of the rings into his purse, slipping three rings onto his fingers and offering another to Kaden. "Would you accept this in recompense for the money you paid last night?"

Kaden smiled at Jethrul's offer, for it surely was not an even trade. "Thank you, kind minstrel; I've never had a ring before." Shyly, Kaden slipped it on her finger. Her eyes shone as if it was the most precious treasure.

Mobon moves in as well, as the others converse with the smith. He nods politely if the proprietress looks at him and keeps his hands visible at all times. At an appropriate break in the conversation, after Jethrul concludes his business, Mobon will inquire as to the prices on the various sized beads and marbles. He will also discretely keep an eye on Kaden, to see if she seems to admire any particular pieces above others. (Kaden wasn't particularly looking at any one thing.)

"The beads are 45d per dozen and are usually strung on a leather cord as a necklace. Each marble weighs one ounce and is the way I get my raw material to make small items. There are not many interested in buying them but, if you want, I can sell them for 60d each," she answers. Mobon can see a couple hundred of the beads and ten or eleven marbles.

Mobon mulls this over, then reaches under his tunic and produces his user note for 320d. "Would you consider accepting this in exchange for five of the marbles and some coin?" he asks.

"Sorry but no," she replies, "Those are only good with usurer's and we do not have one in Ternua. I would be willing to exchange it for five marbles and consider the rest payment for my trouble and risk to get it exchanged the next time I go to Tashal for more silver."

Mobon considered her words. True, it was not the best exchange for him, but he would get a lot more use out of the small lumps of silver than this troublesome scrap of paper. "Fair enough." he said, handing it over and slipping the marbles under his tunic and into the pouch there. "Tell me...", he continues, "Is this a common practice, using one ounce marbles as a starting point for small metal items? Could I reasonably expect most whitesmiths to have such handy?"

"I don't know about handy but we all deal with them," she answered. "We use the one ounce marbles for small projects and one pound bars for large projects. How many we have on hand and how many we can part with depends on what we are currently working on."

02-KELÉN-720 TERNUA, KALDOR

4TH WATCH [COLD, CLOUDY, NORTH BREEZE, LIGHT SNOW]¹

Finishing with the silversmith, you proceed to the house of the apothecary. This is a charming, rural-style cottage complete with window boxes of herbs and flowers. As you approach, you notice that one of the windows has been smashed, and the contents of the window box lie scattered and broken on the street. Kaden is the first to notice that it was smashed from the outside and a couple of threads caught on a sash splinter indicate that someone has climbed through it. There are no signs of life in the house, the door is locked and knocking brings no response. Peering through the window, you see signs of a violent struggle -- broken furniture, glass and so on litter the room but there is no sign of Evelyce or anyone else.

Drawing his shortsword into his right hand, Mobon positions himself in front of the door. Eyeing the door, he will make his best guess on foot placement, trying to pick a spot that will put maximum pressure on the locking mechanism. Once he has decided the best spot, he will attempt to kick in the door.

Juebin draws his dagger and prepares himself throw it if needed. Kaden frowned as she noticed the window amiss. "Foul play here," she said quietly. "Evelyce?" she called into the window as she looked for signs of life. "We have to tell the sheriff. Let's go now."

"You go." Mobon replies, "For myself, I wish to ascertain first who lies within, and in what condition they be."

"I'll not leave you to bleed if someone's in there." Kaden's voice was firm. "If you must enter, be quick; I'll follow behind."

Jethrul says, "I can be of little help here, I'll get the sheriff." He waited a moment, in case the others disagreed with his intent, and then hurried to the keep.

As he hurried off, Jethrul realized he didn't know if the village had a castle or keep so he stopped at the Happy Man for directions. "Ternua does nat 'ave a castle ur a shire reeve," the ostler answered, "At dicky time uv morning de bailiff can probably be found breaking 'is fast and getting instructions vrim Lord Verdreth at de manor."

"The manor it is then. How would I be getting there?" asked Jethrul.

Meanwhile, back at the apothecary...

Examining the door, Mobon sees that it is a typical plank door with the external planks running vertical. His experience with similar doors suggests that the planks are nailed to internal planks running horizontal and that both sets of planks are about an inch thick. An iron latch is just above an iron lock both about four feet from the ground. Typically a latch and lock of this type is built into an additional inch-thick block of wood. Mobon kicks the door, once solidly and a second time less solidly, but neither appear to have any effect.

Kaden winced as the door shook.

Since Mobon apparently cannot kick the door open, Juebin tries to climb through the broken window to see what is there. On his first attempt, he gets tangled in the window sash and is unable to get through.

"Aye!" Mobon replies, shifting about and putting his left shoulder toward the door. "Brart! Ebed! Assist me, please!" he says, "As one now...on three! One...two...three!" Whereupon Mobon hurls his weight against the door in the hopes of battering it open.

"Probably the only time I could use my miner's tools in this place and I've left them on the boat" Brart says as he joins Mobon's gate crashing attempt.

Juebin relaxes and gives it another try yelling down to Mobon. "It is pretty hard to get through but I will give it another try if you give me a minute. Then I will come down and let you in."

This attempt proves successful so he slips inside and opens the door...just in time to see the three soldiers hurtling into him. Juebin and Ebed (who is usually quite clumsy) manage to keep their feet but Mobon and Brart fall to the ground.

Kaden, hearing the two men fall, ran to poke her head into the door...er, opening...and see that they were okay.

Mobon will scramble to his feet as quickly as possible,, making sure he still has a firm grip on his shortsword and look around the interior.

This room has been thoroughly wrecked and you notice that all potions, herbs and other apothecary substances that you expect to see here are missing. Kaden notices traces of blood on a few slivers of broken glass but there is no discernible trail. Brart finds a hand-written note (go to the handouts page <http://duttond.topcities.com/Harn/Kaldor/handouts.html> and

click on the checkbox before your name under "Written work for Act 3 Scene 7"). There is a door to another room.

Horrified, Kaden slowly stepped around the room, trying to examine whether or not it seemed like more of one or another substance had been taken. "I guess someone wanted to burglarize the place," she said sadly, fingering some of the leftover shards of pottery.

"Anyone a faster reader than me?" Brart asks, offering the paper in the general vicinity of Kaden.

Mobon moves to the door and, standing to one side, warily examines it to determine if it is locked.

Kaden takes a look at the note for Brart as Mobon looked in the other door. "It says 'This is your final warning! Deliver the goods to the red barn by sunset tonight.' and there is some odd symbol," Kaden said, showing the note around to see if anyone recognized the symbol.

Meanwhile at the manor...

After hearing the instructions Jethrul hurried in that direction, traveling as quick as he could without becoming totally breathless at his approach to the manor. Arriving at the manor, he is confronted at the gate by two guards. "Who are you and what is your business here?" one of them asks.

Jethrul tried hard not to blurt everything out so quickly that he couldn't be understood. "I am Jethrul of Krarisen, journeyman harper. I come from the apothecary's shop, where it looks like someone has broken in, and ransacked the place."

The guard says to wait here and he goes to the manor to report. A short while later he returns to tell you it is the beadle's duty to investigate and report such things and he proceeds to give you directions to the beadle's house.

Meanwhile at the apothecary...

Looking into the back room, you see that it has been thoroughly ransacked. The contents of all the shelves and cupboards (pots, pans, food and so on) have been thrown onto the floor. The only piece of furniture not overturned is a large cupboard that does not appear to be easily moved. Kaden detects a slight draft coming from behind the cupboard. Brart hears the soft sound of movement apparently from behind the cupboard and below the floor level. Then it is silent again.

Mobon shuffles about the room, trying to get an idea of exactly what he's gotten himself into now.

"Help me remove the cupboard", Brart shouts while he rushes over. "We have had enough trouble with things hiding underground."

Brart, Mobon and Ebed manage to slide the heavy cupboard out to reveal a hidden doorway with steep, narrow, wooden steps leading 15 feet into a dark cellar. Just as they look down, a small, indistinct shape shoots past the bottom of the stairs, to be lost in the darkness. The shape is about three feet high and is humanoid but nothing else can be seen in the bad light. There is a faint scabbling noise from the cellar an instant after the shape disappears from view, then silence.

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"Oh no. Not again," cries Brart, "I think we should better hide the doorway again, just in case the local authorities aren't no good too."

"Did you see that??" Kaden squeaked. "Come on! We have to go down!" she said, giving Mobon a pointed look but remaining where she stands.

Hefting the shortsword, Mobon eyes the darkness warily. "See if you can find a source of usable illumination in the rubble." he says, tightening his grip on the hilt, "If need be, make a rag torch or two." That said, he lowers his center of gravity to aid in balance, readies himself to spring off the stairs at a moment's notice if need be and descends rapidly to the cellar.

"I have a candle," Kaden offered as she tried to strike flint and steel to light it before they slid down.

"Wonderful, absolutely wonderful" Brart murmurs as he browses the room for a possible torch or lamp before following his friends. While looking around, Brart finds the materials to make a crude torch and finds another set of stairs, these go to an upper floor. After binding the torch, Brart careful, slowly and as quiet as possible checks the stair to the upper floor, just peering around when his head is high enough, holding the unlit torch in his right, ready to block any potential attacks.

Brart sees a simply furnished bedroom. It contains a wooden bedstead with a feather mattress and pillows on rope net, a washstand, bowl, jug and chest with clean linen and clothes. The room has been devastated. The mattress and pillows have been cut open and their stuffing is strewn about the room along with the contents of the chest. Having checked they are safe from surprises from above, Brart returns to his friends at the cellar.

Rushing down the dark stairs, Mobon steps down hard on a missing step about half way down but he manages to keep his balance. At the bottom, he looks around and spots a young, very-frightened girl hiding in a pile of rags and boxes.

"I will hold the candle so Mobon can go first and have his hands free if you want? Though it still might be better if we make some other type of torches quickly." Juebin will look quickly around for a leg from a broken chair and some cloth from the curtains of the windows to make a torch. By the time Kaden gets the candle lit and Juebin turns back to the cellar door, they see that Mobon has already went down.

"I will hold the candle so Mobon can go first and have his hands free if you want?" offers Juebin, "Though it still might be better if we make some other type of torches quickly." Juebin looks quickly around for a leg from a broken chair and some cloth from the curtains of the windows to make a torch. He easily finds materials to make a crude torch as he notices Brart going up some stairs.

Juebin only listens for a moment up the stairs to make sure Brart didn't find some unexpected guests. Just as he turns toward the cellar, Brart comes down the stairs.

Mobon notes the girl but does not indicate his awareness. Scanning the room, he turns in a circle in place at the foot of the stairs, knees bent slightly and shortsword held at the ready. He completely examines the room, floor to ceiling, while allowing his vision to adjust to the gloom. The small room is an earth and

stone walled cellar with a few boxes, bags and rags. The only occupants appear to be Mobon and the girl.

Candle lit, Kaden carefully follows Mobon down into the cellar.

Satisfied for the moment, Mobon slides the shortsword back into its scabbard, not wanting to frighten the girl further. Hearing someone start down the stairs, he glances over his shoulder and says, "Mind the..."

Kaden doesn't see the missing step in time and falls six-feet down the stairs and into Mobon...who whirls about, catches Kaden and sets her safely on her feet.

Clomp clomp -- aah! urgh!

Finding herself stopped up short in Mobon's arms after a dizzying several-feet tumble, Kaden slowly found her footing, holding her weight as she could. "Ah," she said weakly, raising one hand to touch her face and make sure it was still whole. "Thank her grace. Ah, ah, and thanks," she said quickly as she realized how close she was standing to Mobon, and cursing herself for sounding a fool.

"My pleasure...truly." Mobon says, unable to resist giving the woman a slight squeeze before releasing her. "Seems ok down here." he calls up the stairs. "But, as I was saying..." here he gives Kaden a slight nod, a wink and a roguish grin, "mind the steps. There's a missing one!"

Once sufficiently recovered, Kaden and Mobon turn their attention to the hiding girl who they can only assume is still there as it is a small cellar with no other apparent exit. However, in her fall, Kaden dropped the candle, which then went out as it dropped to the floor. There is now very little light here and most of that is blocked by Juebin and Brart at the cellar door.

Juebin again listen first and descends the stairs upon hearing the comment about the missing step. The missing step is as far as he is able to descend into the small, now-crowded cellar.

"Hello love," Kaden says softly, kneeling down so she didn't look so towering to the little urchin. "What's your name?"

Mobon squats down and set his helmet on the floor, to soften his appearance some.

"Lysela" they hear in a small sobbing voice from the darkness.

Mobon backs off a bit from Kaden, taking his helm with him (in his left hand) but not putting it on. He tries to get several feet away at least if possible, so that Kaden can coax the girl out without her being intimidated by his proximity and weapons. He moves slowly and carefully, not wanting to trip over anything in the dark or make any sudden movements to startle the girl.

"Lysela, that's a beauty," Kaden said, trying for a smile in her voice. "My name is Kaden. I don't know what happened here, but we're here to help. Why don't you come upstairs with us where we can all see each other? It's so dark down here. Nobody's left upstairs to hurt you. They've all gone.

"Slowly she comes out of the darkness and grabs Kaden's hand like she is never going to let go. Without further comment, she follows as Kaden leads her upstairs. Once in the light, you can see that she is about ten years old, with brown hair, blue eyes,

fair skin (although a bit smudged) and wearing a worn dress and foot swaddles.

Meanwhile with Jethrul...

"The beadle? Okay." Following the directions, Jethrul heads in the direction of the beadle's house. By now the sense of urgency has dissipated, and Jethrul walks rather than running. "No doubt I'll discover that the beadle is having breakfast at the Happy Mam," he muttered as he went, "and the whole run around was totally unnecessary."

Arriving at the beadle's house, Jethrul is answered at the door by a rather matronly woman who answers his inquiries with, "My lay-about husband is probably at the Silver Mead Club drinking his breakfast. Now if you don't mind, I have work to do" as she closes the door in his face.

"Thank you for your time, goodwife," Jethrul said sarcastically to the closed door, and turned around to begin trudging back to the Silver Mead Club. As he was heading back, he saw that the others were no longer outside the apothecary shop. "Well, it has taken so long to find the beadle, a few minutes longer won't hurt, and it'll give him a better idea of what has happened." And with that he changed his destination to the shop.

Meanwhile at the apothecary...

Mobon follows them up, keeping his distance until he sees how the little girl reacts to him. He continues to carry his helmet.

Kaden squeezed the girl's hand as they ascended, introducing their group as they appeared, so that she wouldn't be afraid. With her thumb, Kaden wiped a smudge from the girl's cheek.

"There. That's much better. How long have you been hiding down there? Can you tell us what happened?"

"Well," Lysela answers, "a couple uv days ago some mane cam to see de mistress and dey leff arter a lot uv shouting. Den yesterday de mistress ketched me playing way some uv er purty powders so she sent me to de cellar."

"Ee know I be an orphan cuz my parents be daid," she digresses, "bit I dink mistress Evelice be my mother's sister. I do de cleaning and fetching een return vor bait and a place to sleep."

"Last night," she returns to her story, "dere wuz suddenly a lot uv noise and I heard someone scream. The rucksel went on vor a long time and I 'id among de boxes and stayed very still so no wan could fine me. I vall'd asleep and everything 'as bin quay-it since den but I ant dared to try to get out uv de cellar. When I 'eard ee moving 'bout een de 'ouse, I went up de steps to see what wuz gwain on and ee frit me wain ee opened de door." She finally runs out of breath.

While the girl tells the story, Brart looks for something edible or at least some water for the kid. He finds some hard, stale bread, some hard cheese and a single, surviving, gallon jug of weak ale. Cautiously he offers it to the girl but she hides behind Kaden so Brart places the meal on the floor and retreats to a wall.

"It's okay, love, he's a friend of mine," Kaden said carefully. "If you're hungry, go ahead."

Lysela grabs up the food and hungrily starts eating it (softening up the hard bread using the weak ale).

Mobon remains quiet and watches the events unfold.

Kaden let the girl eat, sitting down next to her. "Do you remember anything about the man who came a couple of days ago and anything he said while they were shouting?"

Around a mouthful of food, Lysela says, "I wuz nat close 'nuff to yer what wuz sed while I ded my chores. All I mind be dat dey were big and rough and smelly. Arter dey leff, de mistress tull'ed me to bide away vrim de Silver Mead Club and to nat spake to strangers."

Kaden frowned. "Is the Silver Mead Club a bad place? Who usually goes there, in Ternua? We're new to town, and don't know much about the place."

"I do nat know," she answers, "I do nat gaw where de mistress tells me nat to gaw." As she describes the place and tells you where it is at, you realize that it is the first tavern you stopped at for drinks.

Upon arriving at the open front door of the apothecary, Jethrul notices that there is no one in the outer room but he does hear voices in quiet conversation from the next room. Jethrul briefly casts an eye over the destruction in the outer room, but doesn't linger, moving into the next room and the conversation. There he hangs back, getting an idea of what is going on.

Moving over towards Jethrul, Mobon says, "Any luck with the law?"

"Tschaw," muttered Jethrul, pulling a face. "I've covered most of Ternua, to find that it's the beadle's responsibility and said beadle is in the Silver Mead Club getting sloshed for breakfast. I thought I'd see what you lot had discovered. Any sign of the apothecary?"

After standing around and listening to the others talk to the girl Juebin will add in, "It seems that all the roads lead to the Silver Mead Club. Maybe it is time to go and have breakfast."

"Agreed." Mobon says, "But we must first make some kind of arrangements for the young lady."

"Maybe she could accompany us for a while," Kaden said. "She's got no family; she'd be sent to a hostel or convent or such. And maybe she can be helpful to us; it's not like we know this city at all, and apparently have inadvertently gotten mixed up in some sort of thievery. Who knows, maybe the blackguards that marked Jethrul are the ones that did this."

"For a while she may well accompany us, especially as she seems to trust you." Brart says, "but be aware that we may be facing dangers that may be even worse than that the girl just escaped from."

Mobon regards them wryly, "As if we don't have enough to deal with..." he mutters under his breath. Then, in a more normal tone, he adds, "What say you, youngling? Care to travel a bit with us?"

With a frightened look on her face, she answers, "If it be all de same way ee, Sir, I wud soonder fend vor mezel' den vaace

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dangers and gwain where mistress tull'ed me to staw away vrim."

"A bit of local knowledge can't but help us. Some identification of the people who were responsible for this might not hurt. Although I suspect that the Silver Mead Club isn't the best place for her, and I suspect Kaden won't want to be mistaken for a stoolball prize. Come to think of it, if the beadle is also a habitue of that inn, he may be in on the whole thing in some way or another."

Then he turned his attention to the girl, speaking quietly, "Has your mistress ever spoken of people with yellow marks on their skin coming to see her."

"No, sir," she replies, then with a wint of a smile, "that is beef witted. Why wud anyone do dey?"

"Are you sure?" Kaden asked the girl, concern in her voice. She looked so young to be turned loose to the streets. "You can come with us, if you want, but we'll not make you."

"Yes, mam," Lysela answers, "I be sure. Besides, I need to clain de place up vor wain de mistress returns."

"Tell me, what does your mistress look like, so we might recognize her if we saw her?"

"She be shorter and dinner dan ee and she 'as dark strommel ayer and blue lamps," Lysela answers.

02-KELÉN-720 TERNUA, KALDOR

4TH WATCH [COLD, CLOUDY, NORTH BREEZE, LIGHT SNOW]¹

Finishing with the silversmith, you proceed to the house of the apothecary. This is a charming, rural-style cottage complete with window boxes of herbs and flowers. As you approach, you notice that one of the windows has been smashed, and the contents of the window box lie scattered and broken on the street. Kaden is the first to notice that it was smashed from the outside and a couple of threads caught on a sash splinter indicate that someone has climbed through it. There are no signs of life in the house, the door is locked and knocking brings no response. Peering through the window, you see signs of a violent struggle – broken furniture, glass and so on litter the room but there is no sign of Evelyce or anyone else.

Drawing his shortsword into his right hand, Mobon positions himself in front of the door. Eyeing the door, he will make his best guess on foot placement, trying to pick a spot that will put maximum pressure on the locking mechanism. Once he has decided the best spot, he will attempt to kick in the door.

Juebin draws his dagger and prepares himself throw it if needed. Kaden frowned as she noticed the window amiss. "Foul play here," she said quietly. "Evelyce?" she called into the window as she looked for signs of life. "We have to tell the sheriff. Let's go now."

"You go." Mobon replies, "For myself, I wish to ascertain first who lies within, and in what condition they be."

"I'll not leave you to bleed if someone's in there." Kaden's voice was firm. "If you must enter, be quick; I'll follow behind."

Jethrul says, "I can be of little help here, I'll get the sheriff." He waited a moment, in case the others disagreed with his intent, and then hurried to the keep.

As he hurried off, Jethrul realized he didn't know if the village had a castle or keep so he stopped at the Happy Man for directions. "Ternua does nat 'ave a castle ur a shire reeve," the ostler answered, "At dicky time uv morning de bailiff can probably be found breaking 'is fast and getting instructions vrim Lord Verdreth at de manor."

"The manor it is then. How would I be getting there?" asked Jethrul.

Meanwhile, back at the apothecary...

Examining the door, Mobon sees that it is a typical plank door with the external planks running vertical. His experience with similar doors suggests that the planks are nailed to internal planks running horizontal and that both sets of planks are about an inch thick. An iron latch is just above an iron lock both about four feet from the ground. Typically a latch and lock of this type is built into an additional inch-thick block of wood. Mobon kicks the door, once solidly and a second time less solidly, but neither appear to have any effect.

Kaden winced as the door shook.

Since Mobon apparently cannot kick the door open, Juebin tries to climbs through the broken window to see what is there. On his first attempt, he gets tangled in the window sash and is unable to get through.

"Aye!" Mobon replies, shifting about and putting his left shoulder toward the door. "Brart! Ebed! Assist me, please!" he says, "As one now...on three! One...two...three!" Whereupon Mobon hurls his weight against the door in the hopes of battering it open.

"Probably the only time I could use my miner's tools in this place and I've left them on the boat" Brart says as he joins Mobon's gate crashing attempt.

Juebin relaxes and gives it another try yelling down to Mobon. "It is pretty hard to get through but I will give it another try if you give me a minute. Then I will come down and let you in."

This attempt proves successful so he slips inside and opens the door...just in time to see the three soldiers hurtling into him. Juebin and Ebed (who is usually quite clumsy) manage to keep their feet but Mobon and Brart fall to the ground.

Kaden, hearing the two men fall, ran to poke her head into the door...er, opening...and see that they were okay.

Mobon will scramble to his feet as quickly as possible,, making sure he still has a firm grip on his shortsword and look around the interior.

This room has been thoroughly wrecked and you notice that all potions, herbs and other apothecary substances that you expect to see here are missing. Kaden notices traces of blood on a few slivers of broken glass but there is no discernible trail. Brart finds a hand-written note (go to the handouts page <http://duttond.topcities.com/Harn/Kaldor/handouts.html> and click on the checkbox before your name under "Written work for Act 3 Scene 7"). There is a door to another room.

Horrified, Kaden slowly stepped around the room, trying to examine whether or not it seemed like more of one or another substance had been taken. "I guess someone wanted to

burglarize the place," she said sadly, fingering some of the leftover shards of pottery.

"Anyone a faster reader than me?" Brart asks, offering the paper in the general vicinity of Kaden.

Mobon moves to the door and, standing to one side, warily examines it to determine if it is locked.

Kaden takes a look at the note for Brart as Mobon looked in the other door. "It says 'This is your final warning! Deliver the goods to the red barn by sunset tonight.' and there is some odd symbol," Kaden said, showing the note around to see if anyone recognized the symbol.

Meanwhile at the manor...

After hearing the instructions Jethrul hurried in that direction, traveling as quick as he could without becoming totally breathless at his approach to the manor. Arriving at the manor, he is confronted at the gate by two guards. "Who are you and what is your business here?" one of them asks.

Jethrul tried hard not to blurt everything out so quickly that he couldn't be understood. "I am Jethrul of Krarisen, journeyman harper. I come from the apothecary's shop, where it looks like someone has broken in, and ransacked the place."

The guard says to wait here and he goes to the manor to report. A short while later he returns to tell you it is the beadle's duty to investigate and report such things and he proceeds to give you directions to the beadle's house.

Meanwhile at the apothecary...

Looking into the back room, you see that it has been thoroughly ransacked. The contents of all the shelves and cupboards (pots, pans, food and so on) have been thrown onto the floor. The only piece of furniture not overturned is a large cupboard that does not appear to be easily moved. Kaden detects a slight draft coming from behind the cupboard. Brart hears the soft sound of movement apparently from behind the cupboard and below the floor level. Then it is silent again.

Mobon shuffles about the room, trying to get an idea of exactly what he's gotten himself into now.

"Help me remove the cupboard", Brart shouts while he rushes over. "We have had enough trouble with things hiding underground."

Brart, Mobon and Ebed manage to slide the heavy cupboard out to reveal a hidden doorway with steep, narrow, wooden steps leading 15 feet into a dark cellar. Just as they look down, a small, indistinct shape shoots past the bottom of the stairs, to be lost in the darkness. The shape is about three feet high and is humanoid but nothing else can be seen in the bad light. There is a faint scrabbling noise from the cellar an instant after the shape disappears from view, then silence.

"Oh no. Not again," cries Brart, "I think we should better hide the doorway again, just in case the local authorities aren't no good too."

"Did you see that??" Kaden squeaked. "Come on! We have to go down!" she said, giving Mobon a pointed look but remaining where she stands.

Hefting the shortsword, Mobon eyes the darkness warily. "See if you can find a source of usable illumination in the rubble." he says, tightening his grip on the hilt, "If need be, make a rag torch or two." That said, he lowers his center of gravity to aid in balance, readies himself to spring off the stairs at a moment's notice if need be and descends rapidly to the cellar.

"I have a candle," Kaden offered as she tried to strike flint and steel to light it before they slid down.

"Wonderful, absolutely wonderful" Brart murmurs as he browses the room for a possible torch or lamp before following his friends. While looking around, Brart finds the materials to make a crude torch and finds another set of stairs, these go to an upper floor. After binding the torch, Brart careful, slowly and as quiet as possible checks the stair to the upper floor, just peering around when his head is high enough, holding the unlit torch in his right, ready to block any potential attacks.

Brart sees a simply furnished bedroom. It contains a wooden bedstead with a feather mattress and pillows on rope net, a washstand, bowl, jug and chest with clean linen and clothes. The room has been devastated. The mattress and pillows have been cut open and their stuffing is strewn about the room along with the contents of the chest. Having checked they are safe from surprises from above, Brart returns to his friends at the cellar.

Rushing down the dark stairs, Mobon steps down hard on a missing step about half way down but he manages to keep his balance. At the bottom, he looks around and spots a young, very-frightened girl hiding in a pile of rags and boxes.

"I will hold the candle so Mobon can go first and have is hands free if you want? Though it still might be better if we make some other type of torches quickly." Juebin will look quickly around for a leg from a broken chair and some cloth from the curtains of the windows to make a torch. By the time Kaden gets the candle lit and Juebin turns back to the cellar door, they see that Mobon has already went down.

"I will hold the candle so Mobon can go first and have is hands free if you want?" offers Juebin, "Though it still might be better if we make some other type of torches quickly." Juebin looks quickly around for a leg from a broken chair and some cloth from the curtains of the windows to make a torch. He easily finds materials to make a crude torch as he notices Brart going up some stairs.

Juebin only listens for a moment up the stairs to make sure Brart didn't find some unexpected guests. Just as he turns toward the cellar, Brart comes down the stairs.

Mobon notes the girl but does not indicate his awareness. Scanning the room, he turns in a circle in place at the foot of the stairs, knees bent slightly and shortsword held at the ready. He completely examines the room, floor to ceiling, while allowing his vision to adjust to the gloom. The small room is an earth and stone walled cellar with a few boxes, bags and rags. The only occupants appear to be Mobon and the girl.

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Candle lit, Kaden carefully follows Mobon down into the cellar.

Satisfied for the moment, Mobon slides the shortsword back into its scabbard, not wanting to frighten the girl further. Hearing someone start down the stairs, he glances over his shoulder and says, "Mind the..."

Kaden doesn't see the missing step in time and falls six-feet down the stairs and into Mobon...who whirls about, catches Kaden and sets her safely on her feet.

Clomp clomp -- aah! urgh!

Finding herself stopped up short in Mobon's arms after a dizzying several-feet tumble, Kaden slowly found her footing, holding her weight as she could. "Ah," she said weakly, raising one hand to touch her face and make sure it was still whole. "Thank her grace. Ah, ah, and thanks," she said quickly as she realized how close she was standing to Mobon, and cursing herself for sounding a fool.

"My pleasure...truly." Mobon says, unable to resist giving the woman a slight squeeze before releasing her. "Seems ok down here." he calls up the stairs. "But, as I was saying..." here he gives Kaden a slight nod, a wink and a roguish grin, "mind the steps. There's a missing one!"

Once sufficiently recovered, Kaden and Mobon turn their attention to the hiding girl who they can only assume is still there as it is a small cellar with no other apparent exit. However, in her fall, Kaden dropped the candle, which then went out as it dropped to the floor. There is now very little light here and most of that is blocked by Juebin and Brart at the cellar door.

Juebin again listen first and descends the stairs upon hearing the comment about the missing step. The missing step is as far as he is able to descend into the small, now-crowded cellar.

"Hello love," Kaden says softly, kneeling down so she didn't look so towering to the little urchin. "What's your name?"

Mobon squats down and set his helmet on the floor, to soften his appearance some.

"Lysela" they hear in a small sobbing voice from the darkness.

Mobon backs off a bit from Kaden, taking his helm with him (in his left hand) but not putting it on. He tries to get several feet away at least if possible, so that Kaden can coax the girl out without her being intimidated by his proximity and weapons. He moves slowly and carefully, not wanting to trip over anything in the dark or make any sudden movements to startle the girl.

"Lysela, that's a beauty," Kaden said, trying for a smile in her voice. "My name is Kaden. I don't know what happened here, but we're here to help. Why don't you come upstairs with us where we can all see each other? It's so dark down here. Nobody's left upstairs to hurt you. They've all gone.

"Slowly she comes out of the darkness and grabs Kaden's hand like she is never going to let go. Without further comment, she follows as Kaden leads her upstairs. Once in the light, you can see that she is about ten years old, with brown hair, blue eyes, fair skin (although a bit smudged) and wearing a worn dress and foot swaddles.

Meanwhile with Jethrul...

"The beadle? Okay." Following the directions, Jethrul heads in the direction of the beadle's house. By now the sense of urgency has dissipated, and Jethrul walks rather than running. "No doubt I'll discover that the beadle is having breakfast at the Happy Mam," he muttered as he went, "and the whole run around was totally unnecessary."

Arriving at the beadle's house, Jethrul is answered at the door by a rather matronly woman who answers his inquiries with, "My lay-about husband is probably at the Silver Mead Club drinking his breakfast. Now if you don't mind, I have work to do" as she closes the door in his face.

"Thank you for your time, goodwife," Jethrul said sarcastically to the closed door, and turned around to begin trudging back to the Silver Mead Club. As he was heading back, he saw that the others were no longer outside the apothecary shop. "Well, it has taken so long to find the beadle, a few minutes longer won't hurt, and it'll give him a better idea of what has happened." And with that he changed his destination to the shop.

Meanwhile at the apothecary...

Mobon follows them up, keeping his distance until he sees how the little girl reacts to him. He continues to carry his helmet.

Kaden squeezed the girl's hand as they ascended, introducing their group as they appeared, so that she wouldn't be afraid. With her thumb, Kaden wiped a smudge from the girl's cheek.

"There. That's much better. How long have you been hiding down there? Can you tell us what happened?"

"Well," Lysela answers, "a couple uv days ago some mane cam to see de mistress and dey leff arter a lot uv shouting. Den yesterday de mistress ketched me playing way some uv er purty powders so she sent me to de cellar."

"Ee know I be an orphan cuz my parents be daid," she digresses, "bit I dink mistress Evelice be my mother's sister. I do de cleaning and fetching een return vor bait and a place to sleep."

"Last night," she returns to her story, "dere wuz suddenly a lot uv noise and I heard someone scream. The rucksel went on vor a long time and I 'id among de boxes and stayed very still so no wan could fine me. I vall'd asleep and everything 'as bin quay-it since den but I ant dared to try to get out uv de cellar. When I 'eard ee moving 'bout een de 'ouse, I went up de steps to see what wuz gwain on and ee frit me wain ee opened de door." She finally runs out of breath.

While the girl tells the story, Brart looks for something edible or at least some water for the kid. He finds some hard, stale bread, some hard cheese and a single, surviving, gallon jug of weak ale. Cautiously he offers it to the girl but she hides behind Kaden so Brart places the meal on the floor and retreats to a wall.

"It's okay, love, he's a friend of mine," Kaden said carefully. "If you're hungry, go ahead."

Lysela grabs up the food and hungrily starts eating it (softening up the hard bread using the weak ale).

Mobon remains quiet and watches the events unfold.

Kaden let the girl eat, sitting down next to her. "Do you remember anything about the man who came a couple of days ago and anything he said while they were shouting?"

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"I do nat know," she answers, "I do nat gaw where de mistress tells me nat to gaw." As she describes the place and tells you where it is at, you realize that it is the first tavern you stopped at for drinks.

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After standing around and listening to the others talk to the girl Juebin will add in, "It seems that all the roads lead to the Silver Mead Club. Maybe it is time to go and have breakfast."

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"For a while she may well accompany us, especially as she seems to trust you." Brart says, "but be aware that we may be facing dangers that may be even worse than that the girl just escaped from."

Mobon regards them wryly, "As if we don't have enough to deal with..." he mutters under his breath. Then, in a more normal tone, he adds, "What say you, youngling? Care to travel a bit with us?"

With a frightened look on her face, she answers, "If it be all de same way ee, Sir, I wud soonder fend vor mezel' den vaace dangers and gwain where mistress tull'ed me to staw away vrim."

"A bit of local knowledge can't but help us. Some identification of the people who were responsible for this might not hurt. Although I suspect that the Silver Mead Club isn't the best place for her, and I suspect Kaden won't want to be mistaken for a stoolball prize. Come to think of it, if the beadle is also a habitee of that inn, he may be in on the whole thing in some way or another."

Then he turned his attention to the girl, speaking quietly, "Has your mistress ever spoken of people with yellow marks on their skin coming to see her."

"No, sir," she replies, then with a wint of a smile, "that is beef witted. Why wud anyone do dey?"

"Are you sure?" Kaden asked the girl, concern in her voice. She looked so young to be turned loose to the streets. "You can come with us, if you want, but we'll not make you."

"Yes, mam," Lysela answers, "I be sure. Besides, I need to clain de place up vor wain de mistress returns."

"Tell me, what does your mistress look like, so we might recognize her if we saw her?"

"She be shorter and dinner dan ee and she 'as dark strommel ayer and blue lamps," Lysela answers.

02-KELÉN-720 TERNUA, KALDOR

MIDDLE OF 5TH WATCH [COLD, CLOUDY, NORTHWEST GALE]²⁰

After paying your bill, you proceed to the Happy Man Inn and the beadle sends one of the farm lads with directions to ensure that accommodations are made available. At the entrance to the inn, a nobleman (who appears to be in a foul mood) and two yeomen pass you. The innkeeper greets you cheerily and says rooms are indeed available of whatever type you would prefer. He reminds you that private rooms are 20d and shared rooms are 15d per person, then asks what type of rooms would you like.

"On the menu tonight," he continues, "is a choice of a potrous or sorreyle for starters, a choice of custard lumbarde, playce ysod, or henne dorre for the main dish, sallat and coudele almaunde for accompaniments, followed by bolas for desert.

Kaden, uncharacteristically quiet, states her preferences and then falls silent. "A private room please, and a shared room for my man Ebed," she said. "As for supper, I shall have sorreyle, henne and sallat. Thank you, keep."

Mobon says, "I'll have the same, and a shared room, if you please."

Once their food arrived, Kaden simply picked at it, brooding as she ate.

Trying to lift her mood, Mobon says, "Pity we couldn't stay and see the show when the bailiff confronts our excitable friend there, especially considering who was truly responsible for disturbing his Lordship."

"I'll have the same shared room as last night, and sup on sorreyle, playce and sallat." The minstrel sat near Kaden. "A pretty pickle we seemed to have got into. I fear that mentioning that the girl heard people from the Silver Mead Tankard involved in the attack will cause danger both to her and

ourselves. And the reaction of the beadle is most strange, he seemed more concerned about his wife than the apothecary. I wonder if he is directly involved with the attack, or if the attackers have threatened his wife to compel him to turn a blind eye. Mayhap a talk with the wife might help us learn something."

"Mayhap discussing such things in the common room of the main lodging house in such a small town is not the wisest course." Mobon says in low tones, "Nor approaching again the wife of a man who was ready to brain you for a ravisher at the merest mention of you speaking to her, eh?"

"Aye, I think we should leave the man's wife alone, else our menfolk find themselves strung up by their toes -- or worse," Kaden said, lips quirking into a small smile as she found a bit of her spark again. "As to the rest, I have to agree with Mobon. Tongue wagging got us in this mess in the first place. Let's retire to my room to speak before we part again for the evening."

02-KELEN-720 TERNUA, KALDOR

6TH WATCH [COLD, CLOUDY, NORTH GALE, LIGHT SNOW]¹

As you finish your meal and prepare to go to Kaden's room, the beadle arrives and asks to speak with her. Returning her letter of introduction, he says, "The bailiff tells me that, while this letter gives you no authority here, being from the Dariune family, it does require a certain amount of courtesy and respect...that is, as long as your people are courteous and respectful of us. I have questioned Arbay taverner and he says, other than you, he has only seen three other strangers in town. Three men were lodged at the Silver Mead Club a few days before you arrived at a time when the Happy Man was full of clerics and nobility. Last night they settled their bill and left saying they expected to meet a 'boatman friend' who was to take them to Tashal but he was not due to arrive until tomorrow morning. Arbay thought it was all a bit odd but did not ask any questions. We tend to mind our own business in these parts. I checked out the apothecary but found no little girl. She has, no doubt, went to stay with relatives or friends. I do not know since the apothecary is new in town and I have never seen this little girl. While the place looked decidedly disturbed, it appeared someone had started to straighten it up. I found no evidence to indicate where the apothecary has gone. Finally, the bailiff has instructed me that, due to the amount of disturbance you have already caused, I am to do whatever it takes to make your stay as pleasant...and brief...as possible. So is there anything else before we all retire for the night?"

Kaden accepted her letter from him again, grateful to have it back. Now that it was an issue, Kaden scanned the letter to see if Evelyce was any relation to Sir Dariune or if there was any hint of why he would have recommended her but his recommendation had more to do with what he knew of her character than of Evelyce's. He appears to have asked the head of the Kiban Mangai for master apothecaries, along her expected route, that requested the temporary services of a journeyman apothecary.

"I assure you, good beadle, my companions meant no real harm or offense. It was only a matter of manly pride that raised hackles earlier. We came here with intentions only to rest a few days and for me to visit Evelyce for some training in the apothecary arts, and happened upon the burgled shop. In seeking you out, we only meant to help right a wrong. I hope you

understand our position. I think that's all the speaking we need to do for the night unless you have other questions for us."

"I have no questions and I bid you a good night," the beadle says as he departs.

Once the beadle left, Kaden invited the others into her room to speak of the matters before them, and conveyed all that the beadle had said to her. "So, what do you think? Should we involve ourselves further?"

Brart says, "I'm afraid we are already deeply involved."

After Kaden finishes her talk Juebin says "I don't understand one thing. The little girl said she had no family and wouldn't come with us, then they said they had never seen a little girl around the apothecary shop. It just seems a little suspect to me. However, I don't think we have to time to look in to it since we have to leave as soon as possible."

Kaden shrugged. "But there's a line we need to decide whether we should cross or not -- as in, do we actively go questioning folks looking for these suspicious three, or do we simply get back on the boat and head on down the river as we'd planned? I can see arguments for both views."

Jethrul says, "Getting on the boat and sailing away would be the easy course. However, I am affronted by that beadle. The girl, who says that she has no relatives, and must clean up for her mistress, disappears halfway through her task. And the bailiff was unnecessarily roused, no doubt in an attempt by the beadle to avoid doing anything."

The minstrel thought for a moment, "The downside is that, no doubt annoyed by the beadle, the bailiff wants us out of here as soon as possible, and no doubt if it got nosed around that we were asking questions, it would be sooner. But I think we should do something."

"I don't see that there's much we can do." Mobon says, stretching to work some of the tension from his shoulders, "We're strangers here and already have some of the most influential people here ill-disposed to us. As we've already learned to our misfortune in the past, meddling in local affairs against the grain of the authorities gets us nowhere, at best."

He pauses, musing glumly, then continues, "You know, Kaden, that I always stand ready to strike a blow for justice, but the local law here is just too prickly for my liking. That beadle character considered even us being concerned for the welfare of the citizenry to be a personal insult. And, whether he justifiably summoned the bailiff or not, we know not what story that worthy was told. Even if he knew the truth, how likely is he to side with a group of common strangers against an official of his own community, eh?"

Sighing, he concludes, "I'll go with the consensus of the group, but know this: I backed off in that place because I didn't want to drag you all into my conflict with that ignorant beadle. However, if we go seeking trouble here and find it, you should understand that I will hand my weapons over to no man here, and will spill the guts of any who attempt to take them...regardless of the cost to me, or anyone else. I'll not pass a day in the local lord's dungeon if I can help it."

[Juebin]

When they all head off to bed, Juebin uses Disembodiment. Depending on the time he has he will look at the Apothecary shop then the Silver Mead. Juebin looks for anything suspicious at the Silver Mead since all the troubles we have had have been near there. Seeing if he can pick up any conversations. Then trying to track the three men along there route if possible. Just to see who they are and where they are.

With great difficulty, you are able to separate your spirit from your body. You quickly go to the apothecary and find the girl sleeping in the basement. Then you go to the Silver Mead Club and find it closed and relatively quiet. The innkeeper is sleeping in the master bedroom next to one of the barmaids. In one of the upstairs rooms, a peasant spends his passion upon another of the barmaids. The rest of the beds are empty. As there are no conversations to overhear and no way to follow the three men, you return to your body at the Happy Man.

When you return to your body, you find it difficult to reenter and, once that is accomplished, you fall unconscious for the rest of the night until late into the morning.

[Mobon]

Soon after everyone settles into their beds, you are startled awake by a ghostly presence passing through the room. Looking to the beds of your companions, you notice Juebin has stopped breathing and appears dead.

Mobon springs from his bed, pulling his shortsword from its sheath and crouching at the ready as he scans the room for signs of a threat. Perceiving nothing, he moves to Juebin's side and checks him more thoroughly, listening at his mouth, nose and chest and shaking him with a free hand. He detects neither breath nor heartbeat and gets no response from his ministrations.

Mobon wakes Jethrul and alerts him to what's going on while pulling on his breeches and tunic. Mobon buckles his weapon belt around his waist, resheaths the shortsword and goes immediately to rouse Kaden.

At the knocking at her door, Kaden awoke, looking around bleary-eyed at the pitch-blackness of her room. It was dead of night; who could be knocking? Grabbing her knife, she gingerly approached the door. "Whosit?" she hissed with one foot on the door so nobody could try to open it quickly.

"Tis Mobon!" Mobon hisses through the door, "You must come quickly Kaden...something has happened to Juebin! I think he's dead!"

"What??" Kaden yelled, then remembered her situation and quieted her voice. Reaching back for her backpack, she threw open the door. "Lead me to him," she said in a voice that sounded far braver than she felt.

Leading Kaden back to the room, then watching tensely as she examines Juebin, Mobon elaborates further in low tones, "I awoke to an odd feeling, as a ghostly presence passing by me. Perhaps an odd dream, I know not. I looked over at him and something...I cannot say what, seemed amiss! I checked on him and found no breath, no heartbeat...nothing! And no signs of violence that I could detect, though admittedly, my examination was brief."

Kaden finds that Juebin is breathing normally and his heartbeat is regular. However, his complexion is pale and she is unable to wake him with all of her efforts. He appears to be in shock.

"Thanks be to our most generous Lady!" Mobon exclaims when he realizes that Juebin seems to be alive once more, "The blessings of her servant Thalia, Princess of Fortune, surely are upon us!"

"He was once dead, and now alive again?" Kaden mused as she examined Juebin. "Foul spirits, preying on those who sleep peacefully," she said with venom as she laid her backpack down on the ground and retrieved a dose of Betony.

Mixing its powdered form with a bit of vinegar and honey, Kaden opened Juebin's mouth and ensured he swallowed it down. "This should help ward off foul spirits and hopefully revive him," Kaden said as she drew a blanket over Juebin's unconscious form.

(OOC: Betony: Preserveth the body from witchcraft. A dram of the powder of betony, taken with a little honey in some vinegar, doth wonderfully refresh those that are over wearied by travel.)

Almost immediately, he appears to be sleeping easier and, a short while later, he awakens.

"Are you okay?" Kaden asked him warily.

When Juebin wakes and he finds out all the problems he has caused, he tells them in private conversation when he cannot be heard by anyone not in the party, "I have an ability to leave my body at times and see what is going in different places. I just sort of think about a place as I sleep and try and visit it. While asleep last night I saw the little girl we met sleeping again in the basement of the house. I also went to the silver mead inn but couldn't find anything out of the ordinary. I was going to try and find the men who left the inn yesterday but didn't have enough to go on to find them. Anyway not to worry, it doesn't always work and I do always wake up, though it was a little hard getting back this time, and I am not sure why."

At Juebin's explanation, Kaden crossed herself, silently asking for Peoni's protection for them all. "Well, next time would you warn us? You scared me for a minute there; I thought your soul was being assaulted by some fell demon."

To Kaden and the others present Juebin will say "I am sorry I scared you but I did not realize how my body looks as I am away from it. I hope I didn't cause you to much concern."

With that, Kaden tromped off to bed.

Pulling Juebin aside privately before they return to their room, Mobon says, "A fascinating gift, Juebin. But fear you not that some fell spirit will take your body for it's own whilst your own spirit be away? You were gone, friend...your body dead to all examination. I would be most wary in the exercise of this talent, were I you."

To Mobon when they are alone Juebin will say "It is interesting that you were able to see me trying to get back, and knew something was wrong. Anyway, next time I want to go and look around I will let you know so you can look after my body so as

to keep it safe. I can't say I like the idea of not being able to get back."

03-KELÉN-720 TERNUA, KALDOR

1ST WATCH [COLD, CLOUDY, NORTH GALE, LIGHT SNOW]¹

In the morning, Kaden gathers everyone in her room to speak again. "I think we should go. The captain won't wait any longer, and as long as Evelyce of Jarquane had no importance to my liege, I've no allegiance here further. I'm sure the beadle and bailiff will be glad to see us go."

Brart says, "I agree. While sure something is wrong here, we have a task to fulfill."

"As do I." Mobon says, "And I'll not be saddened to put this place behind me."

Reluctantly Jethrul added, "I concur. Wherever we might look there is wrong happening, but we cannot set every wrong to right. I just hope that that young girl is able to look after herself. Myself, I would like to travel away where this mark will not mean anything," he held out his bandaged hand, "and I might play as I please. 'Tis not easy, not being able to make music when I wish."

03-KELÉN-720 TERNUA, KALDOR

2ND WATCH [COOL, PARTLY CLOUDY, NORTHEAST WIND]²

Since Captain Josriath is also a guest at this inn, you see him in the common room breaking his fast. Telling him of your intentions to leave, he says he will make preparations and should be ready by the next watch. "And where shall we be going next?" he asks, "Of the places you originally mentioned, the next closest is Kolorn."

"I am for heading on to Kolorn. I believe Brart might have some business there, yes?" Kaden said, looking to Brart for confirmation.

Mobon will wait for Kaden to make the call on destination. Prior to departure though, he will find a private place and remove a single gold crown from his neck bag. He will then seek out the Captain and ask for a private word. "Friend Captain," he says, when they are alone, "I apologies for not getting back to you with this when I promised." Here he shows the coin, then continues. "I became entangled in local affairs and, in the midst of the problems thus caused, the errand slipped my mind. I wanted to show it to you, however, so you might know that I am indeed in earnest and not just talking. I pray that we will be able to do business together at our next port of call."

"These things happen to all of us," answers the Captain. "When you're ready for me to invest your money, you can give it to me anytime before you leave the ship."

"So Juebin, are you an acolyte of some religion?" Kaden asked at breakfast, still a bit confused about the events of the evening before.

"No I don't follow any religion closely. The ability is just something I can do, and with practice I am getting better at it. I will make sure from now on that someone knows about what I am up to before I try again."

Kaden eyed Juebin at his revelation, a bit suspiciously, but said nothing else on the matter. "So lads, are we ready?"

03-KELÉN-720 TERNUA, KALDOR

3RD WATCH [WARM, CLEAR, SOUTHEAST WIND]³

By the start of the third watch, everyone has returned to the riverboat and the captain casts off. Just before the Nepen river reaches the Kald river, Jethrul, at the bow of the riverboat happily playing his flute, notices a body on the river bank with several crossbow bolts sticking into it.

"Stop the boat," he calls out to the nearest sailor. "There's a body on the bank there," pointing it out to all who might be interested.

Picking up his bow and slinging the quiver over his shoulder, Mobon fits an arrow to the string. Holding the weapon in his left hand, undrawn, he moves to the railing and looks more closely at the body.

Presuming she catches sight of the body, Kaden examined it closely to see if she could recognize the person at all...but she doesn't. Then she ducked down underneath the side of the boat, away from Mobon's arrows and those of anyone else...

While trying to keep clear of Mobon's field of fire, Brart watches the body too. Do clothes or hair look acquainted? No, they don't appear to be.

By the time the sailors get the boat stopped, it has traveled around a slight bend in the river where another riverboat comes into view. It is apparently adrift and a number of corpses – some human, some less so – litter the deck and float in the river beside the boat. There is no sign of life but Mobon gets the distinct feeling you are being watched (although he is not sure from where).

"I feel like a target. Shouldn't we better leave?" Brart loudly says to no one particular.

Juebin keeps an eye out for anything. He lets others more knowledgeable in this area look things over. He just keeps a look out for anyone still alive and moving and tries not to get in the way of others.

"Protect us," Kaden whispered as she crossed herself. "What madness is this?" she asked Mobon. "Captain, can we pull aside the ship adrift? Are there pirates in these waters?"

"Yes, mam, we can pull along side," answers the captain, "and, no mam, I have never heard of pirates on the rivers."

Pivoting in a slow circle, scanning the surroundings carefully, Mobon pulls back the arrow in his bow just enough to start to feel the tension on the string, to insure no fumbling in a hasty draw. He is careful not to let the bow cover any of his companions or the crew of their boat. "I think whomever did this is still about," he says evenly, eyes narrowing in concentration, "Captain the decision is yours, of course, but I would dearly like to investigate this. Either way, if you have arms aboard for your crew, I suggest you turn them out."

She nodded. "Well, I'll defer to your decision. Should we go look? If we're targets..." Kaden trailed off, shivering at the thought. "I've no mind for combat, though I suppose I could defend myself if I had to."

As the captain begins giving orders to bring the boats together, he says, "I am afraid the crew will have all they can handle

controlling the boat and keeping it ready to depart when necessary. They do not have any fighting skills as I did not believe I would need marines."

Of the five bodies that Mobon can see, one is an ordinary man in his mid twenties, one is an ordinary woman in her mid twenties, one is an ordinary man in his forties, one has an ordinary body but only a skull where his head should be and the last has eyes on stalks like a fresh water crab.

You hear the hoot of an owl coming from the trees on the bank of the river.

Kaden covered her mouth in horror. "I had thought maybe some were still alive, but..." she trailed off. "Give me a steady hand. I should go examine them. Perhaps I can tell something about how they perished."

Ebed jumped to the other boat to defend Kaden while she was there.

"This is no time for night birds! better take cover and leave this place" Brart cries while he crouches behind the ships railing.

Kaden jumped, whipping her head around to see if she could see any owl on the bank -- or rather, a man making an owl noise.

Up in a tree she sees what appears to be a small woman with wings and a spear...just as the creature launches itself into the air.

Turning toward the "owl" noise, also concerned about such an oddly out of place sound, Mobon is startled by the apparition before them. Drawing his bow fully, he steadies his aim as long as he dares and, unless the creature veers away, fires for the center of its body. His arrow barely misses (low and to the left) and the creature passes close enough to deliver a minor stab wound to Mobon's left thigh before it soars off to make another approach.

Flinching slightly at the pain, Mobon reaches for another arrow and reloads, watching the creature's progress.

"Dear goddess!" Kaden exclaimed rather loudly as the apparition of a faery appeared before her eyes. "A faery!" she said sharply. "Impossible! Mobon, did you see it, over there in the trees? That was no owl!"

"Faery? The only faeries I've heard about have wands, not spears, and create mischief not death." Jethrul looks around the boat trying to find something close at hand better to protect himself than a flute.

Juebin will look amazed at the woman owl thing. Not knowing what else to do he will just stare.

As Kaden speaks, two long tentacles come out of the water and grab for her. Her attention returns to her own situation quickly enough for her to evade their grasp.

On the other boat, Ebed readies his shortsword as two more mutants come out of the boats cabin with apparent murderous intent.

Kaden shrieked as the long, wet arms reached for her, jumping back out of the way just in time. "HELP! THERE ARE FELL

THINGS IN THE WATER!" she yelled just in time to see the mutants walk out of the boat's cabin. "Ebed, to arms!" she said, but the doughty fighter was already protecting her. She fell back toward the boat's railing, scrabbling to get away to safety, but drew her knife just in case she was forced to defend her life.

Startled, Mobon pivots and fires for the area of the water where the tentacles came from but doesn't appear to hit anything. Then, dropping bow and quiver, he seizes up his shield and attempts to jump across to the other boat. He misses and falls into the water, his metal tower shield sinking to the river bottom. By reflex he tries to swim and manages the two yards to the river bank to drag himself out of the water.

Realizing nobody shoots at the boat (yet), Brart looks for a potential weapon, too. Not finding anything readily available on deck, Brart runs to get his pick, willing to hit on anything that "boards".

The winged mutant returns from the other direction to attack Brart with its spear but Brart dodges out of the way and enters the boat's cabin.

The first mutant out of the other boat's cabin has a large beak on its face and attacks Ebed with a shortsword. Ebed blocks with his towershield and the mutant almost loses its shortsword from the shock of the blow. Ebed attacks with his own shortsword and delivers a minor stab wound to the mutant's right hip. The second mutant out of the cabin is covered with fur and attacks Ebed with a club. Ebed easily dodges this attack and counterstrikes to no effect. Ebed and the mutant both slip and fall to the deck.

Jethrul puts his flute down somewhere safe. Grabbing his staff he jumps across to the other boat. "I'll keep the flying fiend busy if you look after these monsters." He calls out to Mobon, Ebed and Juebin as he tries to position himself between the 'faery' and the others with the staff held towards one end, to increase its reach. "Kaden, could you keep an eye out for the tentacled tormenter?"

Kaden fell to her knees, clasping her hands together as she began to pray, beseeching Peoni for her aid in their hour of need. "Gentle lady, your good servant is beset by unworldly beasts," Kaden said aloud fervently, eyes closed tight against the outside world as she begged her divine lady for help.

The tentacles once again grope for Kaden but are unable to find her.

Juebin snaps out of his day dream, draw his trusty dagger and jumps to Kaden's rescue. He attempts to attack anything that gets in knife range. If he has a split second he will look for a secondary weapon to grab if the knife is lost or fails to make a difference.

Cursing fluently, Mobon gets to his feet and surveys the situation. Unless there are more foes on the shore or the winged creature comes toward him, he will reenter the water and attempt to struggle toward the nearer boat. As he approaches, he will call for assistance in boarding from Kaden or the sailors, depending on which boat it is. He will try his best to keep as much distance as possible between himself and the place where he saw the

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tentacles. He knows that this is little assurance, but cannot leave his companions to fight on without him.

03-KELÉN-720 TERNUA, KALDOR

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

You awake as the boat approaches Kolorn. You remember your dream of fighting the mutants but don't remember the results of the fight or how the boat reached this point unharmed. Kaden remembers being approached by a young girl who appeared from nowhere. "You must learn to live a more pious life and only ask for my help when you are in most dire straits," she says. "This means I must save the life of you and your companions so that you may learn better ways. In return for my help, you must deliver all of the Yulpris that you have gathered to my temple in Tashal where it is most needed."

The last that Kaden and Ebed remembers is jumping back to the boat. Mobon remembers swimming back to the boat but nothing after that.

Kaden jolted awake, sitting bolt upright. "Peoni! Sweet protector, she has delivered us." Kaden immediately rolled to her knees and pressed her forehead to the ground in a position of penance. She will remain there praying until someone jolts her out of her reverie.

Brart, pick in hand and high on adrenaline, just gazes around, wondering where the foes went.

Jethrul mused on the day's events, somewhat confused. In the end he settles down with his flute trying to compose some music to illustrate his feelings, a piece that is moody and foreboding, with some quick action towards the end and finishing in a dissonant confusion.

Juebin will also reflect on what has happened. He never believed that a God would actually save him or people he was with. He seems to have a new found respect for the group and Kaden in particular. He will find some time to talk to Mobon. "You know Mobon, back there I was felling like there wasn't much I could have done to help out. I was wondering if you could maybe teach me to use more than a Knife. I don't mean to carry a weapon around, but if I am to travel more with you all, then it might be best if I can defend my self and others."